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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
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Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Treasury
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

British Overseas Territories: Registers of Company Beneficial Ownership

[HLWS361]

Baroness Sugg: The Government welcomes the statements made by eight Overseas Territories in which they have committed to greater transparency by announcing they will establish publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership.

The eight Territories – Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Montserrat, the Pitcairn Islands and St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha, and the Turks and Caicos Islands – have all demonstrated good progress and political leadership as part of the global effort to increase transparency in financial services and tackle illicit finance.

This follows an earlier announcement made by the Crown Dependencies to implement publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership within the next few years, and the establishment of a publicly accessible register by Gibraltar, in line with the EU's Fifth Anti-Money Laundering Directive.

In line with the Sanctions and Money Laundering Act 2018 the Government will prepare a draft Order in Council before the end of 2020, which will be published. We hope that the British Virgin Islands will also commit to publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership without delay.

The Government considers that the end of 2023 is a reasonable deadline for the introduction of such registers. Meeting this date will be a considerable ask for many Overseas Territories, given their limited resources; especially those Overseas Territories that do not currently have a company beneficial ownership register. It will involve significant legislative and operational changes. To provide the Overseas Territories with assistance on registers the Government ran a technical workshop last July, hosted webinars in November and will be providing further assistance.

It took the UK over three years to introduce its own public register. The 2023 deadline also aligns with the Government's international campaign to advance publicly accessible company beneficial ownership registers as a global norm. We believe that action on beneficial ownership information in the Overseas Territories should be complemented by improved public access to beneficial ownership information internationally. This maximises the protection of our national security.

The statements issued underscore the Overseas Territories' continued contribution to the global fight to tackle illicit finance. However, it is not the only action they have taken.

All Overseas Territories with financial centres participate in the Exchange of Notes arrangements. These

are bilateral arrangements under which they share beneficial ownership information with UK law enforcement and other agencies within 24 hours (or 1 hour in urgent cases). They are an invaluable capability for our law enforcement, particularly for the National Crime Agency on money laundering and asset denial activity. Last year's statutory review found that these arrangements are working well and are providing UK law enforcement with rapid access to information used to support ongoing criminal investigations

Many Overseas Territories have committed to global tax transparency standards, including the OECD's Common Reporting Standard; under which taxpayer financial account information is automatically exchanged for tax purposes. This reciprocal, automatic exchange of financial information addresses the secrecy that facilitates offshore tax evasion and provides evidence of tax non-compliance.

The Government therefore welcomes the statements on making company beneficial ownership information publicly accessible and all the constructive action the Overseas Territories are taking as responsible jurisdictions.

College Financial Oversight: Independent Review

[HLWS362]

Baroness Berridge: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills (Gillian Keegan) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am publishing today the report of the Independent Review of College Financial Oversight, conducted by Dame Mary Ney DBE.

At the heart of the report is recognition of the contribution of colleges to their local communities and economies— essential to meeting both the skills needs of business and enabling young people and adults to succeed and adapt to the changing economy. Colleges must be recognised as an integral part of each region's growth strategy with a long-term role in raising productivity and living standards. They are vital to building skills to power our national economic recovery at this time.

The principal conclusion of the report, which I endorse, is that government must have a strategic relationship with FE Colleges. This means not just acting as a regulator, or intervening in the event of failure, but ensuring that every college is part of a coherent plan to meet local and regional need. There are many outstanding colleges, and exceptional college leaders, who are well placed to drive not just the success of their institutions, but wider prosperity working with local authorities, businesses, universities and schools.

The report supports a collaborative FE system. Colleges are critical infrastructure backed over time by substantial government capital investment. There is a place for competition, but it is also important that colleges work together to meet need and learn from the exceptional

practice that exists in the sector. Dame Mary's report highlights how this collaborative approach has driven improvement through the Strategic College Improvement Fund, and National Leaders of FE – work that is now been taken forward through the new College Collaboration Fund and the expansion of the National Leader programmes. I endorse this approach.

The FE Commissioner has played a critical role in bringing FE practitioner expertise into government and successfully working to strengthen the leadership and governance of colleges. I intend to maintain the role, reporting directly to ministers as a public appointment, but strengthening alignment with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and placing its civil service support team there. This change will further empower and develop the ESFA's territorial teams and enable them to draw upon practitioner expertise. There will be a regular strategic dialogue with each college board around priorities. This will reduce the perception that support is only available to colleges in trouble, and focus not just on prevention but on building success and outstanding practice.

The review also recommends further action to improve the effectiveness of the financial data collected from colleges. In February, the ESFA took the first step towards adopting a new integrated single data return, working closely with the Association of Colleges. We have also commissioned a July financial collection to assess the financial impact of COVID-19 on the sector and individual colleges. This will enable us to continue to work with governing bodies to mitigate financial risks arising from COVID-19, avoid failure and help reduce intervention, while remaining ready to act decisively when necessary. This will be supported through additional requirements for colleges to be transparent – including protection for whistle blowers - through our Audit Code of Practice and grant conditions. Starting from 2020/21, they will require all colleges to publish their whistleblowing policy externally. We are also considering the link between the ESFA's financial assessments and OFSTED judgements - in light of OFSTED's plans to consider piloting of changes in schools. The report is also right to highlight the importance of funding simplification.

Inspirational leadership, overseen by strong governance, is the ultimate driving force in all our outstanding colleges – providing the structure and culture that supports outstanding teaching and develops exceptional teachers. We are investing in learning and development programmes for those in key governance and leadership roles in colleges through the Education and Training Foundation and Oxford SAID business school. We have allocated up to £4.5m for the current financial year, which will include a new programme of learning and development for governance professionals. Dame Mary was right to highlight the importance of this role. We will also strengthen the governance guide for college corporations.

Fundamentally, Dame Mary Ney's report demonstrates that government must set out a long-term radical vision which places colleges where they belong – driving the success of regional economies and communities. This could not be more opportune. As we renew our economy and society following the historic challenge of Covid-19, our young people and adults must have the skills to succeed. The steps we are already taking, particularly with the launch of the first wave of our new, high status T levels this autumn, are a vital step. We must build on this to create a broad and bold strategy to elevate the role of Further Education and support our colleges in their vital and transformative mission. Our forthcoming White Paper will set out how we plan to do that.

Immigration Health Surcharge Exemption: Update

[HLWS365]

Lord Bethell: My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar) has made the following written statement:

Following announcements by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care earlier this week, I would like to further update the House on progress made by the Department of Health and Social Care towards implementing the Immigration Health Surcharge exemption for health and social care staff, as announced by the Prime Minister on 21 May 2020.

The Prime Minister's announcement demonstrated our continued commitment to supporting our health and social care workforce and their families, not least because of the support they have provided to all of us throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our election manifesto included the commitment to introduce an NHS Visa. As set out by the Home Secretary, next month, we will launch a Health and Care Visa, following the Fees Regulations that were laid yesterday. This will make it cheaper, quicker and easier for the best health and care professionals to come and work in the UK. The launch of this new visa will also mean that for the very first time, overseas health and care staff on this visa will not need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge upfront, either for themselves or their dependents.

I am, however, conscious that this visa does not exempt everyone in the health and care sector who has paid the Immigration Health Surcharge, such as the thousands of overseas staff working as direct care workers in social care, or as cleaners, porters or healthcare assistants throughout the NHS. I am pleased, therefore, to be able to reiterate what the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care confirmed in the House yesterday: that all employees working in the health and care sector that have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge on or after the 31 March 2020 will be eligible for a reimbursement of what they have paid since that date, including those vital staff outlined above.

This reimbursement will be paid in arrears of six-month increments. This ensures we only reimburse those workers and their families who have worked in the sector for an appropriate period of time. This will also provide an incentive to continue working in the health and care sector. I can confirm that this scheme will be launched by 1 October 2020. This is the earliest date that eligible workers and their families would be able to claim a reimbursement. My officials continue to work with colleagues across government, the devolved administrations, representative bodies and the health and care sector to ensure those who are eligible for reimbursement are accounted for within the scheme, and my Department will publish further details of the scheme in due course.

These are significant steps in ensuring that our health and social care workforce and their families are themselves cared for, after they have cared for and supported so many of us in incredible circumstances.

My Department will make further announcements to update the House on the progress of the Immigration Health Surcharge exemption and the reimbursement scheme, and relevant documents will be published on gov.uk in advance of the reimbursement scheme launching in October.

National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland: 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

[HLWS364]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement:

This is a summary of the main findings from the report by His Honour Brian Barker QC, the Independent Reviewer of National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland, covering the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. His Honour Brian Barker concludes:

The overview is a twelve-month period of almost constant change and unpredictability. At the core was another year without a functioning Executive or Assembly and no representative capacity for vital decisions on development to be taken.

Throughout the reporting period I have taken the opportunity to arrange meetings with appropriate senior members of the Service and PSNI, and to be briefed on significant events. My visits to both MI5 and various PSNI establishments confirm my view that there is a deep sense of commitment and high level of professionalism in the continuing and unpredictable battle against indiscriminate and violent lawlessness. Relations with An Garda Síochána continue to strengthen aided by the appointment of PSNI's Deputy Chief Constable Drew Harris as Garda Commissioner in September 2018.

Following the pattern in recent years there have been successes in the containment of dissident groups, but the context in which national security activities are performed remain 'challenging' and constant care and vigilance by

members of the PSNI and the Prison Service both in relation to personal safety remain absolutely necessary.

Arriving from Cheshire Constabulary, Chief Constable Simon Byrne took over on July 1st and was given little time to settle in before a marching season that was disappointingly violent. I was grateful for an introductory meeting in August, and a fuller exchange took place in November covering many of the difficulties, not least the step change in dissident attacks. An examination of CHIS procedures and control had been satisfactory.

The frustrations of the Policing Board were partially addressed by legislation in November 2018 allowing new membership, followed by effective reconstitution in December. I was able to assess progress at a meeting in May and attended what was a very useful exchange. The Board was now able to discharge their wide range of overseeing constitutional duties and follow the seven principles set out in the 2017-2020 Plan to continue oversight of the work of the police and to encourage engagement at all levels. In a meeting with Professor Duncan Morrow and Dr Jonny Byrne of the University of Ulster a valuable perspective was provided by their reflections on the 'state of the union' based on years of research and teaching.

The annual statistics issued to mid 2019 show that the powers of stop and search under section 47a of the Terrorism Act 2000 were not exercised. There were 169 premises searched under warrant under section 37 Schedule 5 of the same Act. There were 146 persons detained under section 41 of the Terrorism Act and 143 (98%) were held for 48 hours or less. 16 persons were charged with a total of 39 offences including four charges of attempted murder, eight charges of firearms offences, six charges of GBH with intent and four charges of possession of offensive weapon. A total of 34 persons were disposed of by non-jury trial, 29 of whom were found guilty of at least one charge. A total of 17 non-jury trial certificates were issued by the DPP, four down on the previous year. There were a total of six persons convicted in the Crown Court under the Terrorism Act 2000, the Terrorism Act 2006 or the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008, one less than the previous year. There were 1515 examinations carried out by police officers under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, 656 of which were examinations of persons, eight of which resulted in a detention. Paramilitary style shootings resulted in 17 casualties, down four compared with 2017, all being aged 18 or above. Paramilitary assaults resulted in 60 casualties, up by six. No compensation or agency payments were made under section 38 schedule 4 of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007 where property was broken, destroyed or damaged or other private property rights interfered with.

I wish to note the full co-operation extended to me by both MI5 and the PSNI where standards and commitment, in the face of unpredictable difficulties, continue to be of high order.

Determined attacks from extremists have continued and police and prison officers face unacceptable risk in

pursuing their duties as they continue to be regarded as legitimate targets.

The tragic killing of Lyra McKee has robbed Northern Ireland of a ‘rising star’ - someone who also believed passionately in social and religious tolerance; but her death generated widespread anger and condemnation of the activities of terrorists. One of her legacies hopefully will be an acceleration along the slow road to normalization.

I have measured performance in this reporting period against the five key principles identified in relation to national security in Annex E to the St Andrews Agreement of October 2006. My conclusions are set out in the attached table.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Annex E to the St Andrew's Agreement [Annex E to the St Andrews Agreement.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-07-15/HLWS364/>

Northern Ireland Assembly Petition of Concern Mechanism: First Report

[HLWS363]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement:

I am today laying before both Houses of Parliament the first report by Her Majesty's Government on the use of the Petition of Concern mechanism in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As part of the New Decade, New Approach deal upon which the devolved Executive and Assembly was restored in Northern Ireland on 11 January 2020, the UK Government committed to undertaking such a report every six months.

This report covers the period from 11 January 2020 to 10 July 2020, during which no Petition of Concern has been lodged against any motion in the Assembly. During much of that period the normal business of the Assembly has been disrupted due to Covid-19. The Assembly has adapted to deal with this by moving to meet frequently as a committee of the whole Assembly.

The fact that there have been no Petitions of Concern since the Assembly was reconvened is a positive reflection on the operation of the Assembly and of the Executive. I know that political leaders in Northern Ireland will share my view that the Assembly should aim to proceed on this basis for the remainder of the current Assembly.

The next UK Government report on the use of the Petition of Concern will cover the period from 11 July 2020 to 10 January 2021.

The report notes that full implementation of the Petition of Concern reforms in NDNA will require Westminster

legislation. The Government will bring forward such legislation when parliamentary time allows, after which the Assembly will be able to reflect the detail of the reforms in its standing orders.

OBR 2020 Fiscal Sustainability Report and Response to OBR 2019 Fiscal Risks Report

[HLWS366]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) made the following Written Ministerial Statement on 14 July.

Today's publication of the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) *2020 Fiscal Sustainability Report* (FSR) fulfils the OBR's legal obligation to publish an analysis of the sustainability of the public finances over the long-term and an assessment of the public sector balance sheet at least once every two years. This report has been laid before Parliament today and copies are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office. The OBR also produces a biennial *Fiscal Risks Report* (FRR) to which the government is required to respond within a year. This statement provides the government's response to *Office for Budget Responsibility - Fiscal risks report July 2019 [CPI31]*, laid 18 July 2019[1].

The action the government has taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was necessary to protect public health, support household incomes, and to minimise permanent damage to the economy – thereby supporting growth, employment and the public finances over the medium to long term. As the OBR have said in the FSR: “The outlook would have been much worse without the measures the Government has taken. These have provided additional financial support to individuals and businesses through the lockdown. They should also help to limit any long-term economic scarring, by keeping workers attached to firms and helping otherwise viable firms stay in business”.

OBR 2020 Fiscal Sustainability Report

The magnitude and duration of the economic shock caused by COVID-19 will have important consequences for the medium and long-term fiscal position. In all three scenarios the OBR have published in the FSR, the level of borrowing this year is significantly higher than expected in the OBR's Spring Budget forecast. Public sector net borrowing is projected to reach between 13% and 21% of GDP in 2020-21, with differences across scenarios reflecting the size of the economic shock. This in turn means that public sector net debt is also projected to be higher compared to the Spring Budget forecast under all scenarios, although the OBR have highlighted that low borrowing costs help to make this more affordable in the near-term. The gilt market is deep and liquid with a good track record in responding smoothly to increases in gilt supply. Underlying demand for the UK's debt remains strong, with borrowing costs at historical lows, signalling confidence in the UK's institutions.

The government has taken significant action to support the recovery and minimise permanent damage from the

pandemic. In the long-run, the OBR also expect demographic change and other cost pressures in health spending to put upward pressure on public spending while leaving revenues broadly unchanged. The government is committed to fiscal sustainability and ensuring the long-term health of the public finances. The government will set out further details on its plans to put the public finances back on a sustainable footing over the medium-term at the next Budget, alongside an updated OBR forecast. As part of this, as set out in the March Budget, HM Treasury is reviewing the UK's fiscal framework to ensure it remains appropriate for the macroeconomic context, while ensuring the sustainability of the public finances. The FSR provides important analysis and scenarios which will be used to inform this review.

Managing fiscal risks from COVID-19

In July 2019, the OBR published their second Fiscal Risks Report covering the main risks to the public finances at that time. With COVID-19 now clearly the most significant immediate source of fiscal risk facing the UK, this response to the report focuses on how the government is managing the fiscal risks associated with the pandemic.

The work of the last ten years in bringing borrowing and debt back under control means that the UK was well-placed to respond to the immediate and long-term challenges posed by COVID-19.

The government acted quickly to implement interventions containing the initial economic shock from the pandemic. When designing these interventions, the government drew on the experience gained from HM Treasury's Balance Sheet Review[2] and international best practice[3] to ensure that fiscal risks are managed effectively. The IMF commended the government's powerful response to the initial shock of COVID-19, finding the interventions to be large, substantial and carefully targeted[4].

In the first phase of the economic response to COVID-19, the government kept people attached to their work, protected their incomes and supported businesses, delivering one of the most generous and comprehensive packages of support globally, with a fiscal response totalling £160 billion. While the economic impacts of COVID-19 and the government's necessary response have come at a significant fiscal cost, the costs of failing to act to support public services, businesses, and workers would have been much higher.

Building on the action taken in the face of the immediate threat posed by the virus, the government is now proceeding with the second phase of its response, supporting the UK's economic recovery while continuing to prioritise people's health. The Plan for Jobs announced last week, made up to £30 billion available to help kickstart the nation's economic recovery while continuing to prioritise people's health by: introducing a new Job Retention Bonus to encourage firms to keep on furloughed workers; supporting jobs with direct help to find work and to gain the skills people need to get a job; protecting jobs in the hard-hit hospitality and

accommodation sectors and at attractions by supporting demand for these businesses, giving them confidence to reopen; creating jobs with action to get the property market moving, to increase and bring forward infrastructure investment, and to make homes greener, warmer and cheaper to heat.

The third phase of the government's plan will be set out in the autumn with measures to support the longer-term recovery through a Budget and a Spending Review. These will detail further plans to invest in public services, to support innovation and growth-enhancing infrastructure with a National Infrastructure Strategy, to seize global opportunities and to level up opportunity across every region and nation of the UK.

Wider fiscal risk management

While the immediate focus of government action is on dealing with COVID-19, the management of the wider risks facing the UK public finances remains important. The government has acted to address a number of the risks that were discussed by the OBR in FRR 2019.

To address the long-term challenge of low productivity growth, Budget 2020 announced measures investing in UK infrastructure, backing tech and innovation, making tax changes to support firms to invest, and introducing measures to support a dynamic and competitive economy. The Prime Minister also announced on 30 June that we will be improving the quality, speed and efficiency of delivering infrastructure through a new Infrastructure Delivery Taskforce named Project Speed.

In the longer-term, climate change remains a significant challenge for the wider public finances. Demonstrating the government's commitment to mitigating climate change, in November 2019, the Chancellor launched an HM Treasury review into how the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions will be funded and where the costs will fall. Spring Budget allocated £640 million for tree planting and peatland restoration, over £1 billion for ultra-low emission vehicles and introduced tax measures to encourage greater energy efficiency and reduce plastic waste. The UK is also increasing its International Climate Finance support for developing countries to at least £11.6 billion. To improve the UK's climate resilience, the government announced a doubling of investment in flood and coastal defences in England to £5.2 billion over the next six years. The devolved administrations will benefit from the Barnett consequential of this substantial increase in government investment in flood and coastal defences.

To manage risks associated with non-bank financial intermediation and increase the resilience of the UK financial system, in the remit for the Financial Policy Committee (FPC), HMT recommended that the FPC publishes a detailed assessment of the oversight and mitigation of systemic risks from the non-bank sector. The FPC has confirmed it will publish preliminary findings in the August Financial Stability Report, followed by a more detailed report that outlines gaps in non-bank resilience and potential measures that may be taken to increase resilience.

The OBR also highlighted fiscal risks related to tax reliefs. The government recognises the need to monitor and evaluate existing tax reliefs; the government will continue to monitor their use and act where appropriate, for example through the recent reforms to Entrepreneurs' Relief, and the planned changes to the entitlement to use Red Diesel. HMRC is committed to increasing the number of published costs of tax reliefs and in May 2020 published cost estimates for another 47 non-structural tax reliefs. HMRC will continue to build on this to increase transparency.

[1] <https://obr.uk/frr/fiscal-risks-report-july-2019/>

[2] The Balance Sheet Review (BSR) was launched in 2017 to identify opportunities to dispose of assets that no longer serve a policy purpose, improve returns on retained assets, and reduce the risk and cost of liabilities.

[3]

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/SPROLLS/covid19-special-notes>

[4]

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/14/tr041420-transcript-of-april-2020-world-economic-outlook-press-briefing>

Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill

[HLWS367]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

Agriculture: Subsidies

Asked by **Lord Jopling**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter sent to peers by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 29 June, how much money will be needed to fulfil their pledge to guarantee the current annual budget for financial support for farmers in every year of this Parliament. [HL6486]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The UK Government's election manifesto guaranteed the current annual budget in every year of the new Parliament, giving significant certainty on funding for the coming years. In England this will enable the Government to provide financial support for the purposes set out in the Agriculture Bill. Funding for future years, including delivering the government's manifesto commitment to guarantee the current annual budget to farmers in every year of the new Parliament, will be announced in due course.

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent estimate they have made of the number of armed forces personnel who have tested positive for COVID-19. [HL6375]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lady to the answer given in the House of Commons to the hon. Member for Lewisham East (Janet Daby) to Question 904256.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

904256 - Armed Forces; Coronavirus [904256 - Armed Forces - Coronavirus (1).docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-01/HL6375>

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contribution of the armed forces in tackling the outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6376]

Baroness Goldie: Having plans and resources in place, coupled with effective military aid to civil authorities (MACA) mechanisms was key to delivering Defence's response in aid of Other Government Departments (OGDs).

Due to the public's adherence to lockdown measures, and the ability of OGDs to maintain essential services, it was not necessary to deploy most of those personnel held at higher readiness.

Defence remains committed to supporting the cross government COVID-19 response, along with delivering its critical outputs maintaining National Security.

Asylum

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 30 June (HL Deb, col 574), how many applications from asylum seekers for refugee status are currently being assessed; how long it takes on average to resolve each application; how many applicants are currently neither told that they will be (1) removed, or (2) allowed to stay; and what consideration they have given (a) to holding an amnesty to regularise the position of those who have been in the UK for more than five years without legal status, and (b) to the potential benefits of enabling such people to live, study, work, contribute, and pay taxes, in the UK. [HL6341]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is unable to state how many applications from asylum seekers for refugee status are currently being assessed or how long it takes on average to resolve each application.

The Home Office does however publish data on the number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration. This data can be found at Asy_04, of the published Immigration Statistics March 2020 which indicate that, as at March 2020, the total number awaiting an initial decision was 51,906.

An extract from the published data can be found below showing the total numbers awaiting an initial decision broken down by more or less than 6 months.

	Mar 2020
Awaiting initial decision	51,906
Less than 6 months	20,390
More than 6 months	31,516

All asylum claimants are notified in writing of the outcome of the decision on their claim. If a claim is refused, a full explanation is provided of the reasons along with the relevant appeal rights, plus the necessary removal notice notifications advising them of their responsibility to leave the UK voluntarily and the consequences of them remaining in the UK illegally. Those applicants who are granted status are advised of their rights and benefits to which they are entitled to in the UK.

There are no plans for the Government to hold an amnesty to regularise the position of those who have been in the UK for more than five years without legal status.

The Immigration Rules already provide for undocumented migrants who are in the UK, who have not broken the law except for remaining here without lawful immigration status, to regularise their status. For those who do not meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules, there is provision for a grant of leave where there

are exceptional circumstances or compelling compassionate grounds which would mean refusal would result in unjustifiably harsh consequences for the applicant.

The Government is committed to a fair and humane immigration policy which welcomes and celebrates people here lawfully, but which tackles immigration offending and protects tax-payer funded public services.

In common with other comparable countries, the UK has in place a framework of laws, policies and administrative arrangements ensuring access to work, benefits and services is permitted only for those with the right to access them. It protects the taxpayer and is based on principles of fairness.

It is expected that those who do not have a legal right to be in the UK should leave.

Asylum: Finance

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 30 June (HL Deb, col 574), what assessment they have made of the impact of the "no recourse to public funds" policy on the prevalence of poverty among people without residential status and the dependence on charities for food, housing and survival. [HL6340]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The NRPF policy is based on the principle that migrants coming to the UK are expected to maintain and support themselves and their families without posing a burden on the UK's welfare system. Access to benefits and other publicly funded services reflects a migrant's lawful status and the strength of their connections to the UK. That is why access to public funds is normally tied to indefinite leave to remain.

Those without lawful status in the UK are expected to take steps to resolve their situation, either by regularising their stay, or by leaving the UK. Help is available for people who wish to leave voluntarily. However, we recognise the unique challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic presents. That is why we have provided more than £3.2 billion of funding to local authorities in England and now a further £500 million to respond to spending pressures they are facing. The Government has also provided additional funding for the devolved administrations under the Barnett formula as part of the wider government response. Funding provided to local authorities under the Covid-19 emergency response will be paid through a grant that is not ring-fenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent.

Local authorities may provide basic safety net support, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

In addition, the Chancellor announced an additional £750m package of support for charities across the UK to ensure they can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they expect to complete the annual review of cash allowances paid to asylum seekers by the end of July; and if not, when they expect to complete the review. [HL6365]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We have been reviewing the level of the cash allowances provided to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute, as we do each year to ensure that they remain capable of meeting their essential living needs (the legal test).

As a result of this work, the standard allowance has been raised to £39.60 per week from £37.75 per week, an increase of around 5%. This increase is significantly higher than the current general rate of inflation, which Office for National Statistics data shows was only 0.5% in the 12 months period to May.

Confirmatory work, including taking account of possible Covid-19 impacts, is ongoing and the result of the full review will be published in due course.

The UK has a generous record in supporting asylum seekers. Last year, we made around 20,000 grants of asylum or protection (one of the higher figures in Europe), as well as offered protection to 3,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – the highest number of any country in Europe. In addition, we have directly resettled around 20,000 people from the most dangerous areas of the world (especially Syrians) in the UK over the last 5 years. Finally, we spend around £14 billion per year in Overseas Aid, helping millions of people around the world. This is the highest amount of any country in Europe and we are the only G7 country to meet the 0.7% of GNI Overseas Aid target.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the data from Public Health England showing that there have been 30 cases of people arriving from Pakistan with COVID-19 since 4 June, what plans they have to ban flights from that country. [HL6399]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Transport operators across all modes are required to increase communication about latest public health advice to passengers travelling into the UK. This is required throughout their journey by providing links to the advice through websites, as part of the booking process, emails post-booking and with documentation issued immediately before travel.

International transport operators must provide on-board announcements to all passengers about public health guidance.

The General Aircraft Declaration (GAD) process is required for all flights coming to the UK requiring crew to identify symptomatic passengers before arrival, with a similar process being implemented for maritime and international rail.

As part of the borders package, Regulations came into force on 8 June that require people arriving in the UK from Pakistan to self-isolate for 14 days.

At present there are currently no Pakistan International Airway flights operating to the UK as the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has currently suspended its Third Country Operator approval for PIA to fly into Europe. The UK CAA has therefore withdrawn the permit for PIA flights to operate to the UK as legally required. There are no other airlines currently operating direct flights from Pakistan to the UK.

British Nationals Abroad: Hong Kong

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the financial, (2) the social, and (3) the logistical implications, of the arrival of British National (Overseas) passport holders from Hong Kong to the UK. [HL6446]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is working to understand the potential implications arising from British Nationals (Overseas) travelling to the UK from Hong Kong under the revised arrangements. Where this work meets the criteria of the new burdens doctrine on Local Government, it will include an assessment of financial and societal impact.

Children: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the call coordinated by Action for Children, Barnardo's, National Children's Bureau, NSPCC and The Children's Society of more than 150 children's organisations to put the needs of children at the centre of their COVID-19 recovery plans; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL6355]

Baroness Berridge: Children have been and remain at the heart of our recovery planning. Supporting children and young people to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak means encouraging school attendance and helping them to catch up on lost learning, but also ensuring they are safe and well. We look forward to continuing our close work with children's charities and benefitting from their insights and experience to inform our long-term recovery plans to support the continued safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

Our guidance published on 2 July provides schools, colleges and nurseries with the details needed to plan for a full return, as well as reassuring parents about what to expect for their children. We know that school is a vital

point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families. The guidance has been developed in close consultation with the sector and medical experts from Public Health England to ensure that both staff and students are as safe as possible.

Pupils in England will also benefit from a £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time over the 2020-21 academic year. This includes £650 million to be shared across state primary and secondary schools and a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million to increase access to high quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have prioritised vulnerable children and young people's attendance in early years, schools and colleges and supported local areas to improve attendance rates.

As well as working in collaboration with children's charities, we have also supported those that provide vital services that are helping vulnerable children and young people.

In April, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, set out the £750 million COVID-19 funding for frontline charities. The Department for Education and the Home Office were allocated a total of £34.15 million specifically for vulnerable children's charities. As part of this, on 10 June, the two departments launched the £7.6 million Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund to provide support to national children's charities operating in England and Wales which offer services to safeguard vulnerable children, and which have suffered financially owing to the impact of COVID-19. The strategic aim of this funding is to ensure that large charities can continue to sustain their existing services.

As part of this funding, the department also announced £7.27 million for a consortium led by Barnardo's, which will support their new See, Hear, Respond service supporting vulnerable children, young people and families affected by COVID-19. The department has also provided funding to other charities working with vulnerable children, including Grandparents Plus, Family Rights Group and FosterTalk. This adds to investment in the NSPCC's Childline service, while some £10 million has already been committed to the Family Fund, helping families with children who have complex needs and disabilities through grants for equipment which makes their lives easier.

As well as charities, we are supporting local authorities during this outbreak by providing a package of support totalling £4.3 billion to help meet the immediate COVID-19 related pressures, including in Children's Social Care and in delivering services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the call coordinated by Action for Children, Barnardo's, National Children's Bureau, NSPCC and The Children's Society of more than 150 children's

organisations to put the needs of children at the centre of their COVID-19 recovery plans, what steps they are taking to do so. [HL6368]

Baroness Berridge: Children have been and remain at the heart of our recovery planning. Supporting children and young people to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak means encouraging school attendance and helping them to catch up on lost learning, but also ensuring they are safe and well. We look forward to continuing our close work with children's charities and benefitting from their insights and experience to inform our long-term recovery plans to support the continued safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

Our guidance published on 2 July provides schools, colleges and nurseries with the details needed to plan for a full return, as well as reassuring parents about what to expect for their children. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families. The guidance has been developed in close consultation with the sector and medical experts from Public Health England to ensure that both staff and students are as safe as possible.

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children, including Grandparents Plus, Family Rights Group and FosterTalk. This adds to investment in the NSPCC's Childline service, while some £10 million has already been committed to the Family Fund, helping families with children who have complex needs and disabilities through grants for equipment which makes their lives easier.

As well as charities, we are supporting local authorities during this outbreak by providing a package of support totalling £4.3 billion to help meet the immediate COVID-19 related pressures, including in Children's Social Care and in delivering services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Children: Disability and Special Educational Needs

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to endorse the advice relating to children with special educational needs and disabilities outlined in the report by Stonewall *An Introduction to Supporting LGBT Children and Young People: A guide for schools, colleges and settings*, published in March; and what plans they have to issue their own guidance. [HL6369]

Baroness Berridge: Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. Schools and teachers are free to use their professional experience in how best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The department does not endorse guidance produced by external organisations. The department's statutory relationships, sex and health education guidance states that all pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years. Secondary schools should include LGBT content in their teaching and primary schools are strongly encouraged to include families with same-sex parents when teaching about different types of family. Through these subjects, children will be taught about the importance of respectful relationships and the different types of loving and healthy relationships that exist.

The department does not currently have plans to produce more guidance. However, we will ensure that the new programme of support for the new subjects, including training materials, an implementation guide and case studies, are inclusive to all pupils.

Customs

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure consistency in customs regulations throughout the UK. [HL6472]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Withdrawal Agreement and Northern Ireland Protocol brings the whole of the UK

out of the EU Customs Union at the end of the transition period. Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's customs territory and as such businesses in Northern Ireland will benefit from future trade deals negotiated by the UK. Northern Ireland traders will also benefit from unfettered access to the rest of the UK's internal market. This will be delivered through legislation by the end of the year. Any processes on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be kept to an absolute minimum to protect the integrity and smooth functioning of the UK internal market.

Electric Scooters

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government why privately owned e-scooters have not been included in the trial of legalising selected rental e-scooters. [HL6398]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: E-scooter trials will include only rental scooters. This allows trials to take place in a controlled manner while we assess their safety and other impacts. There are a wide range of e-scooters available, built to differing standards. Limiting trials to rental scooters ensures that only approved scooters are used, and that they can meet legal requirements. It will also improve the quality of the evidence we gather, that will inform whether e-scooters should be fully legalised.

Electric Scooters: Accidents

Asked by Baroness Clark of Calton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that people, including pedestrians, are protected from the risk of negligent injury and death caused by users of hired e-scooters in the e-scooter rental trials; and whether any such plans include (1) requiring compulsory insurance by users of hired e-scooters; (2) establishing a Government-funded compensation scheme for those without access to insurance; and (3) ensuring that victims have such protection for the full duration of the trial period. [HL6351]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: E-scooters used in trials will be subject to the same requirements as other motor vehicles and require a minimum of third party motor insurance. The trials are only for rental e-scooters and insurance will be provided by the rental operator, not the individual user. Trials will only be authorised where these insurance requirements are met.

Employment: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures will be in place by 1 August to support those who are shielding from COVID-19 who cannot return to work because their workplace is not safe, but who cannot be furloughed as the deadline has passed and who will not

be able to claim Statutory Sick Pay under the Government's plans to end the shielding programme on 31 July. [HL6480]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On 22 June, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will relax the current public health guidance for those identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to shield at home. This means from 1 August they will be able to return to work if they are unable to work from home, provided their workplace is COVID-safe.

It is important that this group continue to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work from home where this is possible, including moving them to another role if required. Where this is not possible, the CEV should be provided with the safest on-site roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the CEV will continue to have access to an unprecedented package of financial support. This is not limited to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, but also includes the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £8bn.

Firearms: Licensing

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were prosecuted for making a false declaration about a medical condition on applications for grant renewal of (1) shotgun, and (2) firearms, certificates in the most recent three years for which records are available. [HL6381]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Statistics relating to prosecutions for making a false statement in order to procure the grant or renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate are available within the publication: Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool. The relevant offence codes are 11559 and 11560. In summary, the figures for the last three years show that in 2019 there were 14 prosecutions and 8 convictions; in 2018 there were 2 prosecutions and 0 convictions; and in 2017 there were 15 prosecutions and 5 convictions.

Data relating to prosecutions specifically in relation to a false declaration relating to medical conditions is not available centrally.

Firearms licensing is an operational matter for police forces. The police carry out a number of checks to ensure that those in possession of firearms do not pose a danger to public safety, including in relation to medical suitability. As part of this process, GPs are asked to provide information about whether the applicant has suffered from a number of relevant medical conditions, prior to the issuing of the firearm or shotgun certificate by the police.

*Asked by **The Earl of Shrewsbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many general practitioners in the last three years for which records are available have placed markers on the medical notes of shotgun and firearm certificate-holders in compliance with Home Office guidance. [HL6382]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government does not require general practitioners to report on whether and how they place a marker on the medical records of shotgun or firearm certificate holders. However, the Government is supportive of the use of these markers as a means of helping to ensure firearms licences are held safely.

The Home Office is actively working with the medical profession and the Department of Health and Social Care to see what more can be done to promote the effective and consistent use of medical markers.

*Asked by **The Earl of Shrewsbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government at which meetings held by Ministers and officials with representatives of the British Medical Association since May 2016 the subject of medical involvement in firearms licensing was discussed. [HL6383]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Home Office Ministers and officials have regular meetings with stakeholders as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings. But I can confirm that we have discussed the involvement of medical professionals in firearms licensing procedures with representatives of the medical profession, including the British Medical Association, and we will continue to do so, as appropriate.

Homelessness: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Cashman***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that LGBTQ+ friendly accommodation is made available to LGBTQ+ youth rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6405]

*Asked by **Lord Cashman***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support LGBTQ+ youth who have been made homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6406]

Lord Greenhalgh: We recognise that LGBTQ+ homelessness is an issue, particularly among young people and that LGBTQ+ people who find themselves homeless may have a different experience of homelessness due to their protected characteristics. My Department has provided funds to both charities and local authorities which will enable them to support their

communities, including LGBTQ+ people, whether they have been homeless, are at risk of homelessness or are rough sleeping.

At the beginning of the pandemic, our priority was to bring vulnerable people inside so they could self-isolate and stop the virus spreading. We backed this with £3.2 million in emergency funding for local authorities to support vulnerable rough sleepers, and a further £3.7 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19, including supporting homeless people. This may include people identifying as LGBTQ+.

This has had a huge impact— as nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation, including hotels, since the start of the COVID-19 emergency. On 24 June we announced that we are providing local authorities with a further £105 million to enable them to best support those placed into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 14 May my Department also announced £6 million of emergency funding to provide relief for frontline homelessness charitable organisations who are directly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Following a successful bidding process, over 130 charities across England are set to benefit from the £6 million emergency fund. Successful bids included Stonewall Housing which provides housing advice and support for LGBTQ+ people whether they are homeless, at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.

On 2 May, we announced the Rough Sleeping Taskforce, which has one overriding objective: to ensure that as many people as possible who have been brought in off the streets during this pandemic do not return to the streets. Supporting the taskforce are our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisor roles that have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Lennie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) personal confidentiality agreements, and (2) non-disclosure agreements, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has signed with stakeholders advising the COVID-19 roadmap taskforce on pubs and restaurants. [HL6362]

Lord Callanan: The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not required personal confidentiality agreements or non-disclosure agreements with stakeholders involved in the pubs and restaurants taskforce.

House of Lords: Reform

Asked by **Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville**

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to any societal changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, what plans there are to establish a Select Committee to consider (1) the membership, and (2) the role, of the House of Lords. [[HL6343](#)]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: There are no current plans for the appointment of a new committee to consider these matters. The Liaison Committee runs regular exercises to invite proposals from members for special inquiry committee topics, and I would encourage anyone with particular suggestions for new committee activity to make them in this context.

The Lord Speaker's committee on the Size of the House published its first report in October 2017, and has since published updates in 2018 and 2019. It is anticipated that this committee will reconvene soon to consider further the size of the membership of the House.

Immigration

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about the possibility of devolving immigration issues to the devolved administrations. [[HL6323](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Immigration is, and will remain, a reserved matter.

This Government will introduce a points-based immigration system that works in the interests of the whole United Kingdom, including the devolved nations.

For a devolved immigration system to function, we would have to have internal borders between different parts of the United Kingdom. This would be wholly unacceptable

Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what sanctions employers face if they breach the guidance set out in Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19), published on 11 June, in relation to (1) people with caring responsibilities, and (2) new and expectant mothers. [[HL6364](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government first published the safer workplaces guidance on 11 May setting out businesses can reopen safely. This guidance forms part of employers' normal health and safety practice. Health and safety legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and by local authorities.

This guidance does not change employers' responsibilities towards new or expectant mothers. Workers who are pregnant are part of the "clinically vulnerable" group who are at higher risk of coronavirus.

If clinically vulnerable individuals, such as those who are pregnant, cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles. Employers need to assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As part of this they should take into account their specific duties towards those with protected characteristics, including new or expectant mothers – who are ultimately entitled to suspension on full pay if a suitable role cannot be found.

If the enforcing authority finds that an employer is not taking action to properly manage workplace risk, a range of actions are open to them including specific advice or issuing enforcement notices. Employers should consult with unions and employees when carrying out their risk assessment. If employees continue to have concerns, they can raise them with their employer, any union safety representatives, or ultimately with the enforcing organisation - the Health and Safety Executive or their local authority.

Depending on the business, HSE and local authorities enforce health and safety in these workplaces and will monitor compliance including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them. Local authorities enforce health and safety in workplaces, such as offices, shops, warehouses, and consumer services. They take action against any business who isn't complying with their legal health and safety obligations, including providing guidance and issuing enforcement notices to require them to take the necessary action or taking tougher action like fines and jail sentences if they continue to not comply.

Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Military Bases

Asked by **Lord Touhig**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether visits to Armed Forces bases will be part of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [[HL6539](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The Integrated Review will cover all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development. Visits to Government locations, including Armed Forces bases, will be included when helpful for the conduct of the review, as they are for normal Government working. These visits are arranged on a case by case basis with the relevant Departments.

Marines

Asked by **The Earl of Shrewsbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of the 3 Commando Brigade of the Royal Marines. [[HL6580](#)]

Asked by **The Earl of Shrewsbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of the amphibious capability of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. [[HL6639](#)]

Baroness Goldie: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence made clear during Defence oral questions in the House of Commons on Monday 6 July 2020, the size and shape of our Armed Forces should be dictated by the threat we face as a nation and our global ambition. The Integrated Review is not about cutting defence and I can assure you that this country will continue to have the world class Armed Forces that it needs and deserves.

The Littoral Strike programme, announced by the Secretary of State for Defence in February 2019, is a complete transformation of the UK's amphibious force. The programme identifies 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines as the central fighting formation used to deliver Littoral Strike and the Future Commando Force. It is driven by the requirement to counter the threats we will face in the future and forms a pillar to the Royal Navy's Integrated Review offer.

Music: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring forward sector-specific support for the commercial live music sector. [HL6630]

Baroness Barran: The Government appreciates that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to many of DCMS' sectors including the live commercial music sector, which is why we announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency.

The Government's response has been one of the most generous and comprehensive in the world, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Bounceback Loan Scheme and business rates reliefs. The Government has adapted the welfare system so that the self-employed can access Universal Credit in full, to help people get quicker and more generous support when they need it most.

In addition, on Sunday 5 July 2020, the Secretary of State announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of cultural and creative sectors, including the live music sector. We will publish detailed guidance on eligibility as soon as possible in July.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of jobs that will be lost in the live commercial music sector without further Government support. [HL6631]

Baroness Barran: The Government has not made such an assessment. However, the Government appreciates that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the live commercial music sector, which is why we

announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency.

In addition, on Sunday 5 July 2020, the Secretary of State announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of cultural and creative sectors, including the live commercial music sector.

To ensure we are assisting the live commercial music sector as effectively as possible, regular ministerially-chaired roundtables are held with business representative organisations as well as trade associations from across the sector.

National Security Council

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 6 July (HL5987) and the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 8 July (HL5985), why the gov.uk website for the National Security Council states that there are sub-committees of the Council on (1) threats, hazards, resilience and contingencies, (2) nuclear deterrence and security, (3) matters relating to implementing the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and National Security Strategy (including cyber matters), and (4) cross-government funds. [HL6658]

Lord True: The current list on GOV.UK is up to date.

Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have provisional dates for the return of (1) socially distanced, and (2) non-socially distanced, indoor live performances. [HL6629]

Baroness Barran: We are committed to reopening creative businesses, including live entertainment venues, in line with the latest Government regulations and advice.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport recently set out a five stage roadmap that the government will work through to get the performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as possible:

- Stage One - Rehearsal and training (no audiences)
- Stage Two - Performances for broadcast and recording purposes
- Stage Three - Performances outdoors with an audience and pilots for indoor performances with a limited socially-distanced audience
- Stage Four - Performances allowed indoors and outdoors (but with a limited socially-distanced audience indoors)

- Stage Five - Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (with a fuller audience indoors).

We moved to Stage Three on the 11th July. DCMS will work with sector representative bodies to select a number of pilots for indoor performances with a socially distanced audience, as we look to move into Stage Four.

Pornography: Internet

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have conducted on children's access to pornographic content online; what plans they have to conduct research on such access; and whether they have monitored whether there has been any increased access to such material by children during the COVID-19 lockdown. [HL6624]

Baroness Barran: The government is committed to ensuring children are protected from accessing inappropriate content online. The British Board of Film Classification, while designated as the age verification regulator under the Digital Economy Act, commissioned research on children's access to pornographic content online. The research, published in early 2020, explored young people's interactions with, and attitudes towards, online pornography and age verification. We will continue to develop our evidence base on online harms ahead of the implementation of the new online harms regulatory framework.

As a result of Covid-19 lockdown measures we expect more people, including children, to be spending more time online. Although it is too early to confidently analyse patterns from this period, there is universal concern about child online safety. We are working closely with technology companies, law enforcement and civil society to monitor trends, and to support users to understand and manage the risks and benefits of being online during this period.

Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lennie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) personal confidentiality agreements, and (2) non-disclosure agreements, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has signed with stakeholders advising the COVID-19 roadmap taskforce on non-essential retail. [HL6363]

Lord Callanan: No personal confidentiality agreements or non-disclosure agreement have been signed with stakeholders advising the COVID-19 roadmap taskforce on non-essential retail.

Satellites

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons for the collapse of

OneWeb in March; and, further to reports that they are considering investing in that company, why they are considering such an investment. [HL6348]

Lord Callanan: On July 3rd, 2020, the Government announced it had led a successful bid to acquire OneWeb, who develop cutting-edge satellite technology in the UK and in the United States. The move signals the government's ambition for the UK to be a pioneer in the research, development, manufacturing, and exploitation of novel satellite technologies through the ownership of a fleet of Low Earth orbit satellites.

As part of developing our bid and making the acquisition, the UK Government undertook appropriate due diligence.

The deal will support the UK to be a pioneer in the research, development, manufacturing, and exploitation of novel satellite technologies, whilst boosting UK manufacturing.

It will also allow the UK to explore other potential strategic opportunities, working with our international allies.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter sent by the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets to the House of Lords EU Internal Market Sub-Committee on 15 May which stated that the "UK's position on subsidies for the trade agreement negotiations with the EU ... does not necessarily require a domestic regulator", whether they could provide state aid or subsidies to any UK company without any independent UK scrutiny or enforcement; and if so, what assessment they have made of the impact on the wider UK business sector of any uncertainty about the rules and criteria used to decide which companies can receive such support. [HL6346]

Lord Callanan: The Government has been clear that, after the end of the transition period, the UK will have its own domestic subsidy control regime. This will not align with EU State Aid rules. Work is ongoing to devise a modern system for supporting British business in a way that fulfils our interests. As part of this, consideration will be given on how to ensure compliance with the new regime. There are a number of possible options, of which an independent regulator is one. We will discuss these options with key stakeholders in due course.

However, as the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets has previously set out, the UK's position on subsidies for the trade agreement negotiations with the EU does not necessarily require a domestic regulator (as demonstrated by other countries, like Canada, that do not maintain a domestic subsidy control regulator to fulfil their trade agreement obligations with the EU).

The Government recognises the importance of providing clarity to businesses. In advance of the

introducing the domestic subsidy control regime, we will be seeking the views of business on the best approach to ensure we continue to have fair and open competition across the UK.

Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether guidance to Universal Credit work coaches on the resumption of conditionality, including claimant commitment, includes an exemption in relation to COVID-19; and whether the guidance will be published. [HL6367]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: To support our re-implementation of Claimant Commitments in July, we are issuing guidance to Work Coaches and Case Managers. We are managing this in a phased approach to deliver a tailored and effective service for our customers, recognising the individual and prevailing circumstances including COVID restrictions. We have not needed to issue new guidance on benefit sanctions. We trust and empower our job centre managers and Work Coaches to work with their customers appropriately.

We regularly update the guidance and up-to-date information about the employment and benefits support available, including Universal Credit, Statutory Sick Pay, New style Jobseeker's Allowance, and Employment and Support Allowance, can be found here:

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/.

Universities: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the 'no detriment' policies adopted by some universities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6420]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Notwithstanding the disruption of the COVID-19 outbreak to the higher education sector, students deserve appropriate support and recognition for their hard work and dedication. Many universities and colleges have moved adeptly to develop new ways of delivering courses through online teaching and alternatives to their usual end-of-course exams.

As higher education providers are autonomous institutions, they are responsible for determining the way their courses are taught, supervised, and assessed. The government expects providers to make all reasonable efforts for student achievement to be reliably assessed and for qualifications to be awarded appropriately. The Office for Students (OfS), the higher education regulator in England, has issued guidance to the sector that sets out expectations about providers' approaches to teaching and assessment during this time.

Some universities have put in place policies stating that students should not be awarded a degree classification

below their level of academic performance prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is intended by providers as a safety net for students to ensure that they are not unfairly affected by these challenging circumstances.

The guidance from the OfS is clear that standards must be maintained but that changes to assessments may be required in some circumstances. If changes are needed, students' achievements must be 'reliably assessed'. If a provider is absolutely confident that they already have enough evidence to make a reliable assessment of a student's achievements, it will sometimes be appropriate to use that evidence to award and classify a degree award.

More often, however, we expect that providers will need to continue with assessment and follow the OfS's guidance on the practical next steps. It may not be appropriate to operate a 'no detriment' approach for all courses if, for example, essential pieces of assessment cannot be completed.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also published a series of guides and information to support providers to maintain academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes a paper published in April, attached, which provides an overview of what 'no detriment' policies aim to achieve. The paper also provides an overview of some of the measures that providers can put in place to ensure that the academic standards of awards remain robust while also recognising the challenging circumstances for students.

We expect providers to develop solutions appropriate to each course, considering the needs of individual students. We also expect them to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate, and timely information they need to make informed decisions. If students have concerns, there is a process in place. They should first raise their concerns with their university; if their concerns remain unresolved, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL6420_paper [HL6420 Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 'No detriment policies - an overview' resource.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-02/HL6420>

Utilities: Compensation

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of compensation available to the providers of electricity, gas and water when the supply of such services has been affected as a result of damage caused by third parties, such as interruptions caused by road works or agricultural machinery. [HL6371]

Lord Callanan: A specific assessment of this sort has not been carried out by Government, as far as can be established. Compensation in this type of circumstance is likely to be a civil matter between the relevant parties.

Welfare Assistance Schemes

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 29 June (HL5692), when they intend to issue guidance to

local authorities on the use of money for local welfare assistance schemes. [HL6366]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We are allocating the funding according to the size of a local authority's population and the level of deprivation. The exact amounts will be published on the GOV.UK website in due course. We issued guidance to local authorities on Friday 10 July, which is available to view at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-authority-emergency-assistance-grant-for-food-and-essential-supplies.

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