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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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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
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, Commonwealth and Development Office
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 and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
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, Commonwealth and Development Office
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

Monday, 14 September 2020

Excise Duty and VAT

[HLWS443]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Kemi Badenoch) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The UK has left the European Union and entered a transition period. In light of this new relationship the government has reviewed the excise duty and VAT treatment of goods purchased by individuals for their own use and carried across borders in their luggage. The government is today announcing the rules which will apply to goods carried across borders by passengers travelling to and from Great Britain to countries outside of the United Kingdom. These changes will apply from 1 January 2021 when the transition period comes to an end.

Currently these reliefs are largely set out in EU legislation, with different rules for those travelling to or from the EU, and those travelling to or from non-EU countries. This will have to be aligned following the transition period so that EU and non-EU passengers are treated equally. At Spring Budget, on 11 March 2020, the government published a consultation on the potential approach to goods carried across borders by passengers. There were a range of views and evidence submitted in response to that consultation and the government has had to balance competing policy objectives, while taking into account the views of stakeholders. A full summary of responses to the consultation has been published alongside this statement.

This announcement focuses primarily on the treatment in GB. The government continues to work with the Joint Committee on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The government is also committed to providing guidance on how the Northern Ireland Protocol will work, including for duty-free and tax-free goods, ahead of the end of the transition period.

The government will make and lay a Statutory Instrument subject to the negative procedure before the House of Commons in due course to give effect to these changes from 1 January 2021. The below summarises the final policy decisions.

Duty-free sales and personal allowances

The government is taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the UK's new relationship with the EU to enable passengers travelling from GB to the EU to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at airports, ports, and train stations on international routes, on the same basis as currently applies to passengers travelling to non-EU destinations. This means passengers travelling from GB won't have to pay

UK VAT and excise duty on these purchases of alcohol and tobacco products when they travel to an EU destination. They will also be able to purchase duty-free goods on-board planes on international routes, on international train journeys and ships sailing from GB to a destination outside the UK for consumption on-board and to take-away. This is something that many businesses have raised as part of the consultation and the government will implement this as soon as the transition period ends.

At the same time, passengers travelling to GB from the EU will no longer be able to bring back unlimited amounts of alcohol, tobacco, or other goods (for example, clothing and electronics) for personal use without making a declaration and paying the relevant taxes. Passengers will instead have the option to bring in defined amounts of alcohol, tobacco and other goods purchased from duty- or tax-free shops, or with tax and duty paid on the high street, in the EU without paying the relevant taxes and duties on entry to GB. These personal allowances currently apply to non-EU countries and the government is now ensuring that EU and non-EU passengers are treated equally. The government is also using its new freedoms to significantly increase the current allowances for alcohol for passengers arriving from both EU and non-EU countries. This will allow a reasonable amount of alcohol to be brought into GB, for example three crates of beer, two cases of still wine and one case of sparkling wine, without the relevant taxes being due. The current levels of allowances will remain for tobacco products and all other goods.

Tax-free sales under the airside extra statutory concession

Currently airside tax-free sales of non-excise goods are permitted under an extra statutory concession for those travelling from the UK to non-EU countries. The government made clear in the consultation that it had a number of concerns over how the benefit is passed on to passengers and that in some instances the relief is not consistent with international tax principles. As such, the government is not extending tax-free sales to passengers travelling to the EU but is instead withdrawing tax-free sales across the UK for all passengers from 1 January 2021.

The VAT Retail Export Scheme

Similarly, the VAT Retail Export Scheme will not be extended to EU visitors and will be withdrawn for non-EU visitors in GB from 1 January 2021. This means that overseas visitors will no longer be able to obtain a VAT refund on items they buy in GB and take home with them in their luggage. The VAT Retail Export Scheme is a costly relief which does not benefit the whole of GB equally, with current use of the scheme largely centred in London. Retailers will instead continue to be able to offer VAT-free shopping, consistent with international principles of taxation, to non-EU visitors who purchase items in store and have them delivered direct to their overseas addresses. Following the end of transition period, this will also be available to EU visitors.

Office for Budget Responsibility: Economic and Fiscal Forecast

[HLWS442]

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

Today I can inform the House that I have asked the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to prepare an economic and fiscal forecast to be published in mid- to late November.

Serious Violence Reduction Orders

[HLWS445]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Every knife crime is a tragedy, and any victim is one too many. The Government is taking action on every level to cut crime and make our streets safer, but we know there is much more to do to protect the public and end the scourge of serious violence.

The case for urgent action is clear. In the year to March 2020 alone 256 people were stabbed to death in England and Wales. Recorded knife crime rose to 46,265 in the same period, with a staggering 4,547 weapons offences committed by children last year. Thousands of people are seeking hospital treatment for stab wounds each year, with some offences never reported.

To save lives and prevent injury we must stop serious violence from happening in the first place. Too many people who carry knives and weapons go on to offend time and time again, with 29% of offenders in 2019 having previous convictions. Our determination to break this deadly cycle of persistent offending led to our manifesto commitment to introduce Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs).

Front line police have long told us that stop and search is a vital tool to crack down on violent crime; it acts as a deterrent and helps keep knives and weapons off our streets. We have listened to them, and to the recommendation of the Centre for Social Justice, to propose a new court order to bear down on known offenders. These SVROs would give the police personalised powers to target those already convicted of certain knife offences – giving them the automatic right to search those who pose the greatest risk. These searches could take place without suspicion so that these known criminals could be stopped at any time.

The intention is for SVROs to complement existing stop and search powers and to prevent known offenders carrying weapons with impunity. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, a court would have the power to impose them following conviction for any relevant offence. They could then set the length of the order,

which would apply from the moment the offender walked free, either while on licence or where there was no immediate jail time. The offender would then be more likely to be stopped by the police and searched to see if they are carrying a knife again. If caught out they would be brought back before the court where they could expect to receive a custodial sentence under the existing ‘two strikes’ legislation brought in by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.

SVROs would empower the police to stop and challenge those who are known to carry knives. They will help to keep communities safer by giving officers a tool to help tackle the most dangerous offenders.

The Government hopes that they will also help the police more effectively target their approach. We know that stop and search disproportionately affects Black people, with the latest figures showing they are 9.7 times more likely to be stopped than those who were White. We are clear that no one should ever be targeted because of the colour of their skin.

We are consulting on the design of SVROs and welcome views on how we can ensure these important tools are used appropriately. Anyone with an interest in this important issue is invited to contribute, including those involved in law enforcement, victims of knife crime and their families.

This consultation will help inform our next steps in the fight against serious violence. It will run from Monday 14 September to Sunday 8 November, and will be available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/serious-violence-reduction-orders>.

I will also place a copy of the consultation document in the Libraries of both Houses.

UK’s Future Relationship with the EU

[HLWS446]

Lord True: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement today:

The Government has made a commitment to update Parliament on the progress of our future relationship negotiations with the EU. This statement provides an update on the eighth round of negotiations.

Led by the UK’s Chief Negotiator, David Frost, negotiators from the UK and the EU held discussions in London on 8-10 September 2020. There were substantive discussions on almost all issues.

Discussions covered all workstreams including:

- Trade in goods: Core areas of the goods elements of the FTA, including the UK’s regulatory regime on SPS and proposals for Product Specific Rules of Origin.
- Trade in services, investment and other FTA issues: Including professional qualifications, investment,

telecommunications and intellectual property (including geographical indications).

- Fisheries: Quota-sharing and stock lists.
- “Level playing field”: Covering subsidies, tax and dispute settlement.
- Energy: Including civil nuclear cooperation, nuclear safety and electricity trading.
- Transport: Road haulage standards, aviation security and Air Traffic Management (ATM).
- Law enforcement: Including Mutual Legal Assistance, Prum, extradition, and criminal records exchange.
- Mobility and social security coordination: Social security coordination arrangements.
- Participation in Union programmes: financial management, EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service), EU SST (Space Surveillance and Tracking) and Peace+.

These were useful exchanges. However, a number of challenging areas remain and the divergences on some are still significant. We have been consistently clear from the start of this process about the basis on which agreement is possible between us and these fundamentals remain.

We remain committed to working hard to reach agreement by the middle of October, as the Prime Minister set out in his statement of 7 September. Negotiators have agreed to meet again, as planned in line with the Terms of Reference, in Brussels this week to continue discussions.

Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

[HLWS444]

Lord True: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove), made the following Written Ministerial Statement on Friday 11 September:

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met on 10 September at Lancaster House, London. The meeting was chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, and the European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, alongside the alternate co-chairs of the Committee, the Paymaster General, Penny Mordaunt, and Michel Barnier. Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive and the EU 27 Member States also joined by videolink.

The Committee discussed the UK Internal Market Bill and the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK made clear that the legislative timetable for the Bill would continue as planned and reiterated its commitment to implementing the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Northern Ireland Protocol, and the Decisions of the Joint Committee.

The UK Government also stressed its obligations to the people of Northern Ireland, its determination to uphold the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, and its responsibility to provide good governance for the whole United Kingdom. As co-guarantor, along with Ireland, of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the Government’s commitment to that agreement remains absolute.

The UK Government will continue to engage in Joint Committee discussions constructively, with the aim of finding a satisfactory outcome for both sides.

Written Answers

Monday, 14 September 2020

A400M Aircraft

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many A400M aircraft they have obtained for current service. [HL7794]

Baroness Goldie: To date, 20 A400M aircraft have been delivered to the Royal Air Force.

A400M Aircraft: Procurement

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they provided in total monies for the A400M project. [HL7793]

Baroness Goldie: Up to the end of March 2020, the UK had spent £2.3 billion on its acquisition of A400M aircraft against a total provision for acquisition of £2.6 billion.

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many A400M aircraft are currently on order. [HL7795]

Baroness Goldie: The UK has ordered 22 A400M aircraft, 20 have been delivered, with two remaining to be delivered.

Anna Campbell

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, and if so, when, they received a request from the family and friends for the repatriation of the body of Anna Campbell, who was killed near Afrin in Syria in March 2018; what reply they sent; whether any subsequent action was taken; and if not, why not. [HL7659]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are bound by strict confidentiality rules under the Data Protection Act. We cannot pass on any information about Anna Campbell without her families consent.

Armed Forces: Deployment

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 6 August (HL7356), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, how many serving members of the UK armed forces are stationed abroad, listed by country of assignment. [HL7650]

Baroness Goldie: The number of Service members of the UK Armed Forces stationed abroad is 6,050. The table below details the country of assignment.

Country	Number of personnel
Germany	540
Cyprus	2,290
Belgium	290
Gibraltar	160
Italy	180
Netherlands	120
Portugal	20
Norway	40
France	60
Czech Republic	20
Denmark	10
Spain	30
Georgia	10
Afghanistan (locally engaged civilians)	80
Brunei	160
British Indian Ocean Territory (including Diego Garcia)	40
Nepal	20
Pakistan	10
Singapore	10
Saudi Arabia	130
Oman	110
Bahrain	20
Kuwait	40
Jordan	20
Turkey	40
United Arab Emirates	50
Israel	10
Qatar	30
Kenya	250
Sierra Leone	10
South Africa	10
Nigeria	20
Somalia	10
United States of America	730
Canada	260
Belize	30
South America	10
Falkland Islands	70
Australia	60

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of personnel</i>
New Zealand	10
Unallocated	20

Board of Trade: Tony Abbott

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what remuneration package they have proposed to Tony Abbott in connection with his proposed membership of the Board of Trade. [HL7805]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Membership of the Board, and the role of Adviser to the Board, is not paid. Members may have their reasonable travel costs reimbursed following each meeting. All expenses which are incurred will be published on GOV.UK.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) under what circumstances, applications made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme between 1 August and 31 August were (a) accepted, and (b) approved, when such applications were submitted after the deadline for applications; and what criteria they used to decide which circumstances were deemed exceptional so as to accept such out-of-time applications. [HL7837]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: There is no appeal process available for those who have missed the CJRS deadline of 31 July 2020. However, if an employer wishes to raise a complaint about mistakes or unreasonable delays caused by HMRC, they have been asked to follow HMRC's complaints procedure.

HMRC have accepted 1,360 claims relating to 1,114 employers that have been made from 1 August 2020 to 31 August 2020 for a period on or prior to 30 June 2020.

The main reasons for the claims being accepted are:

- Amendments to previous claims.
- Customers who have made the claim on or before 31 July that needed manual intervention and which HMRC did not process until on or after 1 August 2020.
- Customers requesting a review. This has been mainly about eligibility or maximum cap.

Coronavirus: Blackburn

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Bethell on 24 July (HL Deb, cols 2475–98), whether they will now answer the question put by Lord Alton of Liverpool about the pausing of lockdown easements in Blackburn; what assessment they have made of the number of COVID-19 infections

there; what progress they have made in containing the increase in such cases; and what criteria will be used to resume the easing of lockdown. [T] [HL7313]

Lord Bethell: Effective local management of outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave that might overwhelm the National Health Service.

In this case, Blackburn suffered the highest incidence rates of all districts in Lancashire for three consecutive weeks between 13 July and 2 August. Incidents rates per 100,000 population rose from 83.25 and peaked at 91.98 before falling to 74.53 by 2 August once local resources were augmented with national support.

When considering whether an area can come out of a localised lockdown, there will need to be a reduction in cases consistent with the surrounding areas and a significantly diminished risk of further growth. We are keeping these restrictions under review and they will be removed when they are no longer proportionate or necessary. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis with involvement of the scientific community and local leaders.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the warning from the director-general of the World Health Organisation that the "worst" of the COVID-19 pandemic "is yet to come", and what steps they are taking to follow the World Health Organisation's advice to test, trace, isolate and quarantine those with COVID-19. [HL6311]

Lord Bethell: To prepare the National Health Service for winter, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion of funding. This includes funding to allow the NHS to maintain the Nightingale surge capacity and continue to use the extra hospital capacity available within the independent sector.

Effective local management of any outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave that might overwhelm the NHS. To support local authorities, we made £300 million available and they already have robust plans in place to respond to outbreaks.

We have also made significant strides in our Test and Trace service. We have established one of the world's largest testing programmes, with capacity at around 350,000 tests every day and we have already traced around 250,000 people who may have unknowingly spread the virus.

NHS winter preparations include delivering a very significantly expanded seasonal flu vaccination programme for priority groups.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what cross-Government planning is taking place in preparation for a potential second wave of COVID-19. [HL6792]

Lord Bethell: To prepare the National Health Service for winter, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion of funding. This includes funding to allow the NHS to maintain the Nightingale surge capacity and continue to use the extra hospital capacity available within the independent sector.

Effective local management of any outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave that might overwhelm the NHS. To support local authorities, we made £300 million available and they already have robust plans in place to respond to outbreaks.

We have also made significant strides in our Test and Trace service. We have established one of the world's largest testing programmes, with capacity at around 350,000 tests every day and we have already traced around 250,000 people who may have unknowingly spread the virus.

NHS winter preparations include delivering a very significantly expanded seasonal flu vaccination programme for priority groups.

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prepare for a potential second wave of COVID-19 infections during the winter. [HL7705]

Lord Bethell: To prepare the National Health Service for winter, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion of funding. This includes money to allow the NHS to maintain the Nightingale surge capacity and continue to use the extra hospital capacity available within the independent sector.

Effective local management of any outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave. To support local authorities, we have made £300 million available and they already have robust plans in place to respond to outbreaks.

We have also made significant strides in building our Test and Trace service. We have established one of the world's largest testing programmes, with capacity at around 350,000 tests every day and we have already traced around 250,000 people who may have unknowingly spread the virus.

NHS winter preparations include delivering a very significantly expanded seasonal flu vaccination programme for priority groups.

Data Protection

*Asked by **Lord Clement-Jones***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish a new National Data Strategy. [HL7762]

Baroness Barran: The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE, announced the publication of the framework National Data Strategy and its accompanying consultation on the 9th September 2020. The consultation is on a UK-wide basis and we are keen to hear from a representative

cross section of society, ensuring diversity, and inclusion. The consultation will be open to all on gov.uk until the 2nd December, with alternative methods of responding to the consultation provided.

Dental Services: Protective Clothing

*Asked by **Lord Woolley of Woodford***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the zero rating for personal protection equipment to include air purification systems and other equipment used by the dentistry profession to remove ambient airborne particulates. [HL7742]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As part of the response to the pandemic, in April 2020 the Government introduced a temporary zero-rate of VAT from 1 May 2020 to 31 July 2020 on all sales and imports of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for protection from infection. This temporary zero-rate has now been extended to 31 October 2020, and benefits all users of PPE, including dentists. The Government has no plans to review the scope of this relief at this time.

Extradition: USA

*Asked by **Lord McNally***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British citizens are held in custody in the UK awaiting the outcome of hearings on extradition to the United States. [HL7677]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As of 3 September 2020, there are nine British Citizens who have been remanded in custody by the courts in relation to extradition requests from the United States. This includes an individual who holds dual British / US nationality.

All figures are from local management information and have not been quality assured to the level of published National Statistics. As such they should be treated as provisional and therefore subject to change. The figures do not include Scotland, which deals with its own extradition cases.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

*Asked by **Lord Naseby***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office staff based in central London were working from their office desks on 2 September. [HL7694]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to make our workplaces safe and accessible in line with the latest public health advice in England and Scotland and have taken a phased approach to increasing the number of desks available. Those who are able and willing to return are being encouraged to make full use of the available desks. The FCDO operates a set of desk-booking systems

that allows it to track and trace which members of staff attended on any given day.

Government Departments: Data Protection

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action the Information Commissioner's Office will be taking against misleading statements given by international cloud providers about the security of UK data on their platforms following the judgment by the European Court of Justice in the Schrems II case. [HL7761]

Baroness Barran: The Information Commissioner's Office is an independent public body and is the UK's independent regulator for data protection and freedom of information. The UK Government does not speak on its behalf.

Information on the powers available to the Information Commissioner and how they are used is available in the [Regulatory Action Policy](#) published on the Information Commissioner's Office website. The ICO will consider any complaints from individuals that are concerned about their rights in connection with international transfers.

The UK Government's statement on the Schrems II judgment is available on [Gov.UK](#) and the Information Commissioner's Office have published their most recent [statement](#) on their website, which sets out the approach to be taken following the Schrems II judgement.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Regulatory Action Policy [Regulatory Action Policy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-03/HL7761>

Hospital Beds: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government in what format data on the number of patients who have been admitted to the NHS Nightingale Hospitals is held. [HL6327]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government in what format data on bed occupancy in NHS Nightingale Hospitals is held. [HL6328]

Lord Bethell: NHS England publishes a 'COVID-19 Hospital Activity' dataset which includes the number of patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 as well as beds occupied by patients with COVID-19, both at provider level only. Data specifically for the Nightingale hospitals is not held.

The Nightingale hospitals in London and the North West have been placed on standby.

Hussein Abdullah Khalil Rashid and Zuhair Ebrahim Jassim Abdullah Abas

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last raised the cases of Zuhair Ibrahim Jasim Abdullah and Hussein Abdullah Khalil Rashid with the government of Bahrain; and which individuals and government bodies (1) in the UK, and (2) in Bahrain, have been involved in senior level representation. [HL7660]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We last raised the cases of Zuhair Ibrahim Jasim Abdullah and Hussein Abdullah Khalil Rashid at a senior level with the Government of Bahrain via the British Embassy in Bahrain in July. The Government of Bahrain is fully aware that the UK is firmly opposed to the death penalty, in all circumstances.

Immigration: Afghanistan

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Afghan interpreters, and (2) family members of Afghan interpreters, have been cleared for relocation to the UK but are awaiting transfer; how long on average they have been waiting; and when they anticipate relocations to take place. [HL7623]

Baroness Goldie: Through the Ex-Gratia Scheme, 445 former Locally Employed Civilians (LECs - this includes interpreters) and their families have relocated to the UK. This means that Her Majesty's Government has already supported over 1,300 individuals in creating new lives in the UK. A further 350 staff have benefitted from our in-country finance and training packages.

There are two former LECs cleared for relocation to the UK but who are awaiting transfer. These two former LECs between them have seven family members who have also been cleared for relocation. There are a further nine family members of other former LECs whose visas have been accepted and who have been referred to Local Authorities in advance of their relocation.

Verifications were completed in January 2020, so the average wait time is circa eight months. However, there has been an adverse impact on relocations from the COVID 19 pandemic; it has affected all parties to the process, from the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office to Local Authorities and partners such as the Afghan Government and the International Organization for Migration. Subject to conditions outside of our control we expect all these individuals to be relocated in the next 12 months.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have put in place to ensure that there will be sufficient

influenza vaccine available from the start of the influenza season to vaccinate the entire population. [HL7601]

Lord Bethell: We have no plans to offer the influenza vaccination to the entire United Kingdom population. On 5 August 2020 we published the Annual Flu Letter Update 2020/21, which set out who will be eligible for flu vaccination this winter.

General practitioners and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, and earlier this year they were asked to review their orders for flu vaccine to ensure they have sufficient vaccine for their eligible patients. We have also procured additional stock as part of our planning for this season.

Flu vaccination deliveries for those who are in at risk groups will start to be available in September and will continue in all areas in England throughout the winter months.

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the uptake of the influenza vaccination programme this autumn; and what measures they intend to take to promote uptake. [HL7676]

Lord Bethell: On 5 August 2020 we published the Annual Flu Letter Update 2020/21, which set out our ambitions for uptake for all eligible groups.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that regional teams have plans in place to increase coverage of the influenza vaccination this winter. In addition to developing the existing system of providing vaccinations through general practice, community pharmacies, schools, community and other National Health Service settings to reach new cohorts and increase uptake in existing cohorts; new models of delivery have been shared with regional commissioning teams to encourage innovative thinking such as mobile and mass vaccination models to allow for increases in uptake safely whilst observing social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to maximise the take up of the influenza vaccine this year. [HL7706]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that regional teams have plans in place to increase coverage of the influenza vaccination this winter. In addition to developing the existing system of providing vaccinations through general practice, community pharmacies, schools, community and other National Health Service settings to reach new cohorts and increase uptake in existing cohorts; new models of delivery have been shared with regional commissioning teams to encourage innovative thinking such as mobile and mass vaccination models to allow for

increases in uptake safely whilst observing social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking with the government of Israel to provide protection to Palestinian farmers in the West Bank from attacks by Israeli settlers. [HL7734]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are troubled by reports of assaults on farmers and vandalism of agricultural land. We continue to raise with Israeli counterparts our concerns about Israeli settler violence, and continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or intend to make, to the government of Israel about Yanun and other Palestinian villages in the West Bank whose land is reportedly being confiscated for Israeli settlements. [HL7735]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on these reports, it has long been our position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Leisure: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the public leisure centre sector to avoid (1) further redundancies, and (2) the closure of public leisure facilities in local communities. [HL7765]

Baroness Barran: Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. It is important that leisure centres remain accessible for people from all backgrounds as we make efforts to return to normality after the Covid lockdown period.

Outdoor swimming pools have been able to open from 11 July, and from 25 July indoor gyms, leisure centres (including sports halls) and swimming pools in England have been able to reopen. These facilities will be able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance.

Sport England have announced a £210 million package of support to help community clubs through this crisis.

Specific support for local authorities was announced through the income guarantee scheme on Thursday 2 July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aimed to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charge which they had reasonably budgeted for.

Libya: Freezing of Assets

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the request by the Libyan Investment Authority to the UN to access frozen assets, including assets frozen in London; and what steps they will take to ensure that such assets are not released without an agreement to compensate the victims of IRA terrorist acts. [HL7630]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the request by the Libyan Investment Authority to the UN to allow the Libyan Investment Authority to invest frozen assets; and what steps they plan to take in response. [HL7631]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Libyan assets in the UK were frozen in 2011 under UN Security Council Resolution 1973, at the request of the Libyan authorities. We are not aware of any formal request by the Libyan Investment Authority to access frozen assets. We are committed to supporting the victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, and continue to believe the Libyan Government has a responsibility to address their claims.

Military Bases: Air Force

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise the strategic role of the RAF Regiment in defending RAF airfields and bases in the UK and abroad as part of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; and whether that review will take into account the adoption by NATO of the RAF Regiment's standards in air force protection. [HL7713]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence is fully committed to its part in supporting the successful delivery of the Government's ambition for the Integrated Review. It is too early to discuss specific capabilities, but I can assure you that this country will continue to have the world class Armed Forces that it needs and deserves.

We will continue to strengthen cooperation with our allies on security and intelligence, underpinned by the NATO alliance.

Military Decorations

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Golden Jubilee Medals, issued in 2003, were awarded to (1) the Reserve Forces, and (2) the Merchant Navy Reserve. [HL7741]

Baroness Goldie: Based on the available records, it is assessed that in the region of 2,513 Queen's Golden Jubilee Medals were issued to Reservists in 2003.

No Queen's Golden Jubilee Medals were issued to the Merchant Navy Reserve (MNR) as the medal was instituted after the MNR was formally disbanded in May 2000 and folded into the Royal Naval Reserve.

NHS: VAT

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the review into the application of VAT as applied to the NHS. [HL7778]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Section 41 policy paper on the review into the application of VAT to the NHS was published on 27 August 2020 on the GOV.UK website as 'VAT and the Public Sector: Reform to VAT Refund Rules'.

Obesity

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the importance of leisure centres in addressing obesity; and what plans they have to provide additional support prior to the Comprehensive Spending Review. [HL7766]

Baroness Barran: Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. It is important that leisure centres remain accessible for people from all backgrounds as we make efforts to return to normality after the Covid lockdown period.

Outdoor swimming pools have been able to open from 11 July, and from 25 July indoor gyms, leisure centres (including sports halls) and swimming pools in England have been able to reopen. These facilities are able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance.

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Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body what plans they have to conduct an independent review (1) of the costs and benefits of the restoration and renewal scheme for the Palace of Westminster, and (2) of the attendant costs and benefits of decanting MPs and Members of the House of Lords to other sites. [HL7835]

Baroness Scott of Needham Market: The Restoration and Renewal Programme is considering the costs and benefits of a range of possible interventions for restoring the Palace of Westminster as part of the preparation of the outline business case for the works, which both Houses will be invited to endorse, as required by section 7 of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019.

On 19 May the Sponsor Body announced it would conduct a strategic review of the Programme. On 1 July I wrote to all Members of the House inviting them to make submissions to that review by 7 August, which was also notified by way of a written statement (HLWS321). Members of the House of Commons were invited to do the same by the Sponsor Body spokesperson in that House.

The costs and benefits of decanting both Houses to alternative sites was previously assessed in support of the deliberations of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster. These sites have also been considered as part of the strategic review, alongside additional alternative sites, and the outcome of that work will form part of the review's findings.

The review will conclude in the autumn and its findings will be considered by the Sponsor Body Board and the Commissions of both Houses in the first instance.

Refugees

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to resume the resettlement scheme for refugees. [HL7752]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is not currently possible to undertake resettlement activity due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are working on detailed plans to recommence resettlement arrivals as soon as it is safe and operationally viable to do so.

The resumption of refugee resettlement arrivals, including community sponsorship, remains dependent on a number of factors including: the lifting of restrictions imposed by the governments of those countries and in the UK; the ability of our international partners to operate; the reopening of the UK's visa application centres; local authority and central government capacity in light of COVID-19; and recovery of the asylum system from the impact of COVID-19.

We continue to closely monitor the situation and remain in regular dialogue with our international and domestic stakeholders.

Refugees: Families

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 August (HL7163), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, when the report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration into family reunion was delivered; and what plans they have for publication of the report before the end of September. [HL7671]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Secretary is considering the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report on Family Reunion Applications. The report will be laid before Parliament as soon as possible.

Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement made by the Saudi Arabia Human Rights Commission on 27 August that the public prosecutor has referred the death sentences of child defendants Ali al-Nimr, Dawood al-Marhoon and Abdullah Hasan al-Zaher for review; what steps they intend to take to ensure that the review is carried out effectively and expeditiously; and what representations they intend to make to the government of Saudi Arabia about (1) the speedy release of those defendants, and (2) the abolition of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia for all individuals charged with crimes committed as children, including Mohammed al-Faraj. [HL7663]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the recent announcement from the Saudi Public Prosecutor that Ali al-Nimr, Dawood al-Marhoon and Abdullah Hasan al-Zaher will have their cases reviewed. The UK strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. This is especially the case for juveniles and for crimes other than the most serious. This is in line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. In August, our Chargé d'affaires in Riyadh raised the issue of the death penalty with Minister of State Al Jubeir, including Mohammad al-Faraj's case. We will continue to monitor and raise concerns about the cases of al-Nimr, al-Marhoon, al-Zaher and al-Faraj. We regularly raise our concerns about the use of the death penalty with the Saudi Arabian authorities. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised the death penalty with Dr Awwad al Awwad, President of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission during his virtual visit in July. I raised the death penalty in a call with Dr Awwad in June and raised

a range of human rights concerns during my visit last September. The Foreign Secretary raised human rights during his visit in March this year.

Social Distancing: Enforcement

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the success of tactics used to police large gatherings of people who are not adhering to COVID-19 preventative measures. [HL7756]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The deployment of tactics is an operational matter for the police. The police response follows the four-step escalation principles – engaging, explaining, encouraging, and then enforcing. In general the public have followed the rules without any need for enforcement action. We have empowered the police to disperse gatherings and issue Fixed Penalty Notices for those who break the rules. This includes £10,000 fines to those who hold, or are involved in the holding of, illegal gatherings as well as fines for those who participate.

The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) regularly publish data on fixed penalty notices issued under COVID-19 emergency health regulations by police forces and are in the process of collating data relating to the number of £10,000 fines issued.

Social Security Benefits

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) how couples living in the same household in receipt of social security benefits intended for children share their income, and (2) how money from social security benefits intended for children is spent in such households; and what research is being undertaken to assess income distribution at an individual rather than household level. [HL7796]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department does not specify how benefit recipients should spend the money they receive and does not monitor the spending decisions they make.

There are no current plans to undertake specific research to assess income distribution at an individual rather than household level.

Social Services: Complaints

Asked by Baroness Greengross

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the suspension of all casework by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman between 26 March and 29 June due to the COVID-19 pandemic, what steps they have taken to ensure that complaints made during that period were handled in line with the Local

Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009; and what steps they are now taking to ensure that complaints about adult social care are handled appropriately. [HL7647]

Lord Bethell: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) took the decision to suspend new complaints in order to protect frontline services. It has now fully reopened and is working through complaints received during the pause. Members of the public will not lose their access to justice because of the pandemic, and complaints regarding the COVID-19 outbreak period are now being considered as are all other complaints. The LGSCO has taken steps to ensure complainants are not penalised on time grounds for not being able to come to the LGSCO during the pause. The LGSCO has also carefully tracked legislation and guidance in operation since the outbreak and developed expertise to consistently investigate complaints made about council and social care provider actions during that period.

Syria: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 16 July (HL6213), (1) when, and (2) how, they intend to transfer existing EU sanctions relating to Syria into UK law; and whether Parliament will be given time to discuss that transfer. [HL7625]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government is transferring existing EU sanctions into UK law through regulations made under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, including the Syria (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. These regulations will come into force on 1 January 2021, at which point existing EU sanctions will become autonomous UK sanctions. The Syria (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 were debated and approved in both Houses in April and May 2019.

Television Licences: Non-payment

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to decriminalise non-payment of the TV licence. [HL7902]

Baroness Barran: We believe that it is right to look again at whether the criminal sanction remains appropriate for TV licence fee evasion given ongoing concerns about whether the criminal sanction is unfair and disproportionate. On 5 February 2020, the Government launched a public consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion, closing on 1 April after receiving over 150,000 responses. We will listen carefully to those that have responded before setting out our next steps.

Television Licences: Older People

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they attached any conditions to the agreement for the BBC to fund TV licences for those aged over 75; what plans they have to reduce any grants to the BBC in line with the decision to discontinue free TV licences for those aged over 75; and what plans they have, if any, to meet the costs of providing such TV licences. [HL7804]

Baroness Barran: In the 2015 Licence Fee funding settlement, the Government agreed with the BBC that the BBC would take responsibility for the over 75s concession from June 2020. In return, the Government closed the iPlayer loophole, agreed to increase the licence fee in line with inflation for the duration of the settlement period, and reduced other BBC spending commitments. In advance of the BBC taking on full responsibility for the concession, the Government also provided phased transitional funding to the BBC to gradually introduce the cost to the BBC.

The BBC is responsible for the over 75 licence fee concession, not the Government. Following a public consultation, the BBC Board decided that from June 2020, any household with someone aged over 75 who receives Pension Credit will be entitled to a free TV licence paid for by the BBC. The Government is deeply disappointed that the BBC has chosen not to extend the over 75 licence fee concession in full. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

UN General Assembly: Anniversaries

Asked by Lord Hannay of Chiswick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in considering the proposal to rename Broad Street Sanctuary as UN Green to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first meeting of the UN General Assembly in Methodist Central Hall. [HL7651]

Baroness Barran: The United Nations charter was signed 75 years ago this year. The charter set out the aims of the UN "to bring nations and peoples together to preserve peace and security, and improve lives everywhere". The United Kingdom played an important role in the establishment of this multilateral organisation, including hosting the first General Assembly at the Methodist Central Hall in London. Activities are ongoing globally to recognise the anniversary of the UN.

Proposals for the renaming of streets must be made through the local council, in this instance the City of Westminster.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what provision they have made to assist the children of those illegal

immigrants crossing the English Channel who have been separated from their parents. [HL7696]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who arrive in the UK are treated in line with established processes. Upon arrival, an unaccompanied child will undergo a number of mandatory checks and will be interviewed in order to identify any safeguarding concerns. On completion, a child will then be handed to a local authority for them to provide the necessary support under their statutory duties as set out in the Children Act 1989.

Universal Credit: Armed Forces

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government why (1) payments from the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, and (2) War Pension payments to cover the costs of injuries arising from service, are treated as income when being assessed for Universal Credit. [HL7707]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Payments made under the War Pension Scheme or the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme are not taken into account as income in Universal Credit.

Income-related benefits already partially disregard War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments for injuries and bereavement. With the introduction of Universal Credit, we have gone a step further, and have ensured that War Pensions and all Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments are fully disregarded in the assessment of income for Universal Credit.

All other regular, occupational and personal pension payments, that are designed to provide support to help people meet their living costs, are taken fully into account in the assessment of entitlement to Universal Credit.

VAT: Imports

Asked by Lord Strasburger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they took and when to address concerns raised by Richard Allen and others that Low Value Consignment Relief (LVCR) was being used for a purpose for which it was not intended; what estimate they have made of (1) the cost to the Exchequer of misuse of LVCR not being addressed sooner, and (2) the number of retailers who did pay VAT and went out of business as a result of the misuse of LVCR by others. [HL7716]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: In April 2012 the Government took action to remove Low Value Consignment Relief (LVCR) for goods imported from the Channel Islands. Estimates were published at the time showing yield from this measure to be £90 million in 2012-13.

From 1 January 2021 the Government will be introducing changes that will see the removal of LVCR from all imports and make online marketplaces liable for

VAT on low value imported goods sold through their websites.

Visas: EU Countries

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the maximum length of continuous visa-free stay for EU citizens in the UK will be from 1 January 2021; how soon after the end of any such visa-free stay period EU citizens who have stayed for the maximum period will be able to return to the UK to begin another visa-free stay; and what will be the legal basis for an agreement on such matters between the UK and EU. [[HL7621](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has already said that its intention is for citizens of the EEA and Switzerland to be able to continue to travel to the UK as a visitor for up to six months without needing a visa from the end of the transition period following the UK's departure from the EU. This will be reflected in the UK's immigration rules.

EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals will not be required to remain outside the UK for a set period before returning to the UK as a visitor, however they should not seek to live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits or make the UK their main home.

From 1 January 2021, unless they have rights under the EU exit separation agreements, EEA and Swiss nationals intending to come to the UK on a long-term basis to live, work or study will need to do so under the new, UK points-based immigration system which will be set out in our domestic law.

Weapons: Proliferation

*Asked by **Lord Collins of Highbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the counter proliferation programme has been suspended until further notice. [[HL7622](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO suspended in part its Counter Proliferation Programme for FY 20/21 as

we reprioritised to tackle the Covid-19 response, and in view of HMG's Overseas Development Assistance prioritisation exercise.

Covid-19 has made it more difficult to carry out international programme work with many Counter Proliferation programmes being deferred to next year.

However, we have made exceptions for critical national security activity for the remainder of FY 20/21 - including support to the IAEA in relation to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. The Foreign Secretary has since approved remaining programme allocations for this financial year. The Counter Proliferation Arms Control Centre in the new FCDO is now assessing how to deliver a programme to ensure that we meet critical counter proliferation objectives for the remainder of this FY.

Yemen: Cluster Munitions

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of banned cluster weapons in Yemen; and what progress, if any, has been made towards a ceasefire in that country. [[HL7655](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK welcomed Saudi Arabia's commitment in 2016 that it would no longer use BL-755 cluster munitions, which were exported from the UK, with the last delivery being in 1989. We have no evidence that this assurance has been breached and have not seen evidence of any recent use of cluster munitions in Yemen since 2016. We continue to monitor the situation closely. We regularly emphasise to Saudi Arabia the importance of conducting thorough and transparent investigations into alleged International Humanitarian Law violations. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is continuing to seek the parties agreement to a permanent ceasefire and a resumption of the UN-led political process. We fully support these efforts and urge the parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy.

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