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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
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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

Wednesday, 16 September 2020

Commercial Property Tenants and Landlords

[HLWS448]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today informing the House that I have laid a statutory instrument that will extend the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeit a lease due to the non-payment of rent to the end of the year.

The moratorium was established via Section 82 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and was due to expire on 30 September. It has now been extended by three months and will expire on 31 December 2020. This extension will help provide businesses and employees with certainty and protect vital jobs, particularly in the retail and hospitality sectors.

This is being accompanied by an amendment to Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery measures led by the Ministry of Justice. Accompanying restrictions on the service of statutory demands and winding-up petitions, implemented through the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020, are currently in place until 30 September, and we are working closely across Government to consider a similar extension to these.

Since March, Government has implemented a range of measures to support commercial property tenants and landlords. The objective of these measures was to preserve tenants' businesses through the Covid-19 lockdown and to give time and space to landlords and tenants to agree reasonable adjustments to rent and lease terms, including terms for the payment of accumulated rent arrears.

This is a temporary measure being extended; however government recognises that it cannot go on indefinitely. We recognise the impact that this extension has on landlords, therefore we expect both sides of the sector to use this time to negotiate and government will intervene further if necessary.

This extension will provide the businesses with certainty as they scale up their recovery from Covid-19 and will ensure that sectors most acutely impacted by the closure of non-essential retail can benefit from the Christmas trading period.

This is not a rent holiday. Government is clear that landlords and tenants should be coming together to negotiate in good faith where a tenant is unable to pay in full, using the principles set out in the voluntary Code of Practice we published in June which recommends that those tenants who can pay should do so while those landlords who are able to grant concessions should do so. This Code of Practice and approach was supported by a

wide range of sector bodies representing tenants and landlords.

England, Northern Ireland and Wales are covered by the protection from forfeiture in the Coronavirus Act. Section 82 relates to England and Wales, and the Welsh Government have already laid a statutory instrument to extend the measures for an additional three months. Section 83 relates to Northern Ireland, who are currently considering a similar extension. The Scottish Government passed separate emergency legislation to implement similar measures.

Coronavirus Update

[HLWS447]

Lord Bethell: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

I want to update on the latest local restrictions. The latest evidence indicates that the Covid-19 infection rate is beginning to rise across the country. It is therefore now vitally important that Government takes decisive action to limit any further spread and reduce the likelihood of a further national lockdown of the type that was necessary earlier this year. We will continue to review the restrictions to ease or strengthen measures when necessary and based on the scientific evidence.

Changes to Leicester restrictions

Further changes are also being made to the Leicester restrictions. As of Tuesday 15 August, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 were amended to enable the opening of casinos, indoor skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas, exhibition halls and conference centres. Socially distanced indoor performances were also able to resume, and remaining restrictions on certain close contact services (treatments on the face, such as eyebrow threading or make-up application) were lifted. These changes meant that Leicester is subject to the same business restrictions as the majority of England and guidance was updated accordingly.

The ban on inter-household gatherings in private homes and gardens remain in place to control the spread of the virus.

The government will continue to review the remaining restrictions in Leicester at least every 14 days, with the next review due to take place before 24 September.

Additional restrictions in Birmingham

In the West Midlands, the increase in Covid-19 infection rates can be seen particularly in Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell, where incidence rates and positivity rates have increased significantly. Transmission appears to be associated with household transmission, travel hospitality venues and other social mixing.

Given the broad transmission routes, we have considered and agreed the request of local authorities to restrict household mixing to try and curb the spread of the virus in the Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell areas of

the West Midlands. Restrictions on households mixing within private homes and gardens was enacted in secondary legislation and came into effect on Tuesday 15 September. Residents in these areas should not socialise with people that they do not live with, either inside or outside. This was taken in consultation with local leaders,

who are working hard to keep the transmission rates down.

Publicly available Government guidance on Gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the new Regulations. Sector bodies will also produce updated guidance where relevant.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 16 September 2020

Agriculture: Sewage

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of (1) the impact of spreading human sewage on farmland, and (2) the adequacy of current regulation and enforcement of the use of such sewage. [HL7598]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

Sewage sludge spread to land as fertiliser or soil improver can be a valuable source of nutrients. The recycling of sewage sludge to land remains a safe activity, provided it is carried out in accordance with the relevant regulatory controls and good practice guidance is followed.

Currently, water companies in the UK can spread sewage sludge under either the more commonly used Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (SUiAR) or the Environmental Permitting Regulations. Since the introduction of the SUiAR regulations in the 1980s, practices and treatment of sludge has changed considerably. To modernise this regime, in March 2020 the Environment Agency published a 'Sludge Strategy' which will review the safe use of sewage sludge. This strategy will enable better management of the environmental impacts of land spreading sludge, and modernise the regulatory framework surrounding the treatment, storage and use of sludge. Details on the strategy can be found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-strategy-for-safe-and-sustainable-sludge-use/environment-agency-strategy-for-safe-and-sustainable-sludge-use>

Animal Welfare: Enforcement

Asked by **Baroness Fookes**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many infringement notices in relation to breaches of animal welfare regulations were issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency between 1 January 2019 and the latest date for which figures are available. [HL7635]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Six Statutory Notices were served relating to breaches of animal welfare regulations. All of the notices related to consignments of sheep exported for slaughter or fattening for the period 1 January 2019 and 30 July 2020.

We have a manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for live animals going for slaughter and fattening, which is an opportunity we have gained through

leaving the EU. We intend to issue a consultation on how we deliver on that commitment in due course.

Apprentices: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to safeguard manufacturing apprenticeship schemes. [HL7723]

Baroness Berridge: Through our 'Plan for Jobs' a total of £1.6 billion is to be invested in scaling up employment support schemes, training, and apprenticeships, with a particular focus on young people.

We recognise that employers, at the moment, face increased challenges with hiring new apprentices and so to help businesses offer new apprenticeships, they will be able to claim £1,500 for every apprentice they hire as a new employee from 1 August 2020 until 31 January 2021- rising to £2,000 if they hire a new apprentice under the age of 25. We will also ensure that there is sufficient funding to support small businesses wanting to take on an apprentice this year.

This new payment means it is a great time for employers in all sectors to offer new apprenticeship opportunities. Employers in the engineering and manufacturing sector have designed over 130 high-quality apprenticeship standards to deliver the skills that they need to recover and grow following the COVID-19 outbreak.

During the outbreak, we introduced flexibilities to support apprentices and employers to continue with, and complete, their programmes and we encouraged providers and assessment organisations to deliver training and assessments flexibly, including remotely, to enable this.

We are talking to employers, sector organisations and providers across a range of sectors, including manufacturing, to understand the opportunities and challenges they face in offering apprenticeships. In August we held a roundtable with the Association of Colleges and 10 colleges with a high volume of delivery to the sector.

Asylum

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in reviewing their policy on the rights of asylum applicants to work in the UK as announced in the White Paper The UK's future skills-based immigration system, published in December 2018; and when they intend to make an announcement about their progress and conclusions. [HL7657]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue. A review of the policy is ongoing, and we are considering the evidence put forward on the issue. Details of the review will be announced in due course.

Asylum: English Channel

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a route for asylum seekers to cross the English Channel to the UK safely. [HL7708]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Minister authorised the release of the Home Office video on immigration on 26 August. [HL7709]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: HL7708: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, for as long as it is needed, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we sympathise with people in difficult situations, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety. France is one such safe country – with a fully functioning asylum system and over 100,000 asylum claims lodged last year.

The UK's resettlement schemes have provided safe and legal routes for tens of thousands of people, who have been given the chance to start new lives in safety. We purposefully resettle those in greatest need of protection, including those who require urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk. We resettle more refugees than any other country in Europe and are in the top five countries worldwide. Since 2015, we have resettled more than 25,000 refugees.

While resettlement arrivals are currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will resume them as soon as conditions allow, and meet our full commitment to those fleeing the Syrian conflict.

HL7709: The original animation was cleared by the Minister for Immigration, Compliance & the Courts; we have since removed this content from official government channels.

Aviation: EU Law

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to protect airline passengers from losses due to the cancellation of flights once EU Regulation 261/2004 no longer applies; and how any such steps will protect (1) passengers on flights to the EU from the UK, (2) passengers on flights from the EU to the UK, and (3) UK passengers flying on EU airlines outside the UK. [HL7613]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: EU261 rules apply until the end of the EU Exit transition period, it is at that point that those rules will be retained in domestic law and will therefore continue to apply. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of challenges. The Department is keen to work with the regulator, industry and consumer groups to learn lessons and to make changes that are practicable and deliverable.

Aviation: Public Opinion

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Department for Transport plans to update the data on (1) public experiences of, and attitudes towards, air travel, (2) public attitudes to climate change and the impact of transport, and (3) aviation statistics information; and when each of these were last updated. [HL7605]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has previously published a statistical publication entitled "Public experiences of, and attitudes towards air travel", last released in 2014. This presented analyses of a short set of questions relating to air travel that were placed into the Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. These questions have since been suspended. Information about UK consumers' behaviour and attitudes towards commercial aviation can now be found in the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) Aviation Consumer Survey and the corresponding reports are published on the CAA website.

The Department for Transport published the National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 3 in August 2020 which included information around attitudes to climate change. The National Travel Attitudes Study is a bi-annual survey used to collect information on public attitudes towards travel and transport.

The Department for Transport's compilation of aviation statistics is released annually in the AVI tables series alongside the release of the Department's annual statistical compendium entitled "Transport Statistics Great Britain". These aviation statistics were last released in December 2019, and are currently scheduled to be updated in December 2020. Information relating to statistics for UK airports is also available directly from the CAA website.

Bank Services: Christianity

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the closure of bank accounts belonging to the Core Issues Trust by Barclays Bank; and what steps they are taking to ensure that bank accounts are not closed as a result of any unfair bias or unlawful discrimination against Christian organisations. [HL7680]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Decisions about whether to provide specific products or services to individuals or businesses remain commercial decisions for banks, building societies and alternative finance providers. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Government to intervene in these decisions.

The Government believes that any dispute arising between financial services firms and their customers is usually best resolved by the parties involved. Should a customer be dissatisfied with a firm's response to their complaint, then they may wish to consider an approach to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The government established the FOS to provide a free, independent dispute resolution service for bank customers, including eligible small businesses.

Blue Badge Scheme and Driving Licences

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 29 June (HL5754), with which EU Member States they have held bilateral discussions about the mutual recognition of drivers' licences and disabled blue parking badges; and what the outcomes of those discussions were. [HL7614]

Lord True: Bilateral discussions with all 27 Member States are currently underway at official level and have been constructive. Further details will be published in due course.

Boundary Commissions

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 11 August (HL7357), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what was the total cost of the work of the four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions, from the passage of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 to the publication of their reports of September 2018. [HL7649]

Lord True: The total expenditure of the Boundary Commissions for England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland in the period 2010/11 to 2017/18, and up to September 2018 in 2018/19, was £15.6m. This includes the cost of the 2018 Boundary Review which was approximately £7.1m.

Bushmeat: Sales

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to secure a global ban on the sale of bush-meat, in particular with regard to preventing the transfer of diseases from animals to humans [HL7656]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We remain concerned about the impact the bush-meat trade can have

on endangered species. However, we are not currently seeking a blanket ban on the sale of bush-meat as a means of preventing the transfer of zoonotic diseases. It is clear that poorly managed and illegal wildlife trade (IWT) poses threats to animal health and welfare, diminishes our biodiversity, undermines governance, and can result in serious public health issues. However, well managed, sustainable trade can make important contributions to biodiversity conservation, livelihoods and wealth creation, social cohesion and cultural identity, and help meet the nutritional needs of local and rural communities in developing nations.

Cattle and Sheep: Exports

Asked by Baroness Fookes

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many truckloads of (1) sheep, and (2) calves, were exported for slaughter or fattening from the port of Ramsgate between 1 January 2019 and the latest date for which figures are available; and how many were subject to supervised loading by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. [HL7634]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: 83 consignments of sheep but no consignments of calves were exported for slaughter or fattening from the port of Ramsgate between 1 January 2019 and 30 July 2020. Of these, 76 consignments were subject to supervised loading at the premises of origin by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

One consignment that was not subject to supervised loading at the premises of origin was supervised when loading additional animals prior to arrival at Ramsgate. The remainder of consignments that were not subject to supervised loading at the premises of origin were subject to additional checks by APHA staff at the port of exit.

The above figures are based on journey logs issued rather than the number of truckloads; occasionally one vehicle may have more than one journey log for each trip.

We have a manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for live animals going for slaughter and fattening, which is an opportunity we have gained through leaving the EU. We intend to issue a consultation on how we deliver on that commitment in due course.

CDC: Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much CDC Group Limited invested in Official Development Assistance in (1) 2017/18, (2) 2018/19, and (3) 2019/20; and, for each year, what percentage of CDC Group Limited's investments this constituted. [HL7731]

Baroness Sugg: Over the last three years, the Government has made capital investments in CDC Group Ltd totalling £2,086,000,000 to support the growth of companies in Africa and South Asia that create jobs and

transform economies. 100% of the Government's investment scores as Official Development Assistance in the year it is allocated to CDC. A summary of the annual breakdown of these investments is as follows:

	<i>Year</i>	<i>ODA Investment £m</i>
1	2017/18	395
2	2018/19	736
3	2019/20	955
Total		2,086

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much investment in Official Development Assistance is in CDC Group Limited's current investment plans; and what percentage of CDC Group Limited's planned investment this constitutes. [HL7732]

Baroness Sugg: CDC's current investment plans cover the period of its five-year Strategic Framework 2017-2021. Across this period the Government has committed to invest Official Development Assistance (ODA) of up to a maximum of £3.515 billion to support the growth of companies in Africa and South Asia that create jobs and transform economies.

100% of the Government's investment scores as ODA in the year it is allocated to CDC.

Children: Coronavirus

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant school closures who (1) had no digital devices in their household, (2) whose only available device was a smartphone, (3) had access to a single device in their household which was shared with more than one other family member, and (4) the total number of children who were unable to access remote education consistently as a result. [HL7798]

Baroness Berridge: The department has already invested over £100 million to support remote education and has delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets to local authorities and academy trusts for children who would not otherwise have access.

The department allocated devices to local authorities and academy trusts based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that did not have access to a device through other means, such as a private device or through school. Local authorities and academy trusts were responsible for distributing the devices, being best placed to know which children and young people need access to a device delivered through the programme.

Where local authorities and academy trusts identified a need greater than their initial allocation, they could provide evidence and request more devices. No valid

request for additional devices for eligible children was denied.

We are now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 available additional devices in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions or local lockdowns, and children become reliant on remote education.

Coastal Areas

Asked by Lord McNally

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide ongoing support for seaside towns; and, in particular, what response they intend to make to the British Amusement and Catering Trade Association's Save our Seaside campaign. [HL7678]

Lord Greenhalgh: This government believes that the Great British coast has enormous potential and this government is determined to see it thrive all year round. We are committed to supporting coastal communities to unlock barriers to their development and growth, and to strengthen their appeal as places to live, work and visit.

Examples of ongoing support provided to seaside towns includes:

- Supporting 178 projects Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) throughout England through £182.9m of Coastal Communities funding, delivering sustainable growth and jobs in coastal areas
- Publishing COVID-19: Guidance to help owners and operators manage visitors to beaches, the countryside and coastal areas in a safe and responsible way.
- Inviting 23 coastal towns to develop proposals for Town Deals worth up to £25 million each.
- Shortlisting 17 coastal places for the Future High Streets Fund.

I thank you for highlighting the British Amusement and Catering Trade Association's Save Our Seaside Campaign and I note the issues it brings to light.

Community Centres: Police Stations

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the possibility of communities providing funding for volunteer-manned community support facilities that are able to liaise directly with police stations. [HL7664]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government actively encourages local communities and volunteers to support police forces to prevent crime. To this end it provides grant funding to Neighbourhood Watch, a community-based volunteer led organisation that enables 2 million households across the UK to become directly involved in crime prevention. Individuals form local groups who often have direct communication with their local police.

It is common practice in many police forces to have designated Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators who assist in engaging directly with the groups. The government also grant funds Crimestoppers, a charity that provides an anonymous reporting system for communities to report and provide information about actual or suspected crimes. In addition, The government has also recently awarded funding to local areas as part of the £25m Safer Streets Fund. This fund is designed to reduce neighbourhood crimes and many plans contain community-based elements. Many successful projects will be setting up neighbourhood watch groups and other more informal networks within communities with the aim to help prevent crime in unison with the police in some of the highest acquisitive crime areas across England and Wales.

Company Accounts

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the International Accounting Standard (1) requires companies to classify and present in their balance sheet property that they rent and do not own as if they owned those assets with the right to sell those assets, and (2) removes rental payments from the profit and loss account and replaces it with a charge for depreciation for assets they do not own and have no right to sell. [HL7847]

Lord Callanan: For many years both UK GAAP and International Accounting Standards have required entities to account for some leases by recognising both the asset utilised by the business and the liability to pay for it on the balance sheet. The asset represents the right to use that asset for the period of the lease, and this ensures the users of accounts can clearly identify the company's control (exclusive right of use asset) of that property over that time period, intended to reflect where the risks and rewards lie. Recent changes to international accounting standards mean that since 2019 more leases are now recognised on balance sheet by lessees, providing a more complete picture of the financial position of an entity, and greater comparability between entities that borrow to buy assets and those that lease assets. As a result, the profit & loss charge in relation to that leased property includes depreciation of the leased asset as well as an interest expense on the lease liability.

Company Accounts: Standards

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the numerical outcomes that the International Standards Board seeks to achieve from accounts prepared using its accounting standards system are the same as those numerical outcomes for accounts (1) set out in section 836 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss, and (2) for the capital maintenance purpose set out in Part 23 of

the Companies Act 2006; and if they are not the same numerical outcomes, (a) what such outcomes are being sought, (b) what was the basis for deciding those outcomes, (c) when was that decided, and (d) by whom. [HL7963]

Lord Callanan: The Companies Act 2006, Part 15, requires that company accounts must be prepared in accordance with accounting standards, with the overriding requirement that they must give a true and fair view of the company's finances. The directors also have a legal duty to ensure that the requirements on capital maintenance and distributable profits in Part 23 of the Companies Act 2006 are followed. Although the calculation of the distributable profits and of a distribution by a public company must be based on the profits of the company as set out in the company's accounts, it must take into account additional factors set out in Part 23, such as those set out in s841 in relation to realised losses and profits. The effect of these additional factors is to ensure that a company may only make distributions out of profits available for the purpose, as set out in s830.

All requirements set out above arise from the Companies Act 2006.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish their plans and preparations for any peak in COVID-19 infections during the winter period, including for any reasonable worst-case scenario. [HL7587]

Lord True: Our collective understanding of the virus, and how it spreads, has vastly improved since the initial wave of infections. As a responsible government, we have been planning and continue to prepare for a wide range of scenarios, including the reasonable worst case scenario. In the coming months, we will continue to assess what the UK can learn from other nations, and carry out a series of exercises, to test the Government's winter plans, including for a reasonable worst case scenario and to ensure effective coordination between departments and with the devolved administrations.

In May, we published the UK Government's [COVID-19 recovery strategy](#). This was updated in July, including details on planning for the winter. Our planning assumptions and guidance are kept under review and amended as the scientific and medical advice develops.

Crossrail 2 Line

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made a decision on the Crossrail 2 Strategic Outline Business Case; and if not, when they intend to do so. [HL7652]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Crossrail 2 is a jointly sponsored project between my Department and Transport

for London (TfL). We need to collectively ensure that Crossrail 2 is affordable before a decision can be taken about the future of the project.

Following the emergency funding package agreed with the Mayor in May 2020 a Government led review on TfL's future financial sustainability is being undertaken. The next steps for Crossrail 2 will therefore need to be considered in light of this review and the forthcoming Spending Review.

*Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the role of the Department for Transport in (1) managing, and (2) setting the budget of, the Crossrail 2 project; and what other organisations will be responsible for the delivery of that project. [HL7653]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Crossrail 2 is jointly sponsored by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL). Both organisations therefore fund the development of the project and as part of this agree annual budgets.

As joint sponsors DfT and TfL oversee an integrated project team tasked with the development of the project. This team comprises of TfL and Network Rail staff

In July this year, TfL published a revised budget. This acknowledged that there were some difficult choices on future major transport schemes such as Crossrail 2 and that they needed to be realistic about its affordability over the next decade. Government continues to discuss next steps for Crossrail 2 as a consequence.

Cybercrime: Business

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect British companies targeted by cyber ransom attacks. [HL7683]

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research by Emsisoft showing that the amount paid by British companies in ransom to cybercriminals in 2019 was over £200 million. [HL7684]

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the amount paid by British companies to cybercriminals as a result of cyber ransom attacks in (1) 2018, and (2) 2019. [HL7685]

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what meetings they have held with the insurance industry about the growth in cyber ransom attacks against British businesses; and what assessment they have made of the extent to which insurers are encouraging their clients to pay ransoms. [HL7686]

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which British companies are paying ransoms to cyber criminals in order to regain access to their data; and what guidance they have made available to support businesses in such circumstances. [HL7687]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government continues to see a significant increase in the scale and severity of malicious cyber activity globally. This is why the National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021 is supported by £1.9 billion of transformational investment. Part of GCHQ, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), is at the heart of this strategy. The Centre provides a single, central body for cyber security at a national level, and has helped over a million organisations become more secure.

Ransomware attacks are increasingly common globally, the Government continues to provide support to British businesses and organisations to try to mitigate the threat. The NCSC continually reviews its advice and guidance to reflect new trends and how companies can protect themselves, as well as providing swift support to organisations which fall victim to ransomware. Additionally, the National Crime Agency's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) provides the focus for our national response to combating serious cyber criminals. It is using its increased operational resources to deliver arrests and disruption, using the NCA's enhanced intelligence picture to target criminals where they are most vulnerable. Our priority working alongside the police and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is to do all we can to mitigate any harm to the UK.

The legal decision of whether or not to pay the ransom is ultimately a matter for the individuals or organisations concerned. We encourage victims of ransom demands to contact the authorities for support. Organisations are increasingly being targeted by ransomware attacks rather than individuals; this is because criminals can demand more money, and victims are more likely to pay due to reputational damage and desire to maintain the viability of their business for the future.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) statistics indicate that in the last financial year for 2019/20 there were 160 recorded ransomware-related breaches, accounting for 6.8% of all cyber-related breaches. The Government currently does not hold any official data on the total cost of ransomware demands.

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the origin of ransom cyber attacks against British businesses. [HL7688]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Ransomware attacks are increasingly common globally with international and domestic cyber criminals increasingly viewing UK-based businesses and private individuals as attractive targets. Cyber criminals targeting the UK include international

serious organised crime groups as well as smaller-scale, mostly domestic, criminals and hackers. While a small number of elite cyber criminals conduct the most serious cyber crimes, cyber crime is highly accessible and the availability of tools and services has lowered the entry level.

The ransomware landscape has changed in recent years, the number of attacks has decreased; however, the attacks appear to be more targeted and demand bigger ransoms. The NCSC and NCA continue to monitor the cyber threat with the UK being a global leader in understanding the threat from cyber crime. NCSC assesses the threat actors behind most large ransomware attacks are Russian speaking cyber criminals.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Staff

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport staff based in central London were working from their office desks on 2 September. [HL7689]

Baroness Barran: We had office desk capacity for 749 staff in our central London office prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. This has been reduced to 155 staff capacity in line with the Government's Covid-secure workplace guidance. On 2 September we had 62 members of staff in - 40% of current capacity, and 8% of our pre-Covid capacity. We expect full Covid-secure capacity to be reached this month.

Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist (HL2159), when they expect to publish the outcome of their consultation Energy Performance Certificates in Buildings, which closed on 26 July 2018. [HL7637]

Lord Callanan: The Government will publish a summary of responses to the Call for Evidence later this year. Alongside this, we intend to publish an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Action Plan which will build on the views expressed as part of the Call for Evidence, to set out a series of actions which the Government will take forward, and inform future policy thinking in order to maximise the effectiveness of EPCs in the future.

EU Grants and Loans

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide domestic replacements for each of the

funding streams that the UK receives from the EU. [HL7764]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Having left the EU, from 2021 the UK will no longer contribute to the EU budget as a Member State, leaving only payments due as part of Financial Settlement obligations. As set out at Spring Budget 2020, the government has accounted for this when setting its spending plans, allowing it to determine how an additional £14.6 billion of spending by 2024-25 can be allocated to its domestic priorities, rather than be sent in contributions to the EU. This will be allocated as part of the overall spending envelope at the Comprehensive Spending Review, and will include meeting our commitments to replace the Common Agricultural Policy and EU structural funds.

Football: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to lower league football clubs to counter the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7933]

Baroness Barran: Football clubs are the heart of local communities and have unique social value.

The Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses throughout this period, including a comprehensive and sizable package of direct fiscal support for business through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support. Many football clubs have benefited from these measures.

The Government is in regular dialogue with all the football authorities to understand their financial position - but has been absolutely clear that it expects football to look first at how it can support itself through these difficult times. To this end I welcomed the Premier League announcement to advance funds of £125 million to the EFL and National League to help clubs throughout the football pyramid. The EFL has also announced a £50m relief fund to help their clubs enduring immediate cash flow problems because of the coronavirus crisis.

Football: Discrimination

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) professional football clubs, and (2) the Police, about sharing data on discrimination within professional football. [HL7947]

Baroness Barran: Racism or any form of discrimination has no place in football or society.

The Government continues to liaise closely with the football authorities and the Police to combat discrimination and promote collaboration wherever possible.

Free School Meals

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children received free school meals during the 2020 summer holidays. [HL7821]

Baroness Berridge: The number of children who received a free school meal (FSM) during the 2020 summer holidays is held at school level, we do not hold this information.

The number and proportion of students who qualify for FSM is published in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' publication and its underlying data files. As of the January 2020 school census, there are around 1.4 million children eligible for and claiming FSM. Statistics for the 2020 school census are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020>.

Gaza: Water

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to support efforts (1) to address water shortages, and (2) to improve living conditions, in Gaza. [HL7733]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. To address water shortages we are funding the construction of pipelines and reservoirs in Gaza that will carry water from the planned Gaza Central Desalination Plant to households and businesses across the strip. When completed this will have doubled the water supply in Gaza, ensuring two million Gazans have greater access to this vital resource.

Our recent £840,000 funding contribution has also enabled the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity in response to COVID-19. The Foreign Secretary recently announced a further £2.7 million funding to UN agencies to provide food assistance, medical supplies and personal protection for the most vulnerable Palestinians.

In addition to our commitment to funding, our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate-General in Jerusalem frequently urge the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to take steps to improve conditions in Gaza. The issue was most recently raised on 20th August. The UK will continue to work to help address the humanitarian situation and improve the lives of the people of Gaza.

GCE A-level: Assessments

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with devolved authorities about co-ordinating

the approach to the awarding of A-levels and equivalent qualifications in the summer of 2020; and what plans they have to publish details of those discussions. [HL7612]

Baroness Berridge: Ministers have had discussions throughout the year with their counterparts from the devolved administrations about the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including about summer 2020 grading. In addition, officials and regulators have been in regular contact to discuss co-ordination of approaches on grading, taking into account the differing features of the educational systems across the UK. There are no plans to publish details of these discussions. The department will continue to work with the devolved administrations on plans for examinations in summer 2021.

Government Departments and Ministers: Email

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all automatic replies acknowledging receipt of emails sent to government and ministerial accounts provide that a full response will be supplied; and if not, why not. [HL7681]

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government who decides whether a substantive response to an email to a Minister or Government department from a member of the House of Lords should be provided; and whether such a decision is made by the relevant Secretary of State or a departmental official. [HL7682]

Lord True: Cabinet Office publishes guidance for departments on how to handle correspondence including emails. Departments will make their own arrangements for acknowledging receipt of emails.

Departments are required to provide substantive responses to correspondence from MPs and Peers promptly, and no later than 20 days after receipt. In specific circumstances, Ministers may decide that a response is not necessary.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to announce details of (1) the measures to be within the scope of the Green Homes Grant scheme, and (2) how that scheme will operate. [HL7736]

Lord Callanan: Guidance and further details about the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme were published on 28 August on the GOV.UK website. This included information on eligibility, items where support can be claimed as part of energy efficiency measure installations, as well as items that will not be paid for under the voucher scheme.

The new scheme will see the Government fund up to two thirds of the cost of home improvements of over 600,000 homes, supporting over 100,000 jobs in green construction. Consumers in England will be able to claim the new vouchers, which are worth up to £5,000. Households on low income can receive vouchers covering 100% of the cost of the improvements, up to a maximum of £10,000.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many assessors they anticipate will be required before the launch of the Green Homes Grant; and how many such assessors they have already recruited. [HL7737]

Lord Callanan: A retrofit assessment will only be mandatory under the Green Homes Grant scheme in a limited number of circumstances, where installations are considered to be more technically demanding. We are confident that there are sufficient retrofit assessors in place to oversee these cases.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to draw up a list of approved contractors to operate the Green Homes Grant scheme. [HL7738]

Lord Callanan: Businesses and tradespeople must be registered with TrustMark – as well as certified with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) if installing heating measures – to take part in the scheme. Homeowners and landlords will be able to use the Simple Energy Advice website to find appropriately registered and certified tradespeople in their area that are able to carry out the works, ensuring high standards and consumer protection.

TrustMark is the government-endorsed quality scheme covering work a consumer chooses to have carried out on their home. MCS is a quality assurance scheme supported by BEIS, which certifies products, installation companies and installations to help ensure that Microgeneration products are installed to high quality standards.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government how consumers can obtain the necessary vouchers to take part in the Green Homes Grant Scheme; and what plans they have to publicise that scheme. [HL7832]

Lord Callanan: Homeowners and landlords will be able to apply for the Green Homes Grant scheme vouchers online, with alternative methods being available for those that cannot apply digitally. More details on the application process will be announced in due course.

In order to support customers to take up the scheme and to encourage industry to get involved and register with TrustMark, we are running an integrated communications campaign. Activities include social media, partnerships and a range of media and stakeholder engagements.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage landlords and developers of high rise blocks to address the fire risks associated with (1) dangerous cladding, and (2) other sources of risk. [HL7595]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has made £1.6 billion of funding available for the removal of unsafe cladding systems. We have also put in place additional project management support with construction expertise to help support individual projects and oversee remediation, so there is no excuse for delay. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress on remediation, those responsible should expect enforcement action to be taken by local authorities and Fire and Rescue Services. The Government established a Joint Inspection Team to support local authorities in taking enforcement action.

The Government has also introduced the Fire Safety Bill to put beyond doubt that, as part of the fire risk assessment process, building owners and managers of multi-occupied residential premises of any height are required to fully consider and mitigate the risks of any external wall systems and front doors to individual flats. The Fire Safety Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons on 7th September and was introduced in the House of Lords on 8th September.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Police

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much HS2 Limited has paid to police forces along the HS2 route; and for what services any such payments were made. [HL7606]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd only has an Enhanced Police Service Agreement (EPSA) with the British Transport Police for a National Police Liaison Officer, an Analyst and an Intelligence Researcher. This function supports strategic and tactical coordination across all forces that the route will pass through. The costs for the EPSA so far are as follows:

- 2016/17: £31,261.26
- 2017/18: £100,185.95
- 2018/19: £104,803.18
- 2019/20: £125,782.

High Speed Two: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response on 13 July to the Freedom of Information request to HS2 Ltd (FOI-19-3289), whether they (1) informed the committees in both Houses of Parliament

which considered the petitions in relation to the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017 to the High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill, and (2) have informed, or intend to inform, the committee in the House of Lords which is considering the petitions in relation to the High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill, that any petitioner who had signed a non-disclosure agreement with HS2 Ltd had signed such an agreement; if so, which petitioners; and if not, why not. [HL7602]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Promoter's evidence to the Select Committee only includes information relevant to the matters raised by each petitioner. The Promoter was not asked about NDAs, and so did not mention them to the Select Committees that considered petitions against the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill in either House whether any of the petitioners against the Bill had entered into a NDA (or confidentiality agreement) with HS2 Ltd. Nor has the Promoter done so for petitioners against the High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill. The Select Committees are not inquiries into HS2 or HS2 Ltd – they are a quasi-judicial process that considers requests for changes to the scheme, made by petitioners.

Confidentiality agreements preserve confidentiality when two or more parties exchange sensitive information. These agreements offer protection when parties want to share confidential or commercially sensitive information with each other but need to make sure that the information is not shared more widely. Like any contract, these agreements are entered into by mutual consent, and are utilised to protect not just HS2 Ltd's confidential information but the confidential information of the third party/ies involved. They provide value to the taxpayer by reducing uncertainty and by helping to reduce generalised blight.

A confidentiality agreement would not prevent a signatory from petitioning against the Bill or appearing before a Select Committee in either House to raise the issues in its petition. It simply seeks to ensure that any confidential information shared between the parties under the terms of the agreement is not disclosed.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) HS2 Limited has signed, or has incorporated into contracts with, (1) consultancy firms, (2) senior staff of HS2 Limited leaving the organisation, (3) landowners negotiating compulsory purchase orders, and (4) police forces; how many contracts between HS2 Limited and those groups did not include NDAs or similar clauses; and further to the remarks by Nusrat Ghani MP on 15 July 2019 (HC Deb, col 651), how many NDAs signed by HS2 Limited were deemed "competitive and sensitive". [HL7607]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd uses NDAs to enable the exchange of confidential information with individuals and organisations, who do so on a willing and

consensual basis. As Nusrat Ghani MP made clear on 15 July 2019, HS2 Ltd takes its responsibilities on the use of NDAs seriously. While HS2 Ltd holds information on the parties it has signed NDAs with, it is not held in a format that can be disaggregated by category and as such it is unable to provide information on: the number of NDAs with consultancy firms; landowners negotiating compulsory purchase orders; and the number that were deemed "confidential and sensitive".

I can confirm that no NDAs have been signed by HS2 Ltd with police forces or with senior staff who have left the organisation; though a small number of Settlement Agreements have been signed with former staff which contain a confidentiality clause.

Home Office: Staff

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Home Office staff based in central London were working from their office desks on 2 September. [HL7691]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is only able to provide this information for 2 Marsham St where it is recorded.

On 2 September 2020, 173 members of Home Office staff were working in 2 Marsham Street office, which is 30 % of Covid compliant occupancy.

*Note: available desks is currently 577 due to social distancing. Desk numbers for Home Office staff in 2 Marsham Street total 2072 but due to social distancing this has been reduced to 577.

House of Lords: Location

Asked by Lord Norton of Louth

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 11 August (HL7467), whether a feasibility study of using a site in York for the House of Lords or a government department has been commissioned by the Cabinet Office; and whether discussions about such a site have taken place with York Central Partnership. [HL7695]

Lord True: There are already Civil Servants based in York. Through the Places for Growth Programme, the Cabinet Office is exploring opportunities to relocate Civil Service roles across the UK. By relocating more Civil Service roles, including senior grades and decision-making roles, out of London, the Government wants to create and distribute opportunity, jobs and investment across the whole United Kingdom.

In that context, the Government has engaged with the York Central Partnership, and, as part of this, explored whether the space would allow for Parliamentary activity, should it be required.

Housing: Older People

Asked by **Baroness Altmann**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many retirement properties have been empty while awaiting sale for more than (1) six months, and (2) two years, in (a) England, and (b) Wales. [HL7575]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Department does not collect data on the types of properties that have been empty while awaiting sale in England and Wales.

Asked by **Baroness Altmann**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance is available to bereaved relatives who are being required to pay council tax at full or double rate after being unable to sell an inherited retirement property that has been on the market while potential purchasers have been unable to view or move during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7576]

Lord Greenhalgh: When a property is empty following the death of its owner or occupant, and there is no other liable person, it is exempt from council tax for as long as it remains unoccupied and until probate is granted. A further six months exemption is then possible. Authorities have powers to provide further discounts where they consider that the circumstances merit it. Authorities can also agree alternative payment arrangements, such as deferring payment until the proceeds of a sale are made available. Potential purchasers who wish to move home can do so, and guidance on home moves is available (attached) at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Government advice on home moving during Covid-19 [200916
Government advice on home moving during the coronavirus
(COVID-19) outbreak - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-02/HL7576>

Asked by **Baroness Altmann**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the problems facing owners of retirement properties who are unable to sell such property; and whether councils are able to rent such properties to house older eligible individuals in need of housing. [HL7577]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government recognises the benefits of specialist retirement housing, however, we are aware that some owners of retirement properties have experienced difficulties in selling or renting their properties due to a range of factors.

The Law Commission published a report in 2017 of their review of event fees in retirement properties. The Government responded to the Law Commission in March

2019, agreeing to implement the majority of the recommendations.

We would encourage all prospective purchasers of retirement homes to take legal advice on their purchase and ensure they understand any restrictions on the use or sale of the property. The Government's [How to Buy Guide](#) (attached) has further advice on what to look out for when buying specialist retirement properties.

Where existing covenants are preventing the property being sold or rented there are a variety of potential remedies and the owner should take their own legal advice. For instance - it may be possible to vary or reduce restrictions through an application to the land tribunal.

Local authorities and housing associations already provide specialist accommodation for older and disabled people who are in need of it. The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and has recently confirmed the details of £12.2 billion of investment. This includes a new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme providing up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow, and 10% of delivery will be used to increase the supply of specialist or supported housing.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

How to buy guide [200908 How_to_Buy_Guide - HL7577.PDF]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-02/HL7577>

Imports: VAT

Asked by **Lord Strasburger**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Richard Allen was rewarded for his whistle blowing role in alerting them and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to the misuse of Low Value Consignment Relief, as provided for by section 26 of the Commissioners for Customs and Excise Act 2005; and if not, why not. [HL7715]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC do have the discretion to pay rewards, and these are based on what is achieved as a direct result of information provided. HMRC conduct an internal review process for determining whether or not a reward is payable and, if so, how much that reward should be. Rewards are offered at HMRC's discretion and are not calculated as a means of compensation for the cost of gathering information that is subsequently supplied to HMRC, nor are they subject to negotiation.

HMRC's policy is to neither confirm nor deny the existence of information provided by individuals or to confirm the fact that any individual has, or has not, provided information, directly or by inference, including comment on specific reward payments. In common with other law enforcement agencies in the UK, HMRC maintain this stance as a means of effective protection of the public interest; to protect the safety of any informants

and to ensure that future potential informants are not discouraged from coming forward.

Income Tax

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are currently paying the additional rate of income tax; and how much they raised from this band over the last financial year. [HL7879]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The table below contains estimates of additional rate taxpayer numbers and liabilities taxed at the additional rate for the 2019-20 financial year:

<i>Number of taxpayers with total taxable income above the additional rate threshold and tax liabilities at the additional rate</i>	
Number of taxpayers (thousands)	450
Total additional rate tax liabilities (£ million)	42,400
Of which:	
Tax on earnings (£ million)	35,300
Tax on savings (£ million)	856
Tax on dividends (£ million)	6,290

i) Taxpayer numbers and liabilities are rounded to three significant figures. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

ii) The figures are based on outturn data derived from the 2017-18 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) and projected using economic assumptions consistent with the Office for Budget Responsibility's March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

The estimated number of income tax payers, and liabilities by tax band are published in HMRC's Income Tax Liabilities Statistics publication.

Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Keen of Elie on 16 July (HL Deb, col 1746), what additional progress they have made towards implementing the recommendations of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. [HL7699]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Department has continued to take steps to implement the recommendations made in this report, as well as others made by independent experts and scrutiny bodies, as part of its robust response to protect prisoners and prison staff from COVID-19.

Progress has been reflected in the development of Exceptional Delivery Models which cover areas such as social visits, education and time in the open air. This

forms an integral part of the National Framework for Prison Regime and Services Recovery which is currently being implemented.

The recommendations made by the report note the importance of clear communication and ensuring that prisoners feel supported and listened to. The majority of establishments have now resumed social visits which are vital for maintaining family contact and prisoners' wellbeing. As we move to Stage 2 of the National Framework, prison governors will have more autonomy to shape their regimes in a way that responds to local dynamics and continues to keep staff and prisoners safe from COVID-19.

Independent Commission for Aid Impact: Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) how much time staff of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) have, or will need to, set aside for the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and development announced in February; (2) who in the ICAI has or will contribute to the Review; and (3) the extent to which the Review will require a postponement of ICAI's planned programme for 2020/21. [HL7711]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Independent Commission for Aid Impact is an advisory non-departmental public body sponsored by the FCDO, but is operationally independent of government.

On the Integrated Review, the Government is engaging with experts beyond Whitehall and wider stakeholders with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity, and the global challenges the UK will face over the coming years.

The Government has issued a Call for Evidence to help inform the Integrated Review, which is open to all organisations with an interest and role in our nation's security and prosperity, and in tackling the global challenges the UK will face over the coming years.

Inheritance Tax

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the total yield on inheritance tax collected in each of the last five years. [HL7880]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC publish information regarding the total amount of Inheritance Tax (IHT) receipts received in each tax year annually in their 'Inheritance Tax Statistics' publication.

The latest statistics were published on 30 July 2020. The amount of revenue raised from IHT, irrespective of when the charge to tax arose, is reproduced in the table below, for each of the last five years.

<i>Tax Year</i>	<i>Receipts (£millions)</i>
2015-16	4,673
2016-17	4,840
2017-18	5,218
2018-19	5,384
2019-20	5,161

Source: Table 12.1 Inheritance Tax: Analysis of Receipts. Available online on the GOV.UK website. These figures include both cash and non-cash receipts.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take to protect civilians in Gaza from bombing by the government of Israel. [HL7826]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by the recent hostilities in Gaza and welcome steps taken on 31 August 2020 to de-escalate the situation, and ease some restrictions. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We urge both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 6 August (HL7404), what plans they have to make an assessment of the case for using the Royal Navy to protect Palestinian fishermen from attacks by the Israeli Navy. [HL7827]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government has no plans to make an assessment on using the Royal Navy in this way.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to protect Palestinians in Kafr Qaddum in the light of reports (1) that explosive devices have been placed by the Israel Defence Force in civilian areas, and (2) of violence towards unarmed Palestinians. [HL7830]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal and security issues relating to the occupation. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Jerusalem: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to protect Palestinian medical facilities in East Jerusalem from violent incursions by the Israel Defence Forces. [HL7829]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by any reports of incursions into, or demolitions of, Palestinian medical facilities by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Such actions also weaken the capacity of Palestinians to withstand the impact of COVID-19. Under IHL, an occupying power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene in the occupied territory to the fullest extent of the means available to it. We call on both parties to avoid any provocative action which might undermine the cooperation that is so critical.

Laércio Souza Silva and Paulo Paulino Guajajara

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Brazil about reports of the killing of Paulo Paulino Guajajara and the wounding of Laercio Souza Silva by illegal loggers in the Arariboia reservation of Maranhao State. [HL7654]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is committed to promoting and defending the human rights of all individuals including indigenous peoples. Brazil has a robust and independent justice system that tackles cases such as this one. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and to raise critical issues such as this in our dialogue with the Government.

Lebanon: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister has spoken to the prime minister-designate of Lebanon, Mustapha Adib, since his appointment; and if so, (1) when, and (2) whether concrete British assistance to rebuild the country was discussed. [HL7797]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a long-standing friend of Lebanon and the Lebanese people. In the aftermath of the terrible explosion in Beirut, the UK has been one of the biggest donors to the crisis, committing £25 million overall in UK aid. In August we sent HMS Enterprise to survey damage to Beirut Port so that reconstruction work can urgently begin. The Foreign Secretary spoke to then PM Hassan Diab on 5 August to

discuss UK assistance, and the Prime Minister spoke to President Aoun on 8 August. We engage regularly with the full range of Lebanese leaders and will maintain a regular dialogue with Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib.

Legislation: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether existing rights of access to all UK legislation will apply to UK-adopted international standards, including the full and free right (1) to copy, publish, distribute and transmit the information, (2) to adapt the information, and (3) to exploit the information commercially and non-commercially, including by (a) combining it with other information, or (b) including it in products or applications. [HL7849]

Lord Callanan: After the end of the transition period, the Government will publish UK-adopted international accounting standards in accordance with the publication requirements in regulation 9 of the International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, including the requirement to publish a consolidated text of UK-adopted international accounting standards as a whole.

UK-adopted international accounting standards will not be legislation themselves; rights as to their use will be subject to any license agreement agreed with the IFRS Foundation. Such agreement has not been finalised and we are not able to comment further on the content of the agreement.

Local Government: Coronavirus and Devolution

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with leaders of each of the combined authorities in England about (1) further devolution of powers, and (2) increased funding, to aid the economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7955]

Lord Greenhalgh: Ministers meet regularly with the leaders of the combined authorities in England, both bilaterally and as a group. Forthcoming meetings will include discussions on economic recovery, the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper, and priorities for the Spending Review.

Nigeria: Crisis Management

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the commitment given in the 2018 UK-Nigeria security and defence partnership that Nigeria would implement a

new crisis response mechanism, similar to the UK's COBR system, has been implemented. [HL7583]

Baroness Sugg: The UK and Nigerian Governments signed the Security and Defence Partnership in August 2018 with the objective of working together to tackle regional and global threats including terrorism, conflict and intercommunal violence, human trafficking, serious organised crime, cybercrime and piracy.

Through our Security and Defence Partnership, the UK Government has worked with Nigeria to implement a new crisis response mechanism. In 2019, the UK Government facilitated the publication of a National Crisis Response Doctrine in Nigeria, establishing a clear cross-government approach to crisis management. We also trained the secretariat for the Presidential Communications Command and Control Centre and the Joint Operations Room. The Presidential Communications Command and Control Centre is the Nigerian equivalent to COBR. The Joint Operations Room brings together the key directors of operations from across the Nigerian Government during a national crisis.

The use of the Doctrine is regularly tested and refreshed. The High Commission in Abuja ran a workshop in February 2020 for current directors of operations from across the Nigerian Government, to establish new guidelines for use during a national crisis. The Presidential Communications Command and Control Centre has been used throughout the COVID-19 crisis response in Nigeria.

Nigeria: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Stroud

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 9 March (HL1991) and reports of increased violence in Plateau, Benue, Taraba, southern Kaduna and Bauchi in Nigeria, what plans they have to provide humanitarian assistance in the Middle-Belt region in Nigeria. [HL7718]

Baroness Sugg: We are concerned by intercommunal violence that occurs across multiple states in Nigeria and has a devastating impact on affected communities. We condemn all incidents of intercommunal violence and call for solutions that meet the needs of all affected communities. FCDO is increasing our engagement with state governments in affected areas, including Plateau, Kaduna and Benue.

We are working with stakeholders to respond to the drivers of violence, including the challenge of resource competition. We have provided technical support to the Nigerian Government for the development of the National Livestock Transformation Plan, which aims to promote cattle-rearing in one place to limit competition over land and resources. This is currently being implemented in eight Middle-Belt states. We also provide funding to support communities recently displaced due to violence in Kaduna State.

UK humanitarian assistance in Nigeria supports vulnerable people with the most acute lifesaving needs. Aligned with the UN Humanitarian Response Plan this is focused in North East Nigeria.

Northern Trains

Asked by *Lord Stunell*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, as operator of last resort, to instruct Northern Rail to maintain passenger services in accordance with the franchise agreement; and, in particular, whether they intend to require Northern Rail to maintain a full timetable of services on the Manchester Piccadilly to Rose Hill Marple line. [[HL7719](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Following the Minister of State for Rail's meeting with the operator on 4 September, and after reviewing its options, Northern is introducing two trains in the morning, Monday to Friday, for Rose Hill-Marple from 14 September, which will help school children and morning commuters. There will be an additional afternoon service, arriving at Rose Hill-Marple at 1514 and arriving Manchester Piccadilly half an hour later. From the 26 October schools' half-term, Northern will provide a regular service every 90 minutes during the day between Manchester Piccadilly and Rose Hill Marple.

Palliative Care and Suicide

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mandate the inclusion of details of mental health charities, NHS support and groups such as the Samaritans to be published whenever newspapers or broadcasters report (1) on suicide, (2) on assisted suicide, and (3) on palliative care. [[HL7957](#)]

Baroness Barran: Every suicide is a tragedy which has a devastating and enduring impact on families and communities. The Government is taking action in this area, including launching the first Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Strategy, which sets out an ambitious programme across national and local government and the NHS. In response to COVID-19, the Government announced £9.2million of additional funding to support mental health charities, including Samaritans and CALM

The editorial and operational decisions of broadcasters are independent from the Government. Ofcom, the UK's independent broadcast regulator, sets rules in its Broadcasting Code for licensed broadcasters to meet to ensure UK audiences are adequately protected from harmful content. Ofcom advises in its Guidelines that where a programme has dealt with a particularly sensitive issue, broadcasters may wish to provide a helpline specific to that issue.

The Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Strategy sets out the importance of responsible media reporting of suicide. The Government is committed to a free and

independent press, and does not, therefore, seek to intervene in the decisions or activities of newspapers or regulators. Newspapers either self-regulate or are regulated by independent regulators; which include IPSO and IMPRESS. These regulators issue codes of conduct which set out the rules that newspapers and magazines have agreed to follow, including on reporting suicide.

IPSO has also produced guidance for journalists on reporting suicide, including signposting to sources of support by providing the contact details for The Samaritans, PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide, or other relevant organisations, in any articles reporting on a suicide.

Parks: Finance

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make another funding round for schemes for the funding of pocket parks. [[HL7642](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: In the last 2 years Government has made £16.3 million available to support parks and green spaces, including:

- £9.7 million Local Authority Parks Improvement Fund
- £5.1 million Pocket Parks and Pocket Parks Plus programmes (in addition to £1.05 million on Pocket Parks in 2015/16)
- £1.41 million to test and pilot new management and funding models for parks through the Future Parks Accelerator programme and to support Newcastle City Council development of parks charitable trust.

In addition to this, the Government has recently announced £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund in England. The fund will support projects that are ready to deliver and focus on nature restoration, nature-based solutions and engagement with nature. The fund will protect up to 2000 jobs and create up to 3000 more whilst delivering against the goals of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Further information on the fund can be found at:

Pedestrian Areas: Catering

Asked by *Lord Young of Cookham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the enactment of the Business and Planning Act 2020, how many local authorities have opted to make pavement licences subject to a smoke-free condition. [[HL7838](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The new pavement licence provisions provide vital support for businesses, particularly in the hard-hit hospitality sector, helping with their economic recovery following the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. Under the pavement licence provisions in the Business and Planning Act 2020 all pavement licences are subject to a national condition which requires

provision for non-smoking seating. The Government will work with the Local Government Association to assess the uptake of the pavement licence provisions and the conditions that apply as part of this.

Personal Income

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent research from Finland that suggests that Universal Basic Income improves employee mental health and boosts employment. [HL7724]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made. Universal Basic Income does not take any account of people's needs and circumstances, is not targeted at the poorest in society and would be hugely expensive.

This Government believes Universal Credit is the right strategy for the UK because it simplifies the benefits system, promotes and incentivises work and provides targeted support to those in most need, in a way that is affordable.

Pesticides: Health Hazards

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of (1) the impact of aminopyralid contamination in compost on gardeners and market gardeners, and (2) the adequacy of the Health and Safety Executive's Chemicals Regulation Directorate enforcement of restrictions on the use of herbicide products containing aminopyralid. [HL7596]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are measures in place to keep aminopyralid out of compost and manures. This is necessary because, as a herbicide, aminopyralid can harm broadleaved plants, leading to stunting and distortion (it is important to note that similar effects can result from nutritional deficiencies or diseases). The use of aminopyralid products is subject to strict conditions of use to ensure that plant material which may contain aminopyralid is not used in compost. These conditions have been in place for over ten years and, as a result, the number of reported incidents has declined to a very low level.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors and enforcement officers consider all reported cases of suspected aminopyralid contamination of compost. Decisions on possible compliance and enforcement action are taken on a case-by-case basis. In most cases it is not possible to establish whether or not residues of aminopyralid have damaged plants nor, if so, the source of the residues. HSE maintains close contact with the authorisation holder and continues to keep under review the effectiveness of measures put in place.

Planning: Rural Areas

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the percentage of small rural communities that do not meet the "designated rural areas" definition in section 157 of the 1985 Housing Act used in the consultation Changes to the current planning system, published on 6 August. [HL7638]

Lord Greenhalgh: National planning policy makes it clear that in rural areas, housing development that reflects local needs should be supported, and that affordable housing can be sought for residential developments that are not major developments in designated rural areas. Our consultation on changes to the current planning system does not propose to change this overall approach. To aid small and medium-sized (SME) builders through economic recovery, we are consulting on a proposal to increase the current threshold at which affordable housing contributions can be collected on new developments. The higher threshold will only be in place for a time limited period, and will not apply to designated rural areas. By raising the threshold, we are ensuring that sites that may not have been developed due to viability issues will now go ahead creating the homes our country needs. The Government has not set out a definition of small rural communities in national planning policy, but is keen to work with rural stakeholders as part of the consultation.

Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are planning to take to avoid a substantial number of tenants of private housing being evicted when the stay on house possession proceedings is lifted. [HL7592]

Lord Greenhalgh: To help prevent people getting into financial hardship or rent arrears, the Government has put in place an unprecedented support package, including support for business to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, £9.3 billion of additional support through the welfare system this year, and increasing Local Housing Allowance rates so that they are set at the 30th percentile of local market rents in each area.

Legislation has been introduced that means, from 29 August 2020, landlords must give tenants six months' notice before they can evict in most circumstances, apart from the most egregious cases – such as incidents of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse perpetrators – where it is right that landlords should be able to start progressing cases quicker, because of the pressure they place on landlords, other tenants and local communities. This will be in force until 31 March 2021.

In addition, new court rules, which will come into force on 20 September, will mean landlords will need to set out

in their claim any relevant information about a tenant's circumstances, including information on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Where this information is not provided, judges will have the ability to adjourn proceedings.

We will keep these measures under review and decisions will continue to be guided by the latest public health advice.

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that private tenants who have fallen into rent arrears as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will not be liable for eviction. [HL7593]

Lord Greenhalgh: To enable tenants to continue to pay their living costs, the Government has implemented a strong package of financial support. This includes support for business to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, £9.3 billion of additional support through the welfare system this year and an increase of the Local Housing Allowance rate to the 30th percentile.

The stay on possession proceedings has been extended until 20 September 2020, meaning that in total no tenant can have been legally evicted for six months at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legislation has also been introduced that means, from 29 August 2020 until 31 March 2021, landlords must give tenants six months' notice before they can evict in most circumstances, apart from the most serious cases. The extension of the stay on possession proceedings and changes to notice periods will ensure those most at risk will be protected and provide time for tenants to agree a solution with their landlord if they are unable to pay their rent or consider moving to avoid building up unsustainable debt.

Asked by Baroness Greender

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of private rented sector tenants in arrears as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7855]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public Footpaths: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the condition of public footpaths in England and Wales; and in particular whether (1) signposts, waymarks, bridges and stiles are effectively maintained on public rights of way, and (2) crops are being planted on fields without marking the route of public rights of way. [HL7608]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Local authorities are responsible for the management and maintenance of

public rights of way. They are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to plan improvements to the rights of way network in their area, which are usually available on the authority's website. This must include an assessment of the local rights of way including the condition of the network.

Deferring the 2026 cut-off date for registration of historic rights of way is a possibility, which would create more time for the reforms to rights of way legislation to be implemented effectively. We must weigh this against the desire for certainty around where rights of way exist, which implementing the cut-off date will bring. Officials intend to meet the rights of way reform Stakeholder Working Group soon and will discuss this issue with them and others before we come to a decision.

Railways: Freight

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have to increase the proportion of freight traffic within Great Britain that is carried by the railways. [HL7645]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is committed to further unlocking the economic and environmental benefits rail freight can deliver through its key role in reducing carbon emissions and its contribution to alleviating congestion on Britain's roads. As part of this ambition we are exploring a range of proposals aimed at increasing the proportion of freight traffic that is carried on our railways, and helping the sector recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The Department has invested over £235 million in the Strategic Freight Network between 2014-2019. So far in Control Period 6 (2019-2024), we have approved over £40 million of funding in projects across the country (with further projects being considered) to improve the capacity and capability of the rail network for freight and support its future growth. In addition, officials are preparing proposals in relation to gauge and capacity for rail freight on existing trans-Pennine routes to and from various ports in the North of England. This will be for consideration by Ministers for further development work, to evaluate options and costs, and develop a recommended programme.

The Government also supports the development of an expanded network of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) - which enable freight to be transferred more efficiently between transport modes - to better deliver the environmental and economic benefits rail freight offers. Furthermore, Government supports the development of an expanded network of SRFIs to grow intermodal rail freight, as outlined in the National Network National Policy Statement.

The Government grant schemes – principally the Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme (MSRS) – incentivise the movement of freight by rail and water. These grants usually help to remove around 900,000 HGVs off the road

each year. The Government increased these schemes' funding by 28%, to £20 million, in 2020/21 and remains committed to them to continue to support rail freight growth.

Finally, we are in close dialogue with Network Rail (NR) to explore possibilities for longer and heavier freight trains to enable more freight to run by rail.

Restoring Your Railway Fund: Preston-Colne Railway Line

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they received any bid to the Restoring Your Railway Fund for enhancements, including a passing loop, on the eleven-mile long single-track siding that forms the portion of the East Lancashire line between Gannow Junction and Colne. [HL7641]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has not received any bid to the Restoring Your Railway fund regarding the current single line section between Gannow Junction and Colne. Potential improvements to this section of the East Lancashire line were explored as part of the early feasibility work and this is informing development work on the potential reinstatement of the Skipton-Colne rail link.

Rights of Way: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for an extension of the 2026 cut-off date for registration of historic rights of way in view of delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7643]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Local authorities are responsible for the management and maintenance of public rights of way. They are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to plan improvements to the rights of way network in their area, which are usually available on the authority's website. This must include an assessment of the local rights of way including the condition of the network.

Deferring the 2026 cut-off date for registration of historic rights of way is a possibility, which would create more time for the reforms to rights of way legislation to be implemented effectively. We must weigh this against the desire for certainty around where rights of way exist, which implementing the cut-off date will bring. Officials intend to meet the rights of way reform Stakeholder Working Group soon and will discuss this issue with them and others before we come to a decision.

Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the potential cost in financial year 2021/22 of (1) maintaining the current uplift to Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits and Housing Benefit, and (2) introducing a similar uplift to income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support. [HL7673]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested is not available.

The Government has introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around £9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chancellor announced a series of policies to support people, jobs and businesses on 20 March 2020 during which he confirmed an increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance for 12 months until March 2021, in addition to planned uprating of 1.7 percent. Further decisions on spending will be made at the next fiscal event.

Social Security Benefits: Prisoners on Remand

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 6 August (HL7232), how many prisoners currently being held on remand have had (1) Housing Benefit, and (2) Universal Credit housing costs support, discontinued because the anticipated period in detention on remand exceeds the relevant time limits; and what plans they have to prevent this from happening, in the light of the delays to remand hearings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7672]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department does not centrally collect data for claimants who are serving a custodial sentence, or who are remanded in prison and in receipt of housing benefit, or the housing element of Universal Credit. To provide this would incur a disproportionate cost.

The written answer of 6th August (HL7232) explained that the Department is routinely notified by Prison Services across England, Wales and Scotland when offenders enter custody, including those on remand. For those who exceed the time limits for retaining housing costs support whilst remaining detained on remand, the specialist teams referred to previously ensure that the appropriate action is taken. The Department has no plans to extend the time limits for retaining housing costs support.

Students: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government who will inform a school of a positive COVID-19 test of a student at that school. [HL7820]

Baroness Berridge: Guidance on the full opening of schools was published on 2 July and has been regularly updated. This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. This includes advice on how schools should respond to any infections and is clear that schools should ask parents to inform them immediately of the results of a pupil's test. Local health protection teams will also contact schools directly if they become aware that an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 has attended the school as identified by the NHS Test and Trace system. The guidance outlines how schools should respond to any infection, including engagement with NHS Test and Trace and local health protection teams.

Suicide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with media regulators, including Ofcom and IPSO, on the reporting of suicide; what assessment they have made of the impact of reporting relating to assisted suicide; and what plans they have to review their guidance to ensure that public broadcasters include details of the Samaritans or other support services when reporting on suicide and assisted suicide stories. [HL7956]

Baroness Barran: Every suicide is a tragedy which has a devastating and enduring impact on families and communities. The Government is taking action in this area, including launching the first Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Strategy, which sets out an ambitious programme across national and local government and the NHS.

The Government does not review editorial content, as broadcast regulation is a matter for Ofcom. Ofcom has the power to set rules in its Broadcasting Code for broadcasters to meet in order to ensure UK audiences are adequately protected from harmful content. Ofcom's Guidelines, which advise broadcasters on meeting the rules, includes advice on providing specific helplines where a programme has dealt with a particularly sensitive issue.

The government is committed to a free and independent press, and does not, therefore, seek to intervene in the decisions or activities of newspapers or regulators, including IPSO. IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice sets out the rules that newspapers and magazines regulated by IPSO have agreed to follow, including on reporting suicide.

In response to COVID-19, the Government announced £9.2 million of additional funding to support mental health charities, including Samaritans and CALM. Samaritans published updated media guidelines resources at the beginning of August and created a new online hub of resources, covering additional topics to help journalists and programme makers further understand the issues surrounding suicidal behaviour and offering practical tips on covering these topics.

Television: Hearing Impairment

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what powers Ofcom has to require television broadcasters to put subtitles on all children's programmes. [HL7969]

Baroness Barran: Under the Communications Act 2003, broadcast television channels are required to make a certain proportion of their programmes, including children's programmes, accessible.

Statutory targets are set by Ofcom which include five and ten year targets on subtitling, sign language and audio description for licensed television services. Ofcom's [Code on Television Access Services](#) sets out these obligations and provides guidance and best practice on subtitling for broadcasters. This includes guidance in relation to subtitles aimed at young children which states that:

“care should be taken to ensure that these are accurate and grammatical, as children and parents use subtitles in developing literacy skills”.

Television content on demand should be accessible for all UK audiences. That is why, under the Digital Economy Act 2017, the Government included measures to facilitate accessibility requirements for on-demand services. Officials are working closely with Ofcom to implement this legislation.

Trade Agreements

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in negotiating free trade deals. [HL7814]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom is currently in negotiations with the United States, Australia and New Zealand to establish new Free Trade Agreements. We are also negotiating with a number of markets to establish continuity of trade, as we leave the transition period on 31st December. We reached one such agreement in principle for an enhanced trade agreement with Japan on 11th September, and we will be presenting final text to the House shortly.

My department published an update on the third round of negotiations with the US on GOV.UK on 12th August. The fourth round of negotiations have been running from 8th September and are due to close tomorrow, on the 18th September.

Over the summer, we have also held productive first round negotiations with Australia and New Zealand. Second rounds are scheduled for the week commencing 21st September and late October respectively.

Treasury: Staff

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Her Majesty's Treasury staff based in central London were working from their office desks on 2 September. [HL7692]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury does not hold this information.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to sign the UN's Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and (2) to submit that Treaty to Parliament for ratification. [HL7781]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Government firmly believes that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach under the NPT. The UK will not sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as we do not believe that this treaty will bring us closer to a world without such weapons. The TPNW fails to address the security obstacles that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament. It will not improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency, and risks undermining the NPT.

Urban Areas: Chewing Gum

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the environmental, (2) the health, and (3) the visual, impacts of chewing gum being deposited in urban environments; and what steps they are taking to ensure that companies benefiting from its sale are contributing to the cleaning of such gum. [HL7597]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has made no specific assessment of the environmental,

health and visual impacts of chewing gum being deposited in urban environments.

We believe that businesses should try to reduce the amount of litter their products generate. The Litter Strategy for England, published in 2017, sets out how we intend to work with the relevant industries to tackle certain types of particularly problematic litter, including chewing gum.

Defra chairs the industry-funded Chewing Gum Action Group (CGAG), which brings together the main chewing gum producer, Keep Britain Tidy, local government, the Chartered Institute of Waste Management, the Food and Drink Federation and the devolved administrations. The aim of the CGAG is to find and implement sustainable solutions to stop the irresponsible disposal of chewing gum and focus on changing individual behaviour in the long term. The CGAG has run annual behaviour-change campaigns for over ten years. We remain open to exploring other means of securing contributions from the industry to tackle gum litter.

Mars Wrigley Confectionery, a member of the CGAG, has produced a free to use gum littering toolkit. Local authorities, businesses, transport providers or any other organisation interested in reducing gum littering can access readymade campaigns for free. This toolkit was promoted as part of Defra's 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign that was launched this summer. More information can be found at: <https://tacklegumlittering.co.uk/>.

West Bank: Demolition

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to protect Palestinians living in the West Bank from having their (1) property, (2) land, and (3) infrastructure, demolished by the government of Israel on the grounds of an alleged lack of planning permission. [HL7831]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

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