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**Tuesday
22 September 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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|---|--|
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| Earl Howe | Deputy Leader of the House of Lords |
| Lord Agnew of Oulton | Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Treasury |
| Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
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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 |
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| 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 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

Tuesday, 22 September 2020

Gender Recognition Act 2004

[HLWS457]

Baroness Berridge: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Minister for Women and Equalities (Elizabeth Truss), has today made the following Written Statement:

Today, I am announcing the Government's response to the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

As a Government, we are determined that everyone in the UK should be free to live their lives and fulfil their potential regardless of their sex, gender identity, race or disability.

We are proud to have introduced same-sex marriage and passed the Turing law.

We want transgender people to be free to live and to prosper in a modern Britain. We have looked carefully at the issues raised in the consultation, including potential changes to the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

It is the Government's view that the balance struck in this legislation is correct, in that there are proper checks and balances in the system and also support for people who want to change their legal sex.

However, it is also clear that we need to improve the process and experience that transgender people have when applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate – making it kinder and more straightforward. Our changes will address the main concerns that trans people themselves tell us they have about it.

In 2017, we conducted by far the largest survey ever of British LGBT people, with over 108,000 respondents, of whom 7000 were trans. Of those who had completed their transition, around 2 in 5 said that they had a Gender Recognition Certificate, a higher proportion than is often believed. The survey then asked those who had not applied what had prevented them from doing so. They were able to choose as many reasons as they wanted.

Thirty-eight per cent told us the process was too bureaucratic. So we will place the whole procedure online. Thirty-four per cent said the process was too expensive. This, too, we will address. We will reduce the fee from £140 to a nominal amount.

We have also come to understand that gender recognition reform, though supported in the consultation undertaken by the last government, is not the top priority for transgender people. Perhaps their most important concern is the state of trans healthcare. Trans people tell us that waiting lists at NHS gender clinics are too long. I agree, and I am deeply concerned at the distress it can cause. That is why we are opening at least three new gender clinics this year, which should see waiting lists cut by around 1,600 patients by 2022. The full benefit of the increases in clinical capacity that we've been able to secure will lead to greater patient choice, shorter waiting

times, better geographical coverage and easier access. It will also make it easier to fulfil the medical requirements of obtaining a GRC.

It is why we last year provided funding for the UK's first National LGBT Health Advisor to help improve transgender people's experience.

Britain leads the world as a country where everybody is able to lead their life freely and treated with respect and that, for many years, transgender people have been widely accepted in British society; able to use facilities of their chosen gender; and able to participate fully in modern life.

At the heart of this is the principle of individual liberty. Our philosophy is that a person's character, your ideas, and your work ethic trumps the colour of your skin or your biological sex. We firmly believe that neither biology nor gender is destiny.

The Equality Act 2010 clearly protects transgender people from discrimination. The same act allows service providers to restrict access to single sex spaces on the basis of biological sex if there is a clear justification.

We want every individual, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity to have the confidence and the freedom to be themselves. We will continue with our international leadership by hosting our International LGBT Conference to make sure LGBT people around the world are safe to be themselves.

I am laying the analysis report of consultation responses as a Command Paper today and it will be published on [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk).

The Statement includes the following attached material:

GRA 2004: Analysis of consultation responses [GRA Consultation Analysis Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-09-22/HLWS457/>

Modern Slavery

[HLWS458]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Victoria Atkins) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today the Government has published its response to the Transparency in Supply Consultation. A copy of the Government response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and it will also be published on Gov.UK.

The landmark transparency provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report annually on their work to prevent and address risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. This legislation was introduced to empower investors, consumers and civil society to hold businesses to account, and it has since sparked an international trend for supply chains legislation.

I am proud that thousands of businesses have risen to the challenge of reporting and consistently raised the benchmark for transparency since the Act came into force. This year the Government joined the private sector in opening up about its supply chains, becoming the first country in the world to publish a Government modern slavery statement setting out how we are leveraging public spending to prevent risks in Government supply chains and drive responsible practices. In his foreword to the statement, the Prime Minister made the Government's ambitions clear:

'It's not enough for government and businesses to simply say they don't tolerate modern slavery. As we take stock of both the challenges faced and achievements made, we must match our words with actions.'

Five years on from the Act, it has become more important than ever that businesses take responsibility for their supply chains, and I am committed to ensuring this Government maintains its global leadership on this agenda. In May 2019, the final report of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, led by Frank Field, Rt Hon Maria Miller MP and the noble Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE, considered the Act's transparency legislation alongside four other key areas and made a compelling case for change. In response, the Home Office launched a public consultation seeking views on a range of measures to strengthen section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act and enhance the impact of transparency.

I am grateful for the expertise of the reviewers and of those who responded to the consultation. Today, I am proud to announce the ambitious package of measures we will be taking forwards to strengthen and future-proof the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation.

To improve transparency, we will be requiring all organisations caught by the Act to publish their statement to a central Government-run reporting service, to ensure organisations' work to prevent modern slavery is open to scrutiny. At the same time, we will be introducing mandatory topics that modern slavery statements must cover, to increase transparency and encourage year on year improvement in key areas. Taken together, these measures will drive a race to the top, ensuring progress is recognised and gaps are addressed.

To improve compliance, we will introduce a single reporting deadline on which all statements must be published. We are also considering options for civil penalties for non-compliance forwards in line with the development of the Single Enforcement Body for employment rights, led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Finally, we will be extending the reporting requirement to public bodies – a global first. Leveraging public spending is a crucial step towards driving responsible practices and identifying risks, and I welcome the voluntary efforts of many public sector organisations on this agenda. Like businesses, public sector organisations have a responsibility to be transparent about modern slavery risks in their supply chains and how these are being addressed. Ministerial Government departments

have already committed to publishing annual modern slavery statements, the first of which will be published in September 2021.

Many of these measures are global firsts. However, I am determined that Government and industry do everything possible to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation. Tackling modern slavery remains a priority for the Government and I will continue to look at what further measures are needed to strengthen our response, in partnership with the Devolved Administrations, law enforcement, business, public sector organisations, NGOs, civil society and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

UK's Future Trading Relationship with the US: Negotiations

[HLWS456]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liz Truss MP) has today made the following statement.

The fourth UK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiating round took place from 8 September to 18 September 2020.

There were 29 sessions held in this round, covering 16 different chapter areas. Significant progress has been achieved since launching negotiations in May 2020, and most chapter areas are now in the advanced stages of talks.

In total, 132 sessions have been held over the past four negotiating rounds, as well as an additional 30 intersessional discussions, involving officials from 20 different UK Government departments and agencies.

In the fourth round, both sides continued to have detailed textual discussions, and negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in the majority of chapter areas.

Shortly before the fourth negotiating round both sides exchanged their first tariff offers, allowing a series of detailed market access discussions to be held during the round.

The exchange of tariff offers is a notable milestone, and the speed at which this stage has been reached demonstrates the momentum behind these negotiations.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to continue negotiations at pace throughout the Autumn in advance of the US Presidential elections.

The fifth round of talks will take place in mid to late October, with additional intersessional discussions taking place between the fourth and fifth rounds. Further such talks will be held this week on Telecommunications, Intellectual Property, Market Access, and Rules of Origin.

Below is a summary list of those workstreams discussed in the round:

- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Competition

- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Market Access
- Financial Services
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Rules of Origin
- Investment
- Economics

- Cross Border Trade in Services
- Industrial Subsidies
- Sectoral Annexes
- Core Text
- Trade Remedies
- State Owned Enterprises

Written Answers

Tuesday, 22 September 2020

Abortion: Drugs

Asked by **Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement of a public consultation on whether to make permanent the current COVID-19 measure allowing for home use of early medical abortion pills up to 10 weeks' gestation for all eligible women on 6 July (HC Deb, col 717), what plans they have to hold an inquiry into the British Pregnancy Advisory Service's provision of a telemedical service to send abortion pills by post to women from Northern Ireland. [HL7536]

Lord Bethell: The Government funds the Central Booking Service, which is managed by British Pregnancy Advisory Service for access to services under the Abortion Act 1967 in England only.

Health is devolved matter and abortions in Northern Ireland follow the regulations that apply there. Service provision in Northern Ireland, in line with the regulations, is a matter for the Department of Health in Northern Ireland.

Armed Conflict: Schools

Asked by **Lord Pendry**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving the UN in the application of pressure (1) to the government of (a) Israel, (b) Russia, and (c) Saudi Arabia, and (2) to any other government which has yet to sign and has been accused of (a) violating the rights of children, and (b) attacking schools, to sign the Safe Schools Declaration. [HL7981]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Safe Schools Declaration (Declaration) is a powerful initiative that has successfully shifted mind-sets globally on the impact of attacks and military occupation of educational infrastructure. The UK welcomes the Declaration and other efforts aimed at promoting and protecting the right to education and facilitating its continuation in conflict.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UK is using its membership to engage with key states as they come onto the UNSC on the Declaration, to lobby for endorsement, push for effective implementation, and offer official level consultations where relevant. Through the UNSC Children and Armed Conflict Working Group, the UK supplements and supports the work of the UN to end all violations against children, including pushing states to ensure that educational facilities and related personnel are protected, in line with the Declaration. The UK lobbied successfully for key commitments in September's UNSC Presidential Statement on protecting education against attack, including securing reference to the Declaration and the critical role it plays, despite strong opposition.

In September 2020, the UK actively supported the implementation of the first International Day to Protect Education from Attack on 9 September. We participated in a related UNSC Open Debate, calling upon Member States to endorse and commit to avoiding military use of educational facilities. We will continue to call upon all UN Member States to endorse and implement the Declaration, including Israel, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

Belarus: Political Parties

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Leeds**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) independently, and (2) with the governments of other European nations, to provide political and financial support to opposition parties and individuals in Belarus. [HL8069]

Baroness Sugg: The UK has stated it does not accept the results of the fraudulent Presidential election and has condemned the excessive violence used to suppress the subsequent peaceful protests. We have urged the Belarusian authorities to engage in a constructive dialogue with political opposition and civil society. We intend to double our support for independent media, human rights organisations and community groups in Belarus - with an extra £1.5 million for projects over the next two years.

We will keep working with our international partners to support and strengthen democracy and human rights in Belarus. We are calling for an independent investigation through the OSCE into the electoral process and the repression which has followed. The UK is also working with international partners to sanction those responsible, and to hold the Belarusian authorities to account.

Business: Training

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist businesses to deliver online skills training to staff. [HL7946]

Baroness Berridge: To equip people better to use digital tools and to adapt to the social distancing measures of COVID-19, the government launched The Skills Toolkit in April 2020. This offers a wide-range of digital and numeracy courses for all skills levels.

Courses are available for free to the public, offering an opportunity for individuals to upskill and build on their CV. Everything from 'everyday maths' to an introductory 70 hour course on coding. We want to significantly grow the range of the courses on offer and will therefore be launching an expanded platform shortly.

From August 2020, we have introduced a new digital entitlement that will enable adults with no or low digital skills to undertake new improved digital qualifications free of charge. These entitlements are based on new national standards, which set out the digital skills that people need in life and in work.

We are also providing £2.5 billion, over the course of this Parliament, for the National Skills Fund to help adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future.

The government is also supporting the Digital Boost platform, which provides digital support for small businesses and charities in the UK that have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The platform is building a community of skilled digital expert volunteers, who are providing one-to-one support to small businesses and charities free of charge to help them improve their digital capability, build sustainable incomes through digital channels, reach more customers online and stay competitive during the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.

The government has launched Local Digital Skills Partnerships (Local DSPs) in 7 regions across England to bring together cross-sector regional and national partners to work collaboratively to tackle regional skills gaps. These have been supporting regional economic recovery, for example, working closely with Growth Hubs to understand the challenges businesses and individuals are facing and collating useful resources to support people around digital during this time.

Cameroon: Political Prisoners

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the continued imprisonment of Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe and nine other members of the Southern Cameroon's Liberation Movement on the likelihood of a successful peace process in Cameroon; and what representations they have made for the release of those imprisoned without due process of civilian law in Cameroon. [HL7923]

Baroness Sugg: The British High Commissioner in Yaoundé has repeatedly raised the status of political prisoners in discussions with the Government of Cameroon. The British High Commission has been part of successful efforts to negotiate access to lawyers and family members for political prisoners and we continue to call for due process to be followed for all those in detention. We note reports that Mr Tabe and the Government of Cameroon have been engaged in direct talks, held outside of prison, about the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. We urge all parties to support credible peacebuilding efforts and to remain engaged in the ongoing Swiss-led efforts to facilitate talks.

Children: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children who do not have adequate access to computing devices or digital connectivity and who have not yet received support

from the scheme to provide laptops and 4G dongles. [HL7912]

Baroness Berridge: The department has already delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers to local authorities and academy trusts for children who would not otherwise have access, as part of over £100 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care.

The department allocated laptops, tablets and routers 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 one.

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 was denied.

The department has published data on devices delivered through the programme here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/laptops-tablets-and-4g-wireless-routers-progress-data.

The department are now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 additional devices available in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions. These devices will be owned by the school, academy trust or local authority that receives them and can be loaned out to help children to access education and catch up support.

Schools will be able to use these devices to support disadvantaged pupils who would not otherwise be able to access remote education in years 3 to 11. Schools will also be able to order devices for disadvantaged children across all year groups who are shielding as a result of official advice, all year groups who attend a hospital school that is required to close and those completing their key stage 4 at a further education college that is required to close.

The targeting of devices through this scheme will be continually reviewed to ensure support is offered in the most effective way given the number of schools disrupted and the number of devices available at the time.

Confederation of British Industry: Strategic Trade Advisory Group

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to appoint a representative of the Confederation of British Industry to the Strategic Trade Advisory Group. [HL7952]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Strategic Trade Advisory Group (STAG) has recently been through a review and my Department will shortly announce its new membership.

Constituencies

Asked by *Lord Lipsey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation they undertook before deciding to conduct constituency boundary reviews on an eight-year cycle; and what plans they have to publish a summary of those consultations. [HL7937]

Lord True: Ahead of the Bill's introduction, the Government engaged with parliamentary parties, and electoral administrator representatives, and there was general acceptance of an 8-year cycle.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by *Lord Allen of Kensington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey results published by Make UK in its report Manufacturing Monitor, published on 7 September, and in particular the 62 per cent of respondents who thought the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme should be extended for critical sectors; and what action they plan to take as a result. [HL7950]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is aware of the intense disruption businesses in the manufacturing sector have faced due to the pandemic and has sympathy with all those affected.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was designed to be in place only as a temporary measure while businesses regrouped and responded to the crisis. It would be challenging to extend the CJRS for specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way and it would also be difficult to do so without creating distortion, particularly as some firms work across multiple sectors.

The CJRS will remain open until the end of October, and other schemes in the Government's unprecedented package of support for businesses remain open for those who need it.

The Government is continuing to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic, including on specific sectors, and to work with businesses and representative groups. This will of course inform the Government's efforts to support the recovery heading into the autumn.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of fraud that has taken place in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and what action they are taking in response. [HL7936]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Using the very limited useful evidence available at the time from labour market programmes and HMRC's knowledge of the characteristics of organised fraud, HMRC's early view of the level of error and fraud on the Coronavirus Job

Retention Scheme (CJRS) is that it could range from five to ten per cent. This analysis has been used to help HMRC to design the schemes and calibrate their compliance work.

Following the granting of Royal Assent for the Finance Act on 22 July, HMRC now have the legal powers to carry out investigations into suspected CJRS fraud. Before then, HMRC carried out more than 5,000 targeted calls to high-risk cases, to reduce the chance of further error and make clear that HMRC would be investigating excessive claims.

The Finance Act gives employers a 90-day window to correct claims. HMRC are writing to every employer where they have concerns from the data HMRC hold that they may have overclaimed. By the end of November, HMRC will have written to about 27,000 people prompting them to use the opportunity to self-correct.

Starting this month, HMRC will also conduct up to 10,000 one-to-one interventions. This will include cases where HMRC have received information through their fraud hotlines. HMRC's priorities are to support those correcting a genuine error, while taking action against those who have deliberately sought to abuse the scheme.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by *Lord Lipsey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 20 August (HL7375), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what is their assessment of how much the increase in daily reported COVID-19 cases can be attributed (1) to increased testing, and (2) to changes in natural prevalence. [HL7669]

Lord Bethell: The increase in the number of cases over the past few weeks, affecting particularly young age groups, is not accounted for by an increase in testing and indicated a real increase in incidence.

Coronavirus: Travel

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have not implemented testing for COVID-19 at airports and other ports of entry for those entering the UK. [HL7788]

Lord Bethell: We are taking clear and decisive action to slow the spread of the virus and save lives. To keep the number of transmissions in the United Kingdom as low as possible, international arrivals from non-exempt countries are required to supply their contact and accommodation information, and self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days, unless they are exempt.

Work is ongoing with clinicians, the devolved administrations, the testing and travel industries to consider if and how testing could be used in the future to reduce the self-isolation period. Any potential introduction of testing for international arrivals at airports

or other ports of entry would need to be robust in order to minimise the chance that positive cases are missed.

Corporation Tax

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support are they giving to the Fair Tax Mark certification scheme. [HL7935]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is committed to ensuring all businesses pay their fair share of tax in the UK and has taken significant steps to ensure that this objective is realised. This includes introducing the Diverted Profits Tax in 2015, the Interest Restriction Rules in 2017, and the Digital Services Tax from April 2020.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the administration of the UK tax system. HMRC use the most appropriate, cost-effective, and high-impact methods to support all taxpayers in complying with their obligations, and impose sanctions on those who do not.

Ethiopia: Arrests and Violence

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of (1) recent large-scale arrests and alleged disappearances in Ethiopia, (2) violence against the Tigre people, and (3) intercommunal violence in Oromia; what representations they have made to the government of Ethiopia; and what discussions they have had with (1) the African Union, and (2) the United Nations, about those bodies involvement in peace building work in Ethiopia. [HL8026]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is concerned by reports of violence between ethnic groups in Ethiopia, reports of arrests and abuses by security services. The Minister for Africa visited Ethiopia from 27 - 29 July and was able to discuss these issues with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the President of Oromia Region. He pushed for full and transparent investigations on the violence and that those detained are afforded due process and their cases heard promptly. The Minister for Africa also expressed the need for more peaceful dialogue between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and for space to be given for political debate.

While in Addis Ababa, the Minister for Africa called on Commissioners at the African Union. They discussed a wide range of issues, including peace and security matters.

The UK supports the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to strengthen accountability and has been encouraged by the opening of the political space - in particular the release of thousands of political prisoners and the reform of legislation which constrained civil and political rights. We support civil society organisations in Ethiopia so that they can play an increasing role in

monitoring human rights. The UK is also working closely with international partners including the African Union and the UN to promote a peaceful and stable Ethiopia [and has contributed over £15 million to UNDP support for the National Elections Board of Ethiopia]. The UK is watching carefully developments and reactions to the elections held in the Tigray region on 9 September.

Ethiopia: Christianity

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that more than 500 Christians have been killed in coordinated attacks in Ethiopia since June; and what steps they are taking to assist the government of Ethiopia (1) to identify the perpetrators, and (2) to bring those responsible to justice. [HL7919]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is concerned by reports of violence between ethnic groups in Ethiopia following the murder of Hachalu Hundessa on 29 June, and the widespread violence that followed in Addis Ababa and the Oromia region. The Minister for Africa visited Ethiopia from 27 - 29 July and was able to discuss these events with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the President of Oromia Region. He pushed for full and transparent investigations on the violence and that those detained are afforded due process and their cases heard promptly. The Minister for Africa also expressed the need for more peaceful dialogue between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and for space to be given for political debate. We shall continue to monitor the situation and to raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with the Ethiopian Government and regional leaders.

EU Law: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what body will (1) determine, and (2) enforce, EU state aid rules in Northern Ireland after the end of the transition period. [HL7927]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the circumstances in which a company operating in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland would be subject to EU state aid rules in Northern Ireland but not subject to such rules in Great Britain. [HL7929]

Lord True: The Northern Ireland Protocol sets out that EU state aid rules will apply in certain cases where relevant to trade between Northern Ireland and the EU. This does not mean that state aid rules will apply to Northern Ireland as they do today. State aid provisions apply only to trade 'subject to the Protocol'. The Protocol is limited in scope to the movement of goods and wholesale electricity markets. Where trade is subject to the Protocol, the supervision and enforcement procedures

it sets out will apply, as will the safety net provided by the UK Internal Market Bill.

Gaza: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide (1) ventilators, and (2) any other urgently required medical supplies, to Gaza; and what steps they are taking to encourage (1) parties in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (2) the government of Israel and (3) the governments of other neighbouring states to Gaza, to cooperate to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL8027]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned by the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza.

We have provided over £3.5million to the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel, scale up laboratory testing capacity and support vulnerable households. The British Consulate General also recently supported the delivery of 15 respirators to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Nine more respirators will soon be shipped for hospitals in Gaza.

In his recent visit to the region, the Foreign Secretary encouraged both Israel and the Palestinians to resume cooperation, including with regards to COVID-19.

GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Chair of Ofqual on 2 September that GCSE, AS and A-Level exams may take place online in 2021. [HL7914]

Baroness Berridge: The department believes that examinations and assessments are the best and fairest way of judging students' performance, and we expect next year's examination series to go ahead.

We continue to work closely with Ofqual, the exam boards and groups representing teachers, schools and colleges to consider our approach to GCSE, AS and A level exams and other assessments in 2021, to ensure that next year's exam series proceeds fairly and smoothly.

Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with representatives of Fulham, Richmond and Hammersmith Councils, and with

Transport for London, about the funding for repairs to Hammersmith Bridge. [HL7990]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government wants to make sure that Londoners can move around the capital easily, on public transport, through active travel and on our roads. As part of that, the Government want to see the Hammersmith Bridge opened as soon as safely possible, so that – at a minimum – people can cycle and walk across the bridge and in time return the bridge to full use.

To help find a speedy resolution to the situation, the Government has established a Taskforce. This Taskforce includes representatives from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, to help determine the most appropriate next steps.

High Speed 2 Railway Line

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the opportunity cost of HS2; and what plans they have to allow for further Parliamentary scrutiny should the official cost increase. [HL7998]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The recently published Full Business Case sets out the rationale for why HS2 is the best transport option to deliver the Government's strategic aims of levelling up, improved connectivity and increased capacity between our biggest economic regions. It builds on the Oakervee Review, which considered transport alternatives and concluded that HS2 remained the best option to meet these goals. The Government has committed to provide six-monthly reports to Parliament on progress which will allow scrutiny of any cost increases against the agreed funding envelope for Phase 1 and the contingency provided.

Import Duties

Asked by Lord Rose of Monewden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the tariff rate quotas outlined in the UK goods schedule submitted to the World Trade Organization on 24 July 2018; and if they have any such plans, which categories of goods are expected to be affected. [HL8031]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: On 21st December 2018, the United Kingdom opened a process under Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to negotiate tariff rate quotas, as we work to certify our World Trade Organisation goods schedule. The quotas cover a range of agricultural and non-agricultural goods as listed in our draft goods schedule. Changes to the quotas are possible as a result of those negotiations, but no agreements have yet been finalised. Independent of the negotiations, the United Kingdom may from time to time make technical amendments to her goods schedule.

In Vitro Fertilisation

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon on 4 February 2008 (HL Deb, col 904), what conclusions were reached by the review of practices in informing donor-conceived children of the fact of their donor conception; what changes in the law were consequently made to ensure that donor-conceived children are informed of their donor conception; and how has this been further implemented by subsequent administrations. [HL8042]

Lord Bethell: The Nuffield Council on Bioethics undertook a comprehensive review of donor conception. *Donor conception: ethical aspects of information sharing* was published on 17 April 2013 and a copy is attached.

One of the report's key recommendations was that "The state does not, and should not, have a role in informing donor-conceived people of the circumstances of their conception, for example through entries on birth certificates."

In the light of this review and the report's clear recommendation, the Government took the view that no further legislative action was appropriate in this area. The Government encourages the parents of donor conceived children to be open with them about their genetic heritage. This has remained Government policy through successive administrations.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Nuffield Council review of donor conception [Nuffield Council Donor_conception_report_2013.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-14/HL8042>

Israel: Trees

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel about the uprooting of olive trees for the construction of a settler-only road in Ras Karkarby by that government. [HL8099]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are troubled by reports of the destruction of olive trees and we have expressed our concerns to the Israeli Government on a number of occasions. We continue to oppose settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Jerusalem: Demolition

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel demolished 51 Palestinian structures in East Jerusalem in August. [HL8098]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. We call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

Motor Vehicles: Road Traffic Offences

Asked by **Lord Borwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vehicles have been stopped for reasons which include overloading in each region in England in the last 12 months; how many such vehicles have been tested for gross weight; and how many drivers have been arrested for being found to have overloaded their vehicle. [HL8050]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As part of its roadside enforcement checks the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has stopped 8,335 vehicles for reasons including overloading in England in the last 12 months. The DVSA does not hold data on the number of vehicles stopped for this reason in each region in England. Of the 8,335 stopped, the DVSA has issued 3,806 prohibitions to drivers where the vehicle has been deemed to be overloaded.

It is possible that a vehicle could have had multiple types of overloading offences so the data relates to vehicles weighed and vehicles that have one or more of these types of offences. Having a vehicle that is overloaded is not an arrestable offence and the DVSA does not have the power to arrest.

Musicians: Free Movement of People

Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Barran on 10 September (HL Deb, col 911), what plans they have to seek a Mode IV agreement with the EU to cover musicians and music professionals; and whether any such agreement would enable musicians to travel between the UK and the EU for performing, recording, teaching, or collaborating at short notice and for short periods of time. [HL8110]

Baroness Barran: Our cultural and creative sectors are one of the UK's greatest success stories and the music industry is a major contributor to this. The Government recognises the importance of the continued mobility of musicians and music professionals.

As set out in Our approach to the Future Relationship with the EU, the Government is seeking reciprocal mobility arrangements with the EU in a defined number of areas. For example, to allow business professionals to provide certain services, visa-free. This is in line with the arrangements that the UK might want to offer other close trading partners in future, where they support new and deep trade deals.

Although we cannot preempt the outcome of ongoing negotiations, we will continue our close dialogue with the sector to ensure that the Government is kept well informed of the needs of the music sector.

National Institute for Health Protection

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the National Institute for Health Protection (1) to be formally established, and (2) to be fully operational. [HL7729]

Lord Bethell: The new National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) will bring together the health protection expertise of Public Health England, Joint Biosecurity Centre and NHS Test and Trace under a single leadership. It will start work immediately to boost the United Kingdom's ability to deal with and recover from COVID-19 and meet health challenges of the coming winter. Although the new leadership arrangements will be in effect immediately, the NIHP will not be formally established until spring 2021, in order to minimise disruption to the vital COVID-19 response work.

National Institute for Health Protection: Public Appointments

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the governance of the National Institute for Health Protection will include representatives from both national and local government. [HL7987]

Lord Bethell: We are currently developing the transition process to support full and formal establishment of the National Institute for Health Protection. Future governance arrangements will be determined as part of this process over the coming months.

Palestinians: Armed Forces

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that the bodies of Palestinians who have been killed by the Israel Defense Force are being withheld. [HL8097]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made representations on these reports, we urge all sides to treat the dead with respect and to return any bodies they are holding.

Pharmacy: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research, published in *Chemist+Druggist* on 3 August, which showed that 51 per cent of BAME pharmacy staff have considered leaving their jobs due to racial discrimination. [HL7725]

Lord Bethell: No assessment has been made of the research, published in *Chemist+Druggist* on 3 August, in respect to black, Asian and minority ethnic pharmacy staff and racial discrimination. However, equality and diversity are central themes in the NHS People Plan of 30 July 2020. This sets out practical actions for employers and systems to tackle the discrimination that some staff face and includes principles to apply across all National Health Service organisations, including for pharmacy staff employed by the NHS.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society published *Improving Inclusion and Diversity across our profession: our strategy for Pharmacy 2020-2025* in June 2020. This provides further information and pathways for tackling discrimination in pharmacy. A copy of the report is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Improving Inclusion and Diversity [Improving Inclusion and Diversity across our profession our strategy for Pharmacy 2020-2025.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-02/HL7725>

Prescriptions: Telephone Services

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation they undertook prior to the decision that patients may not order prescriptions by telephone from 1 September; and what assessment they have made of the impact of that decision on (1) individuals, and (2) general practitioners. [HL7590]

Lord Bethell: We are informed by NHS England and NHS Improvement that the National Health Service has not nationally cancelled any facility for ordering repeat prescriptions. While ordering online has proven hugely popular because of the convenience and ease, this will not be possible for everyone. Ordering of repeat prescriptions is for surgeries to arrange locally. However, national guidance is clear that every local practice must put in place a system for prescriptions, which can include online and phone orders, to meet the needs of their own patients.

Retail Trade: Corporation Tax

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that online retail businesses pay corporate taxation (1) at similar levels to high street retailers, and (2) which is relative to profits. [HL8014]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Corporation tax is charged on profits that businesses generate from the activities they undertake in the UK.

Significant measures have been put in place to counter arrangements designed to shift profits derived from UK activities overseas.

Furthermore, the UK is actively involved in continuing OECD discussions which aim to deliver a fairer and more sustainable approach to the taxation of highly digital businesses.

Road Traffic

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that congestion is now higher than comparable 2019 levels, what plans they have to reduce congestion on roads. [HL8141]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: These are unprecedented times, bringing both challenges and opportunities. There is an opportunity to build on changes in behaviour seen during lockdown. The Prime Minister has been clear that as the country emerges from lockdown, people should walk or cycle where possible. Walking and cycling will reduce pressure on the public transport system and the road network.

To help with this, the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) announced on 9 May included £225 million of funding in two tranches for local authorities. Alongside the funding, the Government published additional Network Management Duty guidance. This clearly set out what the Government expects local authorities to do in making changes to their road layouts to encourage cycling and walking in response to COVID-19 and to support a green restart and recovery.

Active travel clearly does not work for everyone, or for every journey, but the more people that cycle and walk, the more road space is freed up for those who really need to drive.

The Government is also investing in road and rail. On 14 May the Department laid out plans to transform the country's transport infrastructure to help the country 'build out' of COVID-19 and support the nation's economy through a £1.7bn Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund to improve roads, repair bridges and fill in millions of potholes.

We are also increasing our investment in the operation, maintenance and renewal of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) to secure safer and more reliable journeys. Our second Road Investment Strategy, published in March,

requires Highways England to meet the ambition that average delay on the SRN will be no worse than then in 2025, and sets tough targets for keeping the SRN free from traffic restrictions owing to roadworks and the clearance of incidents within one hour.

Somalia: Female Genital Mutilation and Marriage

Asked by *Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their strategy to address (1) female genital mutilation, and (2) child marriage, in Somalia, following the introduction of the Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill in the Parliament of Somalia; and what protections they have established for the protection of British-Somali citizens from (1) female genital mutilation, and (2) child marriage. [HL7889]

Baroness Sugg: The UK strategy towards Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early, child and forced marriage in Somalia is incredibly important. We continue our efforts towards ending FGM in all its forms and tackling early, child and forced marriage. The UK Government is lobbying the Government of Somalia to table a bill which is compatible with Somalia's obligations under international law and commitments on the protection of children and women. In 2019 we helped over 24,000 community members participate in conversations to end FGM and child marriage; engaged over 2,000 religious leaders in protecting and promoting human rights for women and girls; and supported the development of plans by over 40 communities to foster more dialogue and action on these issues.

In 2018 the Somali cabinet drafted a Sexual Offence Bill (SOB) which could be instrumental in securing basic sexual and reproductive rights for women. This SOB has not been tabled since its creation, partly due to resistance from clerics and several members of the parliament who find the SOB to not be sufficiently sharia compliant. On 8 August 2020, a modified and regressive version of the SOB, which would for example legalise child marriage, was tabled by parliament. The bill is contentious and civil society, and other development partners are working to stop it from being passed by parliament. BE Mogadishu raises the issue regularly with Parliamentarians at all levels, and supports civil society contacts to do the same.

The UK is equally committed to protecting British-Somali citizens who may be at risk of FGM or forced marriage. The UK Government has a dedicated Forced Marriage Unit leading efforts to combat forced marriage and FGM both at home and abroad and has already provided support to dozens of potential victims in Somalia last year. This support includes UK funded safe-houses in Somalia, including Somaliland, that provide British Nationals with temporary shelter and support, while the consular team establish a plan to repatriate them. Additional support is then available for victims who have returned to the UK.

Somalia: Sexual Offences

Asked by *Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, if any, to dissuade the government of Somalia from pursuing the Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill. [HL7890]

Baroness Sugg: The UK continues to lobby Somalia's parliament, through private conversations as well as public statements to dismiss the 'Sexual Intercourse' bill tabled by some MPs in favour of one that is compatible with Somalia's obligations under international law and commitments on the protection of children and women. The UK is also working to coordinate advocacy efforts with international partners to ensure all messaging is aligned. The UK is encouraged by Somalis lobbying their Parliament and the Somali '#killthebill' social media campaign and continues to support civil society representatives to ensure that Somali voices are heard on human rights issues.

Trade Agreements: Japan

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the draft trade agreement with Japan differs from that which the European Union already has in place with Japan. [HL8065]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement locks in the benefits of the EU-Japan deal, and goes even further in a number of areas, including;

- Cutting-edge digital & data provisions,
- Improved market access for UK financial services,
- More generous rules of origin provisions for some goods, and
- Opening the door for more British products to be protected in Japan by geographical indications.

We will publish a parliamentary report for the UK-Japan agreement prior to ratification, clearly highlighting areas where there are specific material differences between the EU Economic Partnership Agreement and this deal.

Trade Agreements: Sustainable Development

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to exclude products which are not sustainably produced from future trade deals; and if not, why not. [HL8061]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: While the detail of free trade agreements (FTAs) are reserved for formal negotiations, the United Kingdom has publicly committed to negotiating agreements that protect and maintain our high standards on labour and environment. HM Government has been consistently clear in our published outline approaches to FTAs with the US, Japan, New

Zealand, and Australia that we will seek strong provisions on sustainability. We will continue to work closely with international partners and business to ensure that future trade is sustainable and upholds the United Kingdom's high standards.

Trade Bill: Devolution

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of discussions with (1) the Northern Irish Executive, (2) the Scottish Government, and (3) the Welsh Government, about the Trade Bill. [HL7962]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Department for International Trade Ministers and officials have been engaging regularly with Devolved Administration Ministers and officials on the Trade Bill to seek consent from all the devolved legislatures. We have made a number of amendments and commitments to address their concerns. I am pleased that, as a result of this, Scottish Government have recommended consent to all the relevant clauses of the Bill, and the Welsh Government to those that were previously contained in the Trade Bill 2017-19. We are working hard to ensure that the Northern Ireland Executive also feels able to recommend legislative consent to the Bill.

Universal Credit

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of declarations for Universal Credit made between 16 March and 1 September were closed due to ineligibility regarding (1) partner earnings, and (2) partner capital. [HL7974]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The requested information is not held as the level of detail to determine whether ineligibility was due to partner earnings is not available.

Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have (1) moved, and (2) are in the process of moving, onto Universal Credit as part of the 'Move to Universal Credit' pilot currently taking place in Harrogate. [HL7938]

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the 'Move to Universal Credit' pilot, currently taking place in Harrogate, and its wider roll out. [HL7939]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Move to Universal Credit Pilot was temporarily suspended following the outbreak of COVID-19 and the unprecedented increase in Universal Credit new claims. This has allowed the Department to process in excess of three million new

claims during the pandemic, showing that scalability and resilience is inherent in the design of Universal Credit.

It is likely that lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic will have helped with our wider learning about how to support people most effectively and we will take that learning into account when considering our next steps with the Move to Universal Credit Pilot.

In the first phase, we planned to have around 70 cases in the pilot. By the point we temporarily suspended the pilot, the actual number of cases in the pilot was 69.

The Department committed to updating Parliament and stakeholders on progress and were due to provide the first update in Spring 2020, however, due to COVID-19 we have been unable to do so.

USA: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Lord Strasburger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has delayed the publication of the inquiry into the leaking of confidential messages from Lord Darroch of Kew when he was UK Ambassador to the United States. [[HL8088](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Metropolitan Police Service investigation is still ongoing. This is a complex, active criminal investigation and we have no information as to when it may conclude.

USA: International Criminal Court

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the sanctions imposed by the government of the United States on the International Criminal Court's (1) Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, and (2) Head of the Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division, Phakiso Mochochoko. [[HL7920](#)]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the sanctions imposed by the government of the United States on the International Criminal Court's (1) Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, and (2) Head of the Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division, Phakiso Mochochoko, on the operation of the ICC. [[HL7921](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has always been, and remains, a strong supporter of an effective ICC. While we believe that positive reform is required for the ICC to fulfil its mandate as intended under the Rome Statute, and we are working with the Court and other States Parties to achieve this, we also believe that Court officials must be able to carry out their work independently and impartially, without fear of sanction. We are discussing the impact of the US sanctions with the Court and our international partners.

VAT: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether value added tax rates (1) will, or (2) have the potential to, vary between Northern Ireland and Great Britain after the end of the transition period. [[HL7928](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Northern Ireland Protocol ensures that Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's VAT system. Its provisions on VAT rates provide the flexibility to introduce certain new zero and reduced rates in Northern Ireland. For example, this agreement allows the Government to meet its commitment of introducing a zero-rate for women's sanitary products.

VAT raises a significant amount of revenue and plays an important part in funding the Government's spending priorities. While all taxes are kept under review, there are currently no plans to introduce any other zero or reduced rates of VAT.

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