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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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Written Statements

Monday, 5 October 2020

Bilateral Loan to Ireland

[HLWS482]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I would like to update Parliament on the loan to Ireland.

In December 2010, the UK agreed to provide a bilateral loan of £3.2 billion as part of a €67.5 billion international assistance package for Ireland. The loan was disbursed in 8 tranches, and the final tranche was drawn down on 26 September 2013. Ireland has made interest payments on the loan every six months since the first disbursement.

On 7 September, in line with the agreed repayment schedule, HM Treasury received a total payment of £405,490,687.38 from Ireland. This comprises the repayment of £403,370,000 in principal and £2,120,687.38 in accrued interest.

HM Treasury has today provided a further Report to Parliament in relation to the loan as required under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010. The Report relates to the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. It reports fully on the two principal repayments received by HM Treasury during this period, and sets out details of future payments up to the final repayment on 26 March 2021. The Government continues to expect the loan to be repaid in full and on time.

A written ministerial statement on the previous statutory report regarding the loan to Ireland was issued to Parliament on 29 April 2020, Official Report, column 26WS.

Domestic Abuse: Support for Victims

[HLWS478]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister for rough sleeping and housing (Kelly Tolhurst) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Through the Domestic Abuse Bill, this Government is placing a new Statutory Duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation in England. Subject to the bill receiving Royal Assent, this new duty will commence in April 2021.

To help local authorities plan and prepare for the implementation of the new duty, I am pleased to announce today a £6 million Domestic Abuse Capacity Building Fund.

I recognise the invaluable work that local authorities do each and every day to help residents in their local areas, including the most vulnerable in our society. This new funding will help ensure that local authorities are resourced to prepare for implementation of the new duty. It will promote more effective delivery on

commencement, meaning local authorities will be more quickly able to commission much needed support for those victims of domestic abuse and their children who are currently turned away from refuges and other safe accommodation because their needs cannot be met.

This fund will be allocated equally to Tier one local authorities (unitary and metropolitan authorities, county councils, the Greater London Association for London boroughs and the Council of the Isles of Scilly), who will be the accountable body under the new duty. It will be allocated as an unringfenced grant in recognition that local authorities will know best how to prepare locally. I encourage Tier one authorities to use it to engage with their local domestic abuse services, including specialist services for victims from diverse groups.

To further help local authorities with their preparation work, I am also publishing guidance setting out the purpose and suggested outcomes of this fund, and my officials are holding workshops to support local authorities.

Today I am also launching a consultation to seek views on the methodology proposed for allocating funding to meet the new burdens associated with the new duty once it comes into force. The level of funding is of course a matter for the Spending Review.

I encourage all local authorities to use this range of support to ensure they are ready for implementation in April 2021.

Future Relationship with EU: Negotiations

[HLWS481]

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

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

Led by the UK's Chief Negotiator, David Frost, negotiators from the UK and the EU held discussions in Brussels on 29 September - 2 October 2020. There were substantive discussions on almost all issues.

Discussions covered all work streams including:

- Trade in goods: Core areas of the goods elements of the FTA, including market access, customs and regulatory issues.
- Trade in services, investment and other FTA issues: Including mode 4, procurement, digital and intellectual property (including geographical indications).
- Fisheries: Quota-sharing and governance.
- "Level playing field": Covering subsidies, tax, competition, labour, environment, sustainable development and governance.
- Energy: Including civil nuclear cooperation and electricity and gas trading.

- Transport: Road transport, aviation safety and air services.
- Law Enforcement: Covering a number of capabilities including Prum, Mutual Legal Assistance, extradition and our future arrangements with EU Agencies.
- Mobility and Social Security Coordination: Social security coordination arrangements.
- Participation in Union programmes: Covering the general terms for UK participation and Peace+.
- Thematic cooperation: Including future health security and Security of Information arrangements.
- Governance: Including appropriate institutional architecture.

There were positive discussions in the core areas of a trade and economic agreement, notably trade in goods and services, transport, energy, social security, and participation in EU programmes. This has however been true for some time. Progress has also been possible on a law enforcement agreement. In other areas, however, significant and familiar differences remain, notably on the level playing field, and on fisheries where the gap between us remains very large.

The Prime Minister spoke to President von der Leyen on 3 October to review the progress of negotiations. They agreed on the importance of finding an agreement, if at all possible, and instructed the chief negotiators to work intensively to try to do so, given how short time now is before the European Council on 15 October.

Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism: ISC Report

[HLWS483]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament has today laid before Parliament a report of the former Committee on Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism, looking at the key challenges faced by MI5 and others in tackling the threat posed by Dissident Republican (DR) groups in Northern Ireland.

The current security situation in Northern Ireland (NI) is in no way comparable to 'The Troubles'. However, DR and loyalist paramilitary groups continue to be a feature of life and the threat in NI from DR groups remains unchanged at SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely. DRs reject the 1998 Belfast Agreement and consider the use of violence a legitimate tool. Despite significant pressure from the police and security forces, demonstrated by the recent arrests targeting the New IRA, the terrorist threat they pose is enduring, and there remains a minority who aim to destabilise the peace process, harming communities across NI.

The DR threat is, however, just one part of the wider security picture in NI. The lines are often blurred between those involved in terrorist activity, paramilitary activity, and organised crime. In one way or another, these groups

exert control over and exploit those communities for their own criminal ends. To achieve lasting peace in NI these threats cannot be dealt with in isolation.

The Government welcomes the Committee's conclusions on the importance of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) and in particular the strong endorsement that it is sometimes necessary to authorise CHIS to participate in criminal conduct. This is a longstanding tactic which is vital for national security and the prevention and detection of crime. The CHIS (Criminal Conduct) Bill introduced to Parliament on 24 September, and which has its Second Reading in the House of Commons today, provides an express power for the authorisation of criminal conduct, providing certainty to public authorities using this critical tool. The Bill makes clear that a criminal conduct authorisation can only be authorised where strictly necessary and proportionate to do so, and is subject to robust oversight including by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner.

I welcome this report and thank the Committee for the work that has gone into it. The Government will consider the report in full and respond formally in due course.

Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Programme

[HLWS480]

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 Prime Minister has today made fifteen new appointments to his Trade Envoy programme.

These new appointments will extend the total number of Trade Envoys to 31 parliamentarians covering 69 markets. The Prime Minister's trade envoy programme is an unpaid and voluntary cross-party network, which supports the UK's ambitious trade and investment agenda in global markets. The new appointments are:

The Baroness Hooper CMG (Gloria Hooper) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama,

The Baroness Meyer CBE (Catherine Meyer) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Ukraine,

The Hon. Member for Broxtowe (Darren Henry) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Caribbean (with focus on 12 Commonwealth Countries),

The Hon. Member for Cleethorpes (Martin Vickers) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Western Balkans (covering Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia),

The Hon. Member for Maidstone and The Weald (Helen Grant) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Nigeria,

The Hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Mongolia,

The Hon. Member for South Derbyshire (Heather Wheeler) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam,

The Hon. Member for South Ribble (Katherine Fletcher) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Mozambique,

The Hon. Member for Southport (Damien Moore) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Tunisia and Libya,

The Hon. Member for Stafford (Theo Clarke) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Kenya,

The Hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mark Garnier) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Brunei, Myanmar and Thailand,

The Lord Austin of Dudley (Ian Austin) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Israel,

The Lord Davies of Abersoch CBE (Evan Mervyn Davies) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Sri Lanka,

The Rt Hon. Member for South West Wiltshire (Dr. Andrew Murrison) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Morocco, and

The Rt Hon. the Lord Bates (Michael Bates) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Ethiopia.

They join the following list of Trade Envoys:

The Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury (Jane Bonham-Carter), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Mexico,

The Baroness Morris of Bolton OBE (Patricia Morris), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Jordan, Kuwait and the Palestinian Territories,

The Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne (Emma Harriet), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Azerbaijan, Iraq, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan,

The Hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Bow (Rushanara Ali), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Bangladesh,

The Hon. Member for Fylde (Mark Menzies), Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru,

The Hon. Member for Gloucester (Richard Graham), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines,

The Hon. Member for Romford (Andrew Rosindell), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Tanzania,

The Hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to South Africa,

The Hon. Member for Windsor (Adam Afriyie), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Ghana and Guinea,

The Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Richard Faulkner), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Taiwan,

The Lord Popat (Dolar Popat), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo,

The Lord Risby (Richard Spring), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Algeria and Lebanon,

The Rt Hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Sir Jeffrey Donaldson), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Egypt,

The Rt Hon. the Lord Astor of Hever DL (John Jacob Astor), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Oman,

The Rt Hon. the Lord Janvrin GCB GCVO QSO (Robin Janvrin), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey and

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Lamont of Lerwick (Norman Lamont), the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Iran.

Union Connectivity Review

[HLWS479]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

On 30th June the Prime Minister announced a review would be undertaken into Union Connectivity, exploring ways to improve connectivity between our four nations and bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects.

I have now published the Terms of Reference for this independent review. Chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE, the review will make recommendations on how the UK Government can level up transport infrastructure and improve connectivity between Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, boosting access to opportunities and improving people's everyday connections.

Working closely with the Devolved Administrations, Sir Peter will look at road, rail, air and sea links, and how they could be improved to fuel the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Sir Peter brings extensive experience and knowledge to the role with over 45 years working in the transport sector – including as Chair of Network Rail and successfully running London's transport network during the Olympics.

The review will look at how the quality and availability of transport infrastructure between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can support quality of life in communities across the UK while also aiding economic recovery. This will in turn lead to recommendations on whether and how best to improve connections, and whether that includes the need to invest in additional infrastructure by the UK Government. Among other things, Sir Peter will look at the feasibility and conduct a detailed initial assessment of options for improved road and rail connections between England and Scotland, and England and Wales, as well as improved air links across the UK.

The review will also look to the future – considering the role of future technologies and assess environmental impacts of current and future infrastructure. Sir Peter will

be expected to publish his final recommendations in Summer 2021.

This announcement follows a recent pledge by the UK Government to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in the devolved nations – working

with the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK Government will identify opportunities for ‘spades in the ground’ ready projects to help build up communities and create jobs quicker for people across the United Kingdom.

Written Answers

Monday, 5 October 2020

Adult Education: Internet

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to make academic qualifications more accessible for adults. [HL8388]

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove barriers to online education courses for adults. [HL8389]

Baroness Berridge: Adult skills are key in supporting the economy and tackling disadvantage. The government is aware of the barriers adults can face when looking to learn, upskill or retrain such as cost, time, lack of flexibility, poor experiences of education and a lack of awareness of the need to upskill or retrain.

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the £1.34 billion Adult Education Budget (AEB). The principal purpose of the AEB is to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. This includes fully funded courses in English and mathematics for adults who need to improve their literacy and numeracy, fully funded first full level 2 and/or level 3 for learners aged 19 to 23 and from 1 August 2020, fully funded specified digital skills qualifications for adults with no/low digital skills.

Starting this Parliament, we are providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations), for the National Skills Fund to help adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future. The fund aims to boost productivity and presents a great opportunity to create a more coherent and simpler system that learners, providers, local areas and employers can understand and navigate.

To equip people 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 online digital and numeracy courses for all skills levels including courses such as Everyday Maths and an introductory 70 hour course on coding. Courses are available for free to the public, offering an opportunity for individuals to upskill and build on their CV. We want the range of the courses on offer to grow significantly and will therefore be launching an expanded platform shortly. More information on The Skills Toolkit is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-free-online-learning-platform-to-boost-workplace-skills>.

Apprentices: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they plan to provide for companies to continue to offer

apprenticeship training during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8390]

Baroness Berridge: Apprenticeships will be more important than ever in helping businesses recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow. In the 2020/21 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England will remain around £2.5 billion – double the number spent in the 2010/11 financial year. The government is committed to ensuring people of all ages can continue to benefit from the high-quality training that an apprenticeship offers. Through our 'Plan for Jobs', a total of £1.6 billion is to be invested in scaling up employment support schemes, training and apprenticeships.

To help support employers to offer new apprenticeships, employers are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25 between 1 August 2020 and 31 January 2021, and £1,500 for those 25 and over. The department have introduced flexibilities to enable apprentices to continue to train during the Covid-19 outbreak and we encourage employers to take advantage of these flexibilities and the new payments.

Asylum: English Channel

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking over reports that French Navy patrol boats have been aiding asylum seekers to enter UK waters illegally. [HL8268]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has a duty both to prevent loss of life and protect the integrity of our border. In doing so we have domestic and international laws to comply with. Search and Rescue (SAR) legal provisions derive from a number of international conventions, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS) and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue 1979 (the SAR Convention). Under these provisions both the UK and France both have a duty to save lives, and if a boat encounters difficulty and is in distress then there is a need to protect life.

French authorities and vessels do attempt to persuade migrants to abandon their journey and allow themselves to be rescued but are at times met with extreme hostility from migrants. French assets will generally remain with the migrant vessel to ensure they are on-hand in case a rescue is required. The French do not believe forcible interceptions would be safe or permitted under SOLAS or SAR operations.

We are doing everything we can to stop these dangerous Channel crossings and bring to justice the criminals behind this organised immigration crime.

We are also continuing to engage with our French counterparts both on an operational and political level,

exploring all options to reduce the number of people attempting this dangerous crossing.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have paid (1) to the government of France, and (2) organisations based in France, in the last five years to limit asylum seekers crossing the English Channel illegally; and what assessment they have made of whether the government of France has met the commitments of any agreements in place to limit such crossings. [HL8269]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border and the UK has committed several funding packages to supporting this work in recent years. These include:

In September 2019 the Joint Action Plan on Combatting Illegal Migration Involving Small Boats ('Small Boats Action Plan') was signed. The UK committed €3.6m (£3.25m) to tackling the issue. These funds were utilised for the delivery of strategic communications campaigns and the provision of equipment to improve detection of small boats crossings. This was later supplemented with a further €2.5m (£2.25m) in the 19/20 Financial Year, which was dedicated to the deployment of Gendarme Reservists and further strengthening preventive security measures at the French coast.

In January 2018 both countries signed the Sandhurst Treaty, under which the UK made a commitment of €50 million (£45.5m) for activity to prevent illegal migration.

The UK and France are committed to ensuring value for money in investment. The UK and France carried out a joint review of bilateral cooperation under the Sandhurst Treaty, which concluded that this programme of work has made a difference to illegal migration. France also continues to invest significant resource into tackling this issue as part of a joint response with the UK.

In addition to the above sums outlined, we have also invested the following:

The September 2014 Joint Declaration committed £12m for security improvements at Calais, Dunkirk, and the Eurotunnel terminal at Coquelles. This was supplemented by £1 million for fencing and by £1.7 million to support an enhanced secure freight zone at Calais.

In 2015, both countries signed a Joint Declaration which committed £45.96 million (majority to Eurotunnel) towards security enhancements of the juxtaposed controls and to moving migrants into reception centres across France.

This was followed by payments in 2016 (£17 million) and a further (£36 million) to strengthen the border and maintain the operation of the juxtaposed controls.

Aviation: Reviews

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their review into regional connectivity following the collapse of airline Flybe has started; and when they plan to publish that review's findings. [HL8293]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government recognises the impact of Flybe's collapse and the subsequent impact of Covid-19 on regional airports, regional economies and connectivity across the UK.

The Government remains committed to supporting regional connectivity across all transport modes, as well as the importance of maintaining a thriving competitive aviation sector in the UK to deliver connectivity. Regional air connectivity will form a key strand of our aviation recovery plan which we aim to publish this Autumn.

Bereavement Benefits

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government where there is a publicly available list of state benefits and other financial support available to bereaved families. [HL8607]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The 'What to do when someone dies' section of the GOV.UK website provides a step-by-step interactive website guide on what to do after a death, including how to manage financial issues. This guide covers the financial support available to help with paying for a funeral and how to check entitlement to bereavement benefits. The guide also contains a link to benefits calculators to work out entitlement to other state benefits based on individual household circumstances.

Biofuels

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the biofuels market in the UK, and (2) that market's potential for growth. [HL8288]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government set out a fifteen-year strategy for renewable transport fuels in September 2017 which is available in the Libraries of the House. As part of that strategy we almost doubled targets for the supply of renewable fuels under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) between 2018 and 2020, with further increases to at least 12.4 per cent set for 2032.

The Cost Benefit Analysis which accompanied that strategy set out in Appendix 3 estimated the effect on renewable fuel supply in the UK. This suggested the increases in targets could result in a UK renewable fuel market of 2.237 billion litres in 2018, 2.568 billion litres

in 2019 and 3.372 billion litres in 2020. In 2018 2.01 billion litres of renewable fuel was reported as supplied under the RTFO, and provisional data suggests 2.68 billion litres of renewable fuel was supplied in 2019. The Department continues to monitor and review the support schemes it has in place for low carbon fuels across several modes of transport, to ensure these deliver cost effective carbon savings now and in future.

British Chambers of Commerce

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they were consulted by the British Chambers of Commerce prior to the decision of that organisation to remove itself from the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry; what assessment they have made of that decision; and what powers they have, if any, to reverse that decision. [HL8349]

Lord Callanan: The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is an organisation that is independent of Her Majesty's Government. The BCC's membership of any other organisations is a matter for the BCC to consider and decide upon. They did not consult with the Government prior to making this decision and the Government has no power to reverse it.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the support (1) banks, and (2) other financial institutions, are providing to businesses trading in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8456]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: To support businesses and relieve pressure on their finances and cashflow, the government launched three loan guarantee schemes to give banks and other lenders the confidence they need to lend to businesses: the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), and Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs). As of 20 September, over £57bn has been approved under the three schemes. On the 24th September, the Chancellor announced an extension to the deadline for new loan applications for CBILS, CLBILS, BBLs and the Future Fund to 30 November.

The Government also recognise the vital role that non-banks and challenger banks play in the provision of credit to SMEs. We are grateful for the way the sector has responded to the current crisis, and we remain committed to promoting competition and widening the funding options available to UK businesses.

Carbon Emissions

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that waste incineration contracts do not hinder the delivery of the target to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. [HL8375]

Lord Callanan: We have already made significant progress towards meeting our net zero target. Between 1990 and 2018, our economy has grown by 75% while emissions have decreased by 43% - faster than any other G7 nation. Since 2000, we have decarbonised our economy faster than any other G20 country. We met our first and second carbon budgets that were established under the Climate Change Act 2008, and we are on track to overachieve on the third. Our forthcoming sector strategies, and wider plans to deliver a green economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic, will contain further proposals to put us on track to meeting carbon budgets 4 and 5.

In 2018, waste management accounted for 4.6 per cent (20.7 MtCO₂e) of total UK GHG emissions, showing significant achievement of a 69% decrease in emissions between 1990 and 2018. The government is seeking to make the UK a world leader in using resources efficiently and reducing the amount of waste we create as a society. Our Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) sets a clear longer-term policy direction in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan.

The detailed terms of waste incineration contracts are a matter for the contracting parties.

China: India

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political situation on the border of China and India; and what, if any, representations they have made (1) to support the agreement between the governments of China and India to disengage troops from the border and to avoid provocative actions, and (2) to bring about a permanent easing of tensions in the region, in particular in relation to Tibet. [HL8465]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister expressed his concern at increased tensions between China and India in the House on 24 June. We welcome recent progress between China and India to manage tensions along their disputed border and the meeting of Foreign Ministers Wang Yi and Jaishankar on 10 September. Both sides agreed a five-point plan to ease tensions, we encourage them to maintain dialogue and continue to monitor the situation closely.

China: Uighurs

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 September (HL8043 and HL8044), what action they have taken at (1) the UN General Assembly, and (2) the UN Human Rights Council, to address human rights violations against Uighur Muslims in China; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the government of China's use of veto powers at the UN Security Council on the way in which they conduct their actions at the UN. [HL8352]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has played a leading role at the Human Rights Council, and in the UN Third Committee to register the breadth and depth of international concern about the situation in Xinjiang. The UK is the only country to have led formal joint statements on the issue. On 30 June, the UK read out a formal statement on behalf of 28 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council highlighting arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly those targeting Uighurs and other minorities, and urging China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meaningful access to Xinjiang. On 29 October 2019, the UK read out a statement on Xinjiang on behalf of 23 countries at the UN Third Committee in New York. We will continue to work with international partners at the UN to maximise pressure on the Chinese Government over its egregious human rights violations against Uighur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that Uighur Muslim women have been subjected to forced abortions and womb removals, (2) that Uighur children are being separated from their parents and placed in orphanages, and (3) of the treatment of those children in such orphanages, in China. [HL8355]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by reports of suppression of birth rates and the mistreatment of Uighur children in China, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. As the Minister for Asia set out during an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on 9 September, we are seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. On 25 September, at the UN Human Rights Council, I also raised serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including credible reports of forced labour and forced birth control in the UK's 'Item 4' national statement. It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities' own figures show a drastic decline in birth rates in Xinjiang. These reports add to the growing body of evidence about serious and widespread human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. We continue to raise our concerns at the UN, and directly with China.

Asked by **Lord Anderson of Ipswich**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to support the establishment of, (2) to attend, and (3) to provide evidence to, the independent tribunal established by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC to examine whether the Uighur people are being subjected to genocide. [HL8402]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have serious concerns about gross violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang and welcome any work that is rigorous, balanced and raises awareness of the situation faced by Uighurs and other minorities in China. We are aware of this initiative by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, and will study any resulting report carefully.

Colonialism: Education

Asked by **Lord Boateng**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Ofqual about examination boards developing modules on the study of migration and the UK's colonial history; how many such modules are awaiting appraisal; which examination boards have submitted modules for that appraisal; and when such appraisals will be completed. [HL8306]

Baroness Berridge: As set out in my reply to HL8049 from the noble Lord, the department sets the high-level content requirements for GCSEs and A levels for history and within this subject content, there is significant scope for modules that cover the study of migration and the UK's colonial history. It is for awarding organisations themselves to develop specifications for GCSE and A level history that meet those requirements and for Ofqual, the independent qualifications regulator, to ensure those requirements are correctly met. As such, the department has not held discussions with Ofqual concerning the development of modules on these topics by awarding bodies.

Conferences and Events Industry: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Doocey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial impact on the hospitality sector of the decision to not permit conferences, exhibitions and events to take place. [HL8411]

Baroness Barran: We recognise that the events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19. We continue to engage with the stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation. As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, our decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and public health assessments.

Events businesses can continue to make use of the broader support package available to them. This includes the Bounce Back Loans scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Meetings of up to 30 can still take place in permitted venues, as per the Covid-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy.

Coronavirus: Clinical Trials

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research from Radboud University Medical Center, Aarhus University and Copenhagen University that suggests sex and gender are not being adequately considered in Covid-19 clinical trials; and what steps they are taking, if any, in response. [HL8335]

Lord Callanan: Vaccine developers that the Government are working with decide on which specific groups to include in their trials. For instance, the University of Oxford / Astra Zeneca Phase 3 trial includes arms that specifically looks at safety and efficacy of the vaccine in those aged between 56 – 69 and over 70. For the groups that are investigated, researchers are assessing the immune response to the vaccine to find out if there is variation in how well the immune system responds in older people.

In addition to the work that vaccine developers are undertaking, the Government has funded the NHS Registry, developed by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This national registry is encouraging people who may be disproportionately affected by COVID19, such as older people, older people with underlying health conditions and people from different ethnic groups, to volunteer for clinical trials. This includes supporting the development of communications materials to provide information on taking part in COVID19 vaccine trials via the NIHR website (Be Part of Research).

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the mechanisms used to ensure that the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are informed of actions being taken by the Government to address the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8283]

Lord True: The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, holds regular calls with the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and ministers from the devolved administrations will be invited to attend the Covid-Operations Committee on a weekly basis. This supplements wider joint working by ministers and

officials. The purpose is not simply to 'ensure that the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are informed of actions being taken by the Government' but to share best practice and data, coordinate action and work together as set out in the Joint Statement of 25 September.

Criminal Proceedings: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on (1) service users, and (2) victims in the criminal justice system. [HL8327]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer the noble Lady to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Justice Alex Chalk MP's statement in the other place on 22 September:

The Government is determined that victims should receive the help and support they need to cope and recover during the pandemic. In addition to existing funding, the Government has provided £76 million to support victims of modern slavery, domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as vulnerable children and young people. We have set up the victims and witnesses silver command, which consists of the Victims' Commissioner, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and others, to identify needs fast and deliver support to the frontline.

Customs

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last met representatives of the British International Freight Association; and what assessment they have made of the ability of the customs and logistics sector to cope with any additional processes required after the end of the Brexit transition period. [HL8294]

Lord True: The Government regularly meets key representative organisations and trade associations in preparation for the end of the Transition Period. HMRC and Cabinet Office officials meet frequently with the British International Freight Association (BIFA), the most recent occasions for HMRC being an industry roundtable event on 17 September and a customs forum on 21 September. Cabinet Office have also been in discussions with BIFA regarding the Border Operating Model (BOM) on 23 September.

Data Protection: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, after the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, Northern Ireland will be subject to the EU General Data Protection Regulation rules on data transfer even if the rest of the UK decides to introduce new rules. [HL8474]

Baroness Barran: At the end of the transition period, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA) will

incorporate direct EU legislation into UK law, as well as saving EU-derived domestic legislation – collectively referred to as 'retained EU law'. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will become retained EU law for the whole of the UK.

We have made Regulations under the EUWA to make necessary and appropriate changes to the GDPR, which will become the UK GDPR, and the Data Protection Act 2018 so that the UK's data protection law continues to function effectively after the transition period.

In respect of data transfer rules, the EU has an established mechanism to allow the unrestricted transfer (subject to GDPR compliance) of personal data to countries outside the EU, called 'adequacy decisions'. At the end of the transition period, the UK will recognise EEA countries as continuing to be adequate for the purpose of the UK GDPR, so data can continue to flow from the UK to the EEA. In order for the free flow of data from the EEA to the UK to continue at the end of the transition period, we are seeking adequacy decisions from the EU under both the GDPR and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED). Adequacy talks between the UK and the EU began on 11 March and continue to progress.

Disability: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect on disabled people of the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL8543](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on disabled people using existing and new data sources.

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work has had discussions with charities, disabled people's organisations and individuals to understand the range of experiences disabled people have had during the Covid-19 pandemic and to identify the support needed as lockdown restrictions are eased.

We are ensuring that disabled people continue to have access to disability benefits, food, medicines, essentials, accessible communications, updated guidance, including workplace and transport related guidance, as well as financial and other support during the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Government continues to provide disability employment support through initiatives such as Access to Work, Disability Confident, the Work and Health Programme, Intensive Personalised Employment Support, and other forms of support that disabled people need to retain, adapt and move into employment.

The Cabinet Office Disability Unit continues to work with disability stakeholders and across Government Departments to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered in the UK Government's response to Covid-19. We are clear that consideration of equality impacts must be integral in all key policy decisions. All

equality and discrimination laws and obligations continue to apply during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will publish the National Strategy for Disabled People taking into account the impacts of the pandemic on disabled people. The Strategy will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including employment, housing, education and transport.

Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they have provided to local authorities to address any additional demand on domestic abuse services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL8347](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government provided £4.3 billion to local authorities to help them respond to coronavirus (Covid-19) spending pressures. This includes increasing support for services helping the most vulnerable, such as victims of domestic abuse.

We also put in place a system for local authorities that are struggling to meet additional demand due to Covid-19, enabling them to book rooms for domestic abuse victims.

Domestic Abuse: Refuges

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of specialist BME refuges for victims of domestic violence that have closed in the last 12 months as a result of local authorities switching contracts to larger generic charities. [[HL8314](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government does not hold this data centrally. Local authorities often make commissioning decisions based on their specific local needs.

The Government recognises the support that BAME specialist refuges provide for victims of domestic abuse and their children. During 2020/21 we have funded and supported specialist refuges, including BAME specialist services, through our £10 million domestic abuse Covid-19 emergency funding.

Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Covid-19 marshals will be used to ensure that schools and colleges are (1) facilitating social distancing, and (2) providing Covid-19 secure environments. [[HL8348](#)]

Baroness Berridge: On 2 July the department published guidance to help schools and colleges prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to education settings full-time from the beginning of the autumn term:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> and:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-us-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>.

We have worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to develop the specific guidance for school settings. The PHE endorsed system of controls outlined in this guidance sets out the measures that school leaders and all school staff should follow. Colleges are responsible for completing risk assessments and complying with Health & Safety Executive (HSE) duties. HSE may review risk assessments and the measures that have been put in place by colleges to make the premises Covid-19 secure. Our guidance is clear that if schools and colleges implement the actions set out, they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment. This includes minimising contact between individuals and maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

At this time, there is no plan to introduce Covid-19 marshals in schools and colleges. There cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. Head teachers will be best placed to understand the needs of their communities and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk.

Elections: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have in place to facilitate the postponement of (1) local, (2) mayoral, and (3) Police and Crime Commissioner, elections in May 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8330]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the (1) Scottish, and (2) Welsh, Government about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on any elections due to be held in May 2021. [HL8332]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have in place to ensure that polling stations comply with Covid-19 safety measures. [HL8333]

Lord True: The Government has been working closely with key electoral stakeholders, as well as Public Health England and representatives of political parties, regarding local and mayoral elections in England and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales in May 2021.

Electoral Register: Young People

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage young people to register to vote. [HL8331]

Lord True: Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have the statutory responsibility for maintaining complete and accurate registers for their areas. The Government is committed to encouraging democratic engagement amongst all electors, including young people, and we want to build upon recent record levels of individuals registering to vote for elections. Our Register to Vote website is widely used by young people, with almost 8 million online applications submitted by 16-24 year olds since the service was introduced in 2014.

Electric Scooters: Coventry and Middlesbrough

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of issues with the use of e-scooters in (1) Coventry, and (2) Middlesbrough; and what plans they have to pause the e-scooter rental trials until appropriate safeguards are introduced to protect pedestrians. [HL8271]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There are no plans to pause national e-scooter trials, which are absolutely essential if we are to fully assess this new mode and inform longer term micromobility policy. Officials are in close and regular contact with local authorities and e-scooter operators in live e-scooter trial areas. We are encouraging rapid action be taken to respond to operational issues as soon as they arise and ensuring that any lessons from early implementation are applied in subsequent trials. For example, issues which arose during the first week of the Middlesbrough trial, caused by a small minority of users, were quickly resolved with licence verification software and improved geo-fencing technology.

Energy: Meters

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of the rollout of smart meters. [HL8285]

Lord Callanan: There were 21.5 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain, as of the end of June 2020. Research has found that 80% of people with smart meters say they have a better idea of their energy costs and 88% of prepayment customers with smart meters say that topping up has become easier.

Further to the publication of guidance on safe working during coronavirus (Covid-19) in May 2020, energy suppliers have been scaling up installation volumes, while

implementing additional safety measures to ensure the wellbeing of customers and staff.

In June 2020, the Government confirmed that from July 2021 a new four-year policy framework will be implemented with fixed annual installation milestones for energy suppliers that will drive roll-out momentum.

Energy: White Papers

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish a White Paper on energy policy; and if so, when. [HL8309]

Lord Callanan: The Energy White Paper remains a priority for BEIS and it will be published in the autumn.

Exports: VAT

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on jobs of ending tax-free shopping for international tourists; and what steps they are taking, if any, to protect such jobs. [HL8337]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has announced that the VAT Retail Export Scheme will not be extended to EU visitors, and will be withdrawn for all non-EU visitors, following the end of the transition period. However, retailers will continue to be able to offer VAT-free shopping to non-EU visitors who purchase items in store and have them sent direct to their overseas addresses and this will be available to EU visitors following the end of the transition period.

The final costing will be subject to scrutiny by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility and will be set out at the next forecast.

The Government recognises the challenge these businesses face. The Chancellor announced the Winter Economy Plan on 24 September. This includes an extension to the temporary 5 per cent reduced rate of VAT on goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors from 12 January to 31 March 2021. This alone provides continued support for the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protection for 2.4 million jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The plan also provides further support to businesses and jobs over the coming months.

Fishing Vessels: Ammunition

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what reports have they received about fishing vessels from the West of Scotland and Northern Ireland picking up munitions in their nets (1) from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2020, and (2) from 1 April to 21 September 2020. [HL8326]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency recorded twenty-six incidents of

munitions being encountered at sea between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2020, and one incident from the 1 April to 21 September 2020 in the region of the West of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In the timescale given to respond to this question we were unable to determine whether the encounters detailed above were fishing vessels finding munitions in their nets or due to other circumstances as this requires a manual review of each incident log. Unfortunately, due to the way in which the data from 2010 to 2016 is stored we will require additional time to retrieve data from prior to 2016.

Munitions found at sea West of Scotland/Northern Ireland

01/04-31/03		01/04 - 21/09		
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020
10	3	6	7	1

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of a trawler registered in Ardglass fishing port in County Down picking up munitions in its catch on 19 September. [HL8328]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On the 19 September 2020 HM Coastguard responded to a report from the Harbour Master at Ardglass of Second World War munitions having been left at the port by a fishing vessel. The Coastguard assisted the Police Service of Northern Ireland in securing a cordon. Explosive ordinance disposal attended and removed the items for destruction.

Flood Control: Somerset

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of preparations to mitigate flooding of the Somerset Levels in the winter. [HL8290]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: At this time of year, being incident ready and resilient for winter flooding is a top priority for the Environment Agency (EA). The EA are working to ensure that its incident response rosters are well-populated and that incident duty staff have had refresher training.

This summer, across the Levels and Moors, EA field staff have been working to deliver a multimillion pound programme of maintenance works. This includes repairs and essential maintenance to pump stations, clearing main rivers to ensure maximum conveyance, localised repairs to damaged flood banks, and asset inspections to address any defects. Contingency plans have also been developed for strategically important assets with an ongoing programme of tests and exercises.

In October, the EA has planned specialist training for its staff on deploying ultra-high volume pumps and temporary defences. Separate training sessions are also planned with supply chain partners so that they are well briefed if they are needed.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they have allocated for flood defences and further related mitigation measures in the Somerset Levels in the current financial year; and what current schemes are underway to mitigate flooding in the area. [HL8291]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: This current financial year, £4.7 million of capital flood defence capital grant in aid (FDGiA) has been allocated for flood defences and further related mitigation measures on the Somerset Levels and Moors. This funding is being used to progress schemes such as the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier and Dunball sluice refurbishment, as well as works to flood defence reservoirs and pumping station improvements.

In addition, a further £0.5 million of capital funding has been allocated for the recondition of existing flood defence assets.

£3.5 million of revenue FDGiA has been allocated for maintenance and operation of flood defence assets. This is supplemented by £0.5 million of Internal Drainage Board precept.

On behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority, the Environment Agency and the Somerset Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards are also delivering £4 million of capital works to increase channel conveyance on the River Sowey and King Sedgemoor Drain, and to dredge a further section of the River Parrett.

Forests

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the amount of unmanaged woodland and forest. [HL8264]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: 59% of woodland in England is managed, and we recognise the need to increase support for management—safeguarding our woods, supporting biodiversity and providing sustainable timber.

In addition to existing grant support for management, the Forestry Commission and Institute of Chartered Foresters are working to improve the quality of woodland management plans.

We are also exploring further ways in which we can drive up the levels of sustainable woodland management in the development of the upcoming England Tree Strategy.

Greece: Turkey

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of relations between the governments of Greece and Turkey. [HL8280]

Baroness Sugg: We believe it is critical for stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and for the integrity of the rules-based international system that tensions be reduced and disputes are resolved through dialogue and in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We will continue to work with Greece, Turkey and all parties in the region to that end.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) businesses, and (2) tradespeople, have to attain the PAS 2030-2019 Specification to take part in the Green Homes Grant Scheme. [HL8397]

Lord Callanan: In order to participate in the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme, businesses and tradespeople installing energy efficiency measures must install measures against Publicly Available Specification (PAS) standards 2030: 2017 or 2030: 2019 by a certification body that has been accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they include carbon emissions from incineration, including energy from waste, as a separate category in their (1) calculations, and (2) international reporting, of total UK greenhouse gas emissions. [HL8374]

Lord Callanan: There are three categories in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory that include greenhouse gas emissions from incineration, all of which are calculated and reported as separate categories:

- The incineration of municipal solid waste (MSW) in “Power Stations”;
- The incineration of MSW in “Miscellaneous industrial/commercial combustion”;
- Other “Waste Incineration” that is not used for energy.

In line with international guidance, carbon dioxide emissions from the incineration of the biogenic fraction of waste material are estimated, but do not contribute to total emissions reported.

Hong Kong: Detainees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about (1) the location, and (2) the well-being, of Andy Li and eleven other young detainees who are citizens of Hong Kong. [HL8415]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have raised our concerns about these cases with the Chinese authorities in Hong Kong. It is essential that due process is followed.

The UK remains fully committed to upholding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech and assembly, which are guaranteed under the Joint Declaration.

Hong Kong: National Security

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about its national security legislation for Hong Kong, in particular with regard to (1) human rights concerns, and (2) the impact of that legislation on human rights defenders; and how those representations have been raised. [HL8379]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Foreign Secretary made clear to Parliament on 1 July, the imposition by China of the National Security Law on Hong Kong constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The legislation contains a slew of measures that directly threaten the freedoms and rights protected by the Joint Declaration.

Freedom of speech, assembly and association are explicitly guaranteed in the Joint Declaration and Basic Law. The Hong Kong authorities must uphold the rights and freedoms of its people.

On 1 July, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office summoned the Chinese Ambassador to make clear the UK's deep concerns. The UK Consul General in Hong Kong has also raised our concerns with Hong Kong's Executive Council. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Chinese State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi on 8 June and 28 July. We have also made our views clear at the United Nations. The UK, with the US, raised the issue at the UN Security Council on 29 May. At the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 30 June, the UK led a formal Joint Statement with the support of 27 international partners, setting out our deep concern both on Hong Kong and Xinjiang. On 23 September, the UK hosted a virtual side event in the margins of the UN Human Rights Council on rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, which was co-sponsored by Canada and Australia. We will continue to raise our concerns with the Governments of China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, both privately and publicly.

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about (1) the enactment and imposition by China of national security legislation for Hong Kong, and (2) ensuring that people who peacefully exercise their rights to assembly, freedom of expression and association are protected. [HL8380]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Foreign Secretary made clear to Parliament on 1 July, the imposition by China of the National Security Law on Hong Kong

constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The legislation contains a slew of measures that directly threaten the freedoms and rights protected by the Joint Declaration.

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House of Lords: Furs

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are to replace fur used in House of Lords robes with a fur substitute. [HL8449]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: Members may use their own robes for ceremonial occasions or hire them from outside suppliers who offer a choice of real or artificial fur. The House has a small stock of robes which members can borrow for occasions such as introduction and prorogation ceremonies. These robes have been gifted to the House over many years by former members and there is a choice of real or artificial fur. The House has no plans to purchase new robes, nor to replace any real fur in this existing stock.

House of Lords: Reviews

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what is the estimated cost of the external management review of the House of Lords. [HL8368]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The current estimate is that the External Management Review is likely to cost in the region of £100,000, based on the estimated number of days work involved, which may vary. This estimate includes the fees which will be paid to the Reviewer, as well as to any external supporting staff, but does not

include the costs of any internal staff time spent working on the Review.

Immigration Controls: USA

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by the government of the United States to impose visa restrictions on Nigerians they claim have undermined the democratic process in Nigeria; and what plans they have to impose similar such restrictions. [HL8298]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government notes the decision of the United States to impose visa restrictions on certain Nigerian citizens.

The Home Secretary can exclude a non-European Economic Area national where it is conducive to the public good. The UK Immigration Rules also provide for the refusal of a visa application if a person's character, conduct or associations make it undesirable to permit them entry to the UK.

In addition, the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 allows the UK to impose autonomous sanctions, including travel bans, for a number of reasons, including to promote respect for democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

Japan: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister has spoken to the Prime Minister of Japan since his appointment; and if so, whether they discussed the implications of the current tensions between the governments of the United States and China for the global economy. [HL8462]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister spoke to newly appointed Japanese Prime Minister Suga on 23 September. They discussed economic and trade issues, including the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and reform of the World Trade Organisation. The UK is concerned by the impacts of the current trade dispute between the governments of the US and China, and is clear that nobody benefits from trade wars. We continue to raise our concerns about the trade dispute with both parties, and to work closely with them on our bilateral trade and investment relationships.

Lakes and Rivers: Environment Protection

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of pollution in rivers and lakes in England; and how many have achieved a good ecological status. [HL8278]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Environment Agency's State of the Environment: Water

Quality Report 2018 is the most recent assessment of water pollution. The Environment Agency's water body classification results 2019 show that 16% of England's surface water reached good ecological status. More needs to be done and we need to go further and faster. We are tackling pollution from poor farming practice with regulation, financial incentives and educational schemes for farmers. In addition to Government investment in many local improvement schemes, water company investment is being scaled up to £4.6 billion, the highest yet, in the next five-year period. A new task force comprising Government and water companies will help address the problem of sewage discharge from storm overflows and our new chemicals strategy will build on a robust statutory regime to ensure chemicals are managed and handled safely.

Libya: Detention Centres

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people held in indefinite detention in centres in Libya. [HL8476]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains deeply concerned by the conditions faced by migrants and refugees in Libyan detention centres. We continue to urge the Libyan authorities to pursue alternatives to detention and implement a better functioning migration system that respects human rights. On 18 September, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that more than 2400 refugees and migrants were held in these centres.

The UK has not provided any direct funding to detention centres in Libya. These centres are the responsibility of the Libyan authorities. Any UK assistance in detention centres has been limited to official centres to improve humanitarian conditions, such as improving water, sanitation and hygiene conditions and providing non-food items and emergency food distribution. No funding has been provided to their wider operation, day-to-day operations or management. This humanitarian assistance is part of our wider 'whole of-route' approach to protecting migrants and refugees who are travelling along the Central Mediterranean Route, which also includes work to crack down on people smuggling, support to assisted voluntary returns and intensive work to end the conflict in Libya.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding, if any, they have provided to be used (1) to inspect, (2) to improve, and (3) to close, detention centres in Libya. [HL8477]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains deeply concerned by the conditions faced by migrants and refugees in Libyan detention centres. We continue to urge the Libyan authorities to pursue alternatives to detention and implement a better functioning migration system that respects human rights. On 18 September, the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees estimated that more than 2400 refugees and migrants were held in these centres.

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Libya: EU Aid

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they contributed to EU funding used to train and support the Libyan Coastguard in each of the last three years; and what estimate they have made of the total amount spent by the EU on that purpose in each of those years. [HL8475]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: EU training support to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy (LCGN) was provided through EU naval Operation Sophia, to which the UK made a voluntary contribution of €595,000 on 12 May 2017. No contributions were made by the UK to EU training of the LCGN after that date. LCGN training was funded out of voluntary contributions from Member States and we estimate the total amount to be approximately €3 million. The operation formally closed on 31 March 2020. It was succeeded by EU Operation IRINI, to which the UK has not contributed.

Libya: Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they intend to have with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees about speeding up the evacuation process of women and other vulnerable people among the registered refugees in Libya. [HL8479]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is supportive of UNHCR's work to evacuate vulnerable migrants through the Emergency Transit Mechanisms (ETMs). The UK works closely with UNHCR to provide support to vulnerable refugees in Libya through the FCDO Safety, Support and Solutions Phase II (SSSII) Programme and through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). UK officials are regularly in contact with UNHCR on delivery of both programmes.

Through our contribution to the EUTF, the UK supports UNHCR indirectly to conduct life-saving evacuations of

targeted groups of extremely vulnerable people who have been subject to serious violations of their human rights.

Local Government

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to strengthen (1) the role, and (2) the democratic accountability of local resilience forums. [HL8345]

Lord True: Whilst the Covid-19 response continues, there is no immediate intention to review local resilience structures under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) or its associated duties placed on Category 1 and 2 responders. However, given the scale and challenges emergency responders have faced in dealing with Covid-19, we will consider any strengthening of arrangements as part of the legal requirement placed upon Cabinet Office by Regulation 59 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 to conduct an assessment of regulations at least every five years. The next review must be completed by March 2022.

Local Government: Procurement

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they intend to have with local authorities about the case for changing procurement policies to ensure that local specialist services including BME refuges for victims of domestic violence continue to receive contracts. [HL8315]

Lord Greenhalgh: Depending on the value of any specific contracting opportunity, local authorities will need to comply with the general principles of procurement outlined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. This includes a regulatory responsibility to apply equal treatment to bidding organisations. Local authorities are also required to consider the Social Value Act as part of their contracting processes.

My officials have held workshops with local authorities from across the country to support them in preparing for the implementation of the new duty, including discussions on the importance of assessing the needs of all victims and providing specialist domestic abuse services as required. We will continue to work closely with local authorities and the sector.

Manston Airport: Freight

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to inform the local population that an objective decision will be made about the proposed development of a freight cargo project at Manston airport; and if so, how. [HL8470]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The decision by Her Majesty's Government to grant the Manston Airport Development Consent Order 2020 for the reopening and

development of Manston Airport was published on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning Portal on 9 July 2020. This information will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Ministers: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 23 September (HL Deb, col 1834), to (1) send a copy of the Minister's letter to the World Health Organization to the Members who participated in the oral question asked by the Bishop of St Albans on 23 September, and (2) place a copy of that letter in the Library of the House. [HL8436]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We consult and exchange correspondence with a wide range of international organisations, including the World Health Organisation, on the basis of confidentiality. In order to maintain working relationships with these organisations, we do not publish such correspondence.

Myanmar: Genocide

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UN Human Rights Council Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar, published in September 2018, and in particular the recommendation that senior generals of the Myanmar military be investigated and prosecuted for genocide; and what support they plan to provide to the case brought by the government of The Gambia against the government of Myanmar currently before the International Court of Justice. [HL8425]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK played a key role in establishing the UN Fact Finding Mission (UNFFM), we support its findings and have worked with partners to try and implement its recommendations. We are clear that the Myanmar military is responsible for a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. This is why the UK has sanctioned the six individuals named by the UNFFM, including the Myanmar military's Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Commander-in-Chief. We are clear that those who committed atrocities should be held to account. In the absence of a transparent and credible domestic process, all options should remain on the table. There is currently insufficient support at the UN Security Council for a referral to the International Criminal Court.

The UK supports the International Court of Justice process and publicly welcomed the provisional measures ruling which calls on Myanmar to do more to protect the Rohingya. We provided financial support to enable a group of Rohingya refugees to attend the hearings in The Hague in December last year.

Natural Gas: Energy Supply

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of the work being undertaken to upgrade the gas supply network. [HL8286]

Lord Callanan: In order to ensure the gas network is secure and safe for use, the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) enforcement policy for the Iron Mains Risk Reduction Programme (IMRRP) addresses the failure of 'at risk' iron gas mains. This involves the replacement of old, corroded iron pipes with polyethylene (plastic) pipes.

Launched in 2002 under Pipelines Safety Regulation (1996), the scheme aims to reduce the risk to consumers of gas leakage incidents from old iron mains. The Programme is also laying the groundwork for the use of the network to potentially carry decarbonised gases such as hydrogen in the future.

The proportion of iron pipes has fallen from 80% of the distribution network in the mid-1970s to around 20% today. This is forecast to fall to around 10% by the end of Ofgem's forthcoming RIIO (Revenues Incentives Innovation Outputs) price control period (2021-2026) and fall to around 5% by the end of the Iron Mains Risk Reduction Programme in 2032.

Nature Conservation: Sports

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the exemptions included in the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 relating to organised outdoor sports on species at risk of extinction. [HL8276]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has exempted over 30 types of sport, exercise and physical activity such as football, rugby and other outdoor pursuits from the gatherings limit. Outdoor activity is safer from a transmission perspective, and it is often easier to social distance. Just as it did before the coronavirus outbreak, the government recognises it is vital that wildlife and habitats are respected and protected, and we ensure a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship between outdoor sports and conservation.

Navid Afkari

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iran about the execution of Navid Afkari on 12 September. [HL8196]

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether Navid Afkari had a fair trial in Iran prior to his execution. [HL8197]

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the execution of Navid Afkari on the human rights situation in Iran, in particular, on the right to a fair trial. [HL8198]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The execution of Navid Afkari by the Iranian authorities was deplorable. The UK Government made clear its public condemnation of the action on 12 September. The UK Government is firmly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances and in every country, as a matter of principle, and we unreservedly support the right to peaceful protest. Iran's human rights record is of serious and longstanding concern to the UK. The continued use of the death penalty, weak rule of law and restrictions on freedoms of expression remain deeply worrying. We share the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran's concerns that death sentences were handed down and/or implemented following proceedings that did not comply with fair trial and due process safeguards. The UK is committed to holding Iran to account on a wide range of human rights issues, including the right to a fair trial. We will continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

North Africa: EU Immigration

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to EU member states about policies controlling the migration of refugees and migrants from north Africa; and what discussions they have had with those states about (1) the impact of such policies on the safety of women, and (2) how those policies correspond with commitments to uphold the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. [HL8478]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to engage with EU member states in support of a 'whole of route' approach to reduce irregular migration and maintains a dialogue on a range of issues, including upstream intervention to reduce push factors, protecting vulnerable migrants on the move including women and children, and supporting those who want to return home. Amongst EU member states in the region, most recently, the Minister for Europe and the Americas and the Maltese Foreign Minister discussed migration on 27 July. The UK continues to champion the ethos of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), through our National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS (2018-2022). Ensuring that women's and girls' needs are more effectively met by humanitarian actors and promoting the meaningful participation and leadership of women in our humanitarian response is a strategic outcome in our NAP.

Nuclear Power

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the future of nuclear power in the UK. [HL8287]

Lord Callanan: The Government believes that nuclear power will play a key role in our future energy mix. Alongside other technologies, such as renewables, nuclear will help us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The forthcoming Energy White Paper will address changes to our energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth as we deliver on our net zero target.

Obadiah Mailafia

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Obadiah Mailafia has received death threats and been interrogated by Nigerian security forces after he made public remarks about violence in the Middle-Belt region; and what assessment they have made of those remarks. [HL8299]

Baroness Sugg: We are concerned by reports that Mr Obadiah Mailafia received death threats following his remarks. The UK Government maintains that the rights of individuals and independent media to express opinions and peacefully challenge authority are essential to a free and open society. We do not have sufficient information to assess the authorities' motivation for questioning Mr Mailafia, nor why he subsequently retracted his comments.

We do not share Mr Mailafia's original assertion that intercommunal violence was primarily religiously motivated and that there is systemic collusion between Fulani communities and Nigerian authorities in attacks against Christian communities. We will continue to call on the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to assist communities affected by the violence, bring perpetrators to justice and implement long-term solutions that address the underlying causes.

Ofqual: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of (1) the board of Ofqual, and (2) non-Board members of Ofqual's Standards Advisory Group, are BAME; and when the issue of the promotion of the study or assessment of modules about migration and the UK's colonial history was last discussed by either of those bodies. [HL8307]

Baroness Berridge: These are matters for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its acting Chief Regulator, Dame Glenys Stacey, to write to the noble Lord. A copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Palestinians: Schools

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 September (HL8095), what support they plan to give to the Palestinian Authority to enable the continued provision of education for Palestinian children whose school buildings have been demolished by the Israel Defence Force in Area C of the West Bank. [HL8560]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice of demolitions (and confiscations) causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. The UK does not undertake a specific assessment of the impact of demolitions on the education of Palestinian children, but the UK does support education in the OPTs.

UK Aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) helps to ensure it can deliver essential services, including the provision of education by contributing to the salaries of carefully vetted teachers and education workers in the West Bank.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the arrangements put in place for the education of Palestinian children whose schools have been demolished by the government of Israel in the last five years. [HL8563]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice of demolitions (and confiscations) causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. The UK does not undertake a specific assessment of the impact of demolitions on the education of Palestinian children, but the UK does support education in the OPTs.

UK Aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) helps to ensure it can deliver essential services, including the provision of education by contributing to the salaries of carefully vetted teachers and education workers in the West Bank.

Power Stations: Coastal Areas

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential effect of rises in sea

levels on the operation of coastal power stations. [HL8310]

Lord Callanan: Great Britain has a reliable energy system and maintaining a safe and resilient energy supply is a key priority for this Government.

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) works with industry, regulators, sector bodies and other stakeholders to improve and maintain the resilience of the energy infrastructure, networks and assets, to reduce vulnerabilities, and ensure an effective response to actual or potentially disruptive incidents.

The 2008 Climate Change Act gave the Government powers to require organisations such as electricity generating companies, to carry out climate change risk assessments on their assets, and report on how they are adapting to climate change.

Through this work, generating companies have assessed that, due to the robust flood mitigation measures that have been put in place, existing assets are at low risk from climate related hazards such as flooding.

Additionally, planning applications for all new build power stations must demonstrate that companies have adequately taken into account the potential impacts of climate change, in their design. This ensures that our power stations continue to remain resilient to future climate related risks.

Proof of Identity: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Wei

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have stopped issuing (1) National Insurance numbers, and (2) other documents required to prove identity, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; and if so, what measures they are putting in place to allow this service to resume. [HL8489]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) continues to allocate National Insurance Numbers (NINo), however, at present this service is currently limited to specific customer groups.

On 17 March, due to Covid-19, the face-to-face interview process for NINo applications was suspended, this was then extended to all employment inspired NINo activity, on 25 March. The suspension of this service enabled DWP to deploy the people engaged in this activity to support the processing of the substantial number of requests received for financial support for citizens impacted by Covid-19.

Applications for those requiring a NINo for the payment of Social Security benefits has continued throughout the pandemic.

On 1 June a limited service was reinstated for NINo applicants, requiring a NINo for employment purposes, who did not need a face-to-face interview to verify their identity.

When applying for a NINo, all applicants are required to have their identity verified. Where applicants have had

their identity verified by another UK Government Department, primarily the Home Office as part of their visa application, their application for a NINo can be dealt with by post.

However, for those who have not had their identity verified, primarily UK and European Union/European Economic Area nationals, the process requires them to attend a face-to-face interview with DWP. During the face-to-face interview, the applicant will be asked to present photo identity documents such as a passport or National Identity Card, issued by their country of origin, which is then checked for authenticity using specialist document examination equipment.

DWP is currently working on a digital solution that will reduce the length of the NINo interview and will enable the reinstatement of a shortened face-to-face service. This service is expected to be available by mid-October, but will be to a limited number of applicants (initially 550 a day), as the digital solution is tested with the expectation that it will be available to all applicants later in the year.

Pupils: Voucher Schemes

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the summer food payment scheme, and (2) the ability of recipients to use e-gift cards for non-school items. [HL8472]

Baroness Berridge: The government has taken unprecedented and substantial action to ensure that children do not go hungry as we take measures to tackle the Covid-19 outbreak, including in relation to free school meals.

In the first instance, we asked schools to support eligible pupils by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. For circumstances where this was not possible, we established a national voucher scheme and the Covid-19 Summer Food Fund to support schools and families during this difficult time while schools were restricted from opening to all pupils.

Our national voucher scheme supplier, Edenred, reported that over £380 million worth of voucher codes had been redeemed into supermarket e-gift cards by families through the scheme as of 19 August. Over 20,350 schools had placed orders for the scheme as of 28 July. Now schools and their kitchens are open, normal free school meal provision has resumed, enabling children to have a nutritious healthy meal at school. Our guidance stated that the vouchers must be used for food and must not be redeemed for any age-restricted items, such as alcohol, cigarettes or lottery tickets. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund>.

Railways: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial preparedness of train operators to meet any ongoing challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8282]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has agreed new Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements with the rail industry which ensures our railways can continue to support the UK's recovery from Covid-19. These agreements will be in place for up to 18 months, where the Government pays train companies a small performance-related management fee to keep services running through the pandemic.

These agreements, like the Emergency Measures Agreements before them, bring stability and certainty to the rail industry to meet the challenges that this pandemic continues to present.

Railways: Heathrow Airport

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in assessing the Outline Business Case for a southern rail link to Heathrow Airport submitted by Heathrow Southern Railway Limited to the Department for Transport in September 2016. [HL8302]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In September 2016, the Department received an unsolicited Outline Business Case for a rail link to Heathrow Airport from Heathrow Southern Railway Limited. Subsequently, two processes were undertaken regarding the development of a Southern Rail Link to Heathrow, forming the project now known as Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH). The Market Led Proposals Call for Ideas, and the Southern Rail Link to Heathrow Market Sounding.

The market sounding process undertaken in 2018 did not ask for detailed specific schemes to be submitted, and no procurement process has been undertaken to select a preferred scheme for Southern Access to Heathrow.

The Department is working to develop an appropriate 'market involved' commercial model for the delivery of this scheme. This is an exciting opportunity to harness new and innovative ideas from the private sector while reducing the burden on fare and taxpayers.

The Department has continued to work closely with a range of interested stakeholders on the development of SAtH, including with Heathrow Southern Rail Limited.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many proposals for southern rail access to Heathrow were received in response to the Department for Transport's call for market-led proposals, issued on 20 March 2018;

what the names of such respondents were; and how many respondents have (1) contacted, and (2) been contacted by, the Department for Transport about those proposals since 13 December 2019. [HL8303]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There were two processes carried out concurrently. The first was the Call for Ideas as part of the Market Led Proposals workstream, which was carried out by the Department to explore numerous scheme proposals across a broad range of transport regions and routes; the second was a Market Sounding process that focussed specifically on Southern Access to Heathrow (SAth) (formerly Southern Rail Link to Heathrow).

There were twenty-seven contributors to the Southern Rail Link to Heathrow Market Sounding response. The Market Sounding Findings Report was published by Nichols and Agilia in October 2018, which includes the list of contributors to the Market Sounding questionnaire. The responses provided as part of the process were done under commercial confidentiality provisions.

The market sounding exercise did not call for specific proposals but sought to explore opportunities to access significant private sector funding sources beyond just rail passenger revenues, including those derived from wider non-rail benefits, and to understand the appetite of the private sector to share the risk of developing the Southern Access scheme.

Following the Market Sounding exercise, in November 2019 the Department published eight Strategic Objectives for the Southern Access scheme and is working to develop a commercial model to bring a private sector partner into the design and delivery of the project. Throughout this process, we have engaged significantly with stakeholders, including a number of those who responded to the market sounding exercise.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many proposals for rail investment other than for southern rail access to Heathrow were received in response to the Department for Transport's call for market-led proposals, issued on 20 March 2018; what the names of such respondents were; and how many respondents have (1) contacted, and (2) been contacted by, the Department for Transport about those proposals since 13 December 2019. [HL8304]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport received a total of twenty-nine proposals to the call for market-led proposals, excluding those relating to southern rail access to Heathrow. Due to commercial confidentiality we are unable to provide details of the respondents. All respondents were contacted at the time of their proposals. The Department has provided assistance to sponsors to develop their proposals and remain available to all sponsors who responded to the call for ideas. Since 13 December 2019 we are aware of engagement with one proposer.

Railways: Infrastructure

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much civil service time is currently allocated by the Department for Transport (1) for the evaluation of market-led proposals for new railway infrastructure, and (2) for the development of processes for selecting preferred developers for any such infrastructure. [HL8305]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Responsibility for the work relating to market-led proposals is part of the day to day duties undertaken by the Private Investment team within the Rail Strategy and Analysis Directorate.

Recognised Clearing Houses

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter from 18 March 2019 by the Systemic Risk Council to the Financial Stability Board in response to that Board's discussion paper on the resolution of central counterparty clearing houses; and what plans they have to review capital adequacy and the effectiveness of incentives to prevent failure. [HL8323]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK is committed to maintaining the highest international and domestic standards of financial regulation, including for central counterparties (CCPs). The UK continues to play an active role in setting the international standards related to the recovery and resolution of CCPs. The UK was one of the first jurisdictions to have a domestic recovery and resolution regime in place, and we continue to keep this framework under review to ensure it effectively mitigates and prevents failure.

Saneha Kinza Iqbal

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Pakistan about the case of Saneha Kinza Iqbal; whether, in such discussions, they have raised the access of Saneha Kinza Iqbal to impartial legal assistance without involvement by any member of the family or other person associated with the abductor; and what plans they have to raise (1) forced conversion, (2) forced marriages, (3) abductions and abuse, of religious minority women and girls at international fora. [HL8300]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of and monitoring Saneha Kinza Iqbal's case. We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girls' rights and gender equality with the government of Pakistan at a senior level. Most recently, on 27 August, I raised our human rights concerns including Freedom of Religion of Belief with Pakistan's

Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari. In addition, on 8 September, I discussed our concerns regarding Freedom of Religion Belief in Pakistan with the Governor of Punjab.

We will continue to urge Pakistan to take the steps necessary to comply in full with its human rights obligations, including engaging with the UN and other international bodies, and to ensure that the rights of minorities are respected.

Southern Africa: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with other countries to draw up a strategy for the delivery of aid in southern Africa which would (1) promote democracy and human rights, and (2) help to deliver prosperity to the people of that region. [HL8536]

Baroness Sugg: HMG is a leader on aid and development in southern Africa. We will continue to work in close partnership with African countries and international partners - including the African Union, UN, EU and US - on delivering aid across the region. Our Missions in the Region are engaged in extensive work to promote democracy, human rights and prosperity, working closely with other countries.

Special Educational Needs

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) children had Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, and (2) new EHC plans were agreed, in (a) the 2015–16, (b) the 2016–17, (c) the 2017–18, (d) 2018–19, and (e) 2019–20, academic year; how many decisions not to provide an EHC plan were appealed; and of any such appeals, how many were upheld. [HL8426]

Baroness Berridge: The number of children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is collected as of January each year is in the attached Table A.

The number of new EHC plans collected on a calendar year basis is in the attached Table B.

Further information, from the SEN2 Survey, is available at:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-health-and-care-plans>.

Information on how many decisions not to provide an EHC plan were appealed, and of any such appeals, how many were upheld, is not held centrally by the department.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL8426_table [HL8426_number_of_EHC_plans.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-23/HL8426>

Tourism: Job Support Scheme

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to address concerns from the tourism industry, including from tour operators, about employees who are unable to meet the requirement to work at least 33 per cent of their usual hours to qualify for support from the Job Support Scheme. [HL8514]

Baroness Barran: We recognise that these are extremely challenging conditions for businesses in the tourism sector, including tour operators. We continue to closely monitor the situation.

While it will not be possible to preserve every job or business, the Chancellor's recent package of targeted measures will help businesses to protect jobs and manage their finances in the face of reduced or uncertain demand.

Tour operators have been able to access the Government's comprehensive economic support package, which includes the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme until the end of October. It also includes a significant cut to VAT for most tourism and hospitality activities until the end of March.

We are offering impacted businesses generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans, as well as extending the application window of the government-backed loan schemes.

We are continuing to engage across Government and with stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support the recovery of tourism across the UK.

Trade: Taiwan

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the level of trade is between the UK and Taiwan. [HL8281]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Baroness Kennedy,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what the level of trade is between the UK and Taiwan (HL8281).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publish UK export/import statistics in our quarterly UK total trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted release. For 2019, the UK estimates of trade with Taiwan were £2.99bn worth of goods and service exports to Taiwan, and £4.1bn worth of goods and service imports from Taiwan.

For more detail, full annual and quarterly timeseries data on the export and import of goods and services by the UK from Taiwan can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/internationaltrade/datasets/ukttotaltradeallcountriesnonseasonallyadjusted>

Uk Government Union Capability Independent Review

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Dunlop Review of UK Government Union Capability will be published. [HL8321]

Lord True: As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office stated to the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 10 September, we will publish the Dunlop Review before the end of the year.

We are in the process of implementing many of Lord Dunlop's recommendations and we will set out that work when we publish the report.

UN Security Council: Powers

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 September (HL8043 and HL8044), what criteria they use to determine when genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes have been perpetrated to inform their decision not to veto any credible UN Security Council resolution in line with their commitments under the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group's Code of Conduct. [HL8353]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Indications of the existence of atrocity crimes, or the risk that they may be committed, will form part of Her Majesty's Government's overall assessment of a situation. In so doing, it will draw upon a variety of sources of information, including reporting by international organisations with particular expertise on these matters, such as the UN. It will be a matter for properly constituted courts to make legal determinations of whether atrocity crimes have taken place, using criteria defined by relevant international legal instruments such as the Genocide Convention and Rome Statute.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 September (HL8043 and HL8044) and their commitments under the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group's Code of Conduct, what plans they have to review their position on the determination of genocide. [HL8354]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to the principle that there must be no impunity for perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Any determination as to whether war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide have occurred is a matter for competent courts after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible judicial process. We do not plan to review the position on the determination of genocide.

Undocumented Migrants: Coronavirus

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether migrants crossing the English Channel who are detained by the UK Border Agency receive a Covid-19 test. [HL8346]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Since we introduced quarantine measures in June, those who have come to the UK in illegally facilitated crossings have been placed in facilities where they must self-isolate for 14 days, given we cannot be certain which countries they have travelled through.

Anyone who is symptomatic will be taken to designated accommodation and tested according to Public Health England guidance.

All immigration removal centres have communicable disease contingency plans, based on guidance by Public Health England (PHE). Measures such as protective shielding, improved hygiene and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are being used to minimise the risk of Covid-19 spreading to vulnerable groups in IRCs.

On 26 March the High Court ruled that the Home Office was taking sensible, precautionary measures in relation to Covid-19 and immigration detention.

USA: Iran

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States since 21 September to discuss that government's (1) policy towards, and (2) sanctions on, Iran. [HL8464]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly discusses with the US a variety of issues related to Iran, including our shared concerns about Iran's nuclear programme, Iran's destabilising activities in the region and the various sanctions programmes targeting Iran. These discussions take place at all levels of government, including recently during the Foreign Secretary's visit to Washington in early September.

West Bank: Demolition

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of

Israel about reports that 160 structures were demolished in the West Bank in July and August. [HL8467]

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel is demolishing water, sanitation and hygiene structures used by Palestinians in the West Bank. [HL8468]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property and structures 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. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our concerns about demolitions with Israeli Ministers and senior officials, and urged them to cease the counter-productive policy of demolitions. We call on Israel to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

Youth Custody: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people in custody. [HL8329]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in custody remains a top priority during this unprecedented period. We are very

sensitive of the difficulties many children in custody will have experienced as a result of Covid-19, and the necessary measures taken to protect children and staff and follow physical distancing requirements. The Youth Custody Service (YCS) have communicated with staff and children to ensure they are aware and understand the reasoning as to why such measures have had to occur.

During this time, 'SECURE STAIRS' - the integrated framework of care jointly led by NHS England and NHS Improvement and the YCS - has adapted its approach to meet the needs of children, whilst adhering to physical distancing.

Having initially focused on delivering essential activities such as regular phone calls (with young people having been allocated additional free phone credits) access to showers, entertainment and education materials, and time in the fresh air, delivery of 'face to face' education and social visits are being prioritised across our sites, as we progress with Covid-19 recovery work. The YCS is working closely with its partners to further expand the regime in a safe, sustainable and flexible manner, whilst ensuring that the safety of children and staff remains paramount.

We are also carrying out work to ensure that lessons learned from the Covid-19 period are taken into account going forwards. The YCS have commissioned a programme of research, in collaboration with academics, to evaluate and learn lessons from the impact and response to Covid-19 and the results will inform their recovery planning.

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