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**Tuesday
6 October 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 6 October 2020

HM Prison Five Wells: G4S

[HLWS485]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Justice (Lucy Frazer QC) has made the following Written Statement.

"Today I can announce that, following a rigorous and robust evaluation process, G4S has been successful in its bid to provide prison operator services at the new build resettlement prison at Wellingborough.

I can also today announce that following public consultation in 2019 and a meeting of local community representatives in February 2020, the new prison will be named 'HMP Five Wells'. This was the most popular submission from members of the public and reflects the five historic wells that surround the town, and also appear on Wellingborough's coat of arms. I am grateful for the public's submissions to name their new prison and I am proud that HMP Five Wells will provide a significant boost to the local economy by creating hundreds of long-term jobs, support our commitment to a role for the private sector in operating custodial services, and improve rehabilitation and security in the prison estate.

The contract for the operation of HMP Five Wells follows the first mini competition launched in July 2019 under the Prison Operator Services Framework. Four of the six Framework Operators (G4S Care and Custody Services UK Limited, Serco Limited, Sodexo Limited and a new entrant, Management and Training Corporation Works Limited) bid as part of the competition.

Bidders were required to submit proposals that addressed specific requirements in relation to our aspirations for the new Resettlement prison and set how they would deliver all aspects of the custodial service from arrival to resettlement ensuring this is safe, decent and secure. Bidders also set out how the prison would be mobilised and resourced effectively, how they would provide effective Property and Facilities Management, and demonstrated financial robustness.

As the successful bidder, G4S demonstrated its capability to deliver a high quality, value for money service which will ensure that the prison is safe, decent, secure, rehabilitative and fit for modern times. All bidders should be proud of their submissions.

HMPPS did not bid in the competition but provided a public-sector benchmark against which bids were rigorously assessed. If bids had not met our expectations in terms of quality and cost, HMPPS would manage the new prison itself.

It is important to recognise that the operator competition for the operation of HMP Five Wells was about driving quality and value across the system, which we have shown can be done through a balanced approach

to custodial services provision, which includes a mix of public, voluntary and private sector involvement.

The result of the operator competition for HMP Five Wells, with strong bids from all bidders, bodes well for the next competition we will run for the new prison at Glen Parva in 2021 and potentially further competitions for new prisons and existing private prisons as their contracts expire over the course of the next five years.

It is another crucial milestone in this Government's commitment to delivering around 3,500 modern places at HMP Five Wells, the new prison at Glen Parva, and via a new houseblock at HMP Stocken. This is on top of the 10,000 additional prison places being created by investing up to £2.5 billion to reform the prison estate, improve standards of decency across the estate, and reduce reoffending."

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Report on Anglican Church

[HLWS484]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published its latest report, which can be found at www.iicsa.org.uk.

This report relates to its investigation into institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Anglican Church. I pay tribute to the strength and courage of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences to ensure the Inquiry can deliver its vital work.

Government will review this report and consider how to respond to its content in due course.

I would like to thank Professor Jay and her Panel for their continued work to uncover the truth, expose what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

Renewable Energy

[HLWS486]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alok Sharma has today made the following statement:

Today, the Prime Minister announced new investment of £160 million to support offshore wind, and a new level of ambition for the next round of the renewable Contracts for Difference energy auction.

This funding will support major new port side manufacturing hubs, so that the UK can host the factories making the next generation of offshore wind equipment.

The Government also confirmed a boost to its previous target to deliver up to 30GW of offshore wind to delivering 40GW by 2030.

The Government also announced a new ambition for 1GW of the new 40GW by 2030 target to come from floating offshore wind – a brand new technology allowing windfarms to be built further out to sea in deeper waters, boosting capacity even further. This will put the UK at the forefront of the next generation of clean energy.

Together with planned stringent requirements on supporting UK manufacturers in Government-backed renewables projects, these measures will help the industry to reach its target of 60% of offshore wind farm content coming from the UK, helping to also boost lower-carbon supply chains.

To help deliver these ambitious targets and accelerate the country's progress towards net zero emissions by

2050, the Government has confirmed that the next round of the renewable energy auction will open in late 2021 and aim to deliver up to twice the capacity of last year's successful round – potentially providing enough clean energy for up to 10 million homes.

Today's announcement marks the latest stage of the Government's support for renewable energy and acceleration of the transition to net zero. The Prime Minister has set out new plans to build back better and build back greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy – creating jobs, reducing carbon emissions and boosting exports.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Tunnicliffe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional (1) personal protection equipment, and (2) training, for Armed Forces personnel to carry out door-to-door Covid-19 testing. [HL8652]

Baroness Goldie: Armed Forces personnel have been carrying out door-to-door testing as part of Defence's ongoing Covid-19 response.

The safety and welfare of our Armed Forces is paramount, and all personnel wear appropriate PPE, in line with Public Health England guidance and existing Force protection measures.

No additional training is required, but all personnel are suitably briefed to carry out testing.

Asked by *Lord Tunnicliffe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of Covid-19. [HL8654]

Baroness Goldie: As of 30 September 2020, three UK Armed Forces personnel have died where Covid-19 was either the primary cause of death or associated with the cause of death.

Balfour Declaration

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to ensure that the Balfour Declaration is upheld, and in particular, the statement that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". [HL8342]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Israel is a thriving democracy with a long-standing commitment to equality for all. Defending Freedom of Religion or Belief, and championing human rights, is a policy priority for the UK. We encourage the Israeli Government to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all enshrined in its laws.

British Nationality: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK citizenship ceremonies have been cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; what assessment they have made of the impact such cancellations have had on the

ability of applicants to (1) work, and (2) study; and what plans they have to introduce a mechanism to (a) grant citizenships, and (b) hold citizenship ceremonies, online. [HL8351]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Each Local Authority is responsible for administering citizenship ceremonies within their area of responsibility and figures are not recorded centrally by the Home Office. Although ceremonies were suspended in March in line with Government advice relating to Covid-19, they have now resumed and are being strictly conducted in line with Government advice relating to social distancing and public safety. The Home Office has worked with Local Authorities to enable them to deliver online ceremonies. The first online 'virtual' ceremony took place on 20 July 2020.

The majority of individuals waiting to attend a citizenship ceremony already enjoy settled status in the UK and as such are allowed to work and study here. In a small number of instances where it has been necessary to expedite ceremonies, special arrangements have been made.

Cameroon: Humanitarian Situation and Security

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the security and humanitarian situation in Cameroon. [HL8461]

Baroness Sugg: We are deeply concerned about the situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. These regions are suffering from high levels of violence, which has driven almost 740,000 people from their homes. 2.3 million people are in need of humanitarian support. Last month the Government announced £4.5 million in additional funding to humanitarian efforts in Cameroon, bringing our total support to £13.5 million this year.

The Minister for Africa regularly discusses the situation in Cameroon with the British High Commissioner in Yaoundé, and did so most recently in September. In May, the Minister for Africa spoke to the Prime Minister of Cameroon and stressed the need for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. He has committed to visiting Cameroon soon and will raise HMG's concerns directly with the Government of Cameroon.

Reports of human rights violations and abuses by security forces and armed separatists are extremely disturbing and violence and intimidation aimed at humanitarian workers is unacceptable. We continue to call for protection of civilians and unhindered humanitarian access to those affected by the crisis. All those responsible for human rights violations and abuses must be held accountable. The Government strongly condemns the appalling terrorist attacks on innocent civilians, including women and children, in Cameroon's Far North region.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by **Lord Robathan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many deaths of individuals under the age of 65 have been attributed to Covid-19 since 1 February; and of those, how many of those individuals did not have comorbidities. [HL8386]

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

Dear Lord Robathan,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths of individuals under the age of 65 have been attributed to Covid-19 since 1 February; and of those, how many of those individuals did not have comorbidities (HL8386).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing mortality statistics for deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent year for which mortality statistics are available is 2019 however we do publish provisional statistics for weekly death registrations which are currently published for deaths registered up to 11 September 2020. National Records Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10). Deaths involving Covid-19, defined as either as a contributory or underlying cause of death are identified by the ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2.

The most recent weekly deaths data, based on date of registration, shows that there were 5,550 deaths involving Covid-19 registered for individuals under the age of 65 between 1 February and 11 September 2020.

The latest data available on deaths involving Covid-19 by age group and pre-existing conditions was published in 'Deaths involving Covid-19, England and Wales: deaths occurring in June 2020'. These figures are based on the date of occurrence rather than date of registration. These data show that there were 5,364 deaths involving Covid-19 that occurred between March and June 2020 to individuals under the age of 65. Of these, 772 (14.4%) did not have a pre-existing condition.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenglandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere>

[dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending11september2020](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurringinjune2020)

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurringinjune2020>

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether migrants who have crossed the English Channel and were subsequently detained by Border Force have been tested for Covid-19; and if so, what percentage of such migrants have so far tested positive. [HL8365]

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.

Care pathways follow published HM Government guidance on Covid-19 and more detailed PHE and NHS England guidance on the management of Covid-19 in places of detention. Under these guidelines universal testing is not recommended.

Corruption: Sanctions

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to include those involved in corruption in their global human rights sanctions regime. [HL8265]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 6 July the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. This sanctions regime enables the UK to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses.

As the Foreign Secretary announced to the House, work is underway to consider how a corruption regime could be added to our armoury. Sanctions are powerful tools, capable of having a significant impact, and complex to design. We are taking the time to ensure we get them right.

Criminal Proceedings

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the sustainability of publicly funded criminal defence. [HL8385]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Legal Aid Agency monitors capacity across criminal legal aid contracts and

where issues are identified acts to ensure there is ongoing availability of criminal legal advice for the public.

In August we announced that we would be taking forward the policy proposals that practitioners told us mattered most for the Criminal Legal Aid Review (CLAR) accelerated areas. These areas were: unused material, cracked trials, paper-heavy cases, sending cases to the Crown Court, and pre-charge engagement. These policies allowed us to inject up to £51 million into criminal legal aid to further strengthen the market.

As part of our response to the Criminal Legal Aid Accelerated Areas consultation, we also announced that the next phase of the review would include an independently led review of the market, to ensure it can meet demand now and into the future, provide an effective and efficient service that ensures value for money for the taxpayer, and continues to provide defendants with high-quality advice from a diverse range of practitioners. Alongside this we continue to look at the current fee schemes to ensure they keep pace with wider reforms across the justice system.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of the provision of roadside charging points for electric vehicles in England. [HL8458]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government and industry have supported the installation of over 18,000 publicly available charging devices. This includes over 3,200 rapid devices – one of the largest networks in Europe. Highways England have now completed their commitment to ensure there is a rapid chargepoint every 20 miles along 95% of the Strategic Road Network by March 2020.

By 2023, we aim to have at least six high powered, open access chargepoints at motorway service areas in England, with some larger sites having as many as 10-12, and by 2035 we expect the number to increase to around 6,000 high powered chargers across the network. This will be supported by a Rapid Charging Fund, part of the £500 million support for charging infrastructure announced at the March Budget.

In May, we announced that the Government will consult on improving the charging experience for drivers of electric vehicles when using the public charging network including proposals to address reliability, data provision, pricing transparency and ease of payment. We will take industry views on board to develop solutions that work for industry whilst putting the consumer experience at the heart of public electric vehicle charging.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Green Homes Grant Scheme has now been launched; and if

so, how many (1) people have applied, and (2) vouchers have been provided, to date. [HL8396]

Lord Callanan: The Green Homes Grant voucher scheme launched on 30th September ready for homeowners to apply for vouchers and for installers to register with the administrator for payment. As of 3rd October, there were 7,858 applications for vouchers.

Incinerators: Recycling

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of increasing waste incineration capacity on rates of recycling. [HL8373]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In developing our Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) the Government considered the amount of residual waste treatment capacity that will be required for England to avoid any negative impact on future recycling ambitions and the major waste reforms we are implementing. The assessment concluded that significant additional residual waste energy recovery capacity such as incineration or advanced conversion technologies – above that already operating or planned to 2020 – would not necessarily be needed to meet an ambition of no more than 10% municipal waste to landfill by 2035, if a 65% recycling rate is achieved by that same year. This assumed that refuse-derived fuel exports remain at 2018 levels. However, if energy recovery continues to provide a better environmental alternative to landfill, more investment to reduce tonnages of municipal waste to landfill further would deliver environmental benefits.

In accordance with the commitment given in the RWS we will continue to monitor residual waste infrastructure capacity.

Israel: Bahrain and United Arab Emirates

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on people living in the Palestinian Occupied Territories of the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the government of Israel and the government of Bahrain. [HL8394]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the treaty establishing diplomatic relations between the government of Israel and the government of the United Arab Emirates on (1) religious sanctuaries in Jerusalem, and (2) the rights of Muslims to pray in that city. [HL8395]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We warmly welcome the agreement between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. This is an historic step which sees the normalisation of relations between three great friends of the UK. The UK continues to be firmly committed to Freedom of Religion or Belief as a human rights priority.

Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem regularly raise issues of religious freedom with the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority. The UK recognises that Jerusalem holds particular significance for many groups, especially the three Abrahamic faiths, and encourage all parties to ensure the safety and security of the holy sites and all who worship and visit there.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to support (1) Fatou Bensouda, and (2) the International Criminal Court, in the investigation of the government of Israel for alleged war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [HL8341]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We respect the independence of the Court in these matters.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 3 September (HL7829), what advice they have given to the Palestinian Authority about how people in Palestine should respond to any attacks by the government of Israel. [HL8343]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has urged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to work together to meet their obligations under the Oslo Accords. We call on all parties to abide by International Humanitarian Law and to promote peace, stability and security. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions, which make peace more difficult.

Legal Aid Scheme

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a reduction in the provision of the Standard Monthly Payments to criminal legal aid firms on the number of criminal defence lawyers. [HL8384]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: At present, 17% of all crime accounts are paid under the Standard Monthly Payment ('SMP') model. The remainder have opted for Variable Monthly Payments, which pays the actual value of the claim submitted each month. Firms can elect to be paid by either model, according to which may be most advantageous to them. SMPs relate to Controlled Work services only, and therefore reflect a proportion of a Provider's total revenue.

The number of those accounts paid via SMP which have seen a reduction in payments since July 2020 represents 6% of all crime accounts. Where a reduction is necessary, this takes effect following the Legal Aid Agency notifying providers of this in advance. Firms

facing financial hardship can discuss payment options further with their LAA Contract Manager.

The LAA have been in contact with providers to assess the impact on their businesses and can confirm that no Criminal Defence Providers have exited the market as a result of a reduction in SMPs.

The LAA has implemented several changes to maintain cashflow to firms and to allow firms to be paid more quickly – through these changes we can inject up to £51 million per year into criminal legal aid. We have begun a review into how criminal lawyers are compensated for their work and there is more information about this here: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/criminal-legal-aid/criminal-legal-aid-review/>

In addition to the support schemes offered by the government, we have continued to pay providers on time and introduced a number of measures to speed up payments to providers. All of the measures taken by the LAA are set out on our gov.uk page and there is further information about this here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-legal-aid-agency-contingency-response#financial-relief-page>

Local Government: Reorganisation

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to announce proposals this year for the reorganisation of local government in England; and whether county council elections will take place in May 2021. [HL8370]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government wants to decentralise giving more power to local communities, providing opportunities for them to enjoy devolution. The Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper, which will be published in due course, will set out our detailed plans and we continue to work closely with local areas to establish solutions to local government reform. There will be no blanket abolition of district councils or cancellation of the county council elections, and no top-down restructuring of local government.

Marriage: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government why humanist weddings are limited to gatherings of six people under Covid-19 regulations; and what plans they have to change those rules to reflect those for religious and civil marriages which allow up to 15 people. [HL8481]

Lord Greenhalgh: Humanists weddings can take place with 15 people present under these Regulations, as is the case for religious ceremonies and civil ceremonies.

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow the same number of people to attend a

humanist wedding as religious and civil weddings during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8567]

Lord Greenhalgh: Humanists weddings can take place with 15 people present under these Regulations, as is the case for religious ceremonies and civil ceremonies.

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is permitted for up to 15 people to attend a humanist wedding; and if so, whether they have plans to clarify rules for marriages and civil ceremonies. [HL8655]

Lord Greenhalgh: Humanist wedding ceremonies can take place at this time with 15 people present. This is also the case for marriages and civil ceremonies.

Motor Vehicles: Testing

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the operation of the MOT process during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8584]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government introduced legislation to exclude light vehicles (cars, vans, motor cycles, etc.) that were due to be examined between 30th March 2020 and 29th March 2021 from the requirement to hold a test certificate for a one-off period of six months. This was later amended to end the exemption on 30 July 2020, in order to minimise disruption to the testing regime.

At the peak of restrictions, in April, there was a 78.86% reduction in the number of vehicles being tested. However, as Covid-19 restrictions were lifted garages reopened, and testing resumed. July saw a decrease in testing volume of 5.72% when compared with 2019. Once mandatory testing was reintroduced from 1st August, testing volumes increased relative to 2019 levels by 9.88 per cent in August and by 16.28 per cent in September. Volumes are increasing as vehicles which were granted the exclusion become due for test, and both DVSA and the Department continue to monitor the situation.

Roadworthiness and vehicle testing is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and they have taken their own approach to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Northern Ireland: Terrorism

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have held, if any, with the government of Ireland about claims made in the Irish Parliament on 22 September that the former chief of staff of the Provisional IRA was an informer for the Special Branch of the Garda in 1972. [HL8443]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of claims made in the Irish Parliament

on 22 September that the former chief of staff of the Provisional IRA was an informer for the Special Branch of the Garda in 1972; and what implications they consider these claims may have for relations with the government of Ireland. [HL8447]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: I can confirm that the Government have held no discussions with the Irish Government on this matter. The Government have made no assessment of these claims at this time.

Pakistan: Forced Marriage

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about the issue of child, early and forced marriage, and in particular where the victims are members of religious minorities who have been abducted, forcibly converted and abused; what UK Aid projects support victims of child, early and forced marriage in Pakistan; and what assistance these projects provide. [HL8497]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government strongly condemns child, early and forced marriage and forced conversion of all women and girls in Pakistan, including from religious minorities. 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. On 27 August, I raised our human rights concerns including Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari. On 8 September, I also raised these concerns with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, on 8 September.

Our AAWAZ II Accountability, Inclusion and Reducing Modern Slavery Programme will spend £39.5m over 5 years (2018 - 2024) across the Pakistani provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. As part of AAWAZ II, we support better data and evidence collection on child labour and child marriage; increased access to child protection services; and enhanced access for children to birth registration systems and birth certificates. We are also planning future community engagement on modern slavery.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have assessed the capacity of legal mechanisms in Pakistan to handle cases of victims of child, early and forced marriage; and if not, what plans they have to do so. [HL8498]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is deeply concerned by child, early and forced marriage in Pakistan. Our AAWAZ II Accountability, Inclusion and Reducing Modern Slavery Programme supports reforming the legal framework and building state capacity for child protection. We have recently launched analyses of Child Marriage in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in order to

support development of a national child marriage restraint policy framework.

AAWAZ II is also working with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to increase levels of birth registration of children, a National Child Labour Survey and development of Child Protection Case Management and Referral Systems at provincial level. UK's support is contributing to laying the foundation of much stronger and sustainable child protection systems.

We are also working with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen and improve Pakistan's police and judicial systems. The UK's Strengthening Rule of Law in Pakistan programme aims to increase public confidence and trust in the Rule of Law. It focuses on delivering outputs that improve the justice system for victims, witnesses and offenders, including vulnerable women and girls.

Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their policies towards the Middle East on (1) the state of Palestine, and (2) the human rights of Palestinians. [HL8338]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government policy continues to focus on working toward peace, and a sovereign, prosperous Palestinian state, living side by side with a safe and secure Israel. That is why we are a leading donor to the Palestinian Authority and why we have put such emphasis on strengthening Palestinian institutions. Our policy also holds at the core defending Freedom of Religion or Belief, and championing human rights. This is a policy priority for the UK and we will continue to work to improve the lives of Palestinians.

Palestinians: International Cooperation

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) representations they have made, and (2) advice they have given, to the Palestinian Authority, about the Palestinian Authority's attendance at meetings with the governments of Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States concerning negotiations on the future of Palestine. [HL8339]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is actively encouraging both parties back to dialogue. The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the OPTs on 24-25 August and encouraged the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians to build on the momentum of the UAE-Israeli-Bahrain announcements, and suspension of annexation plans. We profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians, as there can be no substitute in order to reach a two-state solution and a lasting peace.

Prisoners on Remand

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners have been released on bail in each month since 1 March because they have reached the maximum permissible period of remand. [HL8369]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department does not currently collect this data centrally.

Prisoners' Release: Housing

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve resettlement for prison leavers. [HL8382]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We have invested an additional £22m per annum over the remaining life of the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts to deliver an enhanced Through the Gate resettlement service preparing offenders for release which includes the requirement that CRCs complete specific tasks to help prisoners to secure and maintain settled accommodation, gain employment, and manage debt and their financial affairs.

The probation reform programme will deliver an enhanced pre-release planning strategy improving the current service for all released from prison, along with access to specialist accommodation providers to reduce the risk of homelessness, and a mentoring provision to support those who struggle with the transition from prison to community to reduce the risk of recalls and build community networks. All National Probation Service (NPS) regions will have a short sentence function providing a multi-agency and responsive approach to sustain existing community links and fast track referrals into new services to improve compliance and outcomes. We will also deliver the existing NPS service-level to all CRC cases under a unified model to increase staff working within the prison service and in the community.

Accommodation pilots in Leeds, Pentonville and Bristol prisons have been operating since August 2019 and, subject to evaluation, we will inform future provision of accommodation for offenders, through the new Probation model. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Justice also secured £8.5 million to support individuals at risk of homelessness on their release from prison and help them to move on into permanent accommodation.

Seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces have been set up to work with local authorities and other partners to find accommodation for offenders released from prison and these taskforces are still active and we are considering how these will build on the gains made.

Probation

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in renationalising probation services. [HL8383]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government is committed to unifying probation under the National Probation Service (NPS) from June 2021. We have published detailed plans this year, outlining our future model for probation services and changes to take account of the impact of Covid-19 on our proposals. In Wales, responsibility for offender management has already been transferred to the NPS. We are working closely with current employers to prepare for a smooth transition from the current to the future model, including the transfer of staff. The staff assignment process is underway with current employers, and call-off competitions for rehabilitative services to be delivered under the Dynamic Framework have also begun.

Religious Freedom

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last made representations to the government of Pakistan about the recognition of baptism certificates and school records as evidence to be used in cases of abductions, forced marriage and forced conversions to determine the ages of victims; and what support they have provided to that country to enable such data to be included on its National Database and Registration Authority. [HL8301]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls from religious minorities in Pakistan. 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 Freedom of Religion Belief with the Governor of Punjab.

We are working with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen and improve Pakistan's police and judicial systems. The UK's Strengthening Rule of Law in Pakistan programme aims to increase public confidence and trust in the Rule of Law. It focuses on delivering outputs that improve the justice system for victims, witnesses and offenders, including vulnerable women and girls.

Republic of Ireland: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Sugg on 15 June (HL4960), 29 June (HL5655), 22 July (HL6669) and 6

August (HL7207), whether they will now answer the questions put, in particular, on what date they were informed by the government of Ireland of its plans for passengers travelling from Great Britain to the Republic of Ireland to be subject to quarantine restrictions in Ireland; and how those plans were communicated. [HL8517]

Baroness Sugg: Restrictions for passengers travelling from Great Britain to Ireland consisting of a requirement to complete a passenger locator form detailing arrangements for fourteen days' self-isolation came into effect from 26th April. Her Majesty's Government was notified by the Irish Authorities of their intention to introduce these on 23rd April. The Irish authorities communicated these plans initially through discussions with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and subsequently with our Embassy in Dublin and other UK Government Departments.

STEM Subjects: Higher Education

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the diversity of students taking STEM subjects at university. [HL8391]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects has an economic benefit for individual students as well as society at large. Ensuring that anyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to pursue a career in these areas is a priority for this government.

We have undertaken a behavioural insight trial of 11,000 pupils to gain a better understanding of why there is a low participation of female students in STEM subjects and to identify the best ways to redress this.

In mathematics, we have invested £76 million in the Teaching for Mastery programme. This programme aims to reach 11,000 schools across England by 2023 and equip all young people, regardless of their background, with the mathematical knowledge and skills they will need for employment, further study, and everyday life. This is further supported by our Advanced Maths Support programme, which aims to increase participation in the post-16 study of mathematics, with a specific focus on the participation of girls and disadvantaged pupils.

In science, we have committed funding to the Stimulating Physics Network to improve the teaching of science for all pupils. This includes a specific programme to improve gender balance. We have also developed the Isaac Physics online learning platform to improve GCSE and A level physics students' attainment, and to increase the numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who choose to study physics at university.

In September 2020 we introduced T levels, new post-16 technical programmes which have been designed to give all young people a high-quality route to skilled

employment and higher technical training such as degree apprenticeships, including for key STEM-related subjects.

Universities and other higher education providers wishing to charge higher levels fees must have an access and participation plan agreed by the regulator, the Office for Students. Through these plans, universities set out how they will support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups to access and successfully participate in higher education.

We will continue to invest in all stages of education to ensure that people with an interest in, and talent for, STEM courses are able to pursue them at university if they wish to do so.

Students: Loans

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that university maintenance loans reflect student living costs. [HL8387]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The loan for living costs is a contribution towards students' living costs while they attend university, with the greatest amount of support made available to students from families with the lowest incomes. Different rates of student loan apply depending on where a student is living and studying, with the highest rates for students living away from home and studying in London.

The government reviews support for living costs on an annual basis. Maximum support for living costs increased by 10.3% in cash terms for eligible new students on the lowest incomes in 2016/17, compared to the maximum support available for new starters in 2015/16 under the previous system.

Further inflationary increases in support for living costs have been made in each academic year since, with an increase of 2.9% announced for the 2020/21 academic year and 3.1% for the 2021/22 academic year – taking the support available for students from the lowest income background to record levels in cash terms. In 2019, we saw record rates of disadvantaged 18 year-olds accepted to study at university on a full-time basis, with an increase of 1.4 percentage points to 21.6%. This means that 18 year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds were 62% more likely to go to university in 2019 than in 2009. The latest data for the 2020 admissions cycle show that this progress has continued, with the entry rate for students from disadvantaged backgrounds greater than last year.

In addition to the standard living costs package, many universities and colleges also offer specific funds, bursaries, and scholarships for eligible students.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the UN Human Rights Council's Independent

International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic 21st report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, published on 15 September, what representations they have made to the government of Turkey about the allegations that the Syrian National Army may have committed war crimes against Kurdish civilians in Afrin and the surrounding area. [HL8334]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have reviewed the report by the UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria and are deeply concerned by its findings that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and human rights violations are still being committed against the Syrian people by all parties to the Syrian conflict. Officials have raised the allegations made against the Syrian National Army with the Government of Turkey. The UK continues to call on all parties to the conflict in Syria to respect international law.

Temperature: Verkhoysk

Asked by Lord Lilley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report Prolonged Siberian heat of 2020, published on 15 July, what assessment they have made of whether the report's sample size is large enough to justify the use of a GEV asymptotic approximation when analysing the Verkhoysk temperatures. [HL8376]

Lord Callanan: The report's sample size is large enough to justify the fitting method used in the analysis as daily temperature data at approximately one-year intervals are not significantly correlated from year to year over continental regions. The maximum daily temperature in a particular month or season in a particular year in a continental region does not serve as a good predictor of the maximum daily temperature in the same month or season in the following year (over and above the long-term effect of climate change) due to natural variability of the climate system. The June-July daily maximum temperature data over timescales from 1 day upwards shows no significant autocorrelation (correlation with itself across a period of time) above 1 week timescales and confirms that the 94 data points used in the report are independent, a sufficiently large number to justify the fitting method used in the analysis. The analysis in the report is based on peer reviewed methodology as set out in a paper by Van der Wiel et al. referenced in the report, which applied this fitting method to a dataset of a comparable size.

Asked by Lord Lilley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report Prolonged Siberian heat of 2020, published on 15 July, whether they will place a copy of a quantile-quantile plot of a GEV distribution against the distribution of June maximum temperatures at Verkhoysk during 1926–2020 in the Library of the House. [HL8377]

Lord Callanan: I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Libraries of the House, along with explanatory text and supporting documents.

Asked by Lord Lilley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report *Prolonged Siberian heat of 2020*, published on 15 July, whether the Met Office's analysis assumes that all the months of June during 1926–2020 have the same statistical distribution for their daily temperature maxima at Verkhoyansk; and if so, why. [HL8378]

Lord Callanan: The analysis does not assume that all the months of June during 1926–2020 have the same statistical distribution for the highest of their daily temperature maxima at Verkhoyansk. Instead, the method involves modelling secular changes in the data by a covariance with smoothed Global Mean Surface Temperature (GMST) and first removing this to create a set of residuals that may be assumed to be stationary and to which a Generalized Extreme Value (GEV) fit is then made. This method, based on peer-reviewed literature, is set out in the linked methods document which accompanies the report.

Trade Agreements: Japan

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, not to follow the provisions of the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, agreed on 11 September. [HL8372]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: We have no plans not to follow the provisions of the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, agreed on 11 September. After the agreement is signed, we will lay the full text in parliament. We will also publish a parliamentary report, setting out in detail any areas where there are material differences between the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Treatment Of, and Outcomes For, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System Independent Review

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in implementing the recommendations of the Lammy Review, published on 8 September 2017. [HL8381]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government has provided updates on the implementation of the independent review into the treatment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system; the Lammy Review.

Where a recommendation could not be implemented in full or exactly as set out in the Review, alternative approaches have been sought to achieve the same aim. As of 23rd September 2020, the status of the recommendations are as follows:

Out of the 35 recommendations listed in the Lammy Review;

i. Actions in relation to 16 recommendations have been completed (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 23, 33, 35).

ii. Actions in relation to 17 recommendations are still in progress, of which:

a. 11 recommendations aim to be completed within 6 – 12 months (15, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

b. 6 recommendations will take longer than 12 months to be completed (1, 9, 10, 31, 32, 34).

iii. In the Government's response to the Review in December 2017, it was stated that two recommendations specific to a target for judicial appointments and appraisal (14, 16) would not be taken forward.

The Government's response identified actions going beyond the Review's recommendations. Progress on recommendations and additional actions are overseen by a CJS Race and Ethnicity Board which was created in response to the Review.

An independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities is currently reviewing inequality in the UK, focusing on areas including education, employment, health and the criminal justice system. The Commission will aim to report to the Prime Minister by the end of the year.

Turkey: Political Prisoners

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Turkey about the detention warrants issued, including to members of the HDP party, concerning a protest that occurred in 2014. [HL8522]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is aware that the Ankara Prosecutor's Office has begun new investigations into the 2014 protests, and we are monitoring developments. Officials from the British Embassy in Ankara regularly meet members of the HDP (People's Democratic Party) to discuss their concerns. We expect Turkey to undertake any legal processes against detainees, including MPs, other party officials, human rights defenders and journalists, fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards establishing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [HL8403]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the timetable for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [HL8405]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government understands the importance of local growth funding to places and people and is committed to creating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to succeed European structural funds, providing vital investment in local economies, cutting out bureaucracy and levelling up those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind.

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to targeting the UK Shared Prosperity Fund at the UK's specific needs, at a minimum matching the size of European structural funds in each nation. This builds upon previous commitments to create a fund which tackles inequalities between communities by raising productivity, especially in those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind.

Final decisions on the design and operation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will need to be made following a cross-Government Spending Review.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Public Consultation

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to hold a formal consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; and whether any such consultation will include a framework for the Fund to ensure that it is accountable and transparent in its distribution principles. [HL8404]

Lord Greenhalgh: The 2019 Conservative manifesto commits to creating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a programme of investment to bind together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations.

The Government has been engaging with key stakeholders on the design and priorities of the fund since 2016, including holding a series of engagement events. Our engagement events have taken place across the UK including in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Over 500 stakeholders attended these events across a variety of sectors including; businesses, public bodies (such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Mayoral Combined Authorities, local governments), higher education institutions, voluntary and charity sector and rural partnership groups.

Final decisions on the allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be taken after a cross-government Spending Review.

VAT: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 22 September (HL7928), whether value added tax rates in Northern Ireland have the potential to rise above value added tax rates in Great Britain after (1) the end of the transition period, and (2) the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and any new state aid rules are operational. [HL8366]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As described in my response of 22 September (HL7928), the Northern Ireland Protocol ensures that Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's VAT system. Its provisions on VAT rates will provide the Government with the flexibility to introduce certain new zero and reduced rates in Northern Ireland.

It will allow the Government to introduce a zero rate for women's sanitary products across the UK from 1 January 2021. Beyond that, the Government has no current plans to introduce new zero or reduced rates after the Northern Ireland Protocol comes into effect.

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