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**Thursday
8 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

Thursday, 8 October 2020

GB-EU Border Operating Model

[HLWS492]

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:

Today, the Government will publish an updated Border Operating Model, to provide further clarity and certainty for businesses. The Model (the first version of which was published on 13 July) has been updated to reflect feedback from stakeholders and to include additional detail on policies and processes. We would like to thank the Devolved Administrations for their engagement with this.

This detail will help businesses which trade with the EU to understand the new arrangements and take action. We are encouraging businesses to go to gov.uk/transition to use the transition checker which will help them understand not just new border requirements but all of the steps they need to take to be ready for the end of the transition.

A copy of the updated Border Operating Model has been deposited in the Library of both Houses.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Border Operating Model [BordersOpModel_updated.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-10-08/HLWS492/>

Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures

[HLWS491]

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:

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

TPIM notices in force (as of 31 August 2020)	5
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 August 2020)	5
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	0
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	0
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	3

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. Third quarter TRG meetings took place on 8, 23 and 25 September 2020.

Written Answers

Thursday, 8 October 2020

Absent Voting

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of holding elections in 2021 entirely through postal voting. [HL8473]

Lord True: The UK Government is of the view that it would not be appropriate to impose an all-postal vote for the local and mayoral elections in England, and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, in May 2021. All-postal voting increases fraud risks, and removes choice from voters who wish to cast their vote in person.

Postal voting on demand already allows any registered elector to apply for a vote by post.

The Government is working with the electoral administrators and Public Health England to identify and resolve challenges involved in delivering the May 2021 elections, including ensuring polling stations are safe and COVID-secure places to vote. People will be able to participate in the polls safely, and in a way of their choice, whether by post, proxy or in-person.

This work is outlined in the recent letter of the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution to Electoral Returning Officers, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-chloe-smith-mp-to-returning-officers>.

Airports: Freight

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to build more cargo airport developments. [HL8469]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Airports in the UK are owned and operated privately. Applications to develop airports for the purposes of storage and distribution will be considered by the appropriate planning authority.

Armed Forces and Police: Holiday Leave

Asked by *Lord Balfre*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Prime Minister's statement on 22 September that the enforcement of the COVID-19 restrictions will include "a greater police presence on our streets, and the option to draw on military support where required to free up the police" (HC Deb, col 798), whether police and army leave will be cancelled for the Christmas and new year period for this purpose. [HL8438]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Decisions on the deployment of officers and use of police resources is a

matter for individual forces. However, we have been working alongside policing partners throughout this emergency to ensure they have the resources required to be able to effectively respond and enforce the COVID measures in place. This work continues and includes consideration of how we could free up more police officers in the future if it is needed. This includes considering the option of using military support to backfill certain non-public facing police roles.

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Armed Forces personnel are on standby to carry out door-to-door COVID 19 testing. [HL8650]

Baroness Goldie: There are currently 739 Armed Forces personnel at high readiness, or otherwise committed to supporting the national COVID response. Approximately 7,000 personnel will shortly be brought to readiness ahead of the Winter period.

Armed Forces: Finance

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much additional funding they have made available to support (1) the Armed Forces, and (2) veterans, since June. [HL8508]

Baroness Goldie: In July 2020, the Chancellor agreed to supplement the Defence Budget by nearly £200 million of additional funding for Service Family Accommodation and improvements to military estates across the UK. This additional investment will improve life for Armed Forces and over 5,000 personnel and their families will have homes modernised with new kitchens, bathrooms and furnishings including reroofing to reduce the risk of mould and damp.

We are aware that COVID-19 has placed extra challenges on our veteran community, particularly in terms of mental health. As such, £6 million of funding has been secured from the Treasury, which has gone to 100 different Armed Forces charities across the country. Alongside this, HMG have also commissioned a new study by King's College London, into the specific impact of COVID-19 on the veteran community. This study will provide evidence about the impact of the pandemic on the veterans' community and highlight any specific needs or impacts that might need to be addressed.

Armed Forces: Housing

Asked by *Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many eviction notices have been served to tenants in Ministry of Defence owned properties (1) in each month since January, and (2) in each year from 2010 to 2020. [HL8649]

Baroness Goldie: The Department does not issue eviction notices; these are issued and enforced by a court. The Department issues Notices to Vacate (NTV) in the following circumstances:

Service personnel to coincide with the final day of Service, or when their entitlement ceases due to personal circumstances.

Civilian sub-let tenants prior to the termination of their occupancy.

The annual number of NTV and enforcement actions required to regain possession from Service personnel/former Service personnel in Financial Year 2015 - 2019 was as follows:

(No centralised records were kept on the number of NTV and enforcement actions required to regain possession from Service personnel in Service Families Accommodation prior to 1 April 2015).

<i>Period of time</i>	<i>Number of NTV issued</i>	<i>Number of enforcement actions</i>
1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016	2,330	114
1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017	2,108	43
1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018	2,264	58
1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019	2,558	51
1 April 2019 - 31 December 2019	1,611	37

The monthly number of NTV and enforcement actions required to regain possession from Service personnel/former Service personnel since January 2020 was as follows:

<i>Period of time</i>	<i>Number of NTV issued</i>	<i>Number of enforcement actions</i>
January 2020	166	1
February 2020	105	1
March 2020	110	1
April – September 2020	0	1

The annual number of NTV and enforcement actions required to regain possession from civilian sub-let tenants from Financial Year 2016 - 2019:

(The civilian sub-let programme started in 2016, and as such is reflected in the table below)

<i>Period of time</i>	<i>Number of NTV issued</i>	<i>Number of enforcement actions</i>
1 January 2016 - 31 December 2016	0	0
1 January 2017 - 31 December 2017	1	0
1 January 2018 - 31 December 2018	0	0
1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019	8	3

The monthly number of NTV issued to civilian sub-let tenants since January 2019:

<i>Jan-20</i>	<i>Feb-20</i>	<i>March - August 2020</i>	<i>Sep-20</i>
0	4	0	367

Arts: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how successful the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have been in retaining workers in (1) the creative, and (2) the music, sector. [HL8571]

Baroness Barran: No estimate is available currently for the impact of Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) on creative and music sector workers specifically.

As of 31 July, a total of 2.6 million people have claimed a SEISS grant with the value of these claims totalling £7.6 billion. More than two thirds of cultural freelancers received support through SEISS.

9.6 million employments have been furloughed through CJRS for at least part of the period between March to June. These claims have been made by 1.16 million employers, with 61% of eligible employers claiming.

We recognise that the music and creative sectors has been severely impacted by Covid-19. We continue to meet with stakeholders to discuss the challenges facing the industry.

Baltic States: Military Aircraft

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they next intend to participate in the Baltic air-policing mission. [HL8681]

Baroness Goldie: The UK remains committed to the security of the Baltic region including in the Air domain. We cannot comment on future operational deployments.

Cameroon: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 21 September (HL7925) whether UK aid is being delivered to vulnerable civilians in Cameroon, either through Cameroon government entities or through local NGOs; and if so, which (1) NGOs, and (2) local partners, the British High Commission in Yaounde are supporting to promote (a) conflict resolution, and (b) the resumption of children's education in (i) the north-west, and (ii) the south-west regions of Cameroon. [HL8437]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is deeply concerned about the 6.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon. That is why last

month we announced £4.5 million further funding to bring our total humanitarian support to £13.5 million this year. The new funding is delivered through multilateral organisations including UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme. It will provide vital food packs, sanitation provisions, medical supplies and fund training for health workers. None of our humanitarian funding is through the Government of Cameroon.

Through the British High Commission in Yaoundé we also work alongside local partners in Cameroon to promote conflict resolution, youth peacebuilders, human rights monitoring and the resumption of children's education in the North-West and South-West regions. We are not currently financially supporting any local partners working on these issues as our funding has been prioritised for vital COVID-19 and humanitarian support, but we will revisit this when funding is available. Past local partners include – among others – the Southwest Northwest Women's Taskforce, Local Youth Corner, and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bamenda Archdiocese. Inclusive dialogue remains vital to ensure a just, peaceful and durable resolution to the crisis. We have shared experiences of conflict resolution with the Government of Cameroon and remain ready to support all credible peacebuilding initiatives.

Cancer: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people they estimate have missed cancer treatment since March in (1) England and Wales, (2) Scotland, and (3) Northern Ireland; and what estimate they have made of the impact of this on future cancer mortality statistics. [HL7578]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people likely to die during 2020 as a result of interruption to normal medical services, in particular (1) the failure to carry out cancer assessments or treatment, (2) individuals suffering stroke but not receiving timely treatment, and (3) individuals not receiving treatment for heart disease in normal timescales. [HL7579]

Lord Bethell: In England, there have been no estimates made of this kind. The Government cannot comment for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland as this is a devolved matter.

The long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on service provision and outcomes will be widespread and complex to identify and evaluate.

Critical care services, including for heart disease and stroke, as well as urgent and essential cancer treatments have remained open and continued throughout the pandemic, and have not been interrupted. The data show that the timeliness and quality of care have been broadly equivalent to, or better than, pre-COVID-19.

Contraception: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether contraception is part of the minimum package of health services being provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL8036]

Lord Bethell: Sexual and reproductive health services have remained open during the pandemic. However, physical access remains more limited. Services are maintaining access during this time through scaling up of online services including increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours' service for residents of another local authority. Public Health England has recently launched the National Framework for e-Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. This new national framework will allow local authorities and service providers to purchase an expanded range of online services including emergency contraception and the contraceptive pill.

Coronavirus Self-isolation Payment Scheme

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the cost of the self-isolation payment scheme they estimate will be administration costs. [HL7774]

Lord Bethell: The Government will fully cover the payments to eligible applicants as well as the administration costs of the scheme. The total expenditure will depend on the incidence of COVID-19 over the coming months. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health and Social Care will be providing more information on the cost of the scheme as it is evaluated.

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research published in the British Journal of General Practice Prevalence of suspected COVID-19 infection in patients from ethnic minority populations, published on 7 September. [HL7995]

Lord Bethell: As yet, no assessment has been made of the research published in the British Journal of General Practice, Prevalence of suspected COVID-19 infection in patients from ethnic minority populations.

The recent review published by Public Health England concluded that ethnicity is a factor on the impact of COVID-19. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have commissioned research proposals to investigate the association between ethnicity and COVID-19. This research will complement the wider disparity review on COVID-19, which is led by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP).

The Government welcomes and will continue to consider all relevant evidence on COVID-19.

Coronavirus: Statistics

Asked by Lord Lipsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what requests for assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics have been made under section 12(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 in respect of statistics relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL8482]

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

Dear Lord Lipsey,

As Head of the Office for Statistics Regulation and Director General for Regulation at the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what requests for assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics have been made under section 12(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 in respect of statistics relating to the COVID-19 pandemic (HL8482).

To date, no requests for assessment have been made under section 12(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 relating to COVID-19 statistics[1]. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) established a short series of rapid reviews to provide timely, independent reassurance and challenge on some key statistics that were developed in response to the pandemic. The outcomes of those 12 reviews are available on the OSR website[2].

Yours sincerely

Ed Humpherson

[1] A formal request for assessment made under section 12(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 is just one way for the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to exercise its statutory powers. Re-assessments of existing National Statistics are carried out proactively by OSR under section 14(1) of the Act. In addition, for example, OSR carries out larger-scale reviews of systemic issues, shorter compliance checks and responds to correspondence about official statistics. OSR received three section 12(1) requests for assessment in 2019, and has received two requests to date in 2020, none of which related to COVID-19 statistics.

[2] <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/covid-19-changes-to-statistics/#osr-endorsements-of-new-statistical-outputs-during-covid-19-outbreak>

Department for Education: Sanitation

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider their decision that the communal lavatories in the visitors' section of Sanctuary Buildings are not for women only. [HL8419]

Baroness Berridge: In previous questions from the noble Lord regarding the visitor's toilets in Sanctuary Buildings, he has been advised that the department is undertaking maintenance works within the building. A large part of these works is to address longstanding issues with the building water and drainage systems and to ensure our wash facilities remain at the required standard for a government building. Whilst we haven't finalised the design of the facilities in the visitor area, it is anticipated that individual and disabled toilets will be installed.

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Institute for Public Policy Research's findings, published on 24 September, that people from BAME backgrounds are (1) twice as likely as the wider population to expect to face financial difficulty in the next quarter, and (2) more than twice as likely to have lost their jobs or access to paid work during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps they are taking to address this discrepancy. [HL8441]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: This Government is committed to levelling up opportunities for everyone, we have already taken action to set up the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which will review inequality across the UK. The Commission will set out a new, positive agenda for change, balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness for all. This is in addition to the work we are taking forward on the findings of the Public Health England review into disparities in the risks and outcomes of COVID-19, published on 2 June.

Throughout these unprecedented times the Government has provided a crucial safety net to record levels of claimants, ensuring all our customers receive the support they need, when they need it. We know some people might require additional help to get back into work so we have launched our Plan for Jobs, including the Kickstart scheme, the expanded youth offer, the Job Entry Targeted Support and the Sector-based Work Academy Programmes to offer new support to those who lose their job as a result of COVID-19, investing £90 million towards activities that address disparities in youth unemployment – with a focus on the data from the Government's Race Disparity Audit - and more. The Government is working to ensure that ethnic minority customers have the opportunity to benefit from this extensive package.

European Fighter Aircraft

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what cost savings they have achieved to date through the TyTAN

Typhoon aircraft programme; and where any such savings have been reallocated. [HL8679]

Baroness Goldie: The 10-year £2.14 billion Typhoon Total Availability Enterprise support contract was awarded to BAE Systems in July 2016 and represents a saving of 38% compared to previous arrangements. To date, more than £500 million of savings have been realised and recycled to fund Typhoon capability upgrades over the next ten years.

Fisheries: Iceland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Iceland regarding access to Icelandic fishing waters for UK fishers following the end of the transition period. [HL8580]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra officials engage regularly with their Icelandic counterparts across a wide variety of policy issues. Recent discussions have focused on enhancing bilateral fisheries cooperation with Iceland through the UK-Iceland Joint Vision for 2030, as well as other fisheries management matters within the North-East Atlantic. The UK's relationship with Iceland is likely to evolve further as the UK goes forward as an independent coastal State.

Fur: Sales

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to legislate for a ban on the sale of fur after the end of the transition period with the EU on 1 January 2021. [HL8448]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products which may never be legally imported into the UK. These include fur from cats and dogs and seal skins and products from commercial hunts. Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 (2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

In addition, we do not allow imports of fur from wild animals caught using methods which are non-compliant with international humane trapping standards. Where fur is from an endangered species protected through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), its import or trade will be subject to CITES controls.

During the transition period it is not possible to introduce restrictions relating to the fur trade. Once our future relationship with the EU has been established there will be an opportunity for the Government to consider further the steps it could take in relation to fur sales.

Health Education: Public Bodies

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the establishment of the National Institute for Health Protection, which public body will be responsible for the delivery of prevention and early intervention programmes (1) to tackle obesity, (2) to encourage smoking cessation, and (3) to address health inequalities. [HL7617]

Lord Bethell: Prevention of ill-health remains a top priority. The Government will continue its focus on health improvement and preventing ill-health, with support from the expert teams who currently sit in Public Health England (PHE), who will continue their excellent work. We are not envisaging any changes to where those responsibilities will sit until spring 2021. We will be consulting with staff and engaging with an external stakeholder advisory group on where PHE's health improvement functions would be best placed in order to support the public health system in our aim to increase healthy life expectancy.

Heathrow Airport: Tunnels

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Civil Aviation Authority has the power to remove the costs of refurbishment of road tunnels at Heathrow Airport from the Regulated Asset Base of Heathrow Airport Limited. [HL8440]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Civil Aviation Authority, as an independent economic regulator, will consider the efficiency and reasonableness of all capital expenditure which is added to Heathrow Airport Ltd's Regulated Asset Base. It can make ex-post decisions to remove expenditure which does not meet efficiency tests. The Civil Aviation Authority's primary duty is to the consumer and its secondary duty is to ensure Heathrow Airport Ltd can finance its operation.

Horticulture: Government Assistance

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, other than the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, what support they are providing to plant and flower growers in England. [HL8594]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The ornamental horticulture sector can access a range of financial support options including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

On September 24, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced updated terms to the financial support package, including an extension of loan application deadlines to November 30, longer loan repayment times

and further extensions to the grant scheme for the self-employed.

HMG is collaborating with the sector on a sustainable, industry led, growth strategy for the sector to ensure it continues to thrive and to ensure its long-term viability.

Internet: Harassment

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about tackling online abuse targeted at women. [HL8599]

Baroness Barran: Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, on a variety of issues, including online abuse targeted at women. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

The new online harms regulatory framework will require companies to put effective systems and processes in place to protect UK users from harm online. Further details will be included in the full government response to the consultation, which we will publish later this year.

Loneliness: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help address loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL8231]

Baroness Barran: The Government launched a plan to tackle loneliness and social isolation in the context of Covid-19 in April 2020.

This includes the latest #Let'sTalkLoneliness public campaign to get people talking openly about loneliness, including new public guidance offering useful tips and advice on how people can look after themselves and others safely.

The plan also included a £5 million fund to support national loneliness organisations supporting those at risk of loneliness. A new £4 million microgrants fund to support small, grassroots organisations is due to open early in the new year.

Finally, as part of the plan, the Government launched a new 'Tackling Loneliness Network', a group of over 60 high-profile charities, businesses and public sector organisations. The network is now working to find and implement innovative solutions to loneliness, drawing on their diverse expertise.

Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

*Asked by **Baroness Browning***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to respond to the Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review First Do No Harm, published on 8 July. [HL7757]

Lord Bethell: The recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully.

The Government will provide an update in due course.

Middle East: Hydroelectric Power

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) control, and (2) use, of water and hydro-electric resources in (a) Turkey, (b) Syria, and (c) Iraq, by (i) the government of Syria, (ii) the government of Turkey, (iii) ISIS, and (iv) the Democratic Union Party in Syria. [HL8480]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned about the ongoing water and electricity shortages in Hasakeh province, north-east Syria, and Iraq, and have raised the humanitarian issue of water and hydro-electric supplies with all relevant parties in the region.

Military Exercises

*Asked by **Lord Moonie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what NATO and EU exercises the Ministry of Defence intends to participate in during 2021. [HL8680]

Baroness Goldie: The following list represents planned UK involvement in NATO exercises for 2021:

DYNAMIC GUARD 21/1
 DYNAMIC MOVE 21/1
 DYNAMIC MANTA 21
 RAMSTEIN AMBITION 21
 DYNAMIC MASTER 21 (postponed from 2020)
 FORMIDABLE SHIELD 21
 STEADFAST DEFENDER 21
 DYNAMIC MOVE 21/2
 DYNAMIC MASTERMIND 21
 DEFENDER EUROPE 21
 NOBLE JUMP
 DRAGON READY
 DYNAMIC MARINER 21
 STEADFAST JACKAL 21
 CYBER COALITION 21
 NOBLE PARTNER
 TIMBER EXPRESS
 JOINT COOPERATION
 IRON THUNDER

Attendance at all these exercises will be COVID restriction dependent.

The UK will not be participating in any EU exercises during 2021.

Music: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of live music performances taking place in England in September 2020 in comparison to the same period last year. [HL8570]

Baroness Barran: We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the live music sector.

No estimate is currently available. However, through our ongoing dialogues with industry, we are aware that there are significantly fewer events taking place when compared to the same period last year.

As part of the Government's 5 stage roadmap to get performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as possible, venues and organisations are able to put on live performances in front of a socially-distanced audience in line with the latest [Covid secure guidance](#).

We recognise that the live music industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19. We continue to meet with the stakeholders to discuss the specific issues facing the industry.

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of (1) job losses, and (2) business closures, in (a) live music venues, (b) the live music supply chain, and (c) the music sector as a whole, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL8572]

Baroness Barran: No estimate is available currently for this but we are continuing to meet with live music stakeholders to understand the specific impacts that Covid is having on the whole industry.

The Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing SEISS and CJRS come to end. From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

In addition, the Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This support package will benefit the live music sector by providing support to venues and many other organisations to stay open and continue operating.

As part of this support package, £3.36 million has been shared among 136 venues across England who applied for the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund. This funding has supported grassroots venues to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of live music venues in England that have re-opened under stage 4 of the phased return to professional performing arts. [HL8573]

Baroness Barran: We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the live music sector.

No estimate is available currently for this but we are continuing to meet with live music stakeholders to provide support and guidance for venues to re-open and stage live events.

As part of the Government's 5 stage roadmap to get performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as possible, venues and organisations are able to put on live performances in front of a socially-distanced audience in line with the latest [Covid secure guidance](#).

We recognise that the live music industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19. We continue to meet with the stakeholders to discuss the specific issues facing the industry.

National Skills Fund

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to make the National Skills Fund available to learners (1) at all levels, and (2) of all ages. [HL8432]

Baroness Berridge: Starting this Parliament, the government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations), for the National Skills Fund.

The National Skills Fund will support adults to learn and reach their potential in the labour market. The fund will complement other provision available for adults, such as through the Adult Education Budget and other recent reforms to adult skills provision and funding. This will ensure we develop a system that really works for adults.

Currently, adults who are between the ages of 19 – 23 are eligible for full funding for their first full level 3. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, recently announced that we are now extending eligibility for a first full level 3 so adults who are above the age of 23 can also benefit from courses with high economic value and strong alignment with government priorities. We will target this level 3 entitlement at subjects and qualifications with economic value and the strongest alignment with government priorities, to ensure the best possible returns for individuals, employers and the nation.

The Prime Minister also announced the launch of our new digital bootcamps, in 6 areas, to support local regions and employers to fill in-demand vacancies. The bootcamp training courses will provide valuable skills based on employer demand and will offer a fast track to a job interview on completion.

The bootcamps will be available in specific local areas for adults aged 19 and above, while we trial the most impactful way to deliver them. Pending the success of the initial bootcamps, we are planning to expand the digital bootcamps to more of the country from spring 2021 and we also want to extend this model to include other technical skills training.

The government remains committed to consulting on the National Skills Fund to ensure that we develop a fund that helps adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future.

We are continuing to review the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak and we are considering the most appropriate time and approach we can take to launch the consultation, ensuring that we have meaningful discussions with employers, providers and users.

In the meantime, the department will continue to engage closely with stakeholders as we continue to develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund, including considering what role the fund could play in meeting more immediate needs in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

New IRA

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the threat level emanating from the New IRA terrorist group. [HL8742]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The threat from dissident republican terrorism continues to be SEVERE in Northern Ireland. Violent dissident republicans have shown, time and again, that they do not care who they hurt and have no regard for people in their communities. This Government's first priority is to keep people safe and secure right across the United Kingdom. The recent success of OP ARBACIA marks a significant step in a far reaching investigation into the new IRA. Terrorism, paramilitary violence and criminality have no place in our society - they must not hold us back from progress towards a peaceful and prosperous future. The Police Service of Northern Ireland, MI5 and others who work to keep people safe have our full support for the public service they give.

Obesity: Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Walmsley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 20 August (HL7568), what the format of the planned stakeholder engagement will be; which stakeholders will be involved; and whether there will be a public consultation as part of that process. [HL7949]

Lord Bethell: We will set out further details about measures on weight management later in the year.

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by **Baroness Northover**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will respond to the letter dated 14 August from Lord Young of Cookham and other peers to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government about advice given to Manchester City Council on smoke-free pavement licenses. [HL8200]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has sent a response to the letter dated 14 August from Lord Young of Cookham and other peers about advice given to Manchester City Council on smoke-free pavement licences.

Public Health

Asked by **Lord Porter of Spalding**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to keep public health functions within local government responsibilities; and how they plan to ensure that such functions are sustainably funded. [HL7986]

Lord Bethell: Local government has a vital role in improving the public's health, both through securing services and through promoting local policies that act on the wider determinants of health. Future funding for local government public health responsibilities will be considered as part of the 2020 Spending Review.

Richard Solomon Tarfa

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Coventry**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria about the arrest and ongoing detention without trial of Professor Richard Solomon Musa Tarfa. [HL8624]

Baroness Sugg: The British High Commission in Abuja has raised Professor Tarfa's case with the Kano State Government and the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria. The former UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rehman Chishti MP, also raised the case with President Buhari's former Chief of Staff. We have repeatedly underlined the importance of an open and transparent legal process for Mr Tarfa, in accordance with Nigerian law and international human rights standards.

Russia: Foreign Relations

Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister last spoke to the President of Russia; whether he raised with the government of Russia (1) the attempted assassination of Alexei Navalny and (2) the crisis in Belarus; and if so, (a) when, and (b) with whom. [HL8639]

Baroness Sugg: The Prime Minister last spoke by telephone to President Putin of the Russian Federation on 8 May 2020 when they discussed the 75th anniversary of VE Day and the importance of global cooperation on COVID-19. The UK Government will continue to raise our serious concerns about the poisoning of Mr Navalny and the current situation in Belarus with the Russian Government. Most recently, the Foreign Secretary also raised these issues in a letter to Foreign Minister Lavrov on 25 September 2020. On 23 September 2020, the Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas raised these issues in a telephone call with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov. On 7 September, the FCDO summoned the Russian Ambassador to the UK to express our grave concern about Mr Navalny's poisoning. In addition, the British Embassy in Moscow will continue to raise these issues, including at Ambassadorial level with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Social Media: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with social media platforms regarding misinformation about COVID-19. [HL8454]

Baroness Barran: Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including social media platforms, on a variety of issues, including misinformation about COVID-19. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the GOV.UK website.

Suicide: Yorkshire and the Humber

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local suicide prevention plans have been set up in England since 2017. [HL8005]

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local suicide prevention plans have been set up in Yorkshire and Humber since 2017; and how much resource from their £25 million investment has been allocated to each plan. [HL8006]

Lord Bethell: Local authorities are responsible for developing local suicide action plans. Every local authority now has a multi-agency suicide prevention plan in place, and we are working with local government to assure the effectiveness of those plans. The Department provided almost £600,000 last year to the Local Government Association for a support programme to help local authorities strengthen their plans.

From 2019/20 to 2023/24, we are investing an additional £57 million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan. This will see investment in all areas of the country to support local suicide prevention

plans. Funding for the NHS England and NHS Improvement National Suicide Prevention Programme is allocated to sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) via a pence per head calculation.

The STPs within Yorkshire and the Humber have received around £2.6 million of this funding to support their work on suicide prevention. As part of this funding,

- South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw STP has received £1.4 million since 2018/19;

- Humber, Coast and Vale STP has received £712,000 since 2019/20 with further planned allocations in 2021/22; and

- West Yorkshire and Harrogate STP has received £519,000 in 2020/21 with further planned allocations in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

There are 15 local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber and the STPs listed above cover all local authorities.

United Kingdom Internal Market Bill: Treaties

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential implications of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill for upholding international agreements, including the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. [HL8038]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Joint Declaration made clear that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, rights and freedoms would remain unchanged for 50 years. We have not breached it and call on China not to do so.

Zimbabwe: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their policy in respect of Zimbabwe. [HL8539]

Baroness Sugg: Our policy remains to support the people of Zimbabwe in moving towards a more democratic, stable and prosperous Zimbabwe. We meet regularly with the full range of stakeholders, from across the political spectrum including members of the ruling and opposition parties, judiciary and civil society, to ensure we understand how best to do that. Further engagement and support for Zimbabwe is contingent on genuine political and economic reforms but the onus must be on the Government of Zimbabwe to deliver this change. So far they have been unable to.

The Minister for Africa engages regularly on Zimbabwe. He spoke with Foreign Minister Moyo on 8 June, where he made it clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must make concrete progress on economic and political reform, including human rights. Progress has so far been poor and in some cases has gone backwards.

Zimbabwe: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had at ministerial level with the (1) government of Zimbabwe, (2) the government of South Africa, and (3) the African Union, about (a) Zimbabwe's political and economic situation, and (b) any human rights abuses which are perpetrated against Zimbabweans; and when such discussions last took place. [HL8537]

Baroness Sugg: The Minister for Africa regularly engages with the Government of Zimbabwe to raise serious concerns about the political, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe. We have been clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. This is a prerequisite for further international support. The Minister for Africa delivered these messages when he last spoke to Foreign Minister Moyo on 8 June, and in a letter he wrote to the Foreign

Minister on 12 August. Our Ambassador in Harare reinforced these messages when she met in person with Foreign Minister Moyo on 14 August and also raised concerns on the chronic economic situation Zimbabwe is experiencing with Zimbabwean Finance Minister Mthuli on 28 September. We will continue to call out the Government of Zimbabwe where we believe abuses of human rights have taken place including monitoring enforcement of the lockdown regulations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK regularly discusses the political, economic, and human rights situation in Zimbabwe with its international partners, including South Africa. On 16 July the Minister for Africa spoke to the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa about the situation in Zimbabwe. The UK is committed to working in partnership with South Africa, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union as well as other international organisations. The UK will continue to work alongside the international community to support good governance, respect for human rights, and genuine political and economic reform in Zimbabwe, to help secure a better future for all Zimbabweans.

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