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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Adult Skills and National Retraining Scheme

[HLWS502]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills (Gillian Keegan) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Today I wanted to update both Houses on further policy developments we are making as part of our efforts to help boost productivity, ensure that businesses can find and hire the skilled workers they need, and help people to fulfil their potential. The impact of the current situation and the longer-term challenges we are likely to face have underlined the ever-present need to support all adults in gaining new skills that employers value, whether to progress in work or to boost their job prospects.

Last month the Prime Minister visited Exeter College and set out an exciting vision to make lifelong learning a reality, announcing new opportunities to help more people to realise their talents, develop new skills and pursue their careers. With that broader vision in mind, wanting to reduce complexity in the adult skills landscape and recognising the need to work closely with a wide range of key stakeholders and experts, we are integrating the National Retraining Scheme into the National Skills Fund. The National Retraining Scheme will no longer continue as a separate programme but rather its work and learning will be rolled into the development of the National Skills Fund. This will be reflected in wider communications around the National Skills Fund and our broader offer for adult skills. It will include the conclusion of the trials of the Get Help to Retrain service, a digital platform that helped adults identify their existing skills as well as new training options.

The findings we have gathered by testing Get help to retrain have already provided useful insights for the National Careers Service. This will help inform the further development of the National Careers Service website for people considering a change to their career.

The understanding and insights we achieved through high levels of research and comprehensive user engagement whilst developing the National Retraining Scheme have also produced a strong foundation for developing the National Skills Fund and other adult skills reforms. As both Houses know, the National Skills Fund is a long term, substantial investment of £2.5bn (£3bn included devolved administrations) that will drive adult retraining and support our ambitious agenda for reform to Further Education.

Our engagement with employers on the National Retraining Scheme ensured we were better sighted on the

skills they need their workers to have, as well as the need for a more flexible approach to the delivery of skills. Greater flexible provision was a clear need for both the employers and the individual. Both of these factors have been central to the design and delivery of the bootcamps announced in the Prime Minister's speech, which are a key element of the National Skills Fund offer.

The bootcamps will support local regions and employers to fill in-demand digital vacancies. The impact of the COVID crisis has shown that digital skills are in demand now more than ever, so these flexible initiatives will be instrumental in giving all adults the skills employers need. 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 Prime Minister also announced, as part of his Lifetime Skills Guarantee, that for all adults who do not currently have an A Level equivalent, we will be fully funding their first full Level 3, focusing on the valuable courses that will help them get ahead in the labour market.

Through our development of the National Retraining Scheme we have also undertaken qualitative research into online training tailored for adults' needs. Our findings have shown that online training has the ability to deliver learning at a time and pace that would fit in with the busy lives that users have. It could also reach the more remote areas of the country where users might struggle to access provision at a time that works best for them. This has informed the development of The Skills Toolkit, which has recently expanded to provide access to even more high-quality, free courses, to help all adults gain the confidence and skills they need to move into new jobs, potentially in completely new sectors of the jobs market.

We remain firmly committed to working with industry, workers, and providers. That is why we plan to engage extensively with these groups right across the country through the upcoming consultation on the National Skills Fund.

Our strong evidence base, delivered through the National Retraining Scheme, is summarised in a Key Findings Paper that will be published today, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-retraining-scheme>). The paper sets out how the extensive learnings and evidence from the scheme will support our ambitious plans for levelling up across the country and help to ensure everyone can get the skills they need, at every stage of their life.

We will set out wider plans for adult skills later in the Autumn and we will update the Houses in due course. In the meantime, we will 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 pandemic.

Culture Recovery Fund: Arts Funding

[HLWS504]

Baroness Barran: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Caroline Dinenage MP, has made the following statement:

I am pleased to inform the House that yesterday we announced 1385 cultural organisations will share over £257 million from the Culture Recovery Fund to help support arts and culture organisations through the coronavirus pandemic.

This represents the biggest award to date of the Culture Recovery Fund and means we have now provided over £360million to support cultural and heritage institutions across England.

This vital government funding is a vital boost for the theatres, music venues, museums and cultural organisations that form the soul of our nation. It will protect these special places, save jobs and help the culture sector's recovery.

These funds are supporting cultural beacons the length and breadth of the country - from the Beamish museum in County Durham to the Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Bristol Old Vic.

The Theatre by the Lake, in Keswick, for example will receive over £800,000 in support which recognises its importance as the biggest employer in the area, the devastating impact coronavirus has had on it and theatres more widely, and the importance of safeguarding this wonderful cultural institution for the future.

Or, to take another example, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield. This cherished organisation will receive £804,000 to help the park to adapt its buildings to new regulations and help it reopen safely. Yorkshire Sculpture Park shows work by British and international artists including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

This is good news not only for these organisations but for towns, cities and workers in these sectors across the country - it will help to protect jobs and ensure our beloved local arts venue can remain afloat and support culture in many communities.

On top of this investment the culture sector has benefited from the Job Retention Scheme, Self Employment Income Support Scheme, the bounce back loan scheme, a reduction in VAT from 20% to 5% for tourism and hospitality firms for six months.

I want to reaffirm that we recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading.

The Culture Recovery Fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances which will provide more opportunities for freelancers to be engaged again.

It will also help many put on cultural activity within this Financial Year which wouldn't have been possible without this funding.

Additionally, to complement this funding for organisations, this year, the Arts Council have made over £115m of funding available for individuals, including free-lancers, to apply to, including £18m for the Developing Your Creative Practice programme which will open for applications this Thursday.

Regarding next steps, we are working flat out to support these sectors and to get the remainder of the funding and support out to those who need it most as quickly as possible.

There will be further announcements about hundreds of millions of pounds of allocations in the coming weeks to support the UK's incredible culture, heritage, arts and creative industries.

The government is here for culture. Help is on its way with more to come in the days and weeks ahead so that the cultural sector - the soul of our nation - can bounce back strongly.

Economy Update

[HLWS499]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Following my announcement on Friday 9 October that I am expanding the Job Support Scheme (JSS), and increasing the generosity and frequency of Local Restrictions Support Grants, I am pleased to share more detail of these schemes and how this Government is supporting and protecting jobs and livelihoods.

The JSS is being expanded to provide temporary, localised support to businesses across the UK whose premises are legally required to close as a direct result of Coronavirus restrictions set by one or more of the four governments of the UK.

This expansion of the JSS will help businesses through the period they are affected by these restrictions, supporting the wage costs of employees in eligible premises who have been instructed to cease work and comply with this instruction. This scheme will enable those premises to reopen as quickly as possible when they can. It will help protect employee incomes, limit unemployment and maintain employer-employee matches.

This is part of the Job Support Scheme, available to employers from 1 November 2020 for 6 months, with the scheme reviewed in January. Further guidance will be published in the coming weeks. Employers will be able to make a claim in arrears on a monthly basis online through www.gov.uk from early December 2020.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) remains in place until the 31 October, and flexibility in the system means if an employer is required to close in October, eligible employees can be furloughed until 31 October. The new Job Support Scheme is available from 1 November, with payments from early December. Eligible employees whose employers use the expanded JSS will

continue to be paid by their employer throughout this period. Neither the employer nor the employee needs to have previously used the CJRS to be eligible for the expanded JSS.

In line with the rules for the JSS already announced: all employers with a UK bank account and a UK PAYE scheme registered on or before 23 September can claim the scheme. Only employees that are on their employer's payroll by 23 September are eligible. This means a Real Time Information (RTI) submission notifying payment of that employee to HMRC must have been made on or before this date. This scheme will cover businesses that, as a result of restrictions set by one or more of the four governments in the UK, are legally required to close their premises. This includes businesses told to provide only delivery and/or collection services from their premises. This scheme is open to employers across the UK, and we look forward to working constructively with the devolved administrations to ensure it operates effectively in all four nations.

The scheme will pay a grant to the employer calculated based on the number of eligible employees who cannot work at the relevant premises (which has been required to close by government). Employers will only be able to use the scheme for employees who have been instructed to and cease work (paid or unpaid for that employer).

Eligible employees cannot work for a minimum of 7 consecutive (or calendar) days. An employee can return at a later date. Claims must not overlap and must be made monthly in arrears. These payments will be taxable, and employers will be required to cover employer NICs and automatic enrolment pension contributions in full, where applicable, but are not required to make further contribution to wage costs. However, employers can top up employee pay if they wish.

In line with JSS payments for hours not worked, the grant per eligible employee available from the UK Government is two-thirds of their normal pay up to a limit of £2100 per month. Further detail on how normal pay is calculated will be set out in guidance. If an employer is closed by Government regulations then they can claim under the applicable rules. When that changes and they are able to re-open they can claim under the wider JSS for firms facing reduced demand under the criteria we outlined in September. Employers will be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus for employees provided they are eligible. JSS grants can be used by employers to pay an employee's wages and help meet the JRB Minimum Income Threshold.

The employer must use the scheme to cover their employees' wages and pay relevant payroll taxes. The whole of the grant must be used to meet employee costs. The grant will not cover Class 1 employer NICs or pension contributions, although these contributions will remain payable by the employer. Payments will be made in arrears, reimbursing the employer for the Government's contribution.

On 9 September, the Government announced the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme. This scheme provided

businesses which are forced to close for three weeks or more due to a nationally imposed local lockdown in England with grants of up to £1,500 per three-week closure period.

The Government is now making this scheme more generous so that businesses receive up to £3,000 per month, and are eligible for payment sooner, after only two weeks of closure rather than three. The Government is also extending the scheme to include businesses which have been required to close on a national rather than a local basis, or which have not been legally able to reopen since the first lockdown in March.

Businesses will receive the following:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month, or £667 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k grants to be £2000 per month, or £1000 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3000 per month, or £1500 per two weeks

Local Authorities will continue to receive 5% of the funding which they received for the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme as a discretionary fund, which the Government will encourage them to use to support business that have been legally mandated to close by the Government but are outside of the business rates system.

Grants will be administered by Local Authorities, and eligible businesses will probably need to provide their details to their Local Authority to access this support.

HS2 Six-monthly Report to Parliament

[HLWS503]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Transport (Andrew Stephenson), has made the following Ministerial Statement.

Overview

1. This Government has committed to provide an update to Parliament every six months on the progress of High Speed 2 (HS2), of which this is the first. This report covers data reported by HS2 Ltd to the end of August 2020. I have placed a copy of the report in the libraries of both houses.

2. After careful consideration of the independent Oakervee review and wider evidence, including the National Audit Office's (NAO's) progress update, the Prime Minister confirmed to Parliament in February 2020 that the Government would proceed with HS2. The Government intends HS2 to become the spine of the country's transport network, bringing our biggest cities closer together, boosting productivity and rebalancing the economy and opportunity for people across the country. It will also help meet our commitment to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 by providing a better alternative to regional air and road travel.

3. In taking this decision, the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport made clear the importance of a tighter grip by the Government on the delivery of the project and of the need for full transparency. That is why we have consulted the chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and Transport Select Committee in providing this report to Parliament and I intend for it to provide clear information about our progress.

4. In April, the Full Business Case for the first phase of the scheme between the West Midlands and London, 'HS2 Phase One', was approved with an increased budget and revised delivery into service date. This permitted HS2 Ltd's Main Works Civils Contractors to begin construction of Phase One. I was delighted to see the Prime Minister mark this significant milestone officially by visiting Birmingham Interchange a few weeks ago.

5. Authorising the Main Works signalled the Government's commitment to invest in our economic recovery in response to COVID. HS2 is central to our plans to build back better and will stimulate economic growth and rebalance opportunity across this country in the short, medium and long term.

6. HS2 Phase One is just the first step in levelling-up our great economic regions and better connecting the North, the Midlands and London. That is why we are progressing legislation to deliver Phase 2a to provide a high speed line from the West Midlands to Crewe, where trains will continue further north via the West Coast Main Line. The Phase 2a Bill is currently in the House of Lords. The Select Committee has finished hearing petitions and we await its report.

7. To deliver HS2 Phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail more effectively alongside other transport schemes, an integrated plan for rail in the North and the Midlands is being developed. This will be informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission, expected at the end of 2020. The Integrated Rail Plan will set out the form, scope and phasing of the Phase 2b route. It will also inform decisions on how to improve links to and from Scotland to strengthen the connectivity of the Union.

8. Achievements in this first reporting period include:

- Getting on with delivery by approving the Phase One Full Business Case and authorising the start of construction, supporting the industry and wider economy as part of the COVID response. Indeed, HS2 Ltd and its supply chain supports over 13,000 jobs, including over 400 apprenticeships. At peak construction, this will increase to 30,000 jobs.
- Getting a stronger grip on delivery to time and budget by establishing the Ministerial Task Force for Phases One and 2a, chaired by the Secretary of State for Transport, and attended by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government and myself. We have also strengthened the Board of HS2 Ltd by appointing three additional Non-Executive Directors.

- Putting the people and communities impacted by the scheme at the centre of our work by reviewing the land and property acquisition programme, the approach to compensation and, importantly, how HS2 Ltd supports and engages with people along the route. The review will be published shortly.

- Revisiting how best to deliver Euston Station as recommended in the Oakervee review, with the aim of providing an improved design and better delivery strategy. This includes revised governance providing closer collaboration between HS2 Ltd and Network Rail, through the new Euston Partnership Board chaired by Sir Peter Hendy.

- Developing the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands. This work focuses on reducing overall costs, identifying the correct schemes and sequencing to improve rail services and to determine how best to improve rail connectivity with Scotland. A separate Ministerial Task Force is also overseeing preparation of the Integrated Rail Plan.

- Continuing the preparation of legislation for the Phase 2b Western Leg into Manchester, reflecting the findings in the Oakervee review that Phase 2b should be delivered in smaller sections with legislation brought forward as it is ready. This includes the Design Refinement Consultation launched on 7 October. The Integrated Rail Plan will set out the form, scope and phasing of the Phase 2b route, across the Western and Eastern Legs, and the Government will therefore consider responses to this consultation alongside the outcomes of the Integrated Rail Plan.

- Setting out our intent to establish enhanced reporting arrangements to demonstrate how HS2 Ltd is meeting the Government's environmental priorities.

Programme update on affordability, schedule and delivery Affordability

9. Earlier this year, the Government reset the funding regime for HS2, including a Target Cost and funding envelope for Phase One and revised estimates for the wider scheme. The total funding envelope for Phase One was set at £44.6bn (2019 prices) and the estimated cost for completing the full network was revised to a range of £72bn to £98bn.

10. For Phase One, including Euston, HS2 Ltd projects an outturn cost at £40.3bn (2019 prices) which is at the level of its Target Cost. This projection remains uncertain at this early stage in the project's lifecycle (as with all major infrastructure projects) and does not yet reflect the impact of COVID. HS2 Ltd is expected to provide its estimate of the COVID impact within the next six months. Any cost changes will be contained within the funding envelope using the contingency already assigned.

11. Of the £40.3bn, £9.6bn has been spent to date, a further £11.5bn is contracted, and £13.9bn is yet to be contracted and remains an HS2 Ltd estimate. The Target Cost also includes available HS2 Ltd delegated contingency of £5.3bn for managing the risk and uncertainty that are an inherent part of delivering major

projects. HS2 Ltd is currently reporting cost pressures of £0.8bn. If not successfully remediated, these pressures will be drawn against the Company's delegated contingency. These pressures are driven by:

- Enabling works to prepare the line of route for construction. These have been underway since 2017 and in some areas have encountered more significant challenges than anticipated, such as the need to safely remove more asbestos than expected, resulting in increased scope and duration. These additional costs are likely to be in the order of £0.4bn according to HS2 Ltd.
- Euston Station, where further development of the baseline scheme has identified a significant cost pressure, which HS2 Ltd is currently reporting as in the order of £0.4bn. Further work is ongoing to validate these initial estimates and this could identify further pressure. As this remains at the design stage, work is underway to consider opportunities, efficiencies and scope reductions in order to redress these pressures and we will report further on this in the next report.

12. The total funding envelope for Phase One remains at £44.6bn (2019 prices). This includes further available contingency of £4.3bn over and above that delegated to HS2 Ltd, which is retained by the Department for Transport and Her Majesty's Treasury. I am determined to carefully scrutinise the use of contingency to ensure that it is sufficient to cover issues that may emerge later in the project and will provide updates to Parliament through these reports.

13. The overall Phase 2a cost is currently estimated as in the range of £5-7bn (2019 prices). This remains in line with the estimate set out at the time of the Prime Minister's announcement on 11 February and the NAO update of January 2020. Firmer ranges and a Target Cost will be confirmed, subject to the scheme being approved by Parliament and based on the scope and undertakings in the Act.

14. Updated cost estimates will be provided for the Phase 2b links to Manchester and Leeds once the Integrated Rail Plan is concluded. At this stage, ongoing design work suggests some further pressure on the most recent estimates but this depends in part on decisions on the route and sequencing, as well as decisions about the appropriate level of contingency to provide at this stage. We will provide further information as this work matures including as part of preparing legislation for the HS2 route from Crewe into Manchester.

Schedule

15. On Phase One, the Delivery into Service (DIS) range for initial services from Old Oak Common to Birmingham Curzon Street remains 2029 to 2033. HS2 Ltd continues to predict that it will provide services within this range but notes some pressures on the earliest date from COVID impacts and delayed handovers from Enabling Works, which it is seeking to mitigate. Schedule estimates will be more reliable once the Main Works are

fully mobilised next summer and once the Rail Systems elements have been contracted.

16. The overall response to COVID by HS2 Ltd and its construction partners has been positive with the rapid implementation of safe working practices to protect the public and workers and the re-opening of the majority of sites after a safety review. However, some works have been delayed and at some sites COVID-safe practices have necessarily reduced productivity to a limited degree.

17. The range for initial opening of services from Euston remains 2031-2036, subject to further work on the study of design and delivery options.

18. Schedule ranges for Phases 2a and 2b will be established once their scopes are finalised.

Delivery progress

19. The Main Works Civils Contractors are currently taking possession of sites along the line of route on Phase One and mobilising their workforces and equipment, including the delivery of tunnel boring machines. Significant works are already underway at several sites.

20. The three other Phase One stations, Birmingham Curzon Street, Birmingham Interchange and Old Oak Common, have now received Schedule 17 planning consents. Procurement is underway for the construction of Curzon Street and Interchange stations and design refinement is underway at Old Oak Common ahead of approving the start of construction.

21. The procurement of Rail Systems packages for track, catenary, power, control and communications systems has begun. Contracts for two packages, slab track and cross passage doors, have been awarded. The procurement of the Rolling Stock supplier continues and will be awarded in the summer of next year.

22. The timeline to achieve Royal Assent of the Phase 2a Bill by the end of the year is challenging, but remains feasible subject to Parliament's will.

23. As noted above, preparations are now underway for a hybrid Bill for the Western Leg of Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester). A consultation on design refinements to support future use of HS2 infrastructure as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail was launched on 7 October. At the same time a route wide update, decisions on changes previously consulted in 2019, and revised property safeguarding were published for the Western Leg.

Community and environmental impact

24. Since my appointment as Minister for HS2, I have sought to increase the focus on managing HS2's impact on communities along the line of route and on the natural environment.

25. Securing the land and property needed to construct the line of route across all Phases is vital to the programme's success and is often the first impact that we have on line of route communities. A range of statutory and non-statutory property compensation schemes are available that seek to compensate affected parties fairly while protecting the public purse.

26. Our policy is to provide fair compensation for those directly and indirectly impacted but the process and disputes for claims can inevitably be traumatic for some. I therefore commissioned a detailed review of the acquisition and compensation process to ensure that there is a renewed focus on those who are being impacted by the new railway. The report will be published shortly and we will move to consult where appropriate on the proposed reforms.

27. Some £3.6bn has now been spent acquiring land and property and in the order of 1,250 properties have been acquired to date across the three phases of HS2. The majority of this is from Phase One where £3.3bn has been spent to date.

28. I want to make sure that HS2 Ltd and its contractors are as sensitive as possible to the impact of construction on communities where impacts will unfortunately be unavoidable. HS2 Ltd needs to ensure that communities are properly informed and consulted and that the impacts are minimised to the extent that is reasonable. I intend to engage closely with Members of Parliament and the communities that they represent and ensure HS2 Ltd is meeting the terms of its planning consents.

29. I also intend to increase our efforts to limit the impact of HS2 on the natural environment and to ensure its construction and operation is as low carbon as possible.

30. In the coming months, HS2 Ltd will establish a new Environmental Sustainability Committee (as a sub-committee of the HS2 Ltd Board), led by its Chair, Allan Cook. This committee will be charged with strengthening Environmental Sustainability Reporting including the development and publication of an Environmental Sustainability Report. HS2 Ltd intends to publish the first report next year.

31. HS2 Ltd has been working with Natural England over the summer to enhance plans to support delivery of the route wide, 'No Net Loss to Biodiversity' target. Following Royal Assent of the Phase 2a Bill, HS2 Ltd will continue to explore opportunities to enhance its existing No Net Loss objective for that Phase of the programme. It will identify and implement appropriate opportunities, where it is reasonably practicable, to move towards net gains in biodiversity. This will be supported by a £2m biodiversity fund.

32. HS2 Ltd is also working in partnership with local communities to create new woodlands, diverse habitats and community green spaces beyond the construction boundary. Funding provided through the Phase One £40m Community and Environment Fund and the Business and Local Economy Fund has seen over 126 projects awarded funding of over £7.7m.

Forward look

33. For Phase One, the focus for the coming year will see the continued mobilisation of the Phase One construction programme and commencement of civil engineering and tunnelling activities alongside further contract awards for stations, rolling stock and systems. I

will continue to focus on the control of schedule and cost whilst implementing the reforms on land and property acquisition, managing the impact of construction on local communities, and improving environmental performance and reporting.

34. Subject to Parliament's will, the Phase 2a Bill will continue through its final legislative stages to secure authority for construction of the route to Crewe and northern destinations via the West Coast Main Line.

35. We will continue to define the scope and scheme for Phase 2b as part of the work to conclude the Integrated Rail Plan and to prepare a hybrid Bill for the Western Leg from Crewe to Manchester.

36. I will continue to engage closely with Members of Parliament and will provide my next report to Parliament in April 2021.

Annex A: Period Financial Report [1]

<i>Forecast Costs by Phase</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Target Cost</i>	<i>Total Estimated Costs Range</i>	<i>Current Forecast</i>
	1	£40.3bn	£35-45bn	£40.3bn
	2a	Not set yet	£5-7bn	Not agreed
	2b	Not set yet	£32-46bn[2]	Not agreed
<i>Historic and Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Spend to Date</i>	<i>2020/21 Budget</i>	<i>2020/21 Forecast</i>
	1	£9.6bn[3]	£3.79bn	£3.46bn
	2a	£0.4bn	£0.18bn	£0.16bn
	2b	£1.0bn	£0.25bn	£0.23bn
Total		£11.0bn	£4.22bn	£3.85bn

[1] All figures in 2019 prices and excluding VAT. Correct as of 31st August 2020.

[2] Validation of the Phase 2b cost range is ongoing and will be updated to support the bringing forward of separate legislation for the HS2 route into Manchester, in line with the conclusions of the Oakervee review. The range provided excludes scope intended to be funded by other sources such as Northern Powerhouse Rail.

[3] Spend to date includes a £1bn liability (provision) representing the Department's obligation to purchase land and property.

Overseas Defence Operations

[HLWS500]

Baroness Goldie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill currently before this House will provide reassurance to Service personnel that we have taken steps to help protect them from the threat of repeated

investigations and potential prosecution in connection with historical operations overseas many years after the events in question. However, we are also clear that there should be timely consideration of serious and credible allegations and, where appropriate, a swift and effective investigation followed by prosecution, if warranted. In the rare cases of real wrongdoing, the culprits should be swiftly and appropriately dealt with. In doing so, this will provide greater certainty to all parties that the justice system processes will deliver an appropriate outcome without undue delay.

I am therefore commissioning a review so that we can be sure that, for those complex and serious allegations of wrongdoing against UK forces which occur overseas on operations, we have the most up to date and future-proof framework, skills and processes in place and can make improvements where necessary. The review will be judged and forward looking and, whilst drawing on insights from the handling of allegations from recent operations, will not seek to reconsider past investigative or prosecutorial decisions or reopen historical cases. It will consider processes in the service police and Service Prosecuting Authority as well as considering the extent to which such investigations are hampered by potential barriers in the Armed Forces, for example, cultural issues or operational processes. A key part of the review will be its recommendations for any necessary improvements. It will seek to build upon and not reopen the recommendations of the Service Justice System Review by HH Shaun Lyons and Sir Jon Murphy. Work by the Department in response to the Service Justice System Review is continuing to be taken forward separately.

I expect the review will report to me in around nine months' time.

Space Industry Act 2018: Insurance and Liabilities

[HLWS501]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Rachel Maclean) has made the following Ministerial Statement.

I am today publishing the consultation on the draft insurance, liabilities and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018. This consultation seeks views on the operability and effectiveness of the proposed liabilities, insurance and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018, including the use of licence conditions to cover insurance requirements. It also seeks views on the draft Space Industry (Liabilities) Regulations and the associated guidance documents, as well as to gather new evidence and test the assumptions in the consultation-stage impact assessment.

The UK's space sector is a unique national asset, and this Government is committed to growing this exciting industry. Our regulatory framework for spaceflight will support safe and sustainable activities that will drive research, innovation and entrepreneurship in this vital sector, exploiting the unique environment of space, and

providing a catalyst for growth across the space sector. Harnessing the opportunities provided by commercial spaceflight will also feed into our emerging National Space Strategy, the Government's agenda to level-up the UK, and Global Britain.

Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global market to 10 per cent by 2030. To support this, our spaceflight programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch, sub-orbital spaceflight and space tourism from UK spaceports. To expand the UK's spaceflight capabilities, government is funding a range of industry-led projects. Separately, we are investing in related facilities and technology. This will provide industry with new commercial market opportunities, grow our export share and help to build new UK supply chains.

Liabilities and insurance requirements

An important element of the Space Industry Act 2018 concerns operators' liabilities arising from their spaceflight activity. Under UN space treaties, the UK Government is ultimately liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space objects on the surface of the Earth or to aircraft in flight, and liable for damage due to its faults in space. This means that another state suffering damage can bring a claim against the UK Government under the UN space treaties. The Space Industry Act 2018 places an obligation on an operator carrying out spaceflight activities to indemnify the Government or listed person or body for any claims brought against them for loss or damage caused by those activities. It also includes liability provisions to provide the general public in the UK with easy recourse to compensation.

We recognise that this is an important issue for the UK space sector and understand that we need to create the right environment for the UK to be competitive and for our British companies to compete on the global stage. We have listened to the concerns industry has raised about liabilities and insurance and our consultation sets out approach to address those concerns, as well as other issues relating to insurance and liabilities. This follows a Call for Evidence on these matters published in March 2018.

We are proposing to limit operator liability and use the Modelled Insurance Requirement approach, which is considered to be critical to enabling launch and unlocking the benefits of spaceflight.

The insurance proposals and liabilities regulations are part of the package of regulations needed to implement the Space Industry Act 2018 and to allow for commercial spaceflight launches to take place from the UK. They supplement the consultation which was launched on 29 July 2020 on the draft Space Industry Regulations, which covers the other secondary legislation and guidance needed to enable commercial spaceflight in the UK.

Together with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority we have legislated to allow for the regulation of a wide range of new commercial spaceflight

technologies, including traditional vertically launched vehicles, air-launched vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes and balloons. It is our intention to merge the draft Liabilities and Space Industry Regulations once the consultations have concluded.

Next steps

The deadline for responses to the consultation is the 10 November.

Following which I will update the House and publish the Government's response to the consultation.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Agriculture: Metaldehyde

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they have provided to British farmers about the decision to ban the use of metaldehyde. [HL8592]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The outdoor use of metaldehyde, a pesticide used to control slugs on farms and in gardens, will not be allowed in Great Britain after the end of March 2022. This decision takes into account expert scientific assessment of the risks that metaldehyde poses to birds and mammals.

Phasing out the use of metaldehyde gives farmers time to switch to alternative slug control measures and we will provide targeted messages during the phase out period. Individual farmers will want to decide their best option. Products containing ferric phosphate remain available, however, and can provide effective slug control without carrying the same risks to wildlife as metaldehyde pellets.

The decision has been communicated via the farming media, and we will continue to engage with farmers on this issue.

ARM

Asked by *Lord Campbell of Pittenweem*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to assess if the proposed acquisition by NVIDIA of Arm would be contrary to the national interest; and if so, how. [HL8181]

Baroness Barran: The Government monitors acquisitions and mergers closely. When a takeover may have a significant impact on the UK we will not hesitate to investigate further and take appropriate action. We are examining this deal carefully to understand its impact on the UK.

Business: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to prevent increased costs being incurred by Northern Ireland businesses as a result of provisions within the Northern Ireland Protocol. [HL8581]

Lord True: The Government outlined its approach to the Protocol in the Command Paper published in May 2020. We will continue to work with businesses to ensure that the Protocol is implemented in a way that minimises burdens and supports the continued flow of goods.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has established a Business Engagement Forum, which discusses a range of issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol. We have also outlined guidance to

business on the requirements of the Protocol which we will update as work proceeds.

In addition, the Government is also providing support to business as they prepare for the end of the transition period and beyond. This includes the new Trader Support Service, a £200m scheme that will provide an end-to-end service which will guide traders through new administrative processes at no additional cost.

We have also committed to exploring further support to those agrifood producers engaging with new sanitary and phytosanitary processes, with further detail to be set out in due course

Care Leavers: Digital Technology

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the uptake of their scheme to provide digital devices and internet access for care leavers. [HL8587]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure every care leaver in England has access to a digital device and the internet for at least 12 months when they first live independently. [HL8588]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all services provided by local authorities for care leavers include access to a digital device and the internet. [HL8589]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to meet with organisations which work with care leavers to discuss access to digital devices and the internet. [HL8590]

Baroness Berridge: In April 2020, the government invested £100 million into laptops and 4G wireless routers for disadvantaged students to enable them to engage in remote learning. This was also made available for children with a social worker and care leavers, to improve digital access to support and services. The department has so far delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets, and over 50,000 routers to local authorities to distribute to vulnerable children and young people in their local areas.

Of these devices, 148,000 have been provided specifically to children with a social worker and care leavers and the guidance issued to local authorities identified care leavers as a priority group. Responsibility for identifying which young people require devices lies with local authorities. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/laptops-tablets-and-4g-wireless-routers-provided-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

These devices are an important injection of support from the government for care leavers who are at greater

risk of isolation and, alongside many excellent local initiatives, have helped to improve digital access for this cohort.

All local authorities have a duty to consult on and publish a local offer for their care leavers. This includes care leavers' statutory entitlements, as well as any discretionary support and services that the local authority chooses to provide. Some local authorities have included supplying mobile phones, data packages or other forms of digital access for their care leavers during the Covid-19 outbreak, and may consider making this part of their local offer going forward.

Mark Riddell, the government's National Adviser for care leavers, and departmental officials from the Care Leavers Policy Team are actively engaged with the organisations campaigning for better digital access for care leavers.

Charities: Finance

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ban charities from using street fundraisers. [HL8992]

Baroness Barran: Ordinarily, street fundraising is estimated to raise over £130m each year for charities. It is a popular form of fundraising for some charities as it recruits long-term supporters to the charity and builds awareness of the important work they do. The charity's trustees are responsible for monitoring all types of fundraising for their charity and for taking steps to address any methods that present a reputational risk or prove a poor investment for their charity. Charity fundraising in England and Wales is subject to independent self-regulation by the Fundraising Regulator. The Fundraising Regulator promotes best practice in fundraising and compliance with its Code of Fundraising Practice.

During this difficult time, ensuring charities can safely begin fundraising activities will be a crucial part of the sector's recovery. DCMS has worked closely with its sectors to publish guidance relating to Covid-19. This includes practical guidance and resources from the Fundraising Regulator and Chartered Institute of Fundraising supporting charities to safeguard the public, staff and volunteers as they plan to return to fundraising activities in a safe and responsible way. This can be viewed at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-dcms-sectors-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

There are no plans to ban charities from using street fundraisers.

Children in Care: Brexit

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of children in each EU and

EEA country who are UK citizens; which Government department or body has responsibility for looking after the interests of such children; what plans they have to provide special consular, or other, support services to those children after 31 December; and what steps they are taking to ensure that such children can exercise their rights under the EU–UK Withdrawal Agreement. [HL8657]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Withdrawal Agreement ensures that UK nationals living in the EU can stay in their host country and continue living broadly as they do now. This includes children of UK nationals. It is not possible to track precisely the number of UK nationals in the EU, nor the number of children. However, the latest analysis from the Office of National Statistics from April 2018 estimated that 59,600 were aged under 15 years.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is responsible for policy relating to the rights of UK nationals living in the EU. Member States also have an obligation to ensure that UK nationals in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement living in their country are protected. When providing Consular assistance, the safety and welfare of children is paramount. It is the primary concern of FCDO when providing consular assistance to young people. The FCDO will provide assistance to vulnerable UK nationals in the EU, including children, after 31 December, in line with FCDO consular policy. We consider that someone is vulnerable when they cannot protect themselves from significant physical or emotional harm, or be protected by others.

The Government is supporting UK nationals, including families with children, to exercise their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement. This includes support through the UK National Support Fund (UKNSF), which has allocated £3 million to external organisations to provide practical support to UK nationals who may have difficulty completing their residency applications.

China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Lord Grimstone of Boscobel on 29 September (HL Deb, cols GC49), what plans they have to initiate a national review of strategic dependency on China; what assessment they have made of China's developing nation status at the World Trade Organisation; and what plans they have, if any, to make representations to change that status. [HL8616]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have a policy of engagement with China and our approach will remain consistent even if difficulties emerge. As we engage we will always protect our national interests and hold China to its international commitments and promises. Our approach also continues to underline our international leadership in promoting free trade, and our belief in the benefits that free trade brings. There is a broader debate at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) regarding the

methodology for awarding Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) to developing countries. As it currently stands there is no objective criteria for defining developing countries at the WTO and members are able to 'self-designate' as developing. The UK continues to engage on this topic at the WTO. We maintain the view that SDT should be awarded on a case-by-case, needs-based basis in the context of each WTO negotiation.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of maintaining (1) the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and (2) the Job Retention Scheme, at the current level for businesses that are unable to open as a result of restrictions in place to address the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8569]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The information requested is not available.

The latest Management Information ^[1], which shows claims for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, was published on 22 September 2020 on GOV.UK.

This shows that by 19 July 2020 a total of £7.6 billion had been claimed for the first SEISS grant and by 20 September 2020 a total of £5.6 billion had been claimed for the second SEISS grant.

This information also shows that £39.3 billion had been claimed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by 20 September 2020.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people diagnosed with Covid-19 on admission to hospital have died while still an in-patient after 28 days. [HL8663]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England does not collect the data in the format requested.

Coronavirus: Prosecutions

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals have been prosecuted for not wearing a face covering on the South Eastern main line since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8644]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: National Statistics on prosecutions and convictions for the second and third quarter of 2020 are due for publication in November 2020 and February 2021, respectively, with detailed offence level data for the whole of 2020 planned for publication in May 2021. Our statisticians are currently considering

what data related to Covid-19 impacts can be gathered and prioritised from court management information systems in time for quality assurance and publication; prosecutions for this type of offence, under the appropriate legislation, may be included. They will notify users through regular statistical publications and updates will be announced on gov.uk.

Culture Recovery Fund

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations (1) have benefitted, or (2) are due to benefit, from the Culture Recovery Fund; and in which regions those organisations are located. [HL8554]

Baroness Barran: Applications to Arts Council England, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and British Film Institute closed in early September.

Additional funding from the £1.57bn will have gone to Scotland (£97m); Wales (£59m) and Northern Ireland (£33m).

On 22nd August, the £3.36 million Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund was shared among 136 venues across England who applied for support to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of this package, The British Film Institute (BFI) is also administering a £30-million fund on a rolling basis to support independent cinemas as they reopen, which will run until October 30th. The first wave of grant allocations was announced on Friday 2nd October, which saw 42 independent cinemas across England receive a share of £654,883.

On Friday 9th October 445 heritage organisations were awarded £103 million from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage. Grants of up to £1m will deliver a lifeline for the heritage sector in England with further support to follow and larger grants for capital projects awarded through the Heritage Stimulus Fund.

On Monday 12th October Arts Council England awarded £257 million to over 1,300 organisations which applied for less than £1 million. The funding goes to theatres, galleries, performance groups, arts organisations, museums and local venues facing the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic to ensure they have a sustainable future.

Further announcements of how the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will be allocated will be made in the coming weeks.

Data Protection

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government which provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation will be incorporated into UK law at the end of the transition period; and what new mechanisms will be put in place to regulate future UK-to EU data transfers. [HL8984]

Baroness Barran: At the end of the transition period, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA) will retain the General Data Protection Regulation in UK domestic law.

We have made Regulations (The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc)(EU Exit) Regulations 2019) under the EUWA to make necessary and appropriate changes to the retained legislation so that the UK's data protection law continues to function effectively after the transition period. For example, the Regulations rename the GDPR as the 'UK GDPR', repatriate certain powers from the EU Commission to the Secretary of State and replace European terminology with UK equivalents.

At the end of the transition period, the UK will recognise EEA countries and EU institutions as continuing to be adequate for the purpose of the UK GDPR, so data can continue to flow from the UK to the EEA without further safeguards needing to be implemented.

In order for the free flow of data from the EEA to the UK to continue at the end of the transition period, we are seeking adequacy decisions from the EU under both the GDPR and the LED.

Debts: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research by the Institute for Public Policy Research Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups at greater risk of problem debt since Covid-19, published on 24 September. [HL8555]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Institute for Public Policy Research's recent publication notes that income shocks, such as redundancy, can cause problem debt and that ethnic minority groups may be particularly exposed to such shocks.

The Government has taken unprecedented steps to help those whose finances have been affected by Covid-19, regardless of their ethnicity. But the Government recognises that it will unfortunately not be possible to protect every job.

The Government's Plan for Jobs provides £1.2 billion to significantly expand and enhance work search support. The Government has also launched the new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people.

The Government is also committed to helping people in problem debt access the support they need to get their finances back on track. That's why an extra £37.8 million support package is being made available to debt advice providers this financial year, which brings this year's annual budget for free debt advice in England to over £100 million.

In addition, from 4 May 2021 the Breathing Space scheme will offer people in problem debt a pause of up to

60 days on most enforcement action, interest, fees and charges, and encourage them to seek professional debt advice.

Fishguard and Holyhead Port

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that vessels from the Republic of Ireland have access to the port of (1) Fishguard, and (2) Holyhead, following the end of the transition period. [HL8608]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Vessels will continue to be able to sail between the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, or on any other shipping route, after the end of the transition period. No additional steps need to be taken and vessels will therefore continue to have access to the ports of Fishguard and Holyhead as currently.

Foreign Relations

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by the then Minister for Asia and the Pacific on 26 February 2019 (HC Deb, col 145), what progress they have made in developing the cross-Government soft power strategy. [HL8577]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The role of soft power is being considered as part of the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development. This will be informed by the conclusions of the cross-government work already undertaken on our strategic approach to this area.

Hate Crime

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about tackling hate crime. [HL8604]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The government continues to routinely engage with a wide range of national partners and other stakeholders about tackling all aspects of hate crime.

The Home Office and MHCLG are also working closely with the National Police Chief's Council to ensure that all police forces are providing reassurance to affected communities and encouraging hate crime reporting during the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes working with civil society partners and social media platforms to encourage victim reporting of hate crime.

The Government is also engaging with a range of Departments and civil society partners to explore possible approaches to tackling hate crime beyond the Hate Crime Action Plan 2016-2020.

Heavy Goods Vehicles: Holyhead Port

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much land they estimate will be required for the parking of lorries travelling through the port of Holyhead following the end of the transition period. [HL8609]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is reviewing potential sites to support Holyhead. It is estimated that approximately 14.8 acres of land will be needed to meet the Government's requirements.

History: Education

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about the potential merits of including black British history in the national curriculum. [HL8602]

Baroness Berridge: Department officials have discussed the flexible scope of the history curriculum, and the opportunities there are to teach black history within it, with a number of organisations such as the Runnymede Trust, The Black Curriculum and the Historical Association. We welcome the profile given to the importance of teaching black history by bodies such as the Runnymede Trust, The Black Curriculum, Fill in the Blanks and many other groups and individuals over the years, and the support and resources on teaching they provide to teachers.

Holidays: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support those who are at higher risk from Covid-19 and may not be entitled to a refund for a booked holiday that they wish to cancel on health grounds. [HL8610]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Consumers who are shielding due to underlying health conditions should discuss options for a refund or a credit note with their travel provider, or consider a claim through their travel insurance. Government have urged businesses to act fairly in this unprecedented situation. The CAA as the regulator actively monitors airline performance on protecting consumer rights and takes appropriate action where that is not satisfactory.

Home Education

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a register for all home educated children. [HL8427]

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to introduce a register of all parents who are teaching children at home during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8690]

Baroness Berridge: In the spring of 2019 a consultation was held on proposals for a mandatory register of children who are not on the role of state or registered independent schools, to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to those children. The consultation closed in June of 2019. Responses to the consultation have been considered and a formal government response document setting out next steps is expected later this year.

As for children who are registered at state or independent schools, all such schools maintain an admissions and attendance register. Information on attendance at such schools is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

The latest figures show that 99.8% of state-funded schools were open on 24 September, down from 99.9% on 17 September. Of the small proportion (0.2%) of schools that were closed, this was mostly due to Covid-19 related reasons. Approximately 88% of all children on roll in all state-funded schools were in attendance on 24 September. This figure has remained broadly stable for 3 weeks.

Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with remote education, but this does not need to be recorded in the attendance register.

Hops: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support hop growers in the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8591]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Hop growers can access a range of financial support options, such as 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 extended loan application deadlines to November 30, longer loan repayment times and further extensions to the grant scheme for the self-employed.

The relaxation of restrictions over much of the country during the last few months has allowed the hospitality sector, including pubs, bars and restaurants, to partially re-open for business. This will have provided some relief to the sector and its supply chains. However, with the current increase in Covid-19 cases and the introduction of Local Alert Levels, certain parts of the hospitality sector will see further restrictions. The Chancellor announced a

new package of financial support on 9 October which will benefit the hospitality sector and its supply chains.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what algorithmic modelling they have used to identify and plan for (1) the location, and (2) the number, of new homes to be built in England; and whether they will publish the outputs of this modelling. [HL8597]

Lord Greenhalgh: The consultation on changes to the current planning system sought views on changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need ("the standard method"). Alongside a worked example of the proposed formula, it sets out the elements we want to balance when determining local housing need, including meeting our target of building 300,000 homes, tackling affordability challenges in the places people most want to live and renewing and levelling up our towns and cities.

Having consulted on each element of the indicative formula, the Government is now reflecting on the feedback. The Government response to the consultation will follow in due course.

Immigration Controls

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government at what stage of development is the Electronic Travel Authorisation system; and when they intend the system to come into use. [HL8598]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme requires primary legislation. It will be developed for delivery as part of the wider multi-year programme of change to the UK's Points-Based Border and Immigration system.

Indonesia: Protests

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Indonesia about police action in response to peaceful protests by students at Cendewasih University in West Papua. [HL8595]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the protests by students on 28 September 2020 at Cenderawasih University in Papua. We have not raised this specific case with the Indonesian authorities, but we regularly press them to address legitimate human rights concerns, including upholding the right of peaceful protest. The former Minister for Asia and the Pacific, Heather Wheeler, raised Papua with the Indonesian Deputy Foreign Minister, Mahendra Siregar, during her visit to Jakarta in January 2020.

Insulin: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government from which (1) sources, and (2) countries, they purchase insulin. [HL8893]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of the UK's supply of insulin is manufactured in the UK. [HL8894]

Lord Bethell: All medicines require a licence approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. This includes information about the sites where the medicine may be manufactured and where components may be sourced. There may be multiple sites associated with each licence, which gives manufacturers resilience in their supply chains, but means that it is not possible for the Department to determine accurately the proportion of medicines manufactured in any one country at any particular time. In addition, any information of this nature that suppliers do share with the Department is commercially confidential.

Insurance: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hayward

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide joint coverage with insurers to ensure adequate insurance provision for individuals and businesses planning events in 2021 which will enable them to start incurring costs for these events during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8521]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector on its response to this unprecedented situation. We are working closely with the insurers, the trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the industry can do to help individuals and businesses in time of need, and how the insurance market delivers the support firms need as the economy reopens. The Government is exploring all options to ensure businesses can build resilience following the outbreak of Covid-19. We encourage businesses encountering financial difficulty as a result of this unprecedented situation to review the initiatives in the Government's support package, such as Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, for which the application window has been extended to 30 November, and businesses rates holidays. We have taken steps to make our schemes deliverable, fair and targeted at those who need it the most. We continue to keep the Government support package under close review.

Joana Mamombe

Asked by Lord Oates

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

Zimbabwe about the detention of Joana Mamombe in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison. [HL8538]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is deeply concerned by the arrest of Joana Mamombe. Following her return to prison on 24 September on the grounds of requiring a medical examination, she was released on 7 October following an order by the High Court. Our Ambassador in Harare publicly welcomed her release but reiterated her concern at the need for her detention on 8 October. When the Minister for Africa wrote to Foreign Minister Moyo on 12 August, following a telephone call with him on 8 June, he raised specific human rights violations, including the treatment of Ms Mamombe, Ms Chimbiri, and Ms Marowa. He made it clear that whilst the UK will support genuine reform in Zimbabwe we are yet to see the necessary meaningful progress, including on human rights. Our Ambassador in Harare reinforced these messages when she met Foreign Minister Moyo in Harare on 14 August.

Our Embassy in Harare will continue to monitor developments on the case of Ms Mamombe, Ms Chimbiri, and Ms Marowa closely. We will continue to call on the Government to uphold the rule of law. This includes respecting the Zimbabwean Constitution which clearly prohibits enforced disappearances, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.

Job Support Scheme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Job Support Scheme on future levels of redundancy. [HL8613]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Job Support Scheme supports businesses who have been impacted by Covid-19 and can support their employees working some hours but who require more time to fully recover, by offering a grant covering one-third of all hours not worked by an employee.

The Job Support Scheme is just one form of support on offer to employers. We have also extended four of the temporary loan schemes: the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan, the Coronavirus Large Businesses Interruption Loan, Bounce Back Loans and the Future Fund, whilst providing flexibility in the repayment these loans, to help support businesses in stay open and meet their costs. We have also introduced the Job Retention Bonus, a one-off grant of £1,000 for every previously furloughed employee who is retained in meaningful employment by January 31st.

Job Support Scheme: Young People

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Job Support Scheme on youth employment. [HL8558]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Government undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment of the Job Support Scheme which included an examination of the impacts on all protected characteristics, including age.

The Job Support Scheme (JSS) is designed to support businesses that are facing lower demand due to Covid-19 to keep their employees in work and attached to the workforce. The JSS is also targeted at businesses who most need it; all SMEs are automatically eligible, and large companies are eligible if they have experienced a decline in revenue.

Where firms make the decision that they cannot retain all of their staff over the longer run, the Government is ensuring that those looking for work are supported. A package of measures in the Plan for Jobs will help people find work by significantly increasing help offered through Jobcentres and providing individualised advice through the National Careers Service. The Government has also launched the Kickstart Scheme, a £2 billion fund to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people.

NHS: Facsimile Transmission

Asked by Lord Borwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many fax machines are regularly used in the NHS. [HL8850]

Lord Bethell: Fax machines and associated consumables were removed from the NHS Supply Chain catalogue in January 2019, and we continue to support the National Health Service with digital transformation to remove the need for outdated technology, including fax machines.

We have not requested further information on fax machine usage from trusts during the Covid-19 outbreak, in order to reduce the burden on systems.

Night-time Economy: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of jobs that could be lost in the night time economy where employees may not qualify for the Job Support Scheme. [HL8516]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Job Support Scheme will assist businesses facing reduced demand over the winter due to Covid-19 to retain their employees and keep them attached to workforce.

The Job Support Scheme is just one part of a wider package of support that will minimise strains on companies' cash flow and help them meet fixed costs.

Alongside the Job Support Scheme, the Government's support package includes Bounce Back Loans, business support grants, an extension to the VAT cut for the hospitality and tourism sectors, and the introduction of the

Job Retention Bonus to encourage employers to keep their previously furloughed staff employed.

Non-domestic Rates: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about business rates relief in Northern Ireland. [HL8585]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Business rates in Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. Following the decision to provide rates relief in England as part of the Government's response to Covid-19, the Executive also introduced rates relief for NI businesses. The measures taken by the Executive include:

- A four-month rates holiday for all NI business ratepayers between April and July this year;
- An extended rates holiday for the hospitality, tourism, childcare, leisure and retail sectors (with the exception of certain supermarkets and off-licences). These businesses will pay no rates for the full financial year up until 31 March 2021.

These measures were enabled by the £2.2bn of additional UK Government funding provided to the Executive as part of our response to Covid-19.

We have regular engagement with Executive ministers on a range of issues, including responding to Covid-19. We will continue to work closely with the Executive as we work to see Northern Ireland recover.

Prisons: Overcrowding

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent overcrowding in prisons. [HL8630]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We are committed to reducing crowding across the prison estate which is why we are investing up to £2.5bn to provide 10,000 additional prison places to ensure we have the prison places we need to manage incoming demand.

In addition, we have already delivered 2,100 uncrowded prison places at HMP/YOI Berwyn, 206 uncrowded places in a house block at HMP Stocken and continue to work at pace to deliver modern, decent, uncrowded prisons at the former HMP Wellingborough and HMP Glen Parva sites, which are due to open in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Public Sector: Artificial Intelligence

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the accuracy, and (2) the efficacy, of the use of algorithms in (a) the planning, and (b) the implementation, of their policies. [HL8596]

Lord True: The Government's Data Ethics Framework and 'Guide to Using AI in the Public Sector', alongside other guidance are available on GOV.UK, to support ethical and safe use of algorithms in the public sector. Building on existing work on algorithmic and data ethics, the Government is now seeking to deliver more transparency on the use of algorithmic-assisted decision making within the public sector; and is working with leading organisations in the field of data and AI ethics on a proposed approach to algorithmic transparency.

Pupil Premium

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase pupil premium funding for economically disadvantaged children. [HL8614]

Baroness Berridge: We are committed to levelling up opportunities to make sure everyone has a fair chance to realise their potential and no-one is left behind. The pupil premium furthers this objective by helping schools improve the academic attainment and wider outcomes of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Since the pupil premium was introduced in 2011, it has provided more than £18 billion of additional funding for schools and has played an important role in contributing to the narrowing of the disadvantaged attainment gaps at ages 11 and 16 years.

Pupil premium allocations for the 2020-21 financial year were published in June, and the first quarterly instalments were paid out in June and July. Announcements on pupil premium funding for the 2021-22 financial year will follow later in the year, in line with the usual timetable. Announcements for future years will be made in due course.

The total allocated through the pupil premium was £2.41 billion last financial year (2019-20) and is £2.45 billion this financial year (2020-21).

Schools: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Triesman

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to research findings that Covid-19 is transmitted in aerosols, leading the governments of Japan, Taiwan, Italy, Spain and France to insist on mask wearing inside classrooms, what assessment they have made of making masks mandatory in UK schools, as advised by the WHO; whether they plan to introduce such measures; and if not, whether they can provide the scientific advice for not doing so. [HL8651]

Baroness Berridge: At each stage of the department's response to the Covid-19 outbreak, we have listened to the latest medical and scientific advice, and if we think that the guidance should be revised based on further evidence then we will not hesitate to act swiftly and decisively.

On 21 August, the World Health Organisation published a new statement advising that “children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same condition as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area”. As a result, the department has revised its guidance on face coverings in schools and colleges, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>.

As the guidance outlines, in areas of national government intervention, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and pupils in secondary schools when moving around indoors, such as in corridors or communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Otherwise, all schools, including primary schools, have the discretion to require the use of face coverings by adults and pupils in year 7 and above in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed. Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

Based on current evidence, and in light of the mitigating measures that schools are already putting in place, face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom. Face coverings would have a negative impact on teaching and their use in the classroom should be avoided.

Schools: Racial Harassment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey conducted by The Diana Award, published in September, which found that 32 per cent of the children surveyed had overheard racist comments at school. [HL8611]

Baroness Berridge: We are clear that there is no place for racism in schools and our wider education system. All children and young people deserve the opportunity to progress and fulfil their potential in an environment free from fear, prejudice or hate.

Departmental officials are aware of the findings you refer to from The Diana Award's recent survey, and these are being considered as part of our ongoing work to tackle racism in schools. We are providing an additional £750,000 funding in the 2020-21 financial year to three anti-bullying organisations, including The Diana Award, to help schools continue to tackle bullying, such as through programmes that tackle prejudice and discrimination.

More broadly, schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. This involves supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and teaching about respect for other people and for difference. Schools and further education providers are also required to actively promote fundamental British values, including individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. The

department has published advice for schools on promoting these values and has made resources available through the Educate Against Hate website. This website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs. The website is available here: <https://educateagainsthate.com/>.

Shipping: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support UK (1) shipping, and (2) ports, with the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8579]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has been working closely with the maritime sector, including shipping and ports, as they have continued to operate throughout the pandemic and provide vital freight and passenger services.

As the economy continues its safe re-opening, the Department will continue to engage widely across the maritime sector to understand any challenges they face, including the ongoing financial health of maritime companies, shipping and our ports.

Shopping Centres and Urban Areas

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect high streets and shopping parades in England. [HL8593]

Lord Greenhalgh: This Government is fully committed to supporting the businesses and communities that make our high streets and town centres successful as the nation responds to the impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak. Now more than ever, it is vital that we continue to help our local economies by supporting town centres and high streets to recover, adapt and evolve.

We have worked with local authorities to make grants of over £11 billion to more than 890,000 businesses via three funds to support small businesses as well as businesses in hard hit sectors such as retail, hospitality and leisure.

In addition to these funds, in May government announced the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund which is providing £50 million from the European Regional Development Fund to councils across England to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. This new money will support practical measures so businesses can re-open quickly when they are allowed to, staff get back to work and customers return to shops confident it is safe.

Government is also delivering the £3.6 billion Towns Fund to re-energise local economies, which includes the accelerated £1 billion Future High Streets Fund competition. The fund will support local areas in England

to renew and reshape town centres and high streets. Government announced in September £80m from the Towns Fund would be delivered to over 100 places to kick start regeneration projects; and we will make an announcement on places receiving funding via the Future High Streets Fund in Autumn.

Government is also providing support to places through the High Streets Task Force. Over five years this is providing hands-on support to local areas like Coventry to develop data-driven innovative strategies to tackle issues such as empty properties and connect local areas to relevant experts. The Task Force will be rolling out its expert, training and data offer across the country in due course and has already launched a range of online support.

We have also set out our plans to reform the planning process in the *Planning for the Future* consultation, open until 29 October. As part of this, we seek to streamline and modernise the planning process, meaning places across the country are able to respond to the needs of their communities and best utilise the land available for more homes in and around town centres and high streets, levelling up the economic and social opportunities available to our communities.

Finally, since March the Government has implemented a range of measures to support commercial property tenants and landlords. The objective of these measures was to preserve tenants' businesses through the Covid-19 lockdown and to give time and space to landlords and tenants to agree reasonable adjustments to rent and lease terms, including terms for the payment of accumulated rent arrears. This included a moratorium on the landlord's right of forfeiture for non-payment of rent, restrictions on the service of statutory demands and winding-up petitions and publishing a voluntary Code of Practice to encourage constructive dialogue between tenants and landlords.

Social Enterprises: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving to social enterprises to help with the changed circumstances and increased costs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8819]

Baroness Barran: The Government continues to champion social enterprises and the significant and wide ranging contributions they make to our society, and more recently in the response to the pandemic including in health, social care and community support. There is no doubt that social enterprises are facing significant challenges and many have adapted their business models and operations to adjust to the new circumstances.

Social enterprises have access to the support measures that the Government has put in place to support organisations through the pandemic, including loan schemes, business rate reliefs, flexibility around tax payments and grants. A £750m targeted funding package has been made available to support the Voluntary,

Community and Social Enterprise Sector to allow organisations to continue to provide vital services to those affected by Covid-19. This unprecedented funding is in addition to the significant package of support that has been made available across sectors, which social enterprises can access. This includes the Job Retention Scheme, the Business Loan Interruption Scheme, and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund and more recent measures including the Job Support Scheme and the Kickstart scheme. A further £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts has been unlocked to support urgent work tackling youth unemployment, providing emergency loans for civil society organisations and improving the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

Last month the Government announced a social value procurement framework for central government contracts. This presents a real opportunity to grow social enterprises' involvement in public sector supply chains.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of Syrian fighters reportedly deployed to Libya by the government of Turkey. [HL8724]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of foreign fighters being transferred from Syria to engage in armed conflict in Libya - on both sides of the conflict.

The UK is clear that external involvement in the Libyan conflict, including the use of mercenaries and foreign fighters, is undermining UN efforts to secure a lasting ceasefire and restart political dialogue. We have expressed our concern to the Turkish Government, as we have to all other external actors whose activity continues to fuel the conflict.

Travel: Insurance

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure insurance companies compensate those whose holidays were cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL8606]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector to understand and influence its response to this unprecedented situation. The Government is encouraging insurers to do all they can to support customers during this difficult period.

The independent conduct regulator for the insurance industry – the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has published guidance for firms handling consumer claims, including travel insurance claims, during the Covid-19 crisis.

The FCA's rules require insurers to handle claims fairly and promptly; provide reasonable guidance to help a

policyholder make a claim; not reject a claim unreasonably; and settle claims swiftly once settlement terms are agreed. In addition to this, the FCA has stated that, in light of the Covid-19 crisis, insurers must carefully consider the needs of their customers and show flexibility in their treatment of them. The Government is working closely with the FCA to ensure that these rules are being upheld, and supports the regulator in its role.

Universities: Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support universities to provide more mental health and wellbeing support to students whilst Covid-19 restrictions are in place. [HL8612]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all students, domestic and international, continues to be a priority for the government. The disruption and uncertainty resulting from the Covid-19 outbreak has affected all age groups, but particularly young people who are making the transition from school to university during this time.

Higher education providers are best placed to identify and address the needs of their particular student body as well as how to develop the services needed. Many providers have boosted their existing welfare and counselling services to ensure that support services can be accessed, which is particularly important for those students having to self-isolate or who are affected by local restrictions.

Student Space, funded with £3 million from the Office for Students, provides dedicated support services (by telephone and text message) for students and an online platform to help students access vital mental health and wellbeing resources. The platform bridges gaps in support for students arising from the Covid-19 outbreak and is designed to work alongside existing services.

The government has recently provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. In addition, NHS mental health trusts are ensuring 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access to crisis telephone lines to support people of all ages.

We have asked providers to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students during this period and have enabled them to use funding – worth up to £23 million per month from April to July this year, and £256 million for

the academic year 2020/21 starting from August – to go towards student hardship funds and mental health support.

West Bank: Housing

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 September (HL8094), what advice they have given to the Palestinian Authority about what steps can be taken to prevent the government of Israel from building settlement housing on Palestinian land in the West Bank. [HL8615]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As previously stated, our longstanding position on settlements is that they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to abide by International Humanitarian Law and to promote peace, stability and security. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

Yemen: War Crimes

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of possible war crimes committed by coalition forces in Yemen after an airstrike on a home in Washah near the Yemeni–Saudi border killed six children. [HL8642]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by reports of civilian deaths in Washah. Whenever the UK receives reports of alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law, we routinely seek information from all credible sources, including from NGOs and international organisations. We use every opportunity to raise the importance of complying with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the Coalition, including requesting investigations into alleged incidents of concern. The UK continues to call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to exercise restraint, comply fully with IHL and engage constructively with the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, which is the only way to end the cycle of violence.

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