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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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

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# Written Statements

*Monday, 2 November 2020*

## Atomic Weapons Establishment: Direct Government Ownership

[HLWS537]

**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.

In 1993 the Ministry of Defence (MOD) entered into a Government owned Contractor operated (GoCo) arrangement with Hunting-BRAE whereby Hunting-BRAE operated the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) on behalf of the Government. In 1999, following a competitive tender, a new 25-year contract was awarded to AWE Management Ltd (AWE ML).

On the 1 July 2019 the MOD triggered the Successor Arrangements clause with AWE ML to enable it to consider alternative viable management options ahead of the current contract expiration. Although the existing arrangements have brought stability to the organisation the MOD has concluded that AWE will revert to a direct Government ownership model.

Under the revised arrangements, AWE plc will become an Arms-Length Body wholly owned by the MOD. It will continue to be managed by a world leading team and a new Board will be appointed by the MOD. The new business model will see AWE plc continue to draw on private sector specialist support to strengthen capability as well as playing a key role in managing capital projects and contracts. This approach is recognised as best practice in other major complex programmes.

The MOD, AWE ML and AWE plc will jointly manage the termination of the contract and the transition to the new arrangements, which are anticipated to be completed by the end of June 2021. This will be completed in close co-operation with workforce representatives, regulators, the supply chain and the local community.

The continued safe and secure operation of AWE sites will remain the over-riding focus during the transition and under the revised management structure.

## Director of Service Prosecutions

[HLWS538]

**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.

Under section 364 of the Armed Forces Act 2006 the Director of Service Prosecutions is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The term of the current incumbent, Andrew Cayley QC, comes to an end on 2 November 2020.

I can inform the House that Her Majesty has appointed Jonathan Rees QC to succeed Mr Cayley as the next independent Director of Service Prosecutions. Mr Rees has practised from chambers at 2 Hare Court since 2015, prosecuting and defending serious criminal allegations of murder, terrorism, sexual abuse and corruption.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr Cayley who has served as Director for the last seven years and worked hard with other Service Justice System stakeholders to improve the processes by which cases are built and brought to trial, whilst maintaining the necessary independence of prosecutorial decision-making. His efforts have ensured that the Authority has retained its position as an independent and respected prosecuting body which has underpinned the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

As he hands over his responsibilities to Mr Rees, I would like to express my personal gratitude for the important contribution he has made.

## Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol: Consent Mechanism Regulations

[HLWS540]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement:

I am today laying before both Houses of Parliament a draft of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Democratic Consent Process) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 which will, if approved, reflect in domestic law the consent mechanism set out in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol and the UK Government's Unilateral Declaration of 17 October 2019.

The consent mechanism ensures that Articles 5 to 10 of the Protocol will cease to apply if Northern Ireland's political representatives conclude they are no longer desirable. The first consent process will take place in late 2024, and will be repeated every four or eight years depending on whether consent (if given) is given on a simple majority or a cross-community basis. Embedding that recognition of consent in the Protocol was intrinsic to its acceptance by this Government.

The regulations implement both a default consent procedure, which will apply if a First Minister and deputy First Minister are in office at the time notification of the start of the process is given, and an alternative consent procedure, which will apply if a First Minister and deputy First Minister are not in office at the time notification of the start of the process is given. The alternative procedure enables any MLA to bring forward the consent motion in the absence of a First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Protocol was specifically designed to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the gains of the peace process. The principle of consent is central to it, ensuring that democratically elected local politicians make decisions for the people of Northern Ireland.

## Transport for London: Funding and Financing

[HLWS536]

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

The Government and the Mayor of London have agreed a second extraordinary funding and financing package for Transport for London for the period to 31 March 2021. It replaces the agreement signed in May. It will ensure the continued operation of public transport services in London and is proof of our commitment to supporting the capital and the transport network on which it depends.

As with the national rail network, the Government will make up the revenue which TfL has lost due to the Covid pandemic over the period. The new package comprises a central funding scenario of £1bn - made up of £905m grant funding and £95m borrowing - with flexibility for changing the grant payment in response to changing passenger demand. Actual payments are likely to be greater than £1bn because of the move to national Covid restrictions.

TfL continues to need substantial support due to the significant fall in revenue caused by covid-19. However, choices made in the preceding four years have made TfL less resilient to the impacts of the pandemic and this is why it is of vital importance that the Mayor brings forward plans to re-establish a trajectory to financial sustainability as soon as possible.

As well as the conditions in the package agreed in May, the new agreement therefore sets out further measures to put TfL on a sustainable financial footing as soon as possible. Over the next six months, the Mayor will impose fare rises of RPI plus 1 per cent on all modes from January 2021; maintain the central London congestion charge at the hours and level to which it was increased in June; maintain the withdrawal of 60-65 Pass and 66+ Freedom Pass concessions in the morning peak; and make a further £160m in year savings, additional to those already planned, with the exception of active travel, which will remain as in the first half of the year. TfL will co-operate with a Government-led review of driverless trains. The two Government special representatives will continue to attend TfL Board and panel meetings. A new Government-led working-level oversight group will be created. By 11 January 2021, TfL will produce a single, comprehensive management plan with options as to how a trajectory to financial sustainability by 2023 can be achieved.

Any grant from Government to support London must be fair for UK taxpayers. If the Mayor wishes Londoners to continue to benefit from travel concessions and/or other benefits above those typically available elsewhere in England, he and TfL have recognised that the costs of these additional benefits will not be met by the Government; and that they will meet these costs themselves, without recourse to additional borrowing, savings, service changes or deferrals. TfL and the Mayor

have proposed that this could be done by an increased council tax precept from April 2021. They will submit their proposals by 11 January 2021, alongside the fiscal sustainability plan. The Government will take all steps necessary at the appropriate times to enable this proposal.

Extending the congestion charging zone to inner London has been ruled out by both the Government and the Mayor. National travel concessions including free travel to school for those who qualify under the 1996 Education Act will continue to be funded by the Government. The Freedom Pass for pensioners and the disabled will continue as now. It is not funded by TfL or the Mayor.

The full agreement can be found on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-for-london-settlement-letter>

## UK-US Future Trading Partnership: Negotiations

[HLWS539]

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

The fifth UK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiating round took place from 19 to 30 October 2020.

This was the most intensive round of negotiations held so far, with 38 sessions covering 19 different chapter areas.

Almost all chapter areas are now in the advanced stages of talks. A significant proportion of legal text has been agreed across multiple chapters.

The round included focused discussions on market access for goods, including negotiations around product specific rules of origin, which determines whether or not a product can benefit from preferential tariffs under the FTA.

We also held detailed textual discussions on a Digital chapter and agreed much of the legal framework for a future agreement.

Following the significant progress made in talks to date, both sides are confident that we are on track for a comprehensive agreement which would provide a significant and mutual benefit to our economies. We believe we are in a good position to move forward after the U.S. election.

We have agreed a programme for continued talks at official level for the weeks following the U.S. election.

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

- Competition
- Core Text
- Cross Cutting Services
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Digital

- Environment
- Financial Services
- Good Regulatory Practice (GRP)
- Investment
- Intellectual Property
- Market Access for Goods
- Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)

- Sectoral Annexes
- Services Sectors – Professional Business, Transport and Delivery Services
- State Owned Enterprises
- State to State Dispute Settlement
- Telecoms
- Trade Remedies

## Written Answers

Monday, 2 November 2020

### Affordable Housing

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the well-being benefits of small scale community housing, including almshouses. [HL9523]

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect and promote small-scale community housing models, such as almshouses, as part of their reforms of the planning system. [HL9524]

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable small-scale housing models, such as almshouses, to benefit from affordable housing levies, including section 106 agreements. [HL9525]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** As part of its contribution to the Loneliness Strategy being led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has commissioned the London School of Economics to undertake research into the benefits of community-led housing in respect of addressing loneliness. The final report of the research is expected in 2021.

We are currently consulting widely on the proposals for reform set out in the Planning White Paper, and we will be listening carefully to all the representations made, including those from organisations representing almshouses. In relation to s106 planning obligations, we are consulting on proposals to replace the existing system of developer contributions with a new Infrastructure Levy, which will deliver at least as much onsite affordable housing as at present.

The upcoming government guidance on producing local design codes will set out more detailed parameters for key elements of successful design, recognising the need for a variety of housing tenures, including community and co-housing schemes, to create diverse, equitable and resilient communities. Further information on this will be published in due course.

### Affordable Housing: Rural Areas

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their statement that "there is a shortage of affordable housing, particularly for local workers" in rural areas in their response on 2 July 2019 to the report by the Select Committee on the Rural Economy Time for a strategy for the rural economy (HL Paper 330, Session 2017–19), what is the net increase in affordable homes in rural areas since July 2019. [HL9724]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** This Government believes that meeting the housing needs of rural communities is important and nearly 165,000 affordable homes have been provided in rural local authorities in England between April 2010 and March 2019.

We are investing £12.2 billion in affordable housing over 5 years from next year (2021-2026). This represents the highest single funding commitment to affordable housing in a decade. This investment includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme which will be delivered over 5 years from next year (2021-2026), providing up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow. Homes England's funding prospectus for this supports the delivery of rural housing, with the commitment of 10% of the housing delivered to be in settlements with a population fewer than 3,000. Furthermore, Homes England has dedicated rural housing champions in each of their operating areas and they remain active across the rural housing sector.

The department collects annual data on new affordable housing supply but does not collect all the data required on disposals of affordable housing that would allow to calculate the net change in affordable housing in rural areas.

The latest available official statistics on new affordable housing supply are for 2018-19. The publication of the statistics for 2019-20 has been provisionally pre-announced for 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

### Animal Products: Exports

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of export health certificates for animal products that will need to be issued from 1 January 2021; and what is their current capacity for issuing these certificates. [HL9302]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** New requirements for export health certificates (EHCs) for goods moving from Great Britain to the EU from 1 January 2021 may increase demand for EHCs for products of animal origin (POAO) by up to five times, compared with the approximately 57,000 issued for third country trade in 2017. To meet this possible demand, we have increased the number of Official Vets (OVs) holding the relevant qualification to certify POAO exports from around 600 in February 2019 to more than 1200 today, with further funded training announced on 1 October 2020. In addition, around 1000 Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) working in 153 different local authorities across Great Britain can certify some exports and therefore contribute towards certification capacity. We have also introduced the role of Certification Support Officers (CSOs) to help reduce the burden on OVs and FCCOs. CSOs are able to carry out preliminary and administrative work to prepare consignments for export. On 1 October, we announced additional funded training to help increase the number of CSOs from 96 qualified and authorised by APHA.



## Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Asked by *Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution they have made in the last financial year (1) to UN programming on combating sexual and gender based violence, (2) to the UN Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and (3) to the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network; and what contributions they plan for this financial year. [[HL9368](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government committed £1 million to the UN Team of Experts and £500,000 for OHCHR Sexual and Gender Based Violence team through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund last financial year 19/20. We have contributed a further £1.5 million and £500,000 respectively in this financial year 20/21. The UK Government does not fund the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network

## Arms Trade

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what safeguards are in place to ensure that arms sold by the UK to other countries are not used on civilian populations. [[HL9283](#)]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** British arms sales are subject to an export licence. All export licence applications are assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria').

The Consolidated Criteria take into account our obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant rules of international law. They provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to think hard about the possible impact of providing equipment and its capabilities.

HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

## Bank of Credit and Commerce International Inquiry

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will (1) publish an unredacted version of the report by Lord Justice Bingham Inquiry into the Supervision of The Bank of Credit and Commerce International, published on 22 October 1992, and (2) provide a list of who has received a copy of the unredacted version of that report to date; and if not, why. [[HL9321](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** There are currently no plans to publish an unredacted version of the report by Lord Justice Bingham into the Supervision of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

## British Nationality: Children

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 19 October (HL Deb, col 1275), whether the "task and finish" exercise promised at the Report stage of the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill will address the barriers to children registering their right to citizenship. [[HL9373](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I intend to meet with noble Lords to discuss citizenship and belonging, and will listen to concerns they wish to raise on that subject.

## Burundi: Human Rights

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking in response to the report by the UN Human Rights Council Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, published on 16 September. [[HL9364](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK remains extremely concerned by the ongoing human rights situation in Burundi, and its humanitarian consequences. The findings of the report of the Commission of Inquiry that Burundi remains at risk of atrocities, is deeply troubling. We welcome the Government of Burundi's commitment to deliver real change and break from the past. The UK will be ready to engage in more substantive dialogue with Burundi once it has taken demonstrable steps to improve human rights, and made progress towards peace and stability. However, we believe an inclusive dialogue, led by the region, remains one of the only viable options to resolve the ongoing political crisis in Burundi. In this context, we continue to urge Burundi to engage both with the region and with the wider international community on human rights, sustainable peace and development issues in the country.

## Burundi: Refugees

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the return of Burundian refugees from Rwanda; and what steps they have taken to support any such resettlement. [[HL9363](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working with the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to Burundi. Since 26 July 2020, a large number of refugees have been repatriated from Rwanda. The UK continues to support the work of UNHCR including reintegration support for repatriated refugees, in addition to wider food security, malnutrition and emergency management interventions. The UK has provided a total of £15 million in humanitarian support to Burundi between July 2017 and December 2020.

## Burundi: Rwanda

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current intergovernmental relations between the governments of Rwanda and Burundi. [HL9362]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK notes positive developments in the Rwanda-Burundi relationship, including the meeting of foreign ministers at their shared border on 20 October. We support continued dialogue and increased cooperation between the two governments. Good relations between Rwanda and Burundi are important for continued development and sustainable peace.

## Carillion: Directors

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many directors of Carillion plc have been disqualified as directors since the report by the House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee and Work and Pensions Select Committee Carillion (HC 769) was published on 16 May 2018. [HL9324]

**Lord Callanan:** The Insolvency Service's enquiries into Carillion plc are ongoing. Once complete, a decision will be made on whether it is in the public interest to commence disqualification proceedings against any of the directors of the company.

## Contact Tracing: Computer Software

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to incorporate the results of rapid saliva-based COVID-19 test kits into the NHS COVID-19 app. [HL8528]

**Lord Bethell:** The app will continue to evolve and we will explore opportunities to incorporate results from these tests in due course.

## Coronavirus: International Cooperation

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the Alliance for COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. [HL9430]

**Baroness Sugg:** As a founding donor, the UK is a strong supporter of the Access for COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. The UK has a seat on the Facilitation Council, provides strategic guidance, and mobilises financial support in its role. The UK has contributed up to £813 million to ACT-Accelerator partners. This includes the Prime Minister's announcement at the United National General Assembly of up to £500 million to the COVAX

Advance Market Commitment to support access to coronavirus vaccines for up to 92 developing countries.

## Coronavirus: Universities

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the location of residential university students who test positive for COVID-19 is recorded in national statistics according to (1) their GP's address or (2) their university address. [HL8824]

**Lord Bethell:** All positive cases are reported according to the permanent address which they used to register with their general practitioner (GP). Universities encourage students to register with a local GP on arrival, so for many students any positive test will be assigned to their term-time location.

## Courts: Video Recordings

Asked by *Lord Wasserman*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent to date on (1) the design, (2) the build, and (3) the roll-out, of the Cloud Video Platform for criminal hearings; and of this sum, how much was spent on independent management and technical consultants. [HL9340]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Cloud Video Platform (CVP) was not developed by the Ministry of Justice, it is a service that has been procured for use by the department, initially for non-criminal cases. Any design and build costs associated with the development of this service would be to the supplier.

CVP was piloted outside of criminal jurisdiction and has only been rolled out for use in this setting due to requirements due to Covid-19. The service is currently being used across the court and prison estate.

Any costs associated with the rolling out and maintaining the CVP due to Covid-19 currently reflects its use in all settings rather than just criminal hearings. It would take a significant amount of time (and incur a disproportionate cost) to break down all costs specifically on a case by case basis to identify a specific figure for just criminal hearings.

## Derelict Land

Asked by *Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by the CPRE State of Brownfield Report 2020, published in October 2020. [HL9538]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We will consider CPRE's recommendations as we take forward our reforms of the planning system, including those proposed in our *Planning for the future* consultation. This White Paper made clear that, alongside our ambition to build the



homes we need and make the planning process more effective, we will promote the stewardship and improvement of our precious countryside and environment. It is our firm intention to preserve and enhance important natural assets, to encourage provision of new green infrastructure, and to maximise the development potential of suitable brownfield land.

### **Developing Countries: Digital Technology**

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the potential of digital trade to aid economic recovery from COVID-19, and (2) the digital divide between the UK and developing countries; and what plans they have to increase their spending on communication and digitisation capacity building to more than 0.2 per cent of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's total budget. [HL9397]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Digital trade can support economic recovery by enabling more trade to continue during global lockdowns and by opening new trading opportunities which the UK also stands to benefit from. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have been supporting businesses to adapt to the challenges of operating online. For example, our 'SheTrades Commonwealth' programme is helping women-owned businesses in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Bangladesh to use digital platforms to market their products and maintain relationships with clients remotely.

There is a deep global digital divide. For example, only 19% of individuals in the least developed countries are estimated to have internet access, while 91% of all UK adults have recently used the internet. The UK Government is investing in programmes that increase digital inclusion in developing countries and emerging markets. This includes the Digital Access Programme which is working in five countries to address the fundamental constraints to digital inclusion, build cybersecurity capacity and support local digital economies, with a focus on underserved communities. Future spending plans on communication and digitisation capacity building, and in all other areas, will depend on the outcome of the ongoing Spending Review.

### **Edinburgh Woollen Mill: Insolvency**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the notice filed by the Edinburgh Woollen Mill Group to appoint administrators. [HL9316]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government recognises the impact that coronavirus is having on job security in the retail sector and we have put together a far-reaching package of support for businesses and for the economy.

We understand this will be a worrying time for Edinburgh Woollen Mill Group's employees and their families and stand ready to support anyone affected in any way we can.

This is a commercial matter for the company and we hope the administrators will be able to secure as many jobs as possible.

### **Employment: Young People**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove barriers to employment for 16 to 24-year-olds. [HL9327]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Government continues to work to raise the bar in the opportunities available to the next generation and to help improve their outcomes by removing barriers to work.

From September 2020 we started the implementation of the new DWP Youth Offer for all 18 to 24 year olds. This includes the introduction of our Youth Employment Programme, during which young people will be referred to the most appropriate support. We have also implemented DWP Youth Hubs and DWP Youth Employability Coaches.

Youth Hubs are co-located and co-delivered with our network of external partners. Young people can access further tailored support to meet any skills gaps and requirements to bring them closer to labour market opportunities. 16 and 17 year-olds will be able to access Youth Hub support via a drop-in service where they will be signposted to the most appropriate support. DWP is also engaging directly with the National Employers Partnership Team to support 16 and 17 year-olds (as well as the wider youth customer group), working with partners such as Movement to Work, the Prince's Trust, Accenture and Youth Employment UK.

Youth Employability Coaches will provide flexible support for young people with significant complex needs and barriers to help them move into employment.

We have also launched the Kickstart Scheme, dedicated to helping those young people at risk of long term unemployment develop their skills and experience through thousands of 6-month job placements. Funding for each job placement covers 25 hours a week, plus the associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions. We are encouraging organisations that support disadvantaged young people to work with us and employers as gateway organisations, helping smaller employers through the application process and helping to deliver tailored employability support for the young people they help on the scheme.

In addition, we continue to deliver our Mentoring Circles programme for 16-24 year olds giving young people an opportunity to build on their employability skills by facilitating interaction with employers.

## Food Supply: France

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of France about its ban on the distribution of food or drink in Calais. [HL9417]

**Baroness Sugg:** Local decrees, such as Arrete CAB-BRS of 10 September 2020, issued by the prefecture of France's Pas-de-Calais department, are a domestic matter for French authorities. We understand that this decree intends to prevent gatherings in around twenty specific streets in Calais city centre and to allow for social distancing but that it does not amount to a total ban on the distribution of food and drink in Calais.

## Football

Asked by **Lord Triesman**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Our Beautiful Game Saving the Beautiful Game: Manifesto for Change, published on 15 October; whether they will refer to that Manifesto in their planned fan-led review of football; and what plans they have to meet football administrators and specialist Members of both Houses to discuss the Manifesto. [HL9385]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government is committed to undertaking a fan-led review of football governance and is currently considering the scope and structure of the review.

We will continue to liaise with a wide range of stakeholders and will analyse all relevant resources as work progresses.

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Consultants

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much was spent on consultancy services by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and its related agencies in the 2019/20 financial year; and what was the (1) cost of, and (2) reason for, each such contract. [HL9017]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** FCDO's consultancy spend in 2019/20 was £2.96m.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>FCO</i>	<i>DFID</i>
2019/20	£2,936,902	£24,609

Legacy DFID's current system does not allow a breakdown of consultancy spend per contract type, this information is not held centrally but at country office level. Below is a breakdown of consultancy spend for legacy FCO:

<i>FCO Consultancy Spend 2019-20</i>	<i>Amount (£)</i>
Strategic planning consultation services	39,508
Finance Consultancy	39,933
IT/IS Consultancy	469,123
Legal Consultancy	761,088
Marketing and Communications Consultancy	5,000
PPM Consultancy	41,223
Procurement Consultancy	149,901
Property and Construction Consultancy	186,840
Strategy Consultancy	327,415
Technical Consultancy	509,360
Org and Change Management Consultancy	407,510
Grand Total	2,936,902

## Gardens

Asked by **Lord Patten**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contribution to national health and wellbeing of the re-opening to the public in May of gardens owned by (1) members of Historic Houses, and (2) other private individuals. [HL9311]

**Baroness Barran:** Although no specific assessment has been made, the government recognised that increasing the green amenity space available to the public was important for both physical health and mental wellbeing, especially as one in eight households in Britain has no garden.

The Government was keen that sites and organisations could freely reopen to the public, once it was safe to do so. These included the likes of National Trust gardens and parkland (not houses), the grounds and gardens of privately owned historic houses, Kew Gardens and the outdoor spaces of Royal Horticultural Society properties. Only those outdoor spaces that could be opened safely and in compliance with wider social distancing guidelines reopened. Opening these sites provided a wider range of safe opportunities for the public to engage in outdoor recreation, helping to reduce pressure on pinch points and hotspots such as urban public parks, beaches and areas of natural beauty.

## Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for extending the Green Homes Grant scheme to March 2022; and what plans they have to provide funding for that purpose. [HL9351]

**Lord Callanan:** Any extension to the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme would be subject to the outcome of the Spending Review.

The Government is committed to improving the building stock as part of reaching our net zero targets, up to £65bn investment will be needed in housing retrofit across the 2020s.

We have confirmed that the delivery dates for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator will extend into 2021/22 to provide assurance that work will be available. Outside of those schemes, we are creating the regulatory environment to drive retrofit and on 30<sup>th</sup> September we published a consultation on further improving the energy performance of privately rented homes over the 2020s, which provides a clear signal on how Government is committed to improving the housing stock.

### **Immigrants: Housing**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the ex-Ministry of Defence sites currently being used to accommodate migrants in Pembrokeshire and Folkestone are in good condition. [HL9318]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government demands the highest standards from contractors and their accommodation and monitor them closely to ensure this is maintained.

All accommodation provided is required to be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped, and to comply with relevant national or local housing legislation.

These standards apply to all accommodation used by the Home Office including the Ministry of Defence sites in Pembrokeshire and Folkestone.

### **India: Amnesty International**

*Asked by Lord Harries of Pentregarth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of India about its decision to freeze the bank accounts of Amnesty International in that country; and what assessment they have made of the actions by that government against non-governmental organisations, in particular, human rights groups. [HL9282]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** I have raised our concerns on this matter with the Indian High Commissioner, most recently on 1 October. Our Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi has also raised this with the Indian Prime Minister's Office, most recently on 29 September. We have requested Amnesty's accounts be unfrozen while the investigation is ongoing. In our contacts with the Government of India, we have noted the important role of organisations like Amnesty in a democracy.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office remains in contact with Amnesty International on this matter. We will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of India, where we have them.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that the Israel Defence Forces have raided Palestinian villages at night for training purposes. [HL9334]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised these specific reports with the Israeli authorities. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that a Palestinian in a village near Nablus was blinded by a rubber bullet fired by an Israel Defence Force soldier. [HL9335]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made representations on this specific incident, we continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

### **Kickstart Scheme**

*Asked by Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many young people in the UK are expected to benefit from the Kickstart Scheme in 2021. [HL9276]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion programme, planning to create thousands of new jobs for young people aged 16-24 at risk of long term unemployment. Whilst we will not limit our ambitions, our first priority is to ensure the quality of experiences created for young people.

### **Kyrgyzstan: Politics and Government**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the annulment of the outcome of the 4 October Parliamentary elections by the Central Election Committee of Kyrgyzstan, what assessment they have made of the political situation in Kyrgyzstan; and what discussions they have held, if any, with the government of Kyrgyzstan to support the safeguarding of the democratic process. [HL9490]

**Baroness Sugg:** Parliamentary elections on 4 October were marred by allegations of widespread electoral malpractice. There was significant political and social unrest and violence in the immediate days following the Parliamentary elections and the situation remains fragile.

It is for the people of Kyrgyzstan to choose their leaders in free and fair elections consistent with the constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. The UK continues to call for an inclusive, legal and democratic resolution. We have delivered messages through Ministers and at the OSCE urging for peace and calling for the constitutional and democratic processes to be followed, and in support of the UN's work in this area. These messages have been reinforced by Her Majesty's Ambassador in Bishkek.

### Land: Ownership

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what assessment they have made (1) of, aside from the Crown and the UK Government, which (a) person, (b) family, (c) organisation, or (d) charity, is the largest landowner in England and Wales; and (2) of how many acres are held by that landowner. [HL9310]

**Lord Callanan:** None. HM Land Registry holds the database that records the legal ownership of registered land in England and Wales. While the register currently holds some 87% of the freehold surface area by individual land owner, the data is not structured in a way that makes it practical to assess the largest single landowner.

### Members: Committees

*Asked by Lord Mann*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many current members of the House have not (1) attended a sitting of the House, Grand Committee or committee meeting, (2) spoken, and (3) voted, since 1 January. [HL9305]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** (1) 42

(2) 192

(3) 91

The answer is based on the total number of members who were members on 20 October (819). The total includes members on leave of absence and those yet to be introduced, and excludes those who were members from 1 January but have since died or retired.

Office holders, or the holders of ceremonial roles, may speak rarely or not at all, and for some voting is not appropriate to their role

### Money Laundering

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Office for Professional Body Anti Money Laundering Supervision Anti-Money

Laundering Supervision by the Legal and Accountancy Professional Body Supervisors: Progress and themes from 2019, published in March, and the finding that "92 per cent of accountancy Professional Body Supervisors expressed concerns about taking robust action if this would damage their ability to attract or retain members", what plans they have to consolidate the number of anti-money laundering regulators. [HL9325]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Under the Money Laundering Regulations, the Treasury is responsible for appointing Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Terrorism Financing (CTF) supervisors. It seeks to ensure they deliver a robust and risk-based approach to supervision, applying dissuasive sanctioning powers when appropriate, while minimising unnecessary burdens on regulated firms.

In 2018, the government established the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision (OPBAS) to oversee the 22 legal and accountancy Professional Body Supervisors (PBSs) and ensure a consistent standard of supervision. In addition, OPBAS has an overarching responsibility to strengthen the UK's supervisory regime by facilitating increased information and intelligence sharing between PBSs, statutory AML supervisors and law enforcement.

The introduction of OPBAS reflects the findings of the government's previous calls for information, which identified that the focus should be on the effectiveness of supervision, rather than the number of supervisors. [1]

As part of the Economic Crime Plan, OPBAS committed to working with the 22 PBSs to ensure they have appropriate plans in place to address the AML/CTF weakness identified in their supervisory assessments and summarised in their first annual report, including in relation to the separation of functions.

Since publication of the first report, all PBSs have taken steps to address the weaknesses identified and have proposed action plans in place. OPBAS's second report noted significant improvement in the suitability, in principle, of governance arrangements for AML supervision. At the end of 2018, 44% of PBSs lacked clear accountability for supervisory activity. By the end of 2019, this was reduced to zero. OPBAS will continue to monitor PBSs progress against these and assess their effectiveness to deliver more consistent supervisory standards.

Where OPBAS has identified deficiencies in PBSs' oversight arrangements or practices, they have taken robust action, including using powers of direction. OPBAS will continue to take such action when appropriate with PBSs to ensure consistent high standards of supervision are achieved.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/call-for-information-anti-money-laundering-supervisory-regime>;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/anti-money-laundering-supervisory-review>.



## Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the number of casualties, and (2) the damage to houses, schools and infrastructure, in (a) the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and (b) Azerbaijan, and (2) the appeal for funds by the International Committee of the Red Cross to help address the COVID-19 pandemic in that region. [HL9370]

**Baroness Sugg:** We have not made an assessment of the number of casualties, damage to houses, schools and infrastructure outside of the information that has been provided by both parties. We continue to evaluate what support the UK provides to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

## National Crime Agency: Languages

Asked by *Lord Wasserman*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) which, languages are spoken by officers of the National Crime Agency. [HL9338]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Numerous languages are spoken by officers within the National Crime Agency but we are unable to disclose further details in order to protect operational activity.

## National Institute for Health Protection: Public Appointments

Asked by *Baroness Thornton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the recruitment process for the position of permanent Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection; and when they expect that process to begin. [HL7728]

**Lord Bethell:** We are in the process of establishing the National Institute for Health Protection from spring next year. Operational decisions, such as the Board constitution and membership, will be agreed over the coming months.

## National Trust

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last met representatives of the National Trust; and what was discussed at that meeting. [HL9312]

**Baroness Barran:** Representatives of the National Trust last met with the Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage on 21st October 2020 as part of the Heritage Working Group. The meeting focussed on covid-19 impacts on the heritage sector.

## Nigeria: Christianity

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria to encourage the investigation of the number of Christians killed in that country since 2001. [HL9271]

**Baroness Sugg:** The Government condemns all violence against civilians in Nigeria, irrespective of their religion. Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) seek to undermine the Nigerian constitutional right to freedom of religion or belief by deliberately attacking both Christian and Muslim communities and religious leaders. We assess that the majority of Boko Haram and ISWA's victims have been Muslim. Intercommunal violence across multiple states in Nigeria is having a devastating impact on communities of all faiths.

We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting all civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. The Minister for Africa discussed the impact of violence in Nigeria with President Buhari's Chief of Staff in June. We will continue to engage with the federal and state authorities to stress the importance of transparent investigations that respect human rights and the rule of law.

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Nigerian House of Representatives on 4 July 2018 declaring killings in predominantly Christian villages in Plateau State to be a genocide and calling on the federal government of Nigeria to establish orphanages in areas affected by violence. [HL9272]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. We do not assess religious identity to be the principal driver of most incidents of intercommunal violence. The root causes are more complex and relate frequently to competition for resources and failures of governance.

We are aware of the advisory resolution passed by the Nigerian House of Representatives in July 2018. It is UK Government policy not to unilaterally determine whether genocide has occurred, in line with the Genocide Convention. This is a matter for competent courts and tribunals, including the International Criminal Court, after consideration of all the evidence, rather than governments or non-judicial bodies. We encourage additional measures by the Nigerian Government to protect children affected by conflict across the country.



## Nigeria: Overseas Aid

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the situation in Plateau State, Nigeria; and what (1) financial, and (2) technical, assistance they intend to provide (a) to strengthen the rule of law, and (b) to protect freedom of religion or belief, in that region. [HL9270]

**Baroness Sugg:** The Government condemns all incidents of violence in Nigeria, including recent attacks in Plateau State. Intercommunal violence continues to have a devastating effect on local communities across multiple states. We are working with Nigeria to respond to the drivers of conflict, which include disputes over natural resources, competition over land, and population growth. We have provided technical support to the Nigerian Government for the development of the National Livestock Transformation Plan. The Plan aims to promote cattle-rearing in one place, rather than the traditional nomadic practice, to limit competition over land and resources leading to violence. The Plan is currently being implemented in eight Middle Belt states in Nigeria, including Plateau state. The UK is firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. The British High Commissioner and her team are increasing their engagement with state governments in areas affected by the violence, including Plateau state. The High Commission team have met with Governors; Christian and Muslim faith leaders; Fulani communities; NGOs active in reconciliation, and affected communities including displaced persons. We are also developing a new conflict, security and justice programme, which aims to reduce levels of intercommunal violence through the development of more effective conflict-management systems.

We will continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to take urgent action to protect those at risk of intercommunal violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence and meet the needs of all communities. To strengthen the rule of law across Nigeria, we have supported a new police bill, engaging the National Assembly and providing technical support to National Assembly members considering the draft legislation. On 17th September President Buhari signed the Police Establishment Act into law. The bill seeks to create a more efficient and effective police force that is based on the principles of accountability and transparency; and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UK Government is deeply concerned by violence during protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, which has tragically claimed a number of lives. We will continue to work with the Nigerian Government and international and civil society partners in support of police reform and improvements in the human rights records and accountability of the Nigerian security services.

## Planning Permission

*Asked by Baroness Thornhill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many completion notices have been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in the last ten years for which figures are available; and what plans they have, if any, (1) to review, (2) to revoke, or (3) to revise, this power. [HL9331]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Since September 2010, 18 completion notices have been confirmed by Secretaries of State at the Department. The Housing White Paper in 2017 proposed reform of completion notices to support the faster build out of development, including removing the requirement for Secretary of State consent which required primary legislation. We are now considering whether to take forward this commitment as part of the implementation of the Planning for the Future White Paper which reconfirmed the importance of planning permissions being built out quickly.

## Protective Clothing: Contracts

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which contracts they awarded to Medwell Medical Products for the provision of personal protection equipment; what was the value of each such contract; and what was supplied. [HL9266]

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which companies that have been awarded contracts to supply personal protective equipment to the NHS have sourced stock from Medwell Medical Products. [HL9267]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department does not hold a direct contract with Medwell Medical Products for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). Investigation of stocks of PPE received from suppliers at the central distribution warehouse for PPE in Daventry show a record of receiving PPE masks produced by Medwell Medical Products.

## Radioisotopes: Procurement

*Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the supply of radioactive isotopes and radioactive sources for cancer services after 31 December. [HL9467]

**Lord Bethell:** Our priority is to ensure that patients continue to have access to the medical products they need, including medical radioisotopes. We continue to work closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to deliver the shared goal of continuity of safe patient care by mitigating any potential

disruption to supply into the United Kingdom of medical products at the end of the transition period.

As set out in a letter from the Department to industry of 3 August, we are implementing a multi-layered approach, that involves asking suppliers of medicines and medical products, including medical radioisotopes to the UK from or via the European Union to get trader ready, reroute their supply chains away from any potential disruption and stockpiling to a target level of six weeks on UK soil where this is possible.

We understand that a flexible approach to preparedness may be required for medicines that cannot be stockpiled, such as some medical radioisotopes. We have asked suppliers of those products to use airfreight, which some suppliers are already doing now.

### Simple Energy Advice

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations, groups or contractors were involved in the (1) development, (2) construction, and (3) contents, of the Simple Energy Advice website. [HL9355]

**Lord Callanan:** The Simple Energy Advice Service (SEA) was launched in 2018, in response to the Government-commissioned Each Home Counts Review, as a new digital and phonenumber service to provide homeowners with impartial and tailored advice on how to cut their energy bills and make their homes greener. It also provides information on any available local and national financial support.

Softwire were, and remain, contracted to develop, and construct the website with content provided by BEIS Policy teams.

In order to feature on the website, businesses and tradespeople must be registered with TrustMark and appropriately certified to install energy efficiency and low carbon heat measures. TrustMark is the government-endorsed quality scheme covering work a consumer chooses to have carried out on their home.

The content of the site is regularly reviewed and updated by BEIS policy teams and we also gather feedback from external stakeholders. In addition, local authorities and NGO's can also submit information on area specific projects to support consumers in their local area.

### Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the £20 per week increase in the standard rate of Universal Credit to people remaining on legacy benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support. [HL9476]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around

£9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year.

We are continuing to work with the Treasury on the best ways to support those receiving benefits.

### South Eastern Trains: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 13 October (HL8644), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, 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. [HL9314]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** There are currently no figures in the public domain.

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 suitable data from court management information systems could be gathered and prioritised for quality assurance and publication before then that are related to Covid-19 impacts, including potentially prosecutions for offences under the act. They will notify users through regular statistical publications and updates will be announced on gov.uk.

### Special Educational Needs

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities who are absent from school, and (2) the extent to which the lack of sufficient support and staffing necessary for those children to return safely is a factor in their absence. [HL9390]

**Baroness Berridge:** It is vital that all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) return to their educational setting so that they can receive high quality teaching and specialist professional care.

Approximately 84% of all pupils with an education, health and care plan on roll in all state-funded schools were in attendance on 15 October 2020.

For the majority of children, the benefits of being back in the classroom far outweigh the low risk from COVID-19 and schools can take action to reduce risks still further.

Opening our schools to everyone is a critical part of returning to the 'new normal' but we do not underestimate the challenge that this represents. We also

know that special education settings may face greater challenges. We are continuing to work closely with the sector to identify issues as they arise and put appropriate measures in place as we update our guidance and support offerings.

Staff working day in, day out with children and young people with SEND and their families are best placed to understand individual needs and the adjustments that may need to be made. This knowledge and expertise underpins the guidance for special schools and other specialist settings. The guidance provides a framework, approved by Public Health England, setting out the high-level actions that all schools must undertake for full return. In planning for full return, coproduction and consultation with families is crucial.

The specialisation and the peripatetic nature of much staffing in special settings may make the flexible deployment of staff more challenging, for example in cases where only one member of staff is trained in a particular intervention. Settings and local authorities may wish to have discussions about ways to increase resilience in these circumstances, such as whether additional staff can be trained or if two settings could work together to ensure cover.

While many parents have sent their children to school, we recognise that there are some parents who will still have concerns. In these cases, we recommend schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

We are committed to improving local SEND services, and have started a programme of visits by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission working with local areas to understand the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to support local areas to prioritise and meet their needs.

### **Sudan: Peace Negotiations**

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the peace agreement signed between Sudan's transitional government and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front on 3 October. [HL9372]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK welcomes the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on 3 October 2020 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front. This is an important step towards a comprehensive peace deal to help bring to an end decades of conflict in Sudan. The UK and our Troika partners, the US and Norway, welcomed this progress in a statement on 4 October calling for all parties to implement this agreement in the spirit of cooperation and compromise. We called for further engagement to seek an agreement with groups who have not, thus far, joined peace talks. Through the UK Special Envoy for Sudan and South

Sudan, and our officials in Khartoum, we remain in contact with all parties to urge progress for the sake of those who have suffered for too long from conflicts in Sudan.

In addition, we are supporting the establishment of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS), which will help in the implementation of the peace agreement and will have a central role for international community support. The UK also delivers programmes that promote long-term stability in conflict-affected areas, support marginalised groups, and encourage reconciliation within conflicted communities. On 25 June, as demonstration of the UK's wider commitment to support Sudan as it transitions to democracy, the Minister for Africa announced £150 million in assistance to help reform Sudan's economy, stabilise inflation and provide humanitarian assistance.

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the peace agreement signed between Sudan's Civilian-led Transitional Government, the Sudan Revolutionary Front, the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minawi and the Sudanese Alliance on 3 October; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the decision of the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North not to sign that agreement. [HL9429]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK welcomes the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on 3 October 2020. This is an important step towards a comprehensive peace deal to help bring to an end decades of conflict in Sudan. The UK and our Troika partners, the US and Norway, welcomed this progress in a statement on 4 October, calling for all parties to implement this agreement in the spirit of cooperation and compromise. We also called for further engagement to seek an agreement with those groups who have not, thus far, joined peace talks. In this regard, we welcome the agreement of 3 September to re-start negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North. Through the UK Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and our officials in Khartoum, we remain in contact with all parties to urge progress towards a lasting peace.

In addition, we are supporting the establishment of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS), which will help in the implementation of the peace agreement and will have a central role for international community support. The UK also delivers programmes that promote long-term stability in conflict-affected areas, support marginalised groups, and encourage reconciliation within conflicted communities. On 25 June, as demonstration of the UK's wider commitment to support Sudan as it transitions to democracy, the Minister for Africa announced £150million in assistance to help reform Sudan's economy, stabilise inflation and provide humanitarian assistance.

## Trade Agreements

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure future trade deals do not impose new costs for (1) regulatory inspections and approvals, (2) trade licences, and (3) country of origin requirements on British (a) importers, and (b) exporters. [HL9394]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** HM Government have been clear in our objectives for future trade deals that we will seek to lower costs, by removing and preventing unnecessary and unintended trade barriers in markets around the world, while upholding the safety and quality of products at home.

This includes making it easier for British manufacturers to have their products tested against trade partners' rules prior to export, and seeking Rules of Origin that reflect the requirements of British industry, supported by predictable and low-cost administrative arrangements.

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what legal protections for business that need to be applied globally in order to function are best addressed in (1) multilateral fora, and (2) bilateral free trade agreements. [HL9398]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** DIT continues to work closely with business stakeholders and business representative organisations through regular engagement channels. Through this engagement we have the opportunity to gain insights from businesses on the trade policy issues that matter to them, including any matters they may raise concerning legal protections to operate globally. These processes help inform the policy making process and if such matters were raised we would assess whether they could be addressed in multilateral fora, such as the WTO, or in our bilateral engagement, for example through Free Trade Agreements.

## Trade Promotion

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish the party or group affiliations of UK trade envoys. [HL9279]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** A written ministerial statement was laid in both Houses on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> October listing all the Prime Minister's Trade Envoys. We have no plans to publish further information on party or group as this is already in the public domain.

## Unemployment: Young People

Asked by *Lord Baker of Dorking*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) 16 year olds, (2) 17 year olds, and (3) 18 year olds, have registered as unemployed in the last three months. [HL9349]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The number of people who registered for unemployment related benefits are published as part of the Alternative Claimant Count and are available by age.

*Alternative Claimant Count – Monthly On Flows, June to August 2020, UK*

Age	June	July	August
16	567	457	198
17	2,026	1,699	604
18	11,962	11,066	8,082

Source: Alternative Claimant Count - On Flows

Notes:

- i) Statistical disclosure control has been applied to this table to avoid the release of confidential data.
- ii) On-flows are defined as the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in month t, who were not claiming in the previous month (t-1).
- iii) Figures are standardised to control for 4 and 5 week counting periods.

This data is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

## Union Learning Fund

Asked by *Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 30 September (HL8220), why they have ceased funding of the Union Learning Fund with effect from March 2021 when the capacity for the National Skills Fund to replace it is not known. [HL9389]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government's commitment to the Union Learning Fund has never been open-ended and the current funding was due to cease in April 2021. We have made no commitment to funding beyond this date and have always been clear any future funding would depend on the government's Spending Review. The decision not to renew funding after April 2021 has been communicated at this stage in the Spending Review process in order to give a greater period of notice.

The National Skills Fund is a substantial commitment to invest £2.5 billion in skills development over this parliament, which compares to £12 million in the current annual budget for Unionlearn. There is an existing adult entitlement to support any adult without English and Maths level 2 or Digital Skills level 1 to gain those qualifications, which my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister extended in his speech at Exeter College on 29 September 2020, confirming a new Lifetime Learning Guarantee that any adult without a level 3 qualification would be fully funded to obtain one. Reinvesting our existing funding for Unionlearn in our expanded offer will therefore contribute to a much more comprehensive offer in future, accessible to a wide range of learners, helping them to develop their skills and careers.



## Universal Credit

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to replace Universal Credit Advance Payment loans with grants or 'starter payments' to reduce applicants' accrual of debt during the five-week waiting period. [HL9477]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** We have no plans to do this. Our focus remains firmly on ensuring that millions of new and existing claimants continue to receive their payments on time, and that we do everything possible to support people back into work where it is right to do so.

Nobody has to wait for five weeks for a Universal Credit (UC) payment. New Claims Advances are available which allow claimants to receive up to 100 per cent of their estimated UC payment upfront so that new claimants will receive their annual award over 13 payments during their first year, instead of 12. These advances are not loans.

The Department has announced that from October 2021, the maximum recovery period is increasing from 12 to 24 months for new claim and benefit transfer advances and that we are reducing the normal maximum level of deductions from a claimant's UC Standard Allowance to 25 per cent, down from 30 per cent.

## Veterinary Services: Recruitment

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the UK is facing a critical shortage of veterinarians; and what steps they are taking to increase veterinary capacity. [HL9301]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Department is aware of staff shortages within the veterinary profession which has an existing job vacancy rate of around 10%. Defra is working with the UK veterinary profession to address the UK's veterinary resourcing needs and to ensure capacity in both the short and long term.

With support from stakeholders, the Department was successful in ensuring that veterinarians were added to the UK Shortage Occupation List in September 2019. This will make it easier for UK employers to recruit vets from overseas. Additionally, two new veterinary schools have been opened to expand the number of UK veterinary graduates in the future.

To support official veterinarians further, Defra created a Certification Support Officer (CSO) role to help work on export certification. Additionally, to ease the burden of statutory TB skin testing of cattle, from 2 November 2020, Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATTs) can be employed and trained by private veterinary businesses in England.

## Vitamin D

Asked by *Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the review by the Royal Society Vitamin D and COVID-19, published on 18 June, which noted both the high levels of Vitamin D deficiency in the UK's population and its important regulatory role in the human immune system, what steps they are taking to prevent vitamin D deficiency as a public health measure. [HL9297]

**Lord Bethell:** Between October and March, the United Kingdom population does not get enough vitamin D from sunlight. Vitamin D can be found in a small number of foods. However, since it is difficult for people to get enough vitamin D from food alone, Public Health England (PHE) recommends that all adults and children over four years old (including pregnant and breastfeeding women) should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D, especially during winter. This advice is on the National Health Service website online and comes from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's 2016 report *Vitamin D and Health*.

PHE re-issued this advice in April 2020 which reminded people to consider taking vitamin D supplements, especially if they were not going outdoors during lockdown. This advice emphasised the importance of vitamin D for bone and muscle health.

We continue to consider what additional communication messages might be needed to ensure this information remains accessible to the public and health professionals as we move into the winter months.

## West Africa: France

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their response to the report by the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development cooperation*, published on 18 September, how they are working with the government of France on shared priority issues in Cameroon and Nigeria; whether they cooperate with that government on internal and regional security issues in Cameroon and Nigeria as well as those concerning Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in West Africa; and if not, what plans they have to do so. [HL9347]

**Baroness Sugg:** We cooperate closely with the French Government on our shared priorities of prosperity, peace and development in Cameroon and Nigeria. This includes working together in support of Cameroonian and Nigerian efforts to tackle the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa in the Lake Chad Basin region. For example, through our funding and operational support to the Multi-National Joint Taskforce, which seeks to coordinate the military response to the conflict.



**Written Questions**

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask the Leader of the House what guidance or training is given to Ministers on the requirements to answer written questions from Members of the House comprehensively. [[HL9633](#)]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** As Leader of the House I take very seriously the responsibility incumbent

on all Ministers to provide full, timely and comprehensive answers to Questions for Written Answers (QWAs). My office works closely with all departmental Parliamentary teams to help provide advice on what is expected of them in providing such answers.

Ministers are also reminded regularly of the importance of their obligations to the House.

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