

**Session 2019-21  
No. 140**



**Wednesday  
11 November 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
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<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
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<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
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# Written Statements

Wednesday, 11 November 2020

## National Security and Investment Bill and White Paper

[HLWS561]

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

I am today introducing the National Security and Investment Bill to update the Government's investment screening powers and strike the right balance between maintaining an open economy and giving us the tools we need to intervene in cases of serious concern. I am also publishing the Government's response to the public consultation on the "National Security and Investment" White Paper, an Impact Assessment for the Bill, and a revised draft Statement of Policy. In addition, I am launching a consultation on secondary legislation to define the sectors subject to mandatory notification.

This Government is a champion for free trade, recognising that inward investment is economically highly beneficial. Investment in UK plc boosts productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and develop skills, and will help support our economic recovery from COVID-19. Since 2010/11, over 600,000 new jobs have been created in our economy thanks to over 16,000 FDI projects. During that decade, over \$750 billion has flowed into the UK as a result of FDI. Investors value our legal system, our highly competitive tax regime, and a stable regulatory approach that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. The recently announced Office for Investment will build on the Government's proud record and ensure that the UK remains a premier investment destination as we take advantage of our new status outside the European Union as an independent country.

An open approach to international investment must, however, also include appropriate safeguards to protect our national security and the safety of our citizens. The UK and our allies face continued and broad-ranging hostile activity from foreign intelligence agencies and others, who seek to compromise our national security. When it comes to investment, we are seeing novel means to undermine the UK's national security that go beyond traditional mergers and acquisitions and also go beyond the reach of our current powers; such as structuring deals to obscure who is behind them. Such behaviour, left unchecked, can leave sensitive UK businesses vulnerable to disruption and espionage. It is crucial that the Government is able to fully combat these threats.

Our current powers to prevent hostile foreign investment in our businesses are set out in the Enterprise Act 2002. Technological, economic, and geopolitical changes across the globe over the last 20 years mean that reforms to the Government's powers to scrutinise

transactions on national security grounds are required. Currently, subject to minor exceptions, target businesses must have a UK turnover of over £70 million or meet a combined share of supply test before Government can intervene on national security grounds. This means that businesses below the £70 million threshold, including those at the very forefront of technological breakthroughs and national security-sensitive innovation, are too often beyond the scope of the present legislation. The Government is also unable to intervene in acquisitions of sensitive assets whose transfer might have national security implications.

The Government is therefore legislating to update its powers to respond to these changing threats and to bring our regime in line with that of our Five Eyes allies and other security partners.

### *More security for British businesses and people*

The National Security and Investment Bill will require notification and clearance of investments in businesses in key sectors, such as defence and artificial intelligence, to our new Investment Security Unit. A full list is provided at the end of this statement and today we are publishing a consultation paper on the definition of these sectors. This consultation will be used to refine the definitions so that they are clear, allow parties to self-assess whether they need to notify, and are narrowly focussed on the specific parts of sectors where risks are most likely to arise. This approach will ensure that the regime is targeted and proportionate, and keeps Britain firmly open for business. The Bill will bring us into line with other countries, such as the USA, whose Committee on Foreign Investment also operates a mandatory notification model that investors will be familiar with.

Other investments can also be notified to the Investment Security Unit or proactively "called in" by the Government for national security assessments. This maintains the current flexibility under the Enterprise Act 2002 so that the Government can address national security risks wherever they arise in the economy. The Bill will cover acquisitions of assets, including intellectual property such as trade secrets and software, so that the risks of such transactions can also be fully scrutinised. This combined approach will provide a proportionate defence against hostile actors targeting sensitive sectors in ever more novel and complex ways.

Transactions subject to mandatory notification will not be allowed to proceed without Government approval and any deal that is completed without approval will be automatically void in law. This approach is in line with powers under the French and Italian regimes.

The regime will be underpinned by both civil and criminal sanctions, creating effective deterrents for non-compliance with statutory obligations, in line with many of our allies' screening regimes, including France and Germany.

The new powers are not limited by turnover or share of supply thresholds, meaning acquisitions of companies of any size, in any sector, can be examined, providing the

Secretary of State reasonably suspects that the transaction has given, or may give rise to, a national security risk.

We have increased the period for “calling in” non-notified transactions which the Secretary of State reasonably suspects may raise national security concerns, to up to five years after they take place – and only those which take place from the point of Bill introduction onwards. Again, this is similar to the French, German and Italian regimes and will help to ensure that the risks posed by hostile actors seeking to complete deals in secret can be addressed. As outlined above, by notifying transactions (including after they take place) which are not covered by mandatory notification but may nonetheless be of potential national security interest, businesses and investors will be able to get a decision and achieve deal certainty.

Once a transaction has been called in and a full assessment process has been carried out, where the clear legal test is met, the Government will be able to impose remedies on transactions. This includes, in the small minority of cases where it is the only appropriate way to address the risks posed by the transaction, blocking or unwinding a deal. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government expects that the vast majority of transactions will be cleared outright, that only a small minority are likely to require conditions, and that only those transactions that present the most serious risks are likely to be blocked. Nonetheless, it is vital we have all the necessary tools available to keep this country safe and such remedies are consistent with the approach under our existing legislation.

The Business Secretary will be the single decision-maker for the new regime and will act with advice from the Investment Security Unit, policy experts in government and with full information from the interested parties, including the ability to hear evidence from the parties in person. This will ensure consistency of decisions across all sectors, that there is a single avenue of approach for business and investors through the Business Department, and that a pro-business outlook underpins the very heart of our investment screening process.

*Slicker investment routes and more certainty for businesses*

We will make any interactions with government simpler and quicker by providing clearance to most transactions within 30 working days, with notifiable investments submitted through a new digital portal. Timelines for assessments will be set out in law and not set by the Government on a case-by-case basis as at present under the Enterprise Act 2002, which can take many months to receive clearance.

The digital portal will be available upon commencement of the new regime. In the meantime, businesses and investors can contact the Government to discuss potential transactions of interest by email at: [investment.screening@beis.gov.uk](mailto:investment.screening@beis.gov.uk).

The National Security and Investment Bill requires notified transactions to be either cleared or “called in” within 30 working days of the notification being given and accepted. If a transaction is cleared, then there is no further opportunity after this point for the Government to intervene (unless false or misleading information was provided), so businesses and investors can achieve maximum certainty.

Once a transaction has been “called in”, the Government will then have 30 working days, extendable – in cases where the specific legal test is met – by a further 45 working days, to carry out a full assessment of the transaction. That may include gathering further information about the deal, identifying the nature and extent of the risks it may pose, and working with the parties to explore potential remedies.

These statutory timescales will enable business and investors to plan their affairs with clarity about when they can expect decisions and give them the confidence they need to do business in the UK. Again, any transaction cleared following such an assessment cannot be re-examined by the Government at a later date (unless false or misleading information was provided) and the outcome of all cases requiring the imposition of final remedies must be published by the Business Secretary.

This, alongside the publication of an annual report as required by the Bill, reflects the Government’s commitment to providing the greatest level of transparency possible within the confines of a national security regime. Businesses, investors, and their advisers will be able to use this information to attain greater certainty about their own activities and the types of prospective transactions which should be notified.

*A regime in line with our allies*

We are not acting in isolation. Many of our closest allies, including our Five Eyes partners and France, Germany, and Japan, have similarly reformed their powers in this area over the last few years.

Like us, the United States has also recently introduced mandatory notification requirements in specific parts of the economy to respond to the changing threats. In July, the Australian Government also released draft legislation requiring foreign investors to seek approval to acquire a direct interest in sensitive national security businesses. We will continue to work with like-minded countries to address the shared risks that we face, including through the vector of investment.

The UK’s proportionate updates build on the best practice established around the world by like-minded countries and deliver a balanced regime that provides the Government with the flexible powers it needs while keeping our country firmly open to investment.

The Government has been clear for a number of years about its intention to introduce legislation in the area of national security and investment. As we re-build from COVID-19 where sensitive British businesses may be vulnerable, we must go further and ensure that the

Government can intervene in any deal across the economy that raises risks.

In summary, the Government believes that the final package of reforms introduced to Parliament in the National Security and Investment Bill today strikes the right balance between maintaining the openness and attractiveness of the UK as a destination for inward investment, while also providing the Government with the appropriate powers it needs to protect the country.

I will lay both the Government Response to the White Paper consultation and the accompanying Bill before Parliament. I will place copies of the Impact Assessment, the draft Statement of Policy, and the consultation on secondary legislation to define the sectors subject to mandatory notification, in the libraries of the House.

*List of sectors with activities to be covered by mandatory notification*

- i) Advanced Materials
- ii) Advanced Robotics

- iii) Artificial Intelligence
- iv) Civil Nuclear
- v) Communications
- vi) Computing Hardware
- vii) Critical Suppliers to Government
- viii) Critical Suppliers to the Emergency Services
- ix) Cryptographic Authentication
- x) Data Infrastructure
- xi) Defence
- xii) Energy
- xiii) Engineering Biology
- xiv) Military and Dual Use
- xv) Quantum Technologies
- xvi) Satellite and Space Technologies
- xvii) Transport.

## Written Answers

Wednesday, 11 November 2020

### Apprentices: Disadvantaged

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that apprenticeship schemes are available to young people from lower income backgrounds. [HL9749]

**Baroness Berridge:** Apprenticeships are more important than ever in helping young people, including those from lower income backgrounds, develop the skills they need following the COVID-19 outbreak.

To help employers offer new apprenticeships, they can claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25 before 31 January 2021, and £1,500 for new apprentices aged 25 and over. Employers can use this funding to help meet any of the costs associated with supporting a new apprentice in the workplace, including uniforms, travel or contributing towards the cost of an apprentice's wages.

During recovery, traineeships will provide the extra support required by vulnerable young people for them to progress into an apprenticeship or other work. We are tripling the scale of traineeships, providing an additional 30,000 places in the 2020/21 academic year, to ensure that more young people have access to high-quality training. To encourage employers to create new traineeship work placements we've also introduced incentive payments of £1000 per learner for the 2020/21 academic year.

Our Apprenticeships Support and Knowledge programme supports schools across England by providing resources to teachers to help them inform and inspire young people and introduce them to the range of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities, particularly in disadvantaged areas and among under-represented groups.

### Aviation: Air Pollution

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the State of Global Air Report 2020, published by the Health Effects Institute in October, in particular its finding that air pollution contributed to nearly 500,000 deaths among infants in their first month of life in 2019. [HL9741]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We welcome the Health Effects Institute's 'State of Global Air' report highlighting the issue of air quality and its impact on health. The World Health Organization estimates that household air pollution from cooking with traditional solid fuels contributes to 3-4 million premature deaths every year, which is more than malaria and tuberculosis

combined. Research has also shown that indoor air pollution exacerbates the impact of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19.

Women and children, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries, are disproportionately affected by indoor air pollution. The Government has made a commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in the developing world by 2030. This includes delivering quality essential health services and promoting healthier lives and environments.

Our International Climate Finance includes up to £1 billion for the Ayrton Fund, which includes support for research, development and demonstration of new clean energy technologies with the potential to improve air quality, health outcomes, and reduce carbon emissions in developing countries. The £38 million FCDO-funded Modern Energy Cooking Services research programme is working towards universal access to clean and affordable cooking technologies. Such technologies have the potential to displace harmful cooking practices used by almost 3 billion people in the developing world, helping to eliminate indoor air pollution and the preventable deaths it causes.

### AWE

Asked by *Lord Walney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Baroness Goldie on 2 November (HLWS537), what assessment they have made of the impact of the decision for AWE plc to "become an Arms-Length Body wholly owned by the MOD" on the timetable for their commitment to nuclear warhead renewal. [HL9969]

**Baroness Goldie:** The change in the Atomic Weapons Establishment operating model will enhance the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) agility to manage the UK's nuclear deterrent and improve the delivery of core defence objectives, including the replacement warhead.

The change will also enable the MOD to invest in the development of the workforce, infrastructure and capabilities needed for the replacement warhead programme. I am withholding further information on the replacement warhead timetable for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

### Balkans: Training

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution, if any, they have made to skills training for young people in the Western Balkans in response to continuing youth migration. [HL9795]

**Baroness Sugg:** Through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, the Government is spending over £10m over three years on the projects that provide skills training for young people in the Western Balkans. This includes the "21st Century Schools" project which delivers digital

skills, critical thinking and problem solving training for up to 1 million young people across all six Western Balkan countries to provide them with better opportunities for employment in the region in the future.

In North Macedonia, one project provides training to young people in digital skills and another is providing skills training in the textiles and construction industries. Another project in Kosovo, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina delivers journalism training and internships in media outlets to young people.

### **Batteries: Waste Disposal**

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the number and percentage of total batteries that are discarded into general waste each year, and (2) how many fires are caused in waste disposal facilities each year by discarded batteries; what assessment they have made of the level of environmental contamination caused by discarded batteries; and what plans they have to reduce any such contamination. [HL9703]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Government has not made an estimate of the number of batteries that are discarded into general waste each year. Nor do we hold information on the number of fires in waste disposal facilities caused by discarded batteries.

A UK-wide producer responsibility scheme is in place for batteries, placing certain responsibilities on producers for their goods, including at end-of-life.

As part of the Resources and Waste Strategy, published in December 2018, we committed to review the four existing producer responsibility schemes, including the requirements applying to batteries. That review is underway, and will consider the arrangements applying to the disposal and treatment of waste portable batteries. Similarly, the arrangements applying to the disposal and treatment of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) are also under review, with such equipment often containing batteries.

### **Business and Unemployment: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of job loss estimates reported by the New Economics Forum on 21 October; and what plans they have to increase the wage subsidy for businesses accessing COVID-19 economic support. [HL9752]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government is committed to ensuring workers across all regions are supported through this difficult time. Since the initial estimates were published by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) on 21 October, the Government has announced further revisions to the Job Support Scheme. The Job Support Scheme Open is at the heart of the Government's efforts to protect viable jobs in businesses experiencing reduced

demand, which was the focus of the New Economics Foundation's research. The Government has increased the generosity of the scheme, ensuring that more jobs are protected.

Since the 21 October NEF publication, the Government has reduced the minimum hours that must be worked by employees to 20% from 33% and increased the wage subsidy provided by the Government from 33% to 61.67% of unworked time, up to a maximum monthly contribution of £1541.75. Employers must now pay for 5% of unworked time, down from 33%, up to a monthly cap of £125. This will ensure workers receive at least 73% of their salary while on the scheme, up to a salary limit of £3,125.

The New Economics Foundation itself has since said that they "welcome the improvements" the Government have made to the scheme.

### **Clean Growth Fund**

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications have been submitted to the Clean Growth Fund; and how many of those applications were from Northern Ireland. [HL9726]

**Lord Callanan:** The Clean Growth Fund considers applications from right across the UK, including Northern Ireland. It will invest in UK companies and create a diverse portfolio spanning the breadth of the Clean Growth sector.

This is a commercially run Fund, managed by Clean Growth Investment Management. Her Majesty's Government is not involved in investment decisions.

Since the Fund was launched in May 2020, the Fund Manager has received 449 enquiries to date. Of these, there have been a minimum of three expressions of interest from companies based in Northern Ireland. This is a minimum as not all expressions of interest include geographical data.

### **Climate Change Convention**

*Asked by Baroness Boycott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what will be the hospitality arrangements for COP26; and what plans they have to publish the procurement process for those arrangements in full. [HL9710]

**Lord Callanan:** Plans for hospitality for the Event are still under consideration and we will be working closely with all venues to deliver the facilities and requirements needed. The plans will be published in line with Public Sector Procurement guidelines

*Asked by Baroness Boycott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what budget has been allocated to public engagement campaigns to change behaviours before COP26; what organisations

they will partner with to deliver any such campaigns; and when any such public engagement campaigns will be announced. [HL9711]

**Lord Callanan:** Achieving our net zero target must be a shared endeavour between governments, businesses and individuals, and we must continue to engage the public on this challenge. In preparation for COP26, the Cabinet Office set up a dedicated engagement team that will facilitate engagement with businesses, wider civil society and youth, and cities and regions on COP26. This will ensure that the UK brings along all of society in the global transition to a net-zero economy and in the delivery of an ambitious and inclusive COP26 summit. Budget for a public engagement campaign is currently going through the government approval process and is yet to be confirmed. We will continue to engage the public as we develop our plans for reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

*Asked by Baroness Boycott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government with how many governments they have started pre-negotiations in advance of COP26. [HL9712]

**Lord Callanan:** The UK is committed to agreeing a negotiated outcome at COP26 that accelerates climate action and leaves no issue behind. Our approach is aligned with the UNFCCC process: formal negotiations have been postponed to 2021 but we are engaging broadly and facilitating exchanges of views so that progress can be made.

As part of the UK's transparent and inclusive approach to the COP26 presidency, Ministers and senior officials across government have directly engaged with over 100 governments; and all countries have been engaged through our FCO network and UN Missions. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has been at the heart of that, playing a leading role in a number of multilateral climate change fora and engaging bilaterally with over 40 countries to discuss matters relating to COP26. As an example of the regular engagement with countries, in September, the UK, alongside current Presidency Chile and the Chairs of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, conducted consultations with all negotiating groups on the way forward to COP26.

We look forward to the UNFCCC Climate Change Dialogues 23 November - 4 December as an opportunity for further exchanges of views and to make progress on key issues ahead of the Ambition Summit that we're hosting on 12 December and on the pathway to COP26 next year.

*Asked by Baroness Boycott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their parliamentary engagement strategy for COP26. [HL9713]

**Lord Callanan:** The COP President Designate is planning to hold a COP26 briefing session for parliamentarians to update them on our plans and will provide further details in due course.

## Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure diversity in the membership of their cross-Government commission to examine racial inequality, including in relation to (1) geographic, and (2) ethnic, origin. [HL8909]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities was established by the Prime Minister in July of this year and is comprised of ten talented and diverse commissioners, outlined below, who each bring a wealth of experience from across a range of important sectors and will set a positive agenda for change.

Its work will continue to be inclusive, undertaking research and inviting submissions from those who wish to provide evidence. The Commission will shortly be setting out a public call for evidence, details of which will be announced in due course.

- Dr Tony Sewell CBE (Chair), Head of charity Generating Genius
- Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE, Space Scientist and Educator. Experienced broadcaster including co-presenter of BBC's 'The Sky at Night'
- Keith Fraser, Chair of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and former police superintendent
- Dr Samir Shah CBE, CEO of Juniper TV, former BBC journalist and former chair of the race relations think tank, The Runnymede Trust
- Lord Ajay Kakkar, Professor of Surgery at University College London, Director of the Thrombosis Research Institute, chair of the Judicial Appointments Commission, chair of the King's Fund
- Dr Dambisa Moyo, internationally renowned economist and author, board member of Chevron Corporation and the 3M Company
- Martyn Oliver, Chief Executive Officer of Outwood Grange Academies Trust, one of the largest multi-academy trusts operating in the North and Midlands
- Naureen Khalid, experienced school governor and co-founder of the dedicated online national school governor forum, UkGovChat
- Aftab Chughtai MBE, Businessman, co-founder of the campaign group Muslims for Britain, member of the Grenfell Tower Taskforce and Chair of West Midlands Police Independent Advisory Group
- Mercy Muroki, Senior Policy Researcher, Commentator, and Columnist.



## Coronavirus: International Cooperation

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 30 October (HL9430), what is the breakdown of their financial contribution to the work of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (1) by recipient, and (2) by purpose. [HL9851]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK has contributed a total of up to £813 million to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. This includes up to £250 million of UK Aid to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an organisation that is supporting the development and manufacturing scale-up of promising COVID-19 vaccines for global use. The UK has committed up to £548 million for the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, which will support access to COVID-19 vaccines for 92 developing countries by contributing to the supply of 1 billion doses in 2021 (subject to vaccines successfully securing stringent regulatory approvals). The UK has also committed £71 million of non-ODA funds to participate in the COVAX Facility for self-financing countries to secure options to vaccines for UK domestic use.

Up to £40 million has been contributed to the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator to support the rapid development of, and access to, treatments for COVID-19. Up to £23 million has been committed to the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FINN) to drive innovation in the development and delivery of tests to combat major diseases affecting the poorest populations, including COVID-19.

## Coronavirus: Older People

*Asked by Lord Farmer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 patients admitted to hospital aged 80 or over received ICU treatment; and how many of those patients survived. [HL9717]

*Asked by Lord Farmer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 patients admitted to hospital aged 80 or over died of the disease without receiving ICU treatment before being discharged. [HL9718]

**Lord Bethell:** The data is not available in the format requested.

## Energy Supply

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what infrastructure is required to transfer energy from battery storage to the National Grid; and whether pylons form part of that infrastructure. [HL9731]

**Lord Callanan:** A number of methods can be used to transfer energy from battery storage facilities to transmission and distribution systems. The choice of which method to use (undergrounding or overgrounding) depends on a range of factors, including technical assessments, environmental impacts and costs.

Battery storage is often connected at the distribution network rather than national grid transmission level, and as it is often located close to existing grid supply points requirements for additional pylons are reduced. Any proposals for the use of pylons will be subject to careful consideration through the planning regime, taking account of the views of local people and other relevant stakeholders.

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether energy stored in batteries for the National Grid is used to provide energy to communities located near to such batteries. [HL9732]

**Lord Callanan:** Batteries can provide a range of services to the electricity system, such as storing electricity from renewable generation during periods of low demand and releasing electricity when prices are high, as well as helping to reduce the cost of balancing the system. They can provide services at both local (community) and national levels.

Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) also operate local markets for flexibility services. These provide additional opportunities for batteries to support the decarbonisation of, and provide energy to, their local communities.

## EU Enlargement

*Asked by The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any EU plans for future enlargement. [HL9792]

**Baroness Sugg:** The European Union adopted new methodology on Enlargement in February 2020, designed to offer incentives for progress and to create disincentives for backsliding on the key reforms candidate countries are required to implement. As and when candidate countries meet the requirements set by the EU for accession, it will be for EU members at the time to decide whether to grant membership.

## Forests

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to fund natural forest regeneration (1) to replace conifer plantations, and (2) for currently non-forested sites. [HL9708]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Countryside Stewardship Woodland Improvement Grant and the HS2

Woodland Fund currently provide support for the natural regeneration of native species on plantations, including conifer plantations, on ancient woodland sites.

Our recent consultation on the England Tree Strategy referred to making more use of natural regeneration as part of our approach to diversifying our treescapes and woodlands and to harnessing the power of natural processes such as natural colonisation to establish woodlands where appropriate. We will be considering the responses received during the consultation in due course. In parallel, we are considering how the Nature for Climate Fund might support natural colonisation.

### Free School Meals: Disadvantaged

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide free school meals during school holidays for vulnerable children who attend school in local authority areas where such meals are not provided. [HL9746]

**Baroness Berridge:** Free school meal provision has supported children to access a healthy, nutritious meal to learn, concentrate and achieve while they are at school, for more than a century. It is ingrained in the fabric of everyday school life. Now that our schools are fully open, this support has returned as intended.

We recognise the current challenges that families face and, building on the significant support given to the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak, we have announced a new £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme, which will be run by councils in England.

The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and it will cover the period to the end of March 2021. Local authorities will receive the funding at the beginning of December 2020.

It will allow councils to directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals, as well as provide food for children who need it over the holidays. Local councils understand which groups need support, and are best placed to ensure appropriate holiday support is provided, which is why they will distribute the funds, rather than schools, who will continue providing meals for disadvantaged children during term-time.

In addition to this scheme, we will also be expanding the Holiday Activities and Food programme across England next year, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018. It will cover Easter, summer and Christmas in 2021, and will cost up to £220 million. It will be available to children in every local authority in England and will build on previous programmes, including this summer's programme, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

### House of Lords: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what consideration the House of Lords Commission has given to the operation of the House in the event of (1) London entering Tier 3 of the COVID-19 restrictions, and (2) a 'circuit-breaker' lockdown across England lasting two or more weeks to address the pandemic. [HL9775]

**Lord McFall of Alcluth:** The House of Lords Commission met on Monday 2 November to consider the implications of the restrictions announced by the Prime Minister on 31 October. On Tuesday 3 November the Lord Speaker, together with the other members of the Commission, wrote to all members of the House to set out the decisions taken at that meeting.

### Immigration: Hong Kong

*Asked by Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, under the new arrangements coming into force in January 2021, citizens of Hong Kong who are not British National (Overseas) passport holders will need to obtain a visa (1) in advance of arrival to enter the UK, or (2) at the port of entry. [HL9778]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The bespoke new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa route recognises our historic and moral commitment to BN(O) citizens in Hong Kong, giving them the option to live in the UK if they decide that is an appropriate choice for them.

Consistent with the wider Immigration Rules, individuals in Hong Kong who do not hold BN(O) status or who are not dependents from the same household as a BN(O) will be able to apply under the new Points-Based System to come to live, work or study in the UK, provided they meet the necessary requirements. Those wishing to come to the UK under the new Points-Based-System will need to apply for a visa in advance of travel.

As with BN(O)s, citizens of Hong Kong are able to travel to the UK visa free for visit purposes for up to six months.

### Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many spot checks and inspections of employer premises have been conducted by the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that they are COVID-19 secure in each of the past six months for which figures are available. [HL9734]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** From the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has conducted 34310 spot checks and inspections of employer premises to ensure they are COVID-19 secure.

*Table 1 - Breakdown of spot checks and inspections by month:*

<i>Calendar Month - 2020</i>	<i>Spot checks and inspections</i>
May	89
June	2072
July	4513
August	5916
September	8960
1 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> October	12760
Total	34310

Note: The data is taken from HSE's live operational database. It represents the picture as at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and is subject to change, e.g. as inspection data is uploaded.

### **Insolvency: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to paragraph 7.7 of the Explanatory Memorandum to the Corporate Insolvency and Governance (Coronavirus) (Extension of the Relevant Period) Regulations 2020, when will (1) the permanent procedural moratorium rules be laid before Parliament under the Corporate and Insolvency Governance Act 2020, and (2) the consultation with the Insolvency Rules Committee regarding the permanent rules covering England and Wales commence. [HL9733]

**Lord Callanan:** Work on amendments to the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016 to provide permanent procedural rules for the moratorium introduced by the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 is ongoing and the relevant regulations will be laid when Parliamentary time allows. The Government is aware that the current temporary provision expires on 30 March 2021 (subject to any extensions) and will have regard to that fact for the purpose of preparing and laying the permanent rules.

The Government intends that consultation with the Insolvency Rules Committee regarding these rules, as required by law, will commence in November 2020.

Separate rules will be required for Scotland and, since this area is partially devolved, the timing of those rules will be subject to further discussions with the Scottish Government.

### **Internet: Children**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the filters adopted by mobile network operators based on British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) guidelines, and regulated

by the BBFC, could be supported and promoted as a best practice solution to protect children from adult content online. [HL10058]

**Baroness Barran:** Protecting children is at the heart of our online harms agenda, and wider government priorities. The government has worked hard to ensure content is filtered in public places where children are likely to be, as well as at home.

The BBFC provides an independent framework for mobile network operators and defines content that is unsuitable for customers under the age of 18 based on their Classification Guidelines for film and video. Like current device level filters, and the filters used by every school in the country, filter software is provided to Internet Service Providers by well-established web filtering companies. There are no plans to require other providers of family friendly filters to use the BBFC's framework.

Our forthcoming online harms proposals will deliver a higher level of protection for children than for the typical adult user. We expect companies to use a proportionate range of tools, including age assurance and age verification technologies, to prevent children accessing age-inappropriate adult content and to protect them from other harms.

### **Interpol**

*Asked by Lord Wills*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any misuse of Interpol procedures for political purposes by member countries. [HL9798]

*Asked by Lord Wills*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the misuse of Interpol procedures for political purposes on the exposure of wrongdoing. [HL9801]

*Asked by Lord Wills*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of member states who have sought to misuse Interpol procedures for political purposes. [HL9802]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Interpol is a crucial organisation for the UK enabling police to police cooperation between 194 member countries.

Any misuse of Interpol is taken very seriously by the government. The Home Office continues to work with Interpol and the National Crime Agency (NCA), which acts as the UK's National Central Bureau for Interpol, on this matter and strongly supports Interpol's efforts to ensure systems are in place that protect individuals' human rights.

Article 3 of Interpol's Constitution forbids the organisation from undertaking any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.

## Japanese Knotweed

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to advance the use of biological control of Japanese knotweed. [HL9707]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** We continue to work closely with the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) on researching and developing biological control methods for Japanese knotweed. Following extensive trials, we approved the release of the psyllid – *Aphalara itadori* in England to tackle Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

We are also funding research into the fungal leaf-spot *Mycosphaerella polygona-cuspidatii*, which has potential as a mycoherbicide for Japanese Knotweed.

## Labour Market: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Learning and Work Institute Crisis in the Capital, published on 27 October; and what steps they are taking to create new jobs in London. [HL9750]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government is working closely with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Councils to support the London Recovery Plan, mapping employment and skills support to provide a coordinated skills and employment support package across the capital. DWP is also working with the Mayor's Construction Academy to promote the opportunities in this sector as well as supporting GLA initiatives in the creative sector.

The Flexible Support Fund is available to support the unemployed to get back into work and DWP are working with individual London Boroughs using partnership grants to support initiatives to get people back into work.

We will review the report from the Learning and Work Institute and consider its findings.

Further to this through this Government's Plan for Jobs, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer set out a plan to support jobs focussing on skills and young people. This includes:

- A new £2bn Kickstart Scheme to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people aged 16 to 24 claiming Universal Credit across England. Funding is available for six-month job placements will cover 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week – and employers will be able to top this wage up. There is no cap on the number of places available.
- Recruiting 13,500 work coaches to more than double the number of work coaches across the country - as well as putting in place a package of support to ensure young

people have the skills and training to go on to high quality, secure and fulfilling employment.

- A new payment of £2,000 to employers in London and across England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. Employers can start claiming for payments from 1 September.
- £111m is being invested to triple the scale of traineeships: with three times more funding available to providers in 2020-21 to support 30,000 new places. We have also introduced – for the first time - payments of £1,000 per trainee for employers who offer new or additional work placements (up to 10 trainees).
- Apprenticeship opportunities will also be increased, with more funding for SMEs taking on apprentices, and greater flexibility in how their training is structured – especially in sectors such as construction and creative industries where there are more varied employment patterns.
- Through the Government's Local Growth Fund, the London Local Enterprise Action Partnership will deliver approximately 11,649 jobs and apprenticeships in London through the lifetime of the programme (15-21). The Fund will also help upskill 27,106 learners in London.

## Low Pay: Rural Areas

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address (1) low pay among those living in rural areas, and (2) the gap in average earnings between those living in rural and urban areas. [HL9725]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** There is no gap in median earnings between those living in rural and urban areas. Indeed, on a residence basis, in 2019 median gross annual earnings of £24,300 in predominantly rural areas were on a par with those in predominantly urban areas excluding London, which were £24,200.

Government policy is based on economic prosperity and helping people out of poverty wherever they live. The National Living Wage was increased by 6.2% to £8.72 per hour from 1 April 2020, above inflation and average earnings. Rates for younger workers were also increased. These increases were estimated to raise the pay of over 2 million workers across the UK.

Universal Credit promotes work as an effective route out of poverty. The Government has made significant investment to improve Universal Credit through the reduction in the taper rate from 65% to 63% in 2017, and an extra £1.7 billion a year put into Work Allowances by 2023/24, increasing them by £1,000 a year for working parents and disabled claimants from April 2019. This has put an extra £630 a year in the pockets of 2.4 million of the lowest paid households.

## Lung Diseases: Health Services

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to meet Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation to discuss ways in which respiratory care in the NHS can be improved. [HL9290]

**Lord Bethell:** Representatives from Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation are closely involved in the work on respiratory care within NHS England and NHS Improvement. Alison Cook, Director of External Affairs, Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership, co-chairs the National Delivery Board for Respiratory Disease and are represented on our expert advisory and working groups. In addition, there are meetings every two weeks to update on communications and relevant projects.

## Performing Arts and Theatres: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate that stage 5 of their plan to re-open live performance venues will begin. [HL9670]

**Baroness Barran:** From Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December, new national restrictions will be in force in England to control the spread of coronavirus. During this period, performing arts venues can continue to operate under Stages 1 and 2 of the performing arts roadmap. This means performing arts professionals may continue to rehearse and train, and perform for broadcast or recording purposes. Other than for this purpose, theatres, concert halls and entertainment venues must close.

We have consistently stated that further reopening would be dependent on the public health context at the time. We will continue to work with the sector and have convened a Venues Steering Group which includes representatives from leading sector organisations as well as Public Health England and other experts to develop an action plan for maximising activity under Stages 3 and 4 when it is permitted and for how we safely proceed to stage 5.

DCMS will continue to work with the sector to establish an appropriate pilot process for testing the return to stage 5 activity when appropriate. We are committed to exploring new technologies to minimise these risks, which is why in parallel the government is exploring innovative ways to keep these sectors open.

## Prosthetics: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the NHS England review of prosthetic services has been completed; and if so, when the findings of this review will be published. [HL9284]

**Lord Bethell:** The review of prosthetic services was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The review has now been restarted with the first meeting held at the beginning of October 2020. We expect that the revised service specification will be available for public consultation in December this year with the aim of starting implementation of a revised service model from April 2021.

## Social Services: Vacancies

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Skills for Care The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, published in October; and what steps they are taking to fill social care job vacancies. [HL9586]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department has noted the findings of this report. The Department funds Skills for Care, as a key delivery partner, to support the development of skills in the adult social care sector and address issues related to recruitment, retention, development and wellbeing of staff.

In order to attract more people to work in the sector we ran a national recruitment campaign across broadcast, digital and social media highlighting the vital work social care workers do, we are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers, and we have launched an online recruitment tool, Join Social Care, to simplify and fast track the recruitment process. We are continuing to offer free rapid online induction training through Skills for Care, to help induct and train redeployees, new starters, existing staff and new volunteers in social care services.

## Transport: Greater London

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of transport emissions in London in the each of the last three months, compared with levels in the same months of 2019; and what assessment they have made of the impact of those emissions on health. [HL9865]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Mayor of London is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to reflect this.

The Mayor carries out monitoring of air quality in London and London has its own air quality monitoring network (the London Air Quality Network) which is run by Imperial College and contains more detailed monitoring than any carried out at a national level.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) national air quality monitoring network provides continuous measurements of a range of pollutants across the UK. This network includes five

roadside sites in London and the data is made available online on Defra's UK-Air website.

We know that air pollution is a major public health risk and poses the single greatest environmental risk to human health, which my Department is addressing through its Clean Air Strategy and the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

Defra have not carried out any specific assessment on the health impacts of air quality in London over the last 3 months.

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the deaths in the English Channel on 27 October, what plans they have to urgently arrange a safe legal route for refugees to enter the United Kingdom. [HL9742]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** This week's tragic event highlights the danger to life from channel crossings and the need to stop callous criminals exploiting vulnerable people.

Safe and legal routes are a core part of our proposed reforms to the asylum system to ensure it is both firm and fair. As Baroness Williams has previously made clear in Lords, as an integral part of that work the Government will conduct a review of safe and legal routes to the UK for asylum seekers, refugees and their families. This government intends to bring forward legislation next year that will deliver some of our much-needed reforms.

The UK already provides safe and legal routes for people to join family members in the UK through existing Immigration Rules and have a proud record of providing safety to those who need it through our world-leading resettlement schemes.

### Water: Standards

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps (1) they, and (2) the Environment Agency, are taking to ensure that surface water bodies in England meet a 'good' standard under the Water Framework Directive. [HL9723]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Environment Agency (EA) and Defra work together closely on addressing the pressures that prevent water bodies in England from meeting 'good' status.

Through regulation, enforcement, financial incentives and educational schemes, we are improving poor farming practices which lead to water pollution. We are also working with water companies to tackle head-on, sewage discharge from storm overflows. A new Taskforce has been set up between Defra, the EA, Ofwat and water companies which will meet regularly and set out clear proposals to reduce the frequency and volumes of sewage discharges.

In 2019 the EA issued, monitored and enforced 4,263 water quality permits, protecting water quality. In the last five years the EA has undertaken 44 prosecutions against water companies, securing fines of £34 million. Since 2008 the EA made changes to over 300 abstraction licences that have returned 47 billion litres of water a year to the environment, improving river levels and flows.

Water improvement is also supported by significant funding from water companies, required in their statutory duties. In the current Price Review period (2020-25) they have committed £4.6 billion towards environmental improvements.

### Women's Business Council

*Asked by Baroness Mone*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when an update report from the Women's Business Council will be published; and whether the work of the Council will address issues regarding female entrepreneurship in addition to its work on the gender pay gap. [HL9145]

**Baroness Berridge:** During the Coronavirus pandemic, the work of the Women's Business Council, has been paused. This was to enable the Government to focus on managing the crisis. In light of these exceptional circumstances, there are no plans for an annual report from the Council in 2020.

As the Government now moves to introduce a raft of business recovery measures, I have been speaking to a wide range of individuals, including female entrepreneurs and the Chair of the Women's Business Council. I have been keen to get their insight into, and their support on, how best to improve opportunities for women in the world of work, as well as how to stimulate increased female entrepreneurship right across the country. Unlocking women's potential is a key priority following the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and I remain committed to helping more women to start and expand their own businesses.

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