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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
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<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
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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
<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

*Tuesday, 17 November 2020*

## Defence Estate Optimisation Update

[HLWS576]

**Baroness Goldie:** My hon Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continues to deliver on its 25-year strategy to modernise its estate.

As part of this work we wish to confirm programme changes to individual sites: The disposal of DSG Colchester can be brought forward one year to 2021; the disposal of Middlewick Ranges also in Colchester will however be delayed by one year to 2022; the disposal of Fort Blockhouse 1 in Gosport will be delayed by at least three years to not before 2023; and the disposal of the remainder of the Southwick Park site in Fareham will be delayed to 2031. These delays are to meet military requirements.

We are also exchanging two parcels of land as part of the Forthside Stirling disposal to create a more sensible proposition for future development and will be enclaving Napier Lines at Woolwich Barracks as the long-term home for The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery. The disposal of the remainder of both sites will continue as planned.

There is the potential for adjustment to other site disposal dates as we continue to evaluate the movement of personnel and refine the portfolio timeline to meet military capability requirements. Any changes will be reflected in updates to the Defence Disposal Database on the Gov.uk website. This maintains a complete list of all MOD disposals including those that are part of Defence Estate Optimisation. It is routinely updated throughout the year to provide the most accurate and current information as the Department continues to rationalise and enhance its estate.

The MOD remains committed to making the right decisions to support Defence capabilities and offer best value for money for the taxpayer, balanced with our commitment to working with communities over the future use of sites released for disposal as part of the Portfolio.

## HS2 Land and Property Review

[HLWS575]

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

High Speed Two (HS2) is at the heart of our plans to build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic, creating thousands of skilled jobs, boosting connectivity between our towns and cities and helping to rebalance opportunity across the country for years to come.

However, as part of that commitment to build back better, it is crucial that we deliver HS2 in a way that is as considerate as possible of those disrupted by the project, who may face losing their homes and relocating their businesses.

In confirming HS2 would go ahead in February 2020, the Prime Minister also committed to a step change in HS2 Ltd's performance and to drive improvements in transparency, accountability and value to the taxpayer. This included a renewed focus on placing people - the communities and individuals who will be impacted by HS2 - at the heart of everything the Government does.

So following my appointment as the Minister for HS2, I initiated a review of the HS2 land and property acquisition programme, to ensure that those most directly affected were placed at its heart.

The review examined HS2 Ltd's operational acquisition processes and, where the evidence demonstrated it, associated wider-government policies. It focussed on four areas:

- How to deliver a step change in community engagement on the land and property acquisition programme;
- How to protect the interests of those impacted;
- How to improve process efficiency and delivery by HS2 Ltd; and
- And how to drive a better tone, showing conspicuous respect, courtesy and understanding.

Today, I am pleased to publish the findings of this review. Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

The Government is grateful for the contributions made by Members of the House and their constituents, external stakeholders, the HS2 Residents' Commissioner and the HS2 Construction Commissioner. The review also considered lessons from Phase One of HS2 and examined compensation regimes employed on other UK infrastructure projects and abroad.

The review generated a number of proposals that are designed to speed up property valuations and disturbance payments, settle cases and disputes more quickly and build on the improvements HS2 Ltd have been introducing to engage more effectively with people.

The focus now will be on how the Government and HS2 Ltd turn these proposals into long-lasting changes that not only improve the delivery of HS2, but also the experience and well-being of individuals, businesses and communities impacted by them.

The Government wants to ensure that those living near the route receive the right support at all stages of the project. Importantly, it remains committed to ensuring that those affected are properly compensated and treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

HS2 Review [201013 HS2 Land and Property Review.PDF]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-11-17/HLWS575/>

## Independent Reporting Commission: Third Substantive Report

[HLWS577]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement: I have received the third substantive report from the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC).

The IRC emanated from the Fresh Start Agreement of November 2015. The Agreement set out the Northern Ireland Executive's commitments around tackling paramilitary activity and associated criminality. This work continues to be taken forward through a Northern Ireland Executive Action Plan which contains 43 recommendations.

This third substantive report builds on the work already undertaken by the Commissioners. The inclusion of a commitment to continue to tackle paramilitarism in the New Decade New Approach Agreement, in January 2020, highlights the ongoing importance of this issue, but the Commission's report again reminds us of the challenging work still to be done.

I would like to thank the Commissioners for their work, particularly in delivering this year's report in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic.

## Social Housing White Paper

[HLWS578]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today announcing the publication of the Social Housing White Paper. This White Paper will bring transformational change for social housing residents and the new approach and regulatory changes we set out will make a measurable difference to their lived experiences.

A home should always be more than just four walls and a roof. This country has a long tradition of providing homes for those most in need, going back many centuries. Today, the social housing sector provides homes to four million households. Many landlords provide a good service to their residents. They provide a decent, safe home. They support thriving neighbourhoods and communities. They are open with their residents, listen to them and treat them with respect. But this is not true of all landlords.

The tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 raised critical questions for everyone involved in social housing. The Chair of the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, identified broader questions on social housing policy raised through the consultation on the Inquiry terms of reference. It was agreed that these

broader questions should not be within the scope of the Inquiry itself.

Through the 2018 social housing Green Paper we sought views on a wide range of potential changes by talking to residents across the country as well as launching a Call for Evidence about how social housing is regulated. Many residents reported positive experiences, but others did not. We heard concerns about safety, and about complaints being handled slowly or poorly; that residents were not listened to or not treated with basic courtesy and respect. This is why today I am delivering on our manifesto commitment and publishing the Social Housing White Paper: The Charter for Social Housing Residents.

Alongside the changes we are making to improve building safety, our package of measures will make a real change to residents. It will ensure that there will be action for those landlords whose services fall below expectations so that they can be brought up to the level of those that we know already deliver a good service.

### *Summary of proposals*

The White Paper establishes a new Charter for social housing residents, setting out what every social resident should be able to expect of their landlord:

- 1) To be safe in their home. We will reinforce the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer regulation objective to include safety explicitly. We will legislate to place an obligation on landlords to identify a nominated person responsible for ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements. We will consult on how we apply the stronger legal requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the private rented sector to the social rented sector, followed by a consultation on how to ensure social tenants are protected from poor electrical safety. We will support residents to have a stronger voice on safety matters and promote best practice on safety engagement with landlords.
- 2) To know how their landlord is performing. We will establish tenant satisfaction measures for social landlords to report against on issues that matter to tenants. We will make sure landlords are reporting clearly on how they spend their income and introduce a new access to information scheme for housing association tenants. And, we will require landlords to identify a senior person in their organisation who is clearly identified as responsible for ensuring they comply with consumer standards.
- 3) To have their complaints dealt with promptly and fairly. We will build on the changes we have already implemented with the Housing Ombudsman Service to improve its performance and reduce its decision times, ensuring swift and effective resolution of complaints. We will raise awareness of how residents can make and escalate complaints. We will expect social landlords to take greater responsibility for upskilling their staff to serve residents better when they make a complaint or raise an issue.

4) To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator for tenants. We will transform social housing regulation by creating a new, proactive consumer regulation regime for social housing, delivering robust oversight of all social landlords. This means establishing a new arm of the Regulator of Social Housing to regulate proactively on consumer standards including quality of homes, repairs, engagement with tenants and complaints handling. The new approach will raise standards and include routine inspections of the largest landlords every four years, alongside risk-based reactive inspections to deliver scrutiny and investigation of landlords most at risk of failing residents. We will ensure residents can access information about their home and the services they receive, and can raise concerns about systemic failure to the Regulator of Social Housing. We will maintain the robust economic regulation that is already working effectively to support a well-governed and financially viable sector, and make sure the whole system is cohesive and balanced.

5) To have their voice heard by their landlord. We will empower residents by requiring landlords to improve tenant engagement. We will deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support them in engaging with landlords and holding them to account. We will review professional training and development to ensure residents are treated with courtesy and respect.

6) To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in. We will encourage investment in neighbourhood, place and decency. We will review the

Decent Homes Standard and boost the quality of, and access to, green spaces. We will tackle anti-social behaviour by enabling tenants to know who is responsible for action and who can support and assist them.

7) To be supported to take their first step to ownership. We will enable delivery of good quality, affordable homes including the investment of £11.5 billion in the new Affordable Homes Programme to deliver up to 180,000 homes. The programme will unlock a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing. We are also introducing a new Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme and implementing a new, fairer and more accessible model for Shared Ownership.

Alongside the Social Housing White Paper I am publishing the analysis of the consultation responses to the social housing Green Paper 2018 and to the Call for Evidence on the Government's Review of Regulation 2018. I am also publishing a consultation on mandating smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in social rented homes with the aim of ensuring the same legal protections for social housing tenants as for those in private rented homes.

This new Charter with its focus on transforming social housing regulation, ensuring homes are decent and safe, offering residents swift and effective resolution of complaints and empowering residents will rebalance the relationship between landlords and tenants. This is a strong, coherent package that is going to make a real difference in people's lives.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

## Animals: Nature Conservation

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the power to prohibit the holding of specimens including live animals under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has been removed; if so, (1) why, and (2) what plans they have to reverse any such removal. [HL9940]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Environment and Wildlife (Miscellaneous Amendments etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 do not lessen government powers or weaken our implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The provision in Council Regulation 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein states that Member States 'may prohibit the holding of specimens, in particular live animals of the species listed in Annex A'.

Rather than conferring any legislative powers, this provision simply states that EU Member States have discretion to act should it be considered necessary. At the end of the Transition Period, the UK will continue to be able to act, meaning the inclusion of the provision in retained direct EU legislation would be an unnecessary statement of the government's ability to put in place legislation. Its omission does not lessen existing powers or weaken our controls on endangered species.

## Belfast Agreement: USA

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with President-elect Biden about the Belfast Agreement. [HL10053]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** This Government looks forward to engaging and working closely with the new President-elect. The Prime Minister spoke to Mr Biden and assured him that the UK Government would continue to uphold the Belfast Agreement in all circumstances. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is also engaging with US politicians and congressmen of all parties.

## Boilers: Waste Heat Recovery

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 3 August (HL7278), why passive flue gas heat recovery systems with thermal storage are not mandated for (1) all replacement boilers in the UK, and (2) installation in all new buildings; and whether those systems deliver an average five per cent efficiency improvement and significant carbon savings. [HL9913]

**Lord Callanan:** Building Regulations set minimum energy performance standards for heating systems in new homes and when they are replaced or fitted into existing homes.

Under these regulations, when a gas combination boiler is installed in an existing dwelling, an additional energy efficiency measure must also be installed, with passive flue gas heat recovery systems being one of four options. The English housing stock is diverse, so the requirement is flexible to allow a suitable choice to be made that reflects the nature of the building, and the needs of the individual household.

When these regulations were introduced, many system and most regular boilers on the market were considered incompatible with passive flue gas heat recovery systems and compensation controls, or required an additional component, and therefore were exempt from the additional energy efficiency measures.

For new builds, buildings regulations around energy efficiency and space and water heating are deliberately couched in performance terms and do not prescribe the technologies, or fuels to be used, allowing manufacturers and builders the flexibility to innovate and select the most practical and cost-effective solutions in particular circumstances.

The extent to which a passive flue gas heat recovery system can increase the efficiency of a dwelling and reduce natural gas consumption is dependent on many factors. Analysis undertaken on behalf of BEIS showed that the typical household could increase boiler efficiency between 1% to 5% by adding a passive flue gas heat recovery system.

## British Nationality: British Overseas Territories

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 13 August (HL7533), whether Hong Kong citizens who do not hold British National (Overseas) status are able to apply to enter the UK under the British National (Overseas) visa scheme rules; and if so, what the process is for doing so. [HL9931]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The bespoke new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa route recognises our historic and moral commitment to British National (Overseas) citizens in Hong Kong, giving them the option to live in the UK if they decide that is an appropriate choice for them. Hong Kong citizens who do not hold BN(O) status or are not the close family member of a BN(O) will not be eligible to apply for the Hong Kong BN(O) Visa route.

Consistent with the wider Immigration Rules, individuals in Hong Kong 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.

The existing youth mobility scheme is also open to people in Hong Kong aged between 18-30, with 1000 places currently available each year.

### Cash Dispensing

*Asked by Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the future of cash machine networks in the UK. [[HL9914](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, which is why it has committed to legislate to protect access to cash and to ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the long term.

To inform the development of this legislation, the Government published a Call for Evidence on 15 October seeking views on the key considerations associated with cash access, including deposit and withdrawal facilities, cash acceptance, and regulatory oversight of the cash system.

Alongside the development of legislation, LINK, the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network, has existing arrangements in place to protect free-to-use ATMs that do not have another free-to-use ATM or Post Office within 1 kilometre. LINK's members have also made £5 million available to fund ATMs at the request of communities with poor access to cash. The Government established the Payment Systems Regulator, which has powers to regulate LINK, the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network. The Payment Systems Regulator is holding LINK to account over their commitments to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs.

### Churches: Repairs and Maintenance

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the rate of closure of churches in recent years; what assessment has been made of the ability of worshipping communities to fund ongoing repairs to church buildings; and what plans they have to provide support to worshipping communities to help maintain church buildings. [[HL10036](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** Historic England works closely with faith communities on the management of historic places of worship.

When a place of worship is no longer required for regular worship it can still make a valuable contribution to the wider community; Historic England works with faith communities to develop a sustainable future when they are not used actively for worship, retaining as much of their special historical and architectural significance as possible. Only in a small minority of cases do places of

worship have to close. Historic England also offers bespoke advice to those who manage places of worship on how to address repairs.

In 2016, the Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals was commissioned to examine the funding and sustainability of listed Church of England churches. The Review considered that a more strategic approach was needed to ensure that the previous large investments of public money were protected by timely maintenance and repair of these buildings. Consequently, the DCMS-funded Taylor Review Pilot was commissioned to test some recommendations made in the Review, pairing advice and support from building conservation and community development experts with targeted grant funding for maintenance and minor repairs. The evaluation, which was published in October 2020, demonstrated the impact of this project on historic places of worship in the pilot areas, with just over £1m of grant funding for repairs allocated almost equally between both areas to 136 applicants.

The Government has set out its vision and strategy to protect the historic environment, including England's places of worship, in the 2017 Heritage Statement. Any further financial support is subject to the Spending Review, which is due to conclude later this month.

### Consumer Goods: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent comments by (1) Marks and Spencer's, and (2) Sainsbury's, about the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the supply and cost of goods in Northern Ireland. [[HL10287](#)]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK and the EU have committed to an intensified process of engagement to resolve all outstanding issues with the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, which includes securing the flexibilities we need for trade from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. This is particularly important for supermarkets, where we have seen clear specific solutions are required.

We will continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive as discussions continue with the EU through the Joint Committee process.

### Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK

*Asked by Baroness Sherlock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many meetings (1) the Prime Minister, (2) the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (3) the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and (4) the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, have had with the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group. [[HL10018](#)]

**Lord True:** Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on gov.uk.

Ministers are acutely aware of the grief, heartbreak and loss suffered by families across the country as a result of the virus, and the Government has fully committed to looking back and reflecting on all aspects of the pandemic.

There will be an opportunity to learn lessons from all aspects of the pandemic in the fullness of time, but for now, the Government remains focused on reducing the spread of the virus, and to protect those most vulnerable in society.

Ministers have met and continue to meet with those who have been bereaved as a result of Covid-19. And with respect to this particular group, Ministers from Her Majesty's Government will be happy to meet them at an appropriate time to do so, and once legal proceedings have concluded.

### **Ethiopia: Refugees**

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the number of refugees in the Ethiopia-Sudan border region, (2) the nationality of these refugees, and (3) the impact of the Tigray conflict on refugee numbers in that area. [[HL10108](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) there are almost 162,200 refugees in regions of Ethiopia adjoining Sudan from Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan. Owing to telecommunications outages across Tigray region and limited access for humanitarian agencies due to insecurity we are not able to accurately determine the impact of the conflict on refugee numbers.

We await confirmation from UNHCR about the movement of Ethiopians into Sudan but Sudanese media have reported that an estimated 6,000 asylum seekers from Ethiopia have crossed into Sudan in recent days. Prior to the fighting in Tigray, Sudan hosted approximately 13,000 Ethiopian refugees who reside in official camps as well as in towns and cities across the country.

### **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 19 October (HL8705), how many schemes have been set up for training Green Homes Grant skills; where in the UK such schemes are located; what the capacity to deliver such training is in each region of the UK; what academic level the training is; and how many students have (1) enrolled in, and (2) completed, the training. [[HL9909](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Department launched a £6.9m skills competition to provide training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains, to deliver works and scale up to meet additional consumer

demand. This could deliver up to 5,000 training opportunities in support of the scheme, dependent on how the funding is allocated. The competition recently closed, and the bids are being assessed. The Department received bids from all regions in England (Midlands, North East, Yorkshire & Humber, North West, South East, South West) and for all work packages. Training will commence once successful applicants have been informed.

Funding will be provided to support training individuals with existing skills and those new to the sector, along with support for installation companies to gain PAS 2030 or MCS accreditation as required by the Green Homes Grant scheme. Training courses will be carried out against the following specific technology standards – National Occupational Standards (NOS), PAS 2030: 2017, 2019 or MCS standards or higher. The work packages within the competition cover retrofit assessor and retrofit coordinator, insulation, non-insulation fabric measures, heat pumps & solar thermal; heating and hot water controls.

### **Hunterston B Power Station: Closures**

*Asked by **Baroness Clark of Kilwinning***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about the economic impact of the permanent closure of Hunterston B nuclear power station; and what steps they intend to take to ensure an economic investment package is put in place in view of job losses and the wider economic impact of that closure. [[HL9912](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** EDF Energy recently announced that Hunterston B would close no later than January 2022. EDF Energy, as owner and operator of the power station, is responsible for the management of the closure, in consultation with the nuclear regulator, including any related employment matters arising from closure and during the subsequent station decommissioning.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working with EDF Energy and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to consider how efficient and cost-effective decommissioning of EDF Energy-owned nuclear power stations can be planned for and delivered in the future. This work does not affect the closure of the stations.

### **Hussein Yousef**

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that authorities at Jau Prison in Bahrain are preventing Yousef Hussein Yousef from receiving the medical treatment he requires; what assessment they have made of (1) the conditions in which he is held, and (2) reports that complaints about his case to oversight bodies including the Bahraini prisons ombudsman and National Institution for Human Rights in Bahrain have received no response; and what plans they have to make representations to the



government of Bahrain about his access to medical treatment. [[HL9948](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of reports regarding Yousef Hussein Yousef and are monitoring his case. We have raised this case with the oversight bodies and understand that three separate complaints, relating to medical and dietary issues, have been made in 2020 by relatives of Mr Yousef; and that all complaints were fully investigated and resolved. We welcomed these assurances from the oversight bodies and continue to encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise them with the appropriate human rights oversight body.

### Israel: West Bank

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that demolition orders have been delivered to Palestinian-owned houses in the Issawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. [[HL10135](#)]

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that structures in the Humsa al Bqai'a Bedouin community have been demolished by the government of Israel; and what support they plan to provide to those affected. [[HL10137](#)]

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Fuad al-'Amour, the coordinator of Protection and Steadfastness Committees in Masafer Yatta and Southern Hebron hills, on 3 November, about the actions of the Israel Defence Force and the impact on communities living in Masafer Yatta. [[HL10139](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are seriously concerned by increasing rates of demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concern about demolitions with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October, and issued a statement outlining the UK's concern about the demolitions of structures in Humsa Al-Baqai'a on 6 November. Officials from the British Consulate General Jerusalem visited Humsa Al-Baqai'a on 6 November to reiterate UK support for the community. The UK provides funding to the West Bank Protection Consortium, which is coordinating with the Palestinian Red Cross and the United Nations to provide emergency shelter to the community of Humsa Al-Baqai'a, and determine the community's long-term needs. The UK is focused on preventing demolitions and evictions from happening in the first place through our legal aid programme, which supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home

eviction in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

### Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Sugg on 2 November (HL Deb, cols 495–9), what assessment they have made of the judgment delivered by the International Court of Justice in *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro* (no. 91) on 26 February 2007, in particular the statement contained in that judgment that "a State's obligation to prevent, and the corresponding duty to act, arise at the instant that the State learns of, or should normally have learned of, the existence of a serious risk that genocide will be committed"; what assessment they have made of the risk of genocide in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; and what steps they are taking in response to that assessment. [[HL9901](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK takes its moral and legal obligations seriously, and is fully committed to focusing on conflict prevention as the best means to prevent most mass atrocities. HMG adopts a consolidated, whole-of-government effort, using our diplomatic, development, defence and law enforcement capabilities, to help find pathways to global peace and stability. The policy of the UK is that any determination on whether genocide has occurred is a matter for competent judicial bodies, rather than for governments. The UK is fully committed to the principle that there must be no impunity for the most serious international crimes. The UK welcomes the news that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to end the fighting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

### Nature Conservation: Fines

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what happens to the fines levied under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; and what plans they have, if any, to use any money raised by such fines solely for the benefit of wildlife and endangered species. [[HL9941](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** CITES offences and penalties are used as a deterrent to illegal wildlife trade which in turn protects wildlife and endangered species. The collection of fines resulting from convictions under the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations (COTES) is undertaken by HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

With the agreement of HM Treasury (HMT), as part of its Spending Round 2015 settlement the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has been permitted to retain receipts from

all fine collections. These receipts form part of the overall settlement provided by HMT to MoJ to operate the Courts and Tribunals Service and are used for this purpose.

### **Palestinians: Olives**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 3 November (HL9384) and the statement that they "welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence", which such efforts they welcome; and how they measure the success of such efforts. [HL10134]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome the Government of Israel's strong condemnation of settler violence, as well as the establishment of a special governmental unit and legislative changes. Nonetheless, we continue to urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We have stressed the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. Our long-standing objective is a negotiated two-state solution which will allow Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, lessening the likelihood of politically driven violence and incitement to violence.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the planting of olive trees in Atuwani to ensure land near that village is not classified as state land by the government of Israel. [HL10136]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are seriously concerned by the continued expropriation of land by Israel in the West Bank, including notably for settlement expansion. We regularly call on Israel to halt such counterproductive activity and instead urgently commit to creating a better environment for a just and lasting peace. Settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the physical viability of the two-state solution. We continue to call on Israel to improve Palestinians' route to securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure, including agriculture and farming, in Area C.

### **Poland: Abortion**

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Poland's compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights in relation to its position on the termination of pregnancies; and what representations they have made to the government of Poland on this matter. [HL9915]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK is a leading voice on gender issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, in multilateral fora such as the Council of Europe

and the United Nations. There are three outstanding cases in the Council of Europe concerning abortion in Poland; the European Court of Human Rights has judged Poland non-compliant with numerous articles of the European Convention on Human Rights: *P. and S. v. Poland* (2012), *R.R v Poland* (2011) and *Tysiac v Poland* (2007). These cases relate to difficulties in accessing an entitlement to lawful abortion in Poland in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights. Whilst we have not raised these specific cases directly with the Polish government, we continue, within the Council of Europe, to urge the Polish authorities to comply with the Convention, in line with the judgments handed down by the Court, for example by guaranteeing clear and effective procedures to provide women seeking lawful abortion with adequate information on the steps they need to take to obtain it. The three cases will be reviewed again in the Council of Europe in March 2021.

We are closely monitoring developments following a ruling on 22 October by the Polish Constitutional Tribunal that laws permitting abortion in certain cases are unconstitutional, and the large-scale protests across Poland that this has prompted. It is for each country to establish its own laws on abortion. However, the UK firmly believes that supporting the comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, through evidence-based public health interventions, saves lives. Evidence shows that restricting access to safe abortion does not make abortions less common: it only makes them less safe. The British Embassy in Warsaw is also active on the gender equality agenda and in September ran a workshop for British and Polish NGOs active on women's rights.

### **Police Officers: Per Head of Population**

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in the West Midlands. [HL9918]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in the East Midlands. [HL9919]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in Yorkshire and the Humber. [HL9920]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on

29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in North West England. [HL9921]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in North East England. [HL9922]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9280), how many police officers there are per head of the population in each Police Force Area in Greater London. [HL9923]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size and composition of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin. From Table H4 in the data tables published alongside this bulletin, the tables below show the total number of police officers and the number of police officers per 100,000 population in each force of the relevant regions requested as at 31 March 2020.

*West Midlands as at 31 March 2020 1*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Staffordshire	1,666	147
Warwickshire	1,035	179
West Mercia	2,219	172
West Midlands	6,516	223
West Midlands	11,436	193

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

*East Midlands as at 31 March 2020 1*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Derbyshire	1,849	174
Leicestershire	1,979	180
Lincolnshire	1,067	140
Northamptonshire	1,272	169
Nottinghamshire	2,072	178
East Midlands	8,239	170

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

*Yorkshire and the Humber as at 31 March 2020 1*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Humberside	1,966	211
North Yorkshire	1,481	179
South Yorkshire	2,437	173
West Yorkshire	5,342	229
Yorkshire and the Humber	11,226	204

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

*North West region as at 31 March 2020 1*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Cheshire	2,088	196
Cumbria	1,221	244
Greater Manchester	6,866	242
Lancashire	2,999	199
Merseyside	3,629	254
North West	16,803	229

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

*North East region as at 31 March 2020 1*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Cleveland	1,325	233
Durham	1,141	179
Northumbria	3,155	216
North East	5,621	211

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

*Greater London as at 31 March 2020 1,3*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
London, City of	759	..
Metropolitan Police	32,199	360
Greater London	32,958	368

1. Figures provided are on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

3. City of London per capita analysis is omitted due to its disproportionately small permanent population.

More recent figures are available, but on a headcount basis that is not comparable with previous publications reporting on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis. The tables below provide the total number of officers and total officers per 100,000 population on a headcount basis as at 30 September 2020.

*West Midlands as at 30 September 2020 2*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Staffordshire	1,703	150
Warwickshire	1,041	180
West Mercia	2,279	176
West Midlands	6,983	238
West Midlands	12,006	202

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

*East Midlands as at 30 September 2020 2*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Derbyshire	1,899	179
Leicestershire	2,114	192
Lincolnshire	1,089	143
Northamptonshire	1,368	182
Nottinghamshire	2,121	183
East Midlands	8,591	178

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

*Yorkshire and the Humber as at 30 September 2020 2*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Humberside	2,028	217
North Yorkshire	1,533	185
South Yorkshire	2,624	186
West Yorkshire	5,494	236
Yorkshire and the Humber	11,679	212

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

*North West region as at 30 September 2020 2*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Cheshire	2,164	203
Cumbria	1,251	250
Greater Manchester	7,018	247
Lancashire	3,088	205

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
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Merseyside	3,698	259
North West	17,219	235

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

*North East region as at 30 September 2020 2*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
Cleveland	1,392	245
Durham	1,180	185
Northumbria	3,344	228
North East	5,916	222

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

*Greater London as at 30 September 2020 2,3*

	<i>Total Officers</i>	<i>Officers per 100,000 population</i>
London, City of	822	..
Metropolitan Police	33,782	377
Greater London	34,604	386

2. Figures provided are on a headcount basis

3. City of London per capita analysis is omitted due to its disproportionately small permanent population.

These figures are calculated using data from the Home Office's new quarterly Police Uplift publication, reporting the progress of the Police Uplift Programme that is delivering on the current Government's manifesto pledge to recruit 20,000 additional police officers in England and Wales by March 2023. The latest Uplift publication can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-officer-uplift-quarterly-update-to-september-2020>.

## Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by the Early Years Alliance, published on 30 October, finding that one in six early years providers could close by Christmas 2020 without additional funding; and what steps they are taking to provide additional income to nurseries and childminders. [HL9959]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government recognises the importance of supporting the early years sector financially during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We note the information provided by the Early Years Alliance and have used it in recent discussions with HM Treasury.

Data published on 26 October, in the latest parent survey by Ipsos MORI, shows that in September 94% of parents whose child received formal childcare, before the COVID-19 outbreak, were either using formal childcare now, or were intending to return their child to formal childcare, if they could, by January 2021.

Attendance data on early years shows that children's attendance at the majority of nurseries, preschools and childminders is starting to climb back to pre-COVID-19 levels (an estimated 770,000 children attended early years settings on 22 October, compared with 417,000 at the end of the summer term).

Nurseries, preschools and childminders have received significant financial support over the past months and will benefit from a planned £3.6 billion funding package in financial year 2020-21 for free early education and childcare places.

We are providing extra stability and reassurance to settings that are open by 'block-buying' childcare places for the rest of this year at the level we would have funded before the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of how many children are attending. This will give nurseries and childminders another term of secure income.

In addition to this, the government has provided a package of support for individuals and businesses which are directly benefitting providers of childcare. This includes business rates relief and grants, the extended Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Job Retention Bonus and the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which will remain open until December, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500.

Further, business premises forced to close in England are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant. Also, £1.1 billion is being given to local authorities, distributed on the basis of £20 per head, for one-off payments to enable them to support businesses more broadly.

We continue to work closely with both local authorities and the early years sector organisations to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the sector.

### Private Education

*Asked by Lord Soley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy regarding the registration of independent schools in instances where Ofsted has expressed concern regarding that registration. [HL9956]

**Baroness Berridge:** Any educational provider which offers a full-time education to 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, or to 1 or more pupils of compulsory school age who are also looked after, or have

an education, health and care plan, is required to register with the Department for Education. It is a criminal offence to conduct an independent school that is not registered. If convicted of this offence, a person could be subject to an unlimited fine, and/or imprisonment for up to 6 months.

Section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 outlines that Ofsted must inspect all proposed new independent schools against the Independent Schools Standards, and make a report to my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, on the extent to which these standards are likely to be met following registration. The Secretary of State for Education must then decide, taking that report and any other evidence he has on the proposed school into account, whether the standards are likely to be met if it is to be registered as an independent school. If he is satisfied that the standards are likely to be met, he must register the school.

In practice, it is nearly always the case that where an inspection report shows that the standards are not likely to be met, the registration application is rejected. However, there are rare exceptions: for example, if remedial building work has been arranged, but has not yet been undertaken at the time of the inspection. In such cases, if the school is subsequently able to show that the work has been carried out successfully, so as to address all of the issues identified in the report, it is possible to register the school without the need for a further inspection.

Full guidance on registering an independent school is available through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration>.

### Schools: Air Pollution

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether schools are encouraged to develop individual clean air plans; and if so, how they incentivise the development of such plans. [HL10004]

**Baroness Berridge:** Local authorities are responsible for air quality in their area and must ensure that it meets the standards set in local air quality action plans. Concerns regarding the air quality in school buildings fall to the body responsible for the school to check and establish what measures need to be taken to improve air quality.

In 2018, the department published Building Bulletin 101 (BB101), which contains guidance for school design on ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality. This guidance sets out the World Health Organisation's air quality guidelines and Air Quality Standards Regulation 2010 for indoor air quality. BB101 requires the indoor environment of new or refurbished school buildings to be monitored by recording temperature and levels of carbon dioxide.

The department is collaborating with other government departments and a number of academic institutions on air

quality projects. The findings from these projects will, in due course, inform our guidance and standards for school buildings.

### Schools: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the COVID-19 transmission rate in schools; and what steps are they taking to protect teachers from COVID-19 infection. [HL9962]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department collects data from schools on a daily basis, as well as gathering information from local areas and following up with individual settings in relation to COVID-19. This includes confirming that procedures for requiring pupils to isolate are well understood and that necessary decisions are being made based on public health advice. Data is collected on the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures and the department has attendance data for schools that have done so.

The department regularly reviews advice from a number of different sources, including the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies outputs and Public Health England (PHE), as well as school attendance data to ensure its policies are guided by the most up to date scientific evidence.

We published 'actions for schools during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' guidance to support schools to welcome back all children from the start of the autumn term. Schools should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in this guidance. The measures set out in the department's guidance to minimise the risk of transmission in schools has been endorsed by PHE.

The full guidance can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

From 5 November 2020, following guidance on new national restrictions in school settings, staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

The full guidance can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#schools>.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Staff and children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically

extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend school in line with current guidance.

### Schools: Gender Recognition

*Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish new transgender guidance for schools; and when such guidance will be available. [HL9943]

*Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Government department is responsible for the policy contained in guidance and reports on transgender education in schools. [HL9944]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department continues to work closely with the Government Equalities Office to understand developments in this area, including non-departmental guidance and reports, and consider how government can best support the school sector.

We recognise that these are complex and sensitive matters to navigate, and schools are best placed to work with parents, pupils and public services to decide what is best for individual children – and what is best for all others in the school.

To note, the department has published guidance to help schools understand how to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010. This guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>.

In relation to teaching, the department has recently published implementation guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). This sets out that all resources used in teaching about gender and biological sex should be age-appropriate and evidence based. Teachers should not reinforce harmful stereotypes, for instance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests, or the clothes they prefer to wear – they should of course always seek to treat individual students with empathy and support.

### Scientific Review Group

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what relationship they plan to have with the EU's Scientific Review Group after 1 January 2021. [HL9939]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** As we have left the EU we will no longer participate in, or be bound by, EU structures, including the EU Scientific Review Group which comprises representatives from EU Member States' Scientific Authorities. Our Scientific Authorities, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, will continue to provide scientific advice on a range of CITES matters and collaborate internationally with other CITES Scientific Authorities to

ensure we remain a world leader in environmental protection.

### Skilled Workers: Training

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by City & Guilds Group Act Now, published on 2 November; and what steps they are taking to allow more autonomy regarding skills funding for mayoral combined authorities. [[HL9960](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Currently, approximately 50% of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) is devolved to 7 Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Mayor of London, acting where appropriate through the Greater London Authority (GLA). These authorities are now responsible for the provision of AEB-funded adult education for their residents and the allocation of the AEB to training providers. MCAs and the GLA are responsible for considering any flexibilities to their funding rules in their respective areas.

Devolving the AEB enables MCAs/GLA to directly support adults in developing the skills that local employers need, reducing skills shortages, boosting productivity and economic prosperity, and improving wellbeing in communities.

We are committed to open dialogue with MCAs, the GLA and other sector stakeholders on how best skills provision and reforms can be shaped to fit the needs of local areas. However, there are no plans for further skills funding devolution at this present time.

### Sky Lanterns

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the damage caused by sky lanterns; and what plans they have to impose a national ban on such lanterns in rural areas. [[HL9857](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** In 2013, the UK and Welsh Governments jointly commissioned an independent study looking at the impacts of sky lanterns and helium balloons on livestock and the environment. The report concluded that the impact was generally low, though did highlight a potential fire safety risk.

Any action the Government takes must be proportionate to the level of risk and we have concluded, based on the results of this research, that an outright ban would be disproportionate in the circumstances. Should evidence that this approach is no longer sufficient arise, we will take the necessary action.

We do recognise the need to protect our environment and wildlife and have therefore used media messaging to encourage people and businesses to consider the risks before releasing lanterns.

There may be times when a local ban is appropriate as part of a wider strategic approach. and local authorities

already have powers to restrict or ban the use of sky lanterns on council or public land. Many councils in England, Scotland and Wales have applied such a ban. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of single-use products.

Voluntary actions and initiatives aimed at minimising the risks associated with sky lanterns and driving up safety standards have been effective. This includes a voluntary Code of Practice for sky lanterns developed by industry with Government support to ensure that they are manufactured to be safe and are sold responsibly. Sky lanterns also fall in scope of the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 which oblige producers and distributors to place only safe consumer products on the market.

As the law stands in England, it is conceivable that a magistrates' court would conclude that a release of sky lanterns constitutes a littering offence. Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 says: "A person is guilty of an offence if he throws down, drops or otherwise deposits any litter in any place to which this section applies and leaves it". Ultimately it would be for a court to rule whether this phrase would cover sky lantern releases.

### Sustainability of the Press Review

*Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on the implementation of each recommendation of The Cairncross Review: A Sustainable Future For Journalism, published on 12 February 2019. [[HL10221](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** In January 2020, the government published its formal response to the independent Cairncross Review, which outlines steps the government, regulators and industry will take to support the future of the news publishing industry.

In terms of the fiscal interventions proposed by the Review, the government has introduced the zero-rating of VAT on e-publications and has committed to extending the existing business rates relief for an additional 5 years, until 31 March 2025. We also worked with Nesta to develop a £2million pilot innovation fund, launched in October 2019, and have committed to considering further fiscal measures to support the sector.

The recommended market study into the workings of the online advertising market has now concluded. The CMA's final report recommended a similar approach to the Cairncross Review in proposing codes of conduct to govern the relationship between platforms and publishers. We are considering the CMA's findings carefully before determining next steps, and will publish our response shortly.

The Review also recommended that Ofcom explore the market impact of BBC News. Government welcomed Ofcom's decision to conduct a review into the BBC's news output, which was published in October 2019.

With regard to the Review's recommendations on taking steps to help users identify the reliability and trustworthiness of news sources, online platforms' efforts here may continue and expand as a result of the proposals in the Online Harms White Paper. We intend to publish the Full Government Response to the White Paper as soon as possible. We are also developing a Media Literacy Strategy, which will be published in Spring 2021.

The government is pleased to see the BBC has conducted a thorough review of the Local Democracy Reporting Service and the wider Local News Partnership, as recommended by the Cairncross Review. As set out in our response, we would support any efforts by the BBC to grow the scheme.

The government will not be taking forward the recommendation to establish an institute for Public Interest News. While we acknowledge the value the proposed institute is intended to provide, it is not for the government to lead on this issue.

The government recognises the vital role of newspapers in supporting communities and in ensuring the provision of reliable, high-quality information at this time. In addition to the above measures, it has therefore also been an absolute priority to ensure we do all we can as a government to support news publishers during the Covid-19 crisis.

### **Trials: Administrative Delays**

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average waiting time for cases to come to trial in England; and what action they are taking to speed up the process. [HL9935]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Data relating to the waiting time in weeks for cases at the Crown Court in England and Wales can be found in Tables C6 (by case type), C7 (by plea) and C8 (by remand status) of the published National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' (latest to June 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>.

Waiting times for England alone require a further breakdown from the published data and are provided in the table attached with this response.

On Monday 7 September, the Crime Recovery Plan was published which sets out our comprehensive plan to tackle the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the justice system by boosting capacity across criminal courts.

As one of the first among other comparable jurisdictions globally to resume jury trials, our Crown Courts are currently listing over 200 jury trials and conducting thousands of other hearings every week. The magistrates' courts have been completing more cases than they receive, dealing with over 21,000 cases each week and tackling the backlog.

We have also installed plexiglass screens into over 200 courtrooms and over 100 jury retiring rooms enabling us to safely open 255 Crown Court rooms for jury trials, roughly the number that were hearing jury trials before Covid.

We're also investing record amounts - the biggest single investment in court estate maintenance for more than 20 years - and have unlocked vital capacity by opening 16 Nightingale Courts to provide 29 additional court rooms.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL9935 - table [HL9935 - table.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-03/HL9935>

### **Uganda: Refugees**

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether South Sudanese refugees are returning to South Sudan from Ugandan camps; and what assistance they are providing to South Sudanese refugees still in Uganda. [HL10109]

**Baroness Sugg:** According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 8,347 refugees returned to South Sudan in September 2020. Of these, 3,023 individuals (36%) returned from refugee settlements in Uganda.

There are currently more than 1.4 million refugees in Uganda; about 938,000 (more than 65%) of these are from South Sudan. The UK is one of the largest supporters of refugees in Uganda, providing life-saving protection and assistance. Under our current 5 year, £210 million programme, the UK helps to safely deliver food assistance to more than one million people; provide emergency nutritional and psycho-social support for children traumatised by conflict in their home countries; ensure livelihood opportunities to enable people to build their resilience and become self-reliant; and prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 among vulnerable refugee and host communities.

### **UK Intellectual Property Office**

*Asked by **Lord Smith of Finsbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to lay a Statutory Instrument to ensure that lawyers from the European Economic Area cannot appear before the UK Intellectual Property Office from 1 January 2021. [HL9955]

**Lord Callanan:** We are working with colleagues across government to have a suitable solution in place before 31 December, including any necessary amendment to the address for service rules.



### **United Arab Emirates: Detainees**

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the United Arab Emirates about the release of 18 Yemenis and one Russian, who are currently detained and at risk of forced repatriation. [[HL10043](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK remains committed to the promotion of universal freedoms and human rights. The UK regularly raises human rights concerns with the UAE at senior levels and continues to encourage the UAE to uphold international human rights obligations.

### **Work Permits**

*Asked by **Lord Green of Deddington***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the previous arrangements for a cap on the annual number of work permits (1) have been deleted in the revised

Immigration Rules, published on 22 October, and (2) are stated as having been suspended in the explanatory notes, published on 22 October; what are the steps which need to be taken (a) to re-impose, and (b) to bring into force, such a cap; and what estimate they have made of the time it would take to take such steps. [[HL9917](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Points-Based Immigration System will allow the Government to take back full control of our borders. We will suspend the cap on the number of skilled workers able to apply to come to the UK, as recommended by the Migration Advisory Committee. Other controls such as sponsorship by a licenced employer, a system of salary thresholds and a requirement for employers to pay the Immigration Skills Charge, will ensure immigration is managed and considered alongside investment in and protection of the UK's resident labour market.

The Skilled Worker route will be kept under review and we will retain the right to introduce further controls if necessary, based on experience and evidence.

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