

**Session 2019-21
No. 144**



**Wednesday
18 November 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
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Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 18 November 2020

Green Industrial Revolution

[HLWS580]

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

The Prime Minister has today set out a Ten Point Plan to drive a Green Industrial Revolution in the UK - an innovative and ambitious programme of job creation that will support levelling up, and up to 250,000 jobs across the UK.

As we rebuild, we must build back better, greener, and faster. Our Ten Point Plan sets out ambitious policies and significant new public investment to allow the UK to forge ahead with eradicating its contribution to climate change by 2050. It presents a vision for the UK that is greener, more prosperous and at the forefront of industries for the future. Covering clean energy, buildings, transport, nature and innovative technologies, the plan will mobilise £12 billion of government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK, and unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

In doing so, we will position the UK to take advantage of export opportunities in new, global emerging markets in low carbon technologies and services, providing jobs and reinvigorating our industrial heartlands, including in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, the Midlands, Scotland and Wales.

The plan builds on the UK's strengths and covers the following 10 areas:

- i) Offshore wind: Generating more power with offshore wind by 2030 than households in the UK are currently using, quadrupling how much we produce to 40GW by 2030, supporting up to 60,000 jobs. We have also committed to invest £160 million into modern, integrated portside offshore wind infrastructure, providing high quality employment in coastal regions.
- ii) Hydrogen: Working with industry, aiming to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for industry, transport, power and homes. This will be supported by investment of up to £500 million for low carbon hydrogen production across the decade, with £240 million committed to 2024/5. We will also support trialling homes using hydrogen for heating and cooking, starting with a Hydrogen Neighbourhood in 2023, moving to a Hydrogen Village by 2025, with an aim for a Hydrogen Town – equivalent to tens of thousands of homes – before the end of the decade.
- iii) Nuclear: Advancing nuclear as a clean energy source through large scale nuclear and developing the next generation of small and advanced reactors. We

have committed £525 million to help develop large and smaller-scale nuclear plants, and research and develop new advanced modular reactors, all of which could support 10,000 jobs.

iv) Electric vehicles: Backing our world-leading car manufacturing bases including in the West Midlands, the North East and Wales to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles, and transforming our national infrastructure to better support electric vehicles. Following extensive consultation with car manufacturers and sellers, the Government confirms that the UK will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, ten years earlier than planned. However, we will allow the sale of hybrid cars that can drive a significant distance without emitting carbon until 2035. To support this acceleration, the Government has announced: £1.3 billion to accelerate the rollout of chargepoints for electric vehicles in homes, streets and on motorways across England; £582 million in grants for those buying zero or ultra-low emission vehicles to make them cheaper to buy and incentivise more people to make the transition; and nearly £500 million to be spent in the next four years for the development and mass-scale production of electric vehicle batteries, as part of our commitment to provide up to £1 billion, boosting international investment into our strong manufacturing bases including in the Midlands and North East.

v) Public transport, cycling and walking: Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero-emission public transport of the future. We will start this transformation with £250m for local measures to increase cycling and walking this year, as part of our commitment to invest £2bn in cycling and walking over this Parliament.

vi) Jet Zero and greener maritime: Supporting difficult-to-decarbonise industries to become greener through research projects for zero-emission planes and ships. We will run a £15m competition to support the production of Sustainable Aviation Fuels in the UK and invest £20m into the Clean Maritime Demonstration Programme to test new fuels in shipping.

vii) Homes and public buildings: Making £1 billion available next year to make new and existing homes and public buildings more efficient, supporting 50,000 jobs by 2030, alongside a target to install 600,000 heat pumps every year by 2028.

viii) Carbon capture: Becoming a world-leader in technology to capture and store harmful emissions away from the atmosphere, with a target to remove 10MT of carbon dioxide a year by 2030, equivalent to all emissions of the industrial Humber today. We have announced an extra £200 million of new funding to create two carbon capture clusters by the mid-2020s, with another two set to be created by 2030. The total investment of up to £1 billion will help to support 50,000 jobs, potentially in areas such as the Humber, North East, North West, Scotland and Wales.

ix) Nature: Protecting and restoring our natural environment, planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year by 2025, whilst creating and retaining thousands of jobs. This will include starting the process to designate more National Parks and Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, create more green jobs with £40 million for a second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and £5.2 billion for a six year programme of flood and coastal defences.

x) Innovation and finance: Developing the cutting-edge technologies needed to reach these new energy ambitions and make the City of London the global centre of green finance. To accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and processes we will launch the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio. The portfolio will focus on ten priority areas that correspond with the Ten Point Plan.

This Ten Point Plan ensures that our recovery from COVID-19 will generate jobs and bolster the economy, whilst continuing to drive down emissions. It sends a clear signal to industries across the British economy to invest in the UK's cleaner, greener future.

The Plan marks the beginning of the UK's path to net zero, and we will continue to build on it. Over the next year we will continue to bring forward ambitious proposals across the economy to cut emissions and secure long-term growth for the whole country, with the Energy White Paper, and a Net Zero Strategy, in the run up to the international COP26 climate summit in Glasgow next year. The summit will bring together world leaders, climate experts, business leaders and citizens to agree ambitious action to tackle climate change.

Ahead of the summit, this Ten Point Plan demonstrates the UK's significant and continuing commitment to tackling greenhouse gas emissions and sets the foundation to drive a Green Industrial Revolution in the UK.

Victims Code: Consultation Response

[HLWS579]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Alex Chalk) has made the following Written Statement.

"This Government is committed to strengthening victims' rights and ensuring that comprehensive support is available at the right time. One of my key priorities is that victims clearly understand and receive the rights provided by the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code). This has never been more important than it is now, when we are facing the huge challenges that Coronavirus has brought. The criminal justice system and the sector have been tested, but we have continued to respond robustly to the needs of victims.

In fulfilling a commitment made in the cross-government Victims' Strategy, I am today laying a revised Victims' Code, as well as publishing the government response to the consultation: 'Improving the Victims' Code' which closed on 28 May 2020. To ensure

that there is enough time for criminal justice agencies to implement the new Code, I will tomorrow be laying a Statutory Instrument that will bring it into force on 1 April 2021.

We received over 500 responses to our two consultations on the Code, which we have carefully considered. I would therefore like to place on record my sincere gratitude to those who took the time to respond and for providing their personal experience, knowledge and candour about what works well and what doesn't. These views have informed the key changes we have made to the Code.

For the first time, the Code has been structured so that victims are its primary audience. With its focus on twelve clearly defined overarching rights, we aim to ensure that victims will both understand and be aware of the level of service they can expect to receive from criminal justice agencies. Simplifying the Code is a vital step in our efforts to rebuild victims' confidence and trust in the criminal justice system and their engagement with it, knowing that they will receive the right support at the right time.

We know that victims find having to engage with different contacts frustrating, potentially exacerbating the trauma they may be experiencing. We have made the frequency and method of communication a more victim led process and have amended the Code to make it clear to service providers that they must try to minimise the number of different people victims have contact with. Where possible, they should offer a single point of contact for information.

We have also included information about the ability to access support; without the need to report incidents to the police; at any time during the investigation and prosecution; if the case is stopped or at the end of the case. While the Code retains existing eligibility categories for access to enhanced support and information, we have made clearer that service providers have the discretion to offer these enhanced rights to victims who fall outside the scope of the existing categories.

We have introduced an 'opt-out' framework for the Victim Contact Scheme, for victims of a sexual or violent offence, where the offender is sentenced to a term of imprisonment for twelve months or more. All eligible victims will now be automatically referred to scheme which gives vital updates on offenders as they serve their sentence, including their potential release from prison. We have also listened closely to victims of unrestricted mentally disordered offenders, who told us of their difficulties in trying to get information about an offender's management and potential release from hospital. To help alleviate their trauma, they will receive a new right to be assigned a Victim Liaison Officer, rather than having to contact hospitals directly. This means these victims will be treated, in the same way that victims of restricted offenders are, ensuring consistency in the level of information and the way it is provided to them.

For the first time, we have also specifically referenced the support available to victims of Foreign National

Offenders and included information on the role of Coroners, as well as for families bereaved by murder or manslaughter abroad.

Recognising that for many victims the impact of the crime may not be immediately apparent, we have redrafted the Code to provide agencies with more discretion on when a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) is offered, and revised information so that victims better understand the process and are fully aware of the wider implications of making a VPS. Victims will also be able to request a copy of their VPS for them to refer to in future.

By the time the new Code comes into force next Spring, we will have embedded the necessary operational adjustments with criminal justice agencies, supported

with victim focussed practitioner guidance, to provide clarity on roles and accountabilities. We will continue to work closely with Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Criminal Justice Partnerships to improve compliance with the Code and also produce a child friendly version of the Code to help children better understand their rights and the support available to them.

As Victims Minister, I believe that the revised Victims' Code both demonstrates our continued commitment to supporting victims of crime at a time when they may need it most as well as give them a louder, clearer voice in the criminal justice system process. The Code will also form the basis of our forthcoming consultation on a Victims' Law."

Written Answers

Wednesday, 18 November 2020

Airports: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness McGregor-Smith*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce COVID-19 testing at airports; and if so, on what date they plan to introduce such testing. [[HL10000](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is actively working on the practicalities of using testing to release people from self-isolation earlier than 14 days. The Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) is working at pace to consider how testing, technology and innovation can drive a recovery for international travel and tourism, without adding to infection risk or infringing on our overall NHS test capacity.

In its work, the GTT will seek to consult representatives from:

- the transport industry, to discuss shared challenges, the value of the sector to the economy, and the future of international travel;
- international partners, to discuss different approaches to health measures at the border, and what standards and practices are needed to maintain safe international travel;
- the tourism sector and local business leaders, to consider the economic impact on domestic tourism, and how international travel can support economic recovery;
- the private testing sector, to consider capacity constraints, pricing, and how quickly testing capacity can be rolled out;
- academia and policy institutes to provide insight and innovative solutions to the challenges the sector is facing.

The Taskforce will submit its recommendations to the Prime Minister in November.

Armed Forces: Gambling

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 3 November (HL9441), what assessment they have made of the success of existing programmes within the military in reducing gambling-related harm among serving personnel. [[HL10104](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes problem-gambling seriously and provides welfare support and financial awareness training for our people.

The MOD also blocks gambling websites on all its networks in order to reduce their accessibility.

The MOD has seen no evidence to suggest that Service personnel are more prone to problem-gambling than any other group in society and has made no assessment of the efficacy of our existing approach to the reduction of gambling-related harm.

Armenia: Genocide

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review their position on the recognition of the Armenian genocide. [[HL10012](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The events of 1915-1916 were a tragic episode in the history of the Armenian people and they must never be forgotten. The UK Government of the day condemned the massacres and this Government fully endorses that view. The policy of the UK Government is that any judgment on whether genocide has occurred is a matter for judicial decision, rather than for governments. We do not have plans to review the position on the determination of genocide.

Ascension Island: Infrastructure

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the infrastructure investment needs of Ascension Island. [[HL10237](#)]

Baroness Sugg: A significant proportion of Ascension's infrastructure needs modernising. In 2018, £5 million from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund was earmarked over three years to address the very most critical safety issues. The UK Government is working with the Ascension Island Government and stakeholders to ensure that these issues are resolved as the Ascension Island is important to the United Kingdom.

Ascension Island: Public Expenditure

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the (1) capital, and (2) revenue, costs of Ascension Island are currently allocated between Government departments. [[HL10238](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Ascension Island Government raises revenue from taxes on island. The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office has used the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund to address issues with critical infrastructure on the island. The island also receives funding from the UK Government Blue Belt Programme (approximately £390,000 this financial year) to support its Marine Protected Area, which was designated in 2019.

British Indian Ocean Territory: Crimes Against Humanity

Asked by *Baroness Whitaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations that (1) the removal between 1968 and 1973, and (2) the subsequent treatment, of the inhabitants of the Chagos Islands is a crime against humanity as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; and how they intend to respond to those allegations. [HL10143]

Baroness Sugg: The UK does not accept this characterisation of the removal of Chagossians from the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), or subsequent treatment of former inhabitants. Nor is this a description used by either the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its Advisory Opinion, or the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Tribunal members in the Award in respect of the circumstances of the removal of Chagossians.

The UK Government has expressed sincere regret about the manner in which Chagossians were removed from BIOT in the 1960s and 1970s. While it has decided not to support resettlement, the UK Government is determined to address the aspirations of Chagossians which make them seek to resettle, which are the desire for better lives, and the desire to maintain a connection to the Territory.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with business representative organisations about the impact of COVID-19. [HL10006]

Lord Callanan: Ministers and officials have engaged closely with business representation organisations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and we continue to do so.

BEIS Ministers hold regular sector calls, with all the industries that BEIS covers, including but not limited to manufacturing, energy, construction, life sciences, professional services, retail and hospitality. The industry representatives include business organisations and trade associations. We use these on-going engagements to collect direct intelligence on the impacts of Covid-19 on industries and sectors that informs the response from BEIS and other Government departments and ensures the effectiveness of the Government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what formula they use to calculate the amount of additional financial support for businesses in areas at (1) very high, and (2) high, COVID-19 alert levels. [HL10008]

Lord Callanan: During the period of national restrictions, all areas of England will be provided with funding to support both closed and severely impacted businesses.

Areas that were subject to Local Covid Alert Level 2 (High) or equivalent restrictions for the period from the 1st August will be allocated funding via the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) to run local discretionary grant schemes. This means that businesses most impacted by the restrictions can be supported: the appropriate level of grant is for Local Authorities to determine bearing in mind the size of business, its fixed costs and the severity of impact suffered.

Where areas were subject during this period to Local Covid Alert Level 3 (Very High) restrictions Local Authorities will receive an allocation of funding via the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) to provide grants of up to £3,000 per four week period to those businesses that have been required by local restrictions to close.

Information on these schemes is available in guidance to local authorities which was published on 3rd November and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the business sectors which have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and what discussions they have had with such sectors. [HL10009]

Lord Callanan: The Government knows that many areas of the economy face challenges, especially sectors that have closed under new national restrictions, such as hospitality. That is why we have extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to the end of March 2021 and provided an unprecedented support package, including grants, job support, loans, business rate holidays, VAT cuts and additional financial support through local authorities.

Calcifediol: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of Calcifediol in the treatment of COVID-19. [HL10048]

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the pilot clinical trials of Calcifediol in the treatment of COVID-19 at the Reina Sofia University Hospital in Cordoba, Spain; and, if not, whether they plan to do so in the future. [HL10050]

Lord Bethell: A rapid review by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), published in June 2020, concluded there was no evidence to support taking

vitamin D supplements, such as Calcifediol (a form of vitamin D), to reduce the risk or severity of COVID-19.

In addition, a rapid review by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), published in June 2020, concluded that evidence currently does not support vitamin D supplementation to prevent acute respiratory tract infections in the general population of the United Kingdom.

Both NICE and SACN reviews emphasised the existing advice that vitamin D is essential for musculoskeletal health.

In September 2020, NICE published a Medicines Evidence Commentary on the clinical trial of Calcifediol in the treatment of COVID-19 by Castillo et al (2020). The Commentary concluded that “the study has many confounders so the results should be interpreted with caution. The clinical management of patients with COVID-19 should not be changed based on the results of this study.” The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has asked NICE and Public Health England to re-review the evidence on vitamin D and COVID-19, due to be published mid-December 2020.

Carers: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by Carers UK *Caring behind closed doors: 6 months on*, published on 20 October, what additional support they intend to provide for carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL9374]

Lord Bethell: The Government recognises the vital role unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period and we continue to work closely with carer's organisations to support them.

During the pandemic, we have provided funding to Carers UK. They have extended their support phoneline, produced a leaflet to help carers identify themselves on discharge from hospital and published guidance specifically for carers and young carers, which includes further information about sources of support.

We have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance to help make decisions on restarting services and to provide quality care safely. In addition, through the Government's Infection Control Fund, we have extended some of this funding to be used to support day services adopt infection control measures to help them reopen safely.

Cheltenham Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments

*Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to reinstate 24-hour opening of Cheltenham General Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department. [HL9132]

Lord Bethell: The temporary closure of the accident and emergency (A&E) department at Cheltenham General Hospital has been agreed until 31 March 2021.

Any temporary closures that have been put in place for the pandemic are just that – temporary – and the One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System are committed to the future restoration of the A&E department in Cheltenham. Once reinstated, the service will remain consultant-led and with no change to its pre-COVID-19 opening hours.

China: Human Rights

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that details of human rights activists working in China were allegedly shared with the government of China by the UN Human Rights Council; what steps, if any, they intend to take in response to those allegations; and what plans they have to clarify whether any British citizens' details were so shared. [HL9972]

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to call for an inquiry into the allegations that the UN Human Rights Council shared details of human rights activists in China with the government of China. [HL9974]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is aware of these reports and has made a number of enquiries into them. We note that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has said it stopped the practice of occasionally confirming the names of UN Human Rights Council participants to States in 2015 and does not believe that it has resulted in harm to any participants. We will continue to monitor the situation.

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of China has harassed human rights activists working in that country to support Uighurs; and what steps they have taken to assist those activists. [HL9973]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by the arbitrary detention of over a million Uyghurs in Xinjiang, including advocates of Uyghurs' rights, culture, language and religion. We engage with a range of human rights defenders, including Uyghur and non-Uyghur and those based outside of China, to better understand what is happening in Xinjiang. This informs our response to the violation and abuses in Xinjiang. Human rights defenders play an essential role in promoting and protecting democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of ending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on employment levels. [HL10010]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On 5 November, the Chancellor announced an extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of March 2021, to ensure jobs and businesses are protected through the winter.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Wales

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the extension of the paid benefits of the Job Retention Scheme following the announcement of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.4) Regulations 2020, will be fully backdated to 23 October for Wales. [HL9986]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The CJRS has been available in Wales throughout the pandemic. Eligible employers in Wales would have been able to furlough their employees in October and furloughed employees will have received at least 80% of their wages. The CJRS, which was recently extended to the end of March 2021, has always been available UK-wide and all changes to the scheme apply UK-wide, as they have done throughout the pandemic.

To further support the whole UK, the Chancellor recently announced an increase of £2 billion to the upfront guaranteed funding for the devolved administrations. For Wales, this means an increase to £5 billion of support on top of their Spring Budget funding.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by *Baroness McGregor-Smith*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic impact of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.4) Regulations 2020. [HL9996]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As the Chancellor said in his letter to the TSC on 4 November, HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent OBR. They will publish their next forecast on 25 November.

In addition, within their statutory mandates, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) produce analysis which reflect their independent judgements regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the likely path of the economy. They updated their projections in their Monetary Policy Report published on 5 November. This reflected UK restrictions announced up to 31 October, including "heightened England-wide measures for the

period 5 November to 2 December". In this scenario, GDP was revised downwards and is now expected to contract by 2% in Q4 reflecting the impact of stricter measures to control Covid-19.

Coronavirus: Hospitals

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the potential bed capacity at each of the NHS Nightingale hospitals; and what is the expected timetable for bringing them into use in the near future. [HL9773]

Lord Bethell: The overall capacity of Nightingale hospitals is not fixed and can be scaled according to requirement. As part of their comprehensive activation plans, each Nightingale team has developed a clinical model that can be scaled up as and when additional capacity is required in the region. This ensures that the right skill mix of staff will be available from National Health Service trusts in the region and via NHS Professionals and through direct recruitment if required.

Coronavirus: Licensed Premises

Asked by *Lord Smith of Hindhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether premises operating under a Club Premises Certificate are permitted to continue to supply alcohol to members without providing a substantial meal in any area within Tier 3 of the COVID-19 restrictions. [HL9796]

Lord Bethell: Until 3 December, tier requirements will not apply because of the new national restrictions. As part of the national restrictions, however, we continue to recognise providing informal social care to relatives and vulnerable people is of the highest importance.

The local Covid alert level Very High restrictions are designed to reduce the transmission of the virus. In so doing all bars and public houses are closed, similarly restaurants and cafes can remain open only if they serve a substantial meal, alcohol may only be served with a substantial meal. The same applies to private members clubs; they are prohibited from staying open if they simply serve alcohol. They may remain open if they serve substantial meals and may serve alcohol with the same.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by *Lord Warner*

Her Majesty's Government whether NHS patients will be able to obtain through their GPs a test to establish if they have COVID-19 as part of their NHS primary care services; and if so, when. [HL5260]

Lord Bethell: With the support of NHS England, we have been piloting COVID-19 swab testing in a small number of general practices around the United Kingdom. The aim was to improve access to testing by enabling general practitioners to test symptomatic patients who present to general practice settings, when deemed it

clinically appropriate, for example for some patients who are vulnerable and may otherwise struggle to access a test through the main testing routes.

Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 tests return a false-positive result in relation (1) to the total number of tests conducted, and (2) as a ratio of positive results in England; and how such figures compare with the figures for such results in (1) Northern Ireland, (2) Scotland, and (3) Wales. [HL8056]

Lord Bethell: The information is not held in the format requested.

All tests have been assessed as performing to manufacturers' specifications before being used. The current tests are very specific and the risk of false positives, where the test is reacting to other viruses, is extremely low in the order of less than one in 500. Like any diagnostic test however, there is always the small possibility of a false negative or a false positive result.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether people considered clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 will automatically be considered a priority for a COVID-19 vaccination, regardless of age. [HL9735]

Lord Bethell: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who provide advice to Government on which vaccine(s) the United Kingdom should use, and which groups to prioritise. The JCVI and the JCVI sub-committee are currently reviewing evidence on clinical risk factors associated with serious disease and mortality from COVID-19, including the risk in those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. Following a review of the evidence, the Committee will develop advice on risk groups for any future COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Eating Disorders: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Parminter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that providers of the proposed new weight management services (1) receive training on eating disorders, and (2) can work with eating disorder services to appropriately support those requiring treatment for binge eating disorder. [HL9738]

Lord Bethell: Further details about the measures on weight management announced in *Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives* will be available later in the year.

Diagnosing and treating eating disorders is an important area of medical practice. It is included within the

curriculum for training all doctors, including for general practitioners, where most eating disorders initially present and in more depth within training for psychiatry, particularly child and adolescent psychiatrists.

Employment

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to introduce the Employment Bill announced in the Queen's Speech. [HL9975]

Lord Callanan: In the Queen's Speech, we announced we will bring forward measures to deliver on a range of Manifesto commitments.

Our legislation will make workplaces fairer, by providing better support for working families, new protections for those in low-paid work, and by encouraging flexible working.

It is important that we work closely with stakeholders to make sure we get the legislation right, and we will bring forward details of the Employment Bill in due course.

Energy: Training

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the total number of trained energy assessors, (2) the percentage of such assessors who have completed PAS 2030 training, and (3) the average time taken to secure an energy assessment in each region of the UK. [HL9977]

Lord Callanan: Based on data from The Property Energy Professionals Association (PEPA), there are currently approximately 10-12,000 trained, and practicing, Domestic Energy Assessors (DEAs); this includes DEAs who have lodged assessments in the last 2 years.

PEPA is a trade body which represents companies that are engaged in the provision of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) in the domestic sector and members of the Association are primarily composed of the accreditation companies that oversee energy assessors in the production of EPCs. They also cover energy assessors in the non-domestic sector for the provision of Display Energy Certificates (DECs).

The average time to secure an energy assessment is 5 working days unless there are property complexities where further evidence is required; the maximum time permitted then is 28 days. For sales and rentals, an energy assessment must be ordered within the first 7 days of a property going onto the market, however the vast majority are completed within 5 working days. The energy assessors routinely adapt to fluctuations in demand.

PAS 2030 is a technical standard for the installation of specific measures (such as solid wall and loft insulation) and does not cover energy assessments or assessors.

Fly Pop: Finance

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what environmental requirements they have imposed on FlyPop as a condition of the funding they awarded to that company; what are the requirements of that funding in relation to Civil Aviation Authority registration; and what due diligence processes were applied to that funding decision. [[HL10002](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Future Fund provides Government loans to UK-based companies, ranging from £125,000 to £5 million. In terms of eligibility, firms qualify for the loans as long as they are able to attract at least equal match funding from private investors, and subject to both firms and investors meeting all the requirements of the scheme. The scheme was launched for firms who are at pre-profit or pre-revenue stage, and who may be ineligible for the various COVID loan schemes, as these firms rely on equity finance rather than debt. The Future Fund does not impose additional conditions on eligible businesses.

The British Business Bank, which manages the Future Fund, has established strong due diligence processes which are built into the portal to ensure firms and investors prove their eligibility. The portal also asks for documentation from investors, firms, and their solicitors, to carry out 'Know Your Customer' and anti-money laundering checks, as well as general fraud checks. These measures ensure that fraudulent activity is avoided, in addition to ensuring that the funds have been allocated correctly to the applicant.

Gambling: Children

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings from the Gambling Commission's 2020 Young People and Gambling Survey; and what steps they are taking to reduce problem gambling among 11 to 16-year olds. [[HL10105](#)]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Gambling Commission and Ipsos Mori Young People & Gambling 2020 Technical Report, published in August, in particular its finding that the number of 11 to 16 year-olds classified as problem gamblers had risen from 1.7 per cent in 2019 to 1.9 per cent in 2020; and what discussions they have had with the Gambling Commission about ways in which problem gambling by children can be reduced. [[HL10245](#)]

Baroness Barran: Protecting children and vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling is a priority for government, and the government and the Gambling Commission work closely together on that

issue. Gambling operators must abide by strict requirements for the protection of children and are subject to sanction by the Commission if they breach these rules. In May 2019 the Commission strengthened protections further to prevent children engaging in illegal underage gambling online by requiring operators to verify age and identity before allowing customers to deposit money or place a bet.

Since September 2020 teaching about the risks related to online gambling has been included in the Health Education curriculum, which is compulsory for pupils in state-funded schools. This is in addition to initiatives by third-sector bodies, including the PSHE Association's resources to help teachers educate their pupils about the risks of gambling and how to avoid them, and the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust's (YGAM) training and tools for teachers, youth workers, mental health specialists and others who work with children and young people.

The Gambling Commission conducts an annual survey of gambling activity by children and young people. The outbreak of Covid 19 halted fieldwork for the 2020 survey before it was finished, which meant that the survey's sample size was significantly smaller than in previous years and that no surveys were completed in Wales. The Commission has made clear that results of the 2020 survey are therefore not representative of Great Britain and should not be compared to those of previous years. However, we have noted the information carefully as we do all research and data relating to children and gambling.

The government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age and further details will be announced in due course.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the Green Homes Grant fund has been (1) applied for, and (2) paid out. [[HL9978](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Green Homes Grant opened to applications on 30th September 2020. As of 6th November 2020, 34,027 grant applications have been received. The first vouchers have been issued, however will only become redeemable once scheduled works are completed. BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

HMS Queen Elizabeth

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the anticipated deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth to the Pacific is part of a wider policy for an increase in the UK's involvement in international Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea. [[HL10025](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The deployment of HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH will demonstrate the UK's commitment to upholding a rules-based international system and showcase our world-leading carrier capability. Detailed planning continues but the Government has yet to announce its programme or destination. Once plans have been agreed, the Government will bring a statement on the deployment before Parliament.

The UK has enduring interests in the region and is committed to maintaining regional security, including asserting its rights to freedom of navigation and overflight as laid out in UNCLOS. Wherever the Royal Navy operate, they do so in full compliance with international laws and norms and exercise their rights to freedom of navigation and overflight provided for by UNCLOS.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the anticipated deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth to the Pacific is part of a new regional foreign policy strategy; and if so, what is that new strategy. [HL10026]

Baroness Goldie: The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly important for the UK, as it is at the centre of global economic growth, and a region of increasing geostrategic significance. Across Government, plans are being developed for broader and deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. These plans will be informed by the Integrated Review.

Holidays: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by Which?, published on 3 November, that found that over £1 billion is owed to consumers who have had to cancel holidays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps they are taking to ensure that those customers receive the refunds to which they are entitled. [HL10005]

Lord Callanan: The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has issued guidance to explain to consumers and business the circumstances when refunds are due as a consequence of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. The Government has always been clear that these refunds must be paid when asked for by the consumer.

The CMA has written to over 100 package holiday firms to remind them of their obligations to comply with consumer protection law, and has already secured refund commitments from TUI UK, Sykes Cottages, Vacation Rentals and Virgin Holidays. If the CMA finds evidence that companies are failing to comply with the law, the CMA will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include taking a firm to court if it does not address its concerns.

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 Centre for Progressive Policy From precarious to prosperous, published on 27 October; and what plans they have to introduce a minimum wage for the self-employed. [HL10024]

Lord Callanan: This Government is determined to tackle unfair working practices. As announced in the Queens' Speech, we will bring forward an Employment Bill in due course, to make workplaces fairer, and provide new protections for those in low-paid work and the gig economy.

An individual's employment rights – such as the right to the National Minimum Wage - are determined by their employment status (employee, worker or self-employed). Employment law doesn't cover self-employed people in most cases because they are their own boss and are responsible for the success of their own business.

We recently announced an extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to continue to support self-employed individuals who are experiencing reduced demand or cannot trade due to the effect of coronavirus.

We are increasing the overall level of the grant to 80% of trading profits covering November to January for all parts of the UK. This provides equivalent support to the self-employed as we are providing to employees through the government contribution in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

This is £7.3 billion of support to the self-employed through November to January alone, with a further grant to follow covering February to April. This comes on top of £13.7 billion of support for self-employed people so far, one of the most comprehensive and generous support packages for the self-employed anywhere in the world.

Lung Diseases: Health Services

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation Recovery and reset for respiratory: restoring and improving basic care for patients with lung disease, published in October. [HL9289]

Lord Bethell: The report, published by Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, has been noted by officials. The recommendations within the report are welcomed, as there is currently working on going in these areas.

General practitioners and their teams have played and continue to play a crucial role in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in ensuring that people can get the care they need - between March and August 122.8 million appointments took place in general practice.

Available data indicates that there were over 2.5 million online consultations submissions and over 195,000 video consultations. While appointment numbers dipped at the outset of the pandemic, activity has now returned to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with manufacturers about the impact of COVID-19 on jobs. [[HL10007](#)]

Lord Callanan: Manufacturing is a critical part of our economy, and the Department continues to regularly engage with industry, suppliers, and trade associations to ensure that we can support our manufacturing sectors during and after the Covid-19 crisis. We have made £2 billion in Government-backed finance available to manufacturers through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and £2.3 billion through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme to help firms keep operating. We have also provided support totalling £4.78 billion through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended to March 2021 to protect people's wages and manufacturing jobs across the UK.

The Government is also continuing to support growth in the sector through investments into: Made Smarter, to help manufacturers reap the benefits of industrial digital technology; the High Value Manufacturing Catapult network, to support manufacturers in commercialising innovation, and; innovation programmes such as the Automotive Transformation Fund to ensure the UK can unlock future markets and lead future industries. Through our Lifetime Skills Guarantee we are also making it easier for people to retrain for jobs of the future.

Military Alliances

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Goldie on 4 November (HL Deb, col 695), what discussions they have had with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations about the potential for future interactions with the Five Power Defence Arrangements. [[HL10142](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The UK Government has made no representations to Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations about future interactions with the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA). Any representations of this nature would require the involvement and consensus of all five FPDA members. As we look towards FPDA's 50th Anniversary in 2021, the UK looks forward to continuing

and enhancing our FPDA engagement as a demonstration of our steadfast commitment to the Arrangements.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

*Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the process for a complaint to be made against a company that has failed to make a disclosure under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. [[HL9993](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. [[HL9994](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The landmark transparency provisions contained in section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report annually on their work to prevent and address modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

Under the current provisions, if a commercial organisation does not comply with the duty to provide a modern slavery statement, the Home Secretary can apply for a court injunction which mandates compliance. The Government has also committed to considering enforcement options in line with the ongoing development of the Single Enforcement Body for employment rights, led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

However, if someone has concerns about an organisation's modern slavery statement they could write to the Board of Directors (or equivalent) as the Act requires a modern slavery statement to be approved by the Board and signed by a Director (or equivalent) to ensure senior level accountability for modern slavery. The Government expects an organisation's senior leadership to take responsibility for their company's modern slavery statement to ensure they are a fair reflection of the circumstances and the action they are taking.

The Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, which was commissioned in 2018 and delivered its final report in 2019, credited section 54 with making modern slavery "a business-critical issue" and increasing "board-level scrutiny and engagement."

The Independent Review also made recommendations designed to improve the effectiveness of the Act's transparency provisions. The Government accepted the majority of the Review's recommendations and on 9 July 2019 the Home Office launched a public consultation seeking views on proposals to strengthen the Act's transparency legislation.

Following widespread support from a broad coalition of business, civil society and public sector respondents, the Government response, published on 22 September 2020, committed to taking forwards an ambitious package of changes to strengthen and future-proof transparency, including:

- Extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more;
- Mandating the specific reporting topics statements must cover;
- Requiring organisations to publish their statement on the new Government digital reporting service;
- Setting a single reporting deadline by which all modern slavery statements must be published.

Addressing modern slavery risks is a complex, long-term task, and the new measures are designed to incentivise organisations to demonstrate year-on-year progress in key areas and take targeted action based on where their risks are highest.

Mozambique: Islamic State

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to the beheadings of people in Mozambique by Islamic State. [[HL10151](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is appalled by reports of beheadings of civilians in Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique, and remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation there. On 10 November, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Africa publicly condemned the recent attacks. The British High Commissioner to Maputo also spoke out publicly.

We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability in northern Mozambique, including through engagement with the Government of Mozambique's regional development authority in Cabo Delgado, and by providing targeted technical assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. The Minister for Africa spoke to Foreign Minister Macamo on 23 July, noting Mozambique's efforts to address the causes of instability through the creation of the Integrated Department for the Development of Northern Mozambique (ADIN), and to encourage a holistic approach to tackling the insurgency.

Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for the provision of further security guarantees to assist those living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; and what steps they are taking to monitor and assess clashes and casualties along the 'line of contact' in that region. [[HL10014](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government has not made an assessment on the case for further security guarantees to assist those living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Any such mechanism should be agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, under the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. The UK Government continues to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group and Minsk Group Co-

Chairs in calling for immediate de-escalation and a return to the negotiating table without pre-conditions.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the scale, and (2) the ferocity, of offensives in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; what representations they have received about fears of ethnic cleansing of Armenian Christians; and what plans they have to call for urgent intervention at international level in line with the UN's Responsibility to Protect agreement. [[HL10015](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government welcomes the news that the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to a ceasefire. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood has spoken to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister four times, most recently on 13 November and spoken to the Armenian Foreign Minister three times, most recently on 28 October. The UK Government has seen no evidence that ethnic cleansing is taking place or will take place and has no plans to call for urgent intervention at the international level. The UK Government continues to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group and Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Nagorno Karabakh: White Phosphorus

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made (1) to the government of Azerbaijan, and (2) at the United Nations, about the alleged use of white phosphorus by the Azerbaijan military against Armenian civilian targets. [[HL10013](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is aware of reports that white phosphorus has been used, by both parties, although we have not made an assessment of these allegations. These claims are incredibly difficult to authenticate. Her Majesty's Government strongly supports the appropriate national and international accountability mechanisms to investigate and report on allegations of violations/breaches of international law. At the current time, we have not made representations to either Government or the United Nations. However, we continue to monitor the situation with concern.

National Institute for Health Protection: Public Appointments

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what appointment or recruitment process, if any, was applied to the appointment of the chair of the National Institute of Health Protection. [[HL7591](#)]

Lord Bethell: Baroness Harding was appointed interim Chair of the National Institute of Health Protection on 18 August 2020 by the Prime Minister, while recruitment for a permanent candidate is completed. Baroness Harding

receives no remuneration for this role or as Head of NHS Test and Trace.

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the appointment of the interim Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection was made in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments. [HL7726]

Lord Bethell: Baroness Harding was appointed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection on an interim basis to urgently help establish the Institute. The Institute has not yet been formed. If when established as a public body, any roles meet the criteria for inclusion on the Public Appointments Order in Council, they will be added to the Order and the appointment process will follow the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of the Code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long the interim Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection is expected to remain in post. [HL7727]

Lord Bethell: Baroness Harding will remain interim Chair of the National Institute of Health Protection while the recruitment process is ongoing and while a handover takes place with the permanent candidate.

NHS England: Directors

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there are no BAME executive directors at NHS England. [HL8991]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement have been working jointly since 1 April 2019. Their Executive Group spans both organisations and includes Prerana Issar, Chief People Officer for the National Health Service, who was appointed 1 April 2019 as a National Director.

Their Board is formed by the Executive Group (National Directors), Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors. The Executive Directors listed on both NHS England and NHS Improvement websites are voting members of the Board for each organisation.

NHS: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of staff working for the NHS through wholly-owned subsidiaries not being included in workforce race equality standard figures; and what plans they have to ensure those staff are included in future figures. [HL9353]

Lord Bethell: The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) applies to all organisations providing National Health Service healthcare services under the full-length version of the NHS standard contract. The status and reporting by NHS trust subsidiary companies, outsourcing and subcontracting service providers is being reviewed by the WRES strategic advisory group. We anticipate the outcome of this review in the coming months and will apply recommendations to future data collections.

Nigeria: Abduction

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what capacity building of Anti-Kidnap Coordination Units took place as a result of the Nigeria Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme; how was this capacity built; and how the programme continues to be used in achieving its declared objectives of increasing public confidence in Nigeria's law enforcement capabilities, and reducing harm to hostages and victims [HL10038]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the effectiveness of the Nigeria: Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme in reducing kidnappings and abductions, and (2) how the programme has been used to assist abducted girls, including Leah Sharibu, subjected to sexual violence. [HL10148]

Baroness Sugg: The Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme in Nigeria provides mentoring and capacity building for units of the Nigerian Police Force to improve border security and anti-kidnap capacity, and respond to organised crime groups in Nigeria. The anti-kidnap capacity building features training for Anti-Kidnap Senior Investigation Officers that meets international standards and embeds human rights compliance including on digital forensics handling to enhance evidence collection and negotiation skills for female officers. This helps anti-kidnap coordination units reduce the harm to kidnap victims by seeking to reduce the longevity of capture and hold those responsible to account. The programme also provides mentoring to officers of the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition in Trafficking of Persons to help them counter the trafficking of women and girls. Kidnappings have increased in recent years in Nigeria so this work remains vital in helping to tackle the threat. Effectively tackling and reducing organised crime in Nigeria, including kidnaps, will improve domestic and international confidence, and support increased trade and investment in Nigeria, improving Nigeria's potential to achieve long-term sustainable economic growth.

This specific programme is designed to help counter criminal, rather than terrorist, activity. The Government has offered and provided separate support in response to the abduction of people by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), including

Leah Sharibu. Following the attack on Leah's school in Dapchi, the then Foreign Secretary spoke to the Nigerian Vice President to offer UK assistance in the recovery of the missing girls. The UK Government has repeatedly called for the release of all those abducted by Boko Haram and ISWA, including Leah Sharibu, and remains committed to supporting the Nigerian Government to secure their release. The Prime Minister's former Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief met Leah's mother in February and reaffirmed the UK Government's support to Nigerian Government efforts to tackle terrorism. In March, the Minister for Africa reiterated to Parliament the UK Government's condemnation of all attacks by terrorist groups in North East Nigeria. We will continue to engage with the Government of Nigeria in support of urgent action to secure the return of Leah Sharibu and all abductees.

Nigeria: Organised Crime

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Nigeria: Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme in reducing cocaine trafficking and organised crime in Nigeria; and what assessment they have made of Nigeria remaining in the top five source countries for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to the UK. [HL10149]

Baroness Sugg: The Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme in Nigeria, led by the National Crime Agency, provides mentoring and capacity-building for units of the Nigerian Police Force to improve border security and anti-kidnap capacity and respond to organised crime groups in Nigeria. The includes mentoring to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency on countering narcotics trafficking. This has helped lead to the seizure of 101 kilos of cocaine by the Nigerian authorities in the past three years from Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Lagos.

The Government condemns all incidents of modern slavery. In 2017, at the UN General Assembly, the then Prime Minister was joined by other world leaders to launch the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. Since then, the Government has remained focused on implementing the Call to Action and encouraging member states to devise national action plans and deliver on their own commitments. Nigeria is no longer in the top 5 source countries for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to the UK, and was ranked 9th in 2019 with 259 individuals referred to the UK National Referral Mechanism. Tackling modern slavery in countries in which we see high numbers trafficked to the UK, including Nigeria, remains a priority. To help tackle the issue, at the UN General Assembly in 2018, the UK co-hosted a modern slavery event with countries including Nigeria. The event incorporated private sector participants who emphasised the critical role of businesses in

eliminating modern slavery from supply chains. We run the Stamping Out Slavery in Nigeria programme, which aims to strengthen victim support systems, raise awareness of the dangers of modern slavery, address the social norms that facilitate it and strengthen the coalition of actors tackling modern slavery. Additionally, through the UK's Modern Slavery Fund, we are providing £5 million to a programme in Nigeria to help stop people falling into slavery, catch offenders and support victims.

Nigeria: Police

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the Nigeria Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme, (2) how much the programme cost, and (3) what indicators have been used to assess its success or failure. [HL10037]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is committed to tackling organised crime and corruption around the world. As part of this work, the UK Government, through the National Crime Agency, delivers a Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme in Nigeria. The programme provides mentoring and capacity building for units of the Nigerian Police Force to improve border security and anti-kidnap capacity, and to respond to organised crime groups in Nigeria. The programme budget was £3.1 million for 2019/20.

The Nigeria Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme is evaluated each year. External consultants have been used to evaluate the programme in some years. It was given a grade A rating for meeting expectations in 2019/20. It was also assessed that the programme represents good value for money and that the project successfully integrates gender and equality issues into delivery. All UK programmes are provided in adherence with the UK Government's Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidance. We will continue to support police reform in Nigeria, working with the Nigerian Government and international and civil society partners to improve its transparency and accountability, in line with its human rights obligations.

Nuclear Energy

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of nuclear energy in the UK. [HL10011]

Lord Callanan: The Government believes that nuclear power will play a key role in our future energy mix alongside other technologies, such as renewables. Nuclear is the only technology that is currently proven that can be deployed on a sufficiently large scale to provide continuous low-carbon power, which will help us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The forthcoming Energy White Paper will address changes to our energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth as we deliver on our net zero target.

Scoliosis: Children

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government what new guidance for the treatment of children with scoliosis has been developed since the withdrawal of the MAGEC system. [HL9342]

Lord Bethell: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have advised that they are currently in the process of reviewing guidance on the MAGEC system in the treatment of people with scoliosis. A robust investigation is currently ongoing to determine whether the benefits of these devices continue to outweigh the risks. In the interim, alternative treatments are available for children with scoliosis, such as casts, back braces and other surgical procedures. The MHRA will consider the use of MAGEC rods on a case-by-case basis where clinicians deem it to be essential.

Any significant change in status to the availability of the MAGEC system in the United Kingdom, will be updated in guidance when appropriate.

Self-employed: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding in the report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies Income protection for the self-employed and employees during the coronavirus crisis, published on 2 April, that 18 per cent of self-employed individuals are ineligible for COVID-19 financial support; and what steps they are taking to expand access to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. [HL10023]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has been a generous support to many but we have tried to target it at those who need it most. The SEISS has a maximum £50,000 threshold for average trading profits and a requirement to earn more than 50% of your income from self-employment.

The self-employed are very diverse and have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times, and in some cases with substantial alternative forms of income too: for example, those who had more than £50,000 from trading profits in 2018-19 had an average total income of more than £200,000. Around 95 per cent of those with more than half their income from self-employment in 2018-19 could be eligible for this scheme.

As previously announced, new, clearer eligibility criteria have been introduced for the third SEISS grant to ensure it will only be available to self-employed traders who intend to continue to trade and, due to COVID-19,

are either facing reduced demand or are temporarily unable to carry out their business. Full guidance on the eligibility criteria will be published in due course, before the scheme opens.

The Government has acknowledged that it hasn't been able to support everyone in the exact way they would want. Those ineligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support available. This includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

Social Security Benefits: Mental Health

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to respond to the report by the University of Glasgow and the Health Foundation, Mental health, welfare conditionality and employment support: Policy recommendations and key findings, published in October. [HL10042]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The University of Glasgow and the Health Foundation's report offers useful insights. We take these issues seriously and will consider the recommendations and key findings alongside the work on the forthcoming Health and Disability Support Green Paper, which will explore how the welfare system can better meet the needs of disabled people and people with health conditions. Improving employment support will be a key theme of the Green Paper.

Tax Allowances: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Sherlock

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is any process in place to speed up the provision of tax rebates to people whose income has been affected by COVID-19. [HL10017]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC does not have a process to identify customers whose income has been affected by Covid-19 and speed up tax rebates to them. HMRC seeks to return all identified tax rebates to all customers as quickly as possible.

Television Licences: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 3 November (HL9410), (1) whether they will now answer the question put, namely, which regulations set the frequency and amount of instalments by which TV licence fees can be paid; what are the prescribed (a) weekly, (b) monthly, and (c) quarterly, instalment amounts of such fees, and (2) whether there is any prohibition in the regulations governing the TV licence fee on the payment of the fee by cheque. [HL9980]

Baroness Barran: The regulations which set the frequency and amount of instalments by which TV licence fees can be paid are the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004. The Communications (Television Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 provided the amended instalment amounts for the period beginning 1 April 2020.

However, the actual frequency and amount of the instalments for a TV licence may be affected by the payment method chosen or the individual circumstances of the customer, such as the date of renewal or whether the customer had a period of unlicensed use before the renewal. Payments may also be affected if the customer is in the first year of their TV licence, which is often paid for over the first 6 months of the licence period, and in some cases must be paid for upfront.

The TV Licensing website sets out that licence fee instalment amounts for a weekly or fortnightly payment licence are set out in an individual payment plan when a customer signs up for a Payment Card: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/payment-card>.

The TV Licensing website also sets the monthly, quarterly and annual payment instalments for direct debit plans: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/direct-debit>.

For customers moving to the BBC's 75+ payment plan, the BBC issued a general notice setting out the weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalment amounts which are payable: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/consultation/age-related-tv-licence-policy/general-notice>.

Certain customers can also pay for their TV licence in monthly or fortnightly instalments as part of the Simple Payment Plan, which is a payment instalment scheme specifically designed for people who struggle to pay the TV licence fee. These instalments can be found in the Communications (Television Licensing) (Amendment) (No.2) 2020.

There is no provision in the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004 which prohibits the payment of the TV licence fee by cheque. However it is the BBC, not the government, that administers these schemes and is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the licence fee, including methods of payment. TV Licensing's website explains that, at

present, only annual licence fee payments can be made by cheque: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/cheque-or-postal-order>.

TrustMark

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the number, and (2) the capacity, of Trustmark assessors relative to service demand; what is the average waiting time for an assessment in each region of the UK; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the announcement on the Green Homes Grant on those figures. [HL9976]

Lord Callanan: The Green Homes Grant scheme has been designed to help stimulate economic recovery and create and support tens of thousands of green jobs. As of 2nd November, there were 1,141 businesses that are TrustMark registered and hold the necessary certifications to install measures under the voucher scheme.

BEIS officials are working closely with the industry to increase the number of installers available and with TrustMark scheme providers and certification bodies to support installers to get certified as quickly as possible, including streamlining certification processes where possible. We are also supporting the growth of the industry through 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.

Unmanned Air Vehicles

Asked by Baroness Stern

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 30 July (HL7182), whether RAF drones used on operations outside of Operation Shader are being used in support of NATO operations or missions. [HL10122]

Baroness Goldie: REAPER is an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform. We do not comment on intelligence matters and I am therefore withholding the information as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

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