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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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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
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
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
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
Lord Stewart of Direleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
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

Monday, 30 November 2020

Retail Opening Hours: Christmas and Covid-19

[HLWS602]

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 wish to update the House on relaxing local restrictions to enable retail opening hours to be extended in England for Christmas.

On Monday 23 November, the Government published its Covid Winter Plan which will see the return to a regional tier approach to restrictions in England from 2 December. In all tiers, shops will be allowed to reopen, giving people the opportunity to shop for gifts for family and friends in the run up to Christmas. The Government recognises the efforts and investment that retailers have made to ensure their premises are Covid-Secure; this has been reflected by the fact that the best available Public Health England and NHS Track and Trace data shows there is at present no evidence of significant increased risk of virus transmission in retail premises. Government asked non-essential retailers to close as part of wider restrictions to limit social mixing in November, once those restrictions have been lifted consumers and retail staff can have confidence to return to our high streets.

We have been working closely with senior representatives from the retail sector, local authorities, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Public Health England to plan for a safe and successful reopening of non-essential retail on 2 December. To ensure the reopening of shops is safe and in line with social distancing rules given the high volume of shoppers expected before Christmas and the subsequent sales in January, the Government wants to see retailers given the option to extend their daily opening hours from Monday to Saturday. This will help to spread footfall, ease transport pressures and make shopping in a socially distanced way easier by giving shoppers greater flexibility to choose when they shop and avoid peak times.

Restrictions on shop opening hours on weekday and Saturdays were removed by section 23 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. However, many retailers are subject to local controls through planning conditions which restrict opening times, particularly in the early morning, evening and at night, to make the development acceptable to local residents who might otherwise suffer from noise and other local amenity issues.

Given the exceptional circumstances as a result of the coronavirus, the purpose of this Written Ministerial Statement, which comes into effect from 2 December, is

to make clear that, as a matter of urgency, local planning authorities should take a positive approach to their engagement with retailers to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to the temporary extension of retail opening times in December and January.

In particular, local planning authorities, having regard to their legal obligations, should not seek to undertake planning enforcement action which would result in the unnecessary restriction of retail hours during this period. The National Planning Policy Framework already emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

Where appropriate, local planning authorities should also highlight this temporary relaxation to retailers in their area so that they can take advantage of longer opening hours if they wish to do so.

The Government recognises that longer retail opening hours could have a temporary impact on local residents, but this needs to be balanced by the significant public interest in ensuring there is a safe retail environment during this busy period; in helping local residents undertake Christmas shopping given many shops have been closed over the last month; and in supporting the commercial viability of local shops in England's high streets and town centres during this challenging period.

This Written Ministerial Statement also confirms that my previous statement to the House of 13 March 2020 about planning enforcement and the delivery of food and other essential goods to retailers during the coronavirus pandemic will remain in place until 31 March 2021 because continued flexibility is necessary to ensure access to food and essential goods in light of ongoing impacts of coronavirus. The statement made on 13 March 2020 is withdrawn with effect from the beginning of 1 April 2021, unless circumstances justify its further extension, in which case a further statement would be made to the House.

Telecoms: 5G Diversification Strategy

[HLWS603]

Baroness Barran: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden CBE MP, has made the following statement:

I wish to inform the House that the Government has today published its 5G Diversification Strategy, which sets out the Government's approach to building a resilient, open and sustainable 5G supply chain.

Digital connectivity is now a core part of the everyday lives of millions of people across the UK. It is fundamentally changing the way we live, work and spend time together.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, connectivity has allowed us to stay in touch with family and friends, and to

stay plugged in while working remotely and access the content and services we need.

With more and more activity happening online, ensuring security in the networks which provide our connectivity is of paramount importance to this Government.

Looking forward, we are now developing world-class next generation technologies, such as 5G and full fibre, which will promote greater connection, drive growth and provide us with the services of the future. But to fully realise the benefits of these technological advances, we need to have confidence in the security and resilience of the infrastructure on which they are built.

That is why we conducted the Telecoms Supply Chain Review to look at the long-term security of our 5G and full fibre networks. It is why in January we announced our decision to exclude high risk vendors from the core of the network, exclude high risk vendors from sensitive sites, and limit their overall presence in the access network to 35%. It is also why we took the decision in July to set out a clear path to the complete removal of Huawei equipment from our 5G network.

Through the Telecommunications (Security) Bill, we have introduced legislation that will place these decisions on a statutory footing and set out a new, robust security framework for the UK telecoms sector. This will establish the UK as one of the toughest regimes in the world for telecoms security and resilience.

But looking to the future, there is more that we can do. The findings of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review highlighted the need for the Government to intervene in the market to create a more diverse and competitive supply chain in the longer term.

The Review underscored the fact that a pronounced lack of supplier diversity has developed in the access network supply chain. This lack of competition has restricted choice in the sector and will continue to pose a risk to the security and resilience of our networks if not addressed.

These findings have made it clear that our current market structure is no longer fit-for purpose and that without Government intervention, it is highly likely that the current market structure will persist.

Therefore, it is essential that we take action to address this issue. Today's strategy will deliver lasting and meaningful change in the 5G supply chain and pave the way for a vibrant and dynamic market. A market where competition and innovation bring forward new, open deployment models; where our networks are flexible, made up of an array of suppliers; and where all operators and suppliers adopt the security standards that will ensure that our networks are robust and resilient.

To realise this ambition, we need to strike a balance between fundamentally shifting the market structure towards our long-term vision and ensuring that we can also guarantee the reliability of supply to our networks in the near term.

We have therefore set out a balanced approach to diversification which will see targeted measures introduced across three separate strands of activity;

- Supporting incumbent suppliers;
- Attracting new suppliers into the UK market; and
- Accelerating open-interface solutions and deployment.

The decision to commit to the removal of Huawei equipment from our 5G networks was the right decision for the UK's telecoms networks, for our national security and our economy - both now and in the long term. However, it brings with it a resilience risk as we become more dependent on the remaining suppliers for our telecoms networks. This strategy means that we can mitigate that resilience risk as we approach the complete removal of Huawei from our 5G networks in 2027.

However, this strategy is about more than that. It is about implementing measures across these strands to facilitate a competitive, diverse and open supply market, which will support economic growth and innovation as the UK adopts next-generation technologies.

We recognise that there is a sharp need to work at pace to make early progress on diversification. As a first step towards delivering our long-term vision, the Government has committed an initial investment of up to £250m, to kick off work to deliver our key priorities.

This will allow us to take forward specific measures as an absolute priority, such as the establishment of a world-class National Telecoms Lab, increasing UK influence in telecoms standards setting and beginning to dismantle the key barriers to diversification.

These measures will be partnered by immediate steps we are taking to accelerate the development of open-interface solutions. The Government will be funding the NEC NeutORAN project as part of the wider 5G Testbeds and Trials programme, which will showcase the latest innovations in the Radio Access Network space. We are also partnering with Ofcom and Digital Catapult to fund the SmartRAN Open Network Innovation Centre (SONIC), an industry-facing testing facility for interoperable solutions.

Alongside this, the Government recognises that this is a global issue which affects many of our international allies. As such, we will be seeking to lead a global coalition like-minded partners to mount a coordinated international approach to diversification.

These next phases of work will be led by the recently established Telecoms Diversification Taskforce, an expert panel chaired by Lord Ian Livingston. The Taskforce will be advising government as we design and develop targeted measures across the three strands of our strategy. It will also support us in our work to look beyond 5G and address diversity in the full fibre and wider telecoms supply chain going forward.

As the Taskforce does so, the Government will be working closely with players across the telecoms industry to explore opportunities to establish homegrown

capability within the wider UK tech industry through R&D investment and fostering key skills.

This strategy presents a significant opportunity to position the UK as a growing power in telecoms and set the UK's telecoms industry apart, by securing a position at the forefront of new, cutting-edge mobile technologies. By acting now, we are in a position to lead the global telecoms industry towards a more open, competitive and

innovative standard - with UK companies setting an example across the sector.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

5G Diversification Strategy [5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-11-30/HLWS603/>

Written Answers

Monday, 30 November 2020

Bicycles: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the results of the evaluation questions answered by individuals when applying for a Fix Your Bike Voucher. [HL10323]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There are no current plans to publish in full the results of the evaluation questions answered by individuals applying for Fix Your Bike vouchers. The information will be used by the Department for its own evaluation of the scheme and to inform future decisions on scheme design.

Blood: Homosexuality

Asked by Lord Cashman

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their LGBT Action Plan 2018: Improving the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people, published on 3 July 2018, what progress they have made in reviewing the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men; who is leading that review; when they estimate that review to publish its recommendations; and what plans they have to ensure that the recommendations are relevant to all of the countries in the UK. [HL10425]

Lord Bethell: NHS Blood and Transplant are working collaboratively with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups on the criteria for blood donation, through the FAIR (For Assessment of Individualised Risk) steering group. The FAIR group is using an evidence-based approach to explore if a more individualised blood donation risk assessment can be safely and practically introduced, while ensuring the safe supply of blood and blood products to patients.

The work of FAIR was slightly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the group has now submitted their report to the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) that advises United Kingdom ministers and health departments from the devolved administrations. The guidance provided by SaBTO is now being considered by Ministers and we will publish the conclusions in due course.

British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 18 November (HL10143), what assessment they have made of the extent to which their Chagossian support package, announced on 16 November 2016 (HCWS260), (1) addresses the aspiration of those Chagossians who wish

to return or resettle in the Chagos Islands, and (2) takes into account the Advisory Opinion Legal Consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 issued by the International Court of Justice on 25 February 2019, which found that resettlement "is an issue relating to the protection of the human rights of those concerned which should be addressed by the General Assembly during the completion of the decolonization of Mauritius". [HL10686]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The decision not to support resettlement followed an independent feasibility study of the practicalities of resettlement (published in February 2015) and a public consultation (results published in January 2016). The consultation found that there were differing indications of the likely demand from Chagossians for resettlement across the communities in the UK, Mauritius, the Seychelles and elsewhere.

The UK Government is determined to use the Support Package to address the aspirations of those Chagossians who wish to return or resettle, and all the community: the desire for better lives, and to maintain a connection to the Territory. For those that wish to return, the Support Package has funded to date eight heritage visits, with a total of 154 visiting the Territory. Unfortunately due to the pandemic we have had to suspend the Heritage Visit programme, but will resume it as soon as it is safe to do so. Beyond the programme of visits, the package focuses on improved access to health and social care, better education and employment opportunities, and cultural conservation. The detail of the package is kept under constant review and we remain committed to engaging with Chagossians to explore ways to better deliver its objectives.

The Support Package was announced in 2016 and is not affected by the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government what data they have collected from their regular retesting of care home staff and residents, as announced as part of their social care testing strategy on 3 July. [HL8490]

Lord Bethell: There is a variety of information that is collected about the individuals getting tested in line with the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010, as well as data to support the operational processes involved in testing - for example the address of the care home, how many test kits are needed and so on.

Civil Servants: Remote Working

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of civil servants are currently working from home. [HL10343]

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many civil servants worked from an office in London during September and October. [HL10344]

Lord True: The information on Civil Servants currently working from home is not held centrally.

Civil Servants are required to follow the local COVID measures wherever they are deployed throughout the UK. Where staff are able to work from home effectively they are doing so and Civil Servants working in essential services will continue to go into our COVID secure workplaces where necessary.

During September we collected data weekly; the number of employees working in the workplace in the London area for some or all of their working patterns were 27,724 individuals by the end of the month. Moving to a monthly collection period from October, workplace attendance increased to 33,151.

Climate Change Convention

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made with preparations for COP26 in November 2021. [HL10371]

Lord Callanan: Planning for COP26 is ongoing and we are continuing to work closely with the venues and our delivery partners to ensure that we deliver the facilities and logistics needed for the event, in line with the requirements outlined by the UNFCCC.

Alongside summit preparations, the COP26 President, Ministers, and senior officials have been engaging with a wide range of UK and international partners.

COP26 presents an unprecedented opportunity to come together as a country to tackle the threat of climate change. That is why we have launched the 'Together for our Planet' campaign, to raise public awareness of COP26 and the UK's Presidency.

The UK, UN and France will also co-host a Climate Ambition Summit alongside our partners Italy and Chile, on 12th December 2020 on the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement. This will be an opportunity for countries to announce ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net zero, finance and adaptation commitments.

The recent net zero commitments from China, Japan and South Korea have provided welcome momentum and we hope that the Ambition Summit provides impetus for further commitments by the end of the year.

Another key preparation that took place on Friday 27th November was the first meeting of the Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Council. It was here that Ministers and representatives from some of the world's largest and most progressive car markets came together to discuss how they can work together to make the transition cheaper, easier, and faster for all. Following the meeting, a joint

statement of intent was released, see here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-of-the-zero-emission-vehicle-transition-council>.

Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the British Society for Immunology The ageing immune system and COVID-19, published on 10 November. [HL10463]

Lord Bethell: The British Society for Immunology's report was shared with the Department and reviewed by officials alongside other insightful academic studies into COVID-19 immunity. Research into the immune response of the ageing population is ongoing and is currently being expanded.

For example, last week the Government announced the expansion of the current Vivaldi 2 study that will test thousands more care home staff and residents for their immune response to COVID-19. By tripling its size, this expanded study will provide a detailed picture of coronavirus infection in care homes in England. These findings will help improve our understanding of these vulnerable groups' immune response to COVID-19 and help inform future treatments for the virus.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement of Professor Gabriel Scally on 6 September that the UK Government has 'lost control' of COVID-19. [HL7903]

Lord Bethell: The Prime Minister announced a set of measures on 23 November 2020 as part of the Government's COVID-19 winter plan, including the introduction of a tiered approach to be adopted from 2 December 2020 in order to control the virus. This included confirmation that we have ordered over 350 million doses of vaccine for the United Kingdom, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories and that the National Health Service is preparing a roll-out programme. Further details will follow in due course.

NHS Test and Trace are working with local leaders and communities to curb the spread of the virus and the contact tracing team ensures individuals and their close contacts isolate, preventing others from being infected. In addition, we have announced £3 billion of extra funding to the NHS for the winter and secured personal protective equipment to ensure front-line workers are protected.

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the argument that restrictions imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19 indirectly cost more lives than they save. [HL9655]

Lord Bethell: These restrictions are necessary and proportionate to prevent the incidence and spread of COVID-19, to protect the National Health Service and to save lives.

An analysis of the overall health impact of lockdown was published in July. A copy of Direct and Indirect Impacts of COVID-19 on Excess Deaths and Morbidity: Executive Summary is attached.

Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 admissions on NHS capacity was published in October as part of a presentation by the Chief Scientific Adviser. A copy of this presentation is attached.

These set out the risk that non-COVID-19 health services would be impacted at a national level by early December if the NHS were to free-up sufficient capacity to meet the projected hospital admissions from COVID-19 patients. If action had not been taken, we would exceed surge hospital capacity by approximately 4 December, even after postponing some hospital services.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Chief Scientific Adviser presentation
[Slides_presented_by_Chief_Scientific_Advisor_to_accompany_coronavirus_press_conference_31_October_2020.pdf]

Direct and Indirect Impacts of COVID-19 [direct-indirect-impacts-covid-19-excess-deaths-morbidity-sage-48.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-10-27/HL9655>

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government which individuals, in addition to police officers, have been given authority to issue fixed penalty notices for failure to self isolate for COVID-19. [HL9514]

Lord Bethell: Since 28 September in England, those who test positive for COVID-19 – or who are identified by NHS Test and Trace or local public health teams as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 – have a legal duty to self-isolate. A fixed penalty notice may be issued to a person who contravenes this requirement without reasonable excuse.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued by police constables or police community support officers. Regulations permit fixed penalty notices to be issued by officers designated by local authorities or by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, but there is no current intention for the Secretary of State or local authorities to make any designations for this purpose.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Strasburger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have considered if any data collected from COVID-19 testing

could be used to create (1) a UK DNA biobank, or (2) be used by Genomics England for any purpose. [HL10393]

Lord Callanan: We are not planning to create a new UK DNA biobank specifically for Covid-19 purposes. However, Covid-19 testing data is made available to researchers to support the Covid-19 response.

Regarding whether data collected from Covid-19 testing could be used by Genomics England for any purpose, participants in Genomics England research studies can consent to give access to their nationally held health data, including Covid-19 testing data, for research. Only in cases where participants have given their consent, Public Health England will provide Genomics England with Covid-19 test data to support this research. NHS Test and Trace data forms part of Public Health England's central dataset.

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of pathology laboratory testing capacity was available to the NHS in England for COVID-19 tests at the end of March 2020; and what is the current available capacity. [HL7907]

Lord Bethell: Pillar 2 uses Lighthouse laboratories and has partnership arrangements with public, private and academic sector laboratories. The United Kingdom's daily COVID-19 testing capacity passed the 500,000 on 31 October. Testing capacity in the UK across all pillars between 29 October and 4 November was at 4,367,049 tests, an increase of 21% compared to the previous week.

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 7 September (HL5229), whether at any point since 31 January a COVID-19 test comprising of a swab of the back of the throat and the nose (1) taken at the same time, (2) at the same testing venue, and (3) from the same person, was counted as (a) one test, or (b) two tests. [HL8825]

Lord Bethell: The 'people tested' measure for United Kingdom statistics was initially used to avoid counting one person tested several times in a short space of time. Many people are now retested multiple times for valid reasons, such as regular testing of health and care workers over several months. This means that the 'tests processed figure', which we have published from 4 July, is a better headline to measure the scale of the testing service.

Our priority is to make sure that we are sharing data in the most clear and transparent way. We are working closely with the country's statisticians including the UK Statistics Authority and the Office of National Statistics to make sure that we provide the most relevant data that helps the public understand how the service is operating.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential reliance on paracetamol in alleviating possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccination; what plans they have to ensure that patients in rural areas can access such medication where there is no community pharmacy in place; and whether rural dispensing practices will be permitted to sell sufficient quantities of such medication. [HL10303]

Lord Bethell: Assessments on the potential reliance on medication in alleviating possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccination are not finalised as we do not yet know the full characteristics, including side effects, of any of the vaccines in development. All plans for deployment remain flexible as there are no certainties in the development, production, formulation and timing of any new vaccines.

Detailed planning is underway building on the National Health Service's expertise to deliver immunisation programmes, such as the flu vaccination programme. Planning considerations, includes the supporting infrastructure required, including warehousing, transport, logistics for transport across the nation and end-destination 'clinic' storage.

Medication such as paracetamol can also be purchased from supermarkets and other retail outlets, as a 'general sales' medicine. Paracetamol can also be purchased online, including in a larger quantity from an online pharmacy.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the sale of fake COVID-19 vaccines; and what assessment they have made of the remarks by the director general of the National Crime Agency's National Economic Crime Centre suggesting that vaccine fraud is an "emerging threat" for the UK. [HL10320]

Lord Bethell: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the United Kingdom's regulator charged with the regulation of medicines for human use, which includes vaccines and medical devices.

The MHRA's first priority is the protection of public health and any medicinal product or vaccine offered for sale which does not hold the appropriate authorisation will be investigated as a potential breach of the Human Medicines Regulations and a clear threat to health and safety of UK citizens.

Officials at the MHRA are actively assessing the nature and extent of such a threat and are working with partners in UK and elsewhere across the globe to provide an appropriate and effective response.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote COVID-19 vaccine uptake among (1)

people with physical and mental disabilities, (2) people with physical and mental chronic illnesses, (3) people who have been sheltering for much of 2020, (4) elderly people, (5) carers, and (6) people who are reluctant to be vaccinated due to anti-vaccine propaganda on social media and elsewhere. [HL10338]

Lord Bethell: The Department has met with organisations representing the health sector, adult social care sector, charities and patient groups to gather insight and build support for pro-vaccine communications to encourage take-up of potential COVID-19 vaccines. These stakeholders represent groups that reflect the interim prioritisation advice published by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which recommends that the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 years old and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors in the initial phase. Messaging will address vaccine safety, quality and efficacy of any vaccine.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many companies were offered the opportunity to bid for the contract, that was secured with Admiral Associates, for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Vaccine Taskforce. [HL10380]

Lord Callanan: Specialist communications support was brought onboard as contingent labour using the Public Sector Resourcing (PSR) framework rather than a contract being signed with Admiral as a company. The support was obtained in line with existing public sector recruitment practices and frameworks.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what work Admiral Associates undertook and provided for the Vaccine Taskforce that civil servants within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy did not have the skills or knowledge to provide. [HL10381]

Lord Callanan: We know that vaccines are of huge interest to the public and ensuring clear, accurate and timely communication is an important part of our public health response. Specialist communications support was therefore brought on board by the Vaccine Taskforce for a time-limited period, in line with existing public sector recruitment practices and frameworks.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the number of days between the initial contract notification and the date when Admiral Associates secured the contract for work on the Vaccine Taskforce. [HL10382]

Lord Callanan: Specialist communications support was brought onboard as contingent labour using the Public Sector Resourcing (PSR) framework rather than a contract being signed with Admiral as a company. The

support was obtained in line with existing public sector recruitment practices and frameworks.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government where was the notification of the tender for the contract secured between Admiral Associates and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Vaccine Taskforce placed. [HL10383]

Lord Callanan: Specialist communications support was brought onboard as contingent labour using the Public Sector Resourcing (PSR) framework rather than a contract being signed with Admiral as a company. The support was obtained in line with existing public sector recruitment practices and frameworks.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government who was ultimately responsible for approving the contract that was secured with Admiral Associates by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Vaccine Taskforce. [HL10384]

Lord Callanan: Specialist communications support was brought onboard as contingent labour using the Public Sector Resourcing (PSR) framework rather than a contract being signed with Admiral as a company. This was approved by the Senior Responsible Owner for the Vaccines Taskforce, who is a Director-General in the civil service.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what due diligence was performed to assess potential conflicts of interests between the directors of Admiral Associates, and ministers, officials and advisers in (1) the Vaccines Task force, (2) the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (3) the Cabinet Office, and (4) the Prime Minister's Office; and what were the findings of any such due diligence performed. [HL10385]

Lord Callanan: Officials in the Vaccine Taskforce ensure the standard civil service procedures in relation to conflicts of interest are followed for all Taskforce members. Actions are agreed to mitigate any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, and these are signed off by both the Department's HR function and by the Permanent Secretary.

Department for Education: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to respond to the letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business and Industry from 35 charities on 29 September which requested the extension of the scheme which provided digital devices and internet access for care leavers and vulnerable

children during the COVID-19 pandemic; and if so, when. [HL10405]

Baroness Berridge: I can confirm that a response to the letter from 35 charities, dated 29 September, requesting the extension of the scheme which provided digital devices and internet access for care leavers and vulnerable children during the COVID-19 outbreak, has been sent.

Employment Schemes: Voluntary Work

Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) the Access to Work programme, and (2) related programmes, give participants the opportunity to volunteer at major UK sporting events, including (a) the Rugby League World Cup 2021, (b) the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, and (c) the UEFA Women's Euro 2022. [HL10475]

Baroness Barran: Access to Work support is available for disabled people and those who have a health condition whose disability or health condition affects the way they do their job. To be eligible for Access to Work the customer must be aged 16 years or over and satisfy certain criteria. As volunteering does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria, volunteers are not eligible for Access to Work support. Where individuals are employed into paid roles, the government will assist applications to the Access to Work programme if requested.

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 Board has launched a volunteer programme called The Power Squad. This programme makes a commitment to celebrate the inclusive and diverse population of England as well as the rich history of host towns and cities.

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games provides a fantastic opportunity to accelerate employment and skills opportunities for residents of the West Midlands. A comprehensive volunteering programme is due to launch in 2021, with up to 1000 roles ring-fenced for West Midlands residents and with a focus on disadvantaged groups.

UEFA Women's EURO 2022 will create a number of paid employment opportunities, plus a sizeable volunteer programme of stadium and host city volunteers. These paid and voluntary roles will be open to all and will enable as many people as possible to be part of the tournament.

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to compel companies to report their ethnicity pay gaps. [HL10408]

Lord Callanan: In 2018/19, the Government consulted on options for employer-level ethnicity pay reporting.

Following the consultation, the Government met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers to reporting and explore what information could be published to allow for meaningful action to be taken. We also ran a voluntary methodology testing exercise with a broad range of businesses to better understand the complexities outlined in the consultation using real payroll data. The Government is continuing to analyse this data and will respond in due course.

Fairgrounds: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they intend to provide to travelling fairgrounds to assist with the income lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic [[HL10566](#)]

Baroness Barran: Government has introduced a number of support measures to support the tourism and outdoor events sector through COVID-19, which travelling fairground businesses can access. We introduced a substantial, UK-wide cut in VAT for many tourism and hospitality activities, including admission to circuses and fairs, until the end of March.

In response to the current national restrictions, the Chancellor has confirmed how the government will support businesses and individuals during this period - including through the extension of various government-backed loans and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes.

Further to this, the Additional Restrictions Grant discretionary fund will allow Local Authorities to help businesses more broadly. It supports businesses that are not covered by other grant schemes, such as the Local Restrictions Support Grant, or where additional funding is needed.

From 2 December, as set out in the COVID Winter Plan we will return to a tiered approach to COVID-19 restrictions in England. Funfairs and fairgrounds - which will be permitted to reopen in all three tiers as they were prior to this period of national restrictions - will need to go through the normal process of requesting permission and any relevant licences from the relevant authority and have the relevant health and safety protocols in place, including a Covid-19 risk assessment. Local Authorities are responsible for deciding whether to permit outdoor events in their area. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to both the risks and the mitigations in place.

In the government's Covid-19 Secure guidance for the Visitor Economy, we have provided guidance for Local Authorities on how to assess applications for outdoor events and how Local Authorities should support event organisers to hold outdoor events safely. We will continue to work closely with Local Authorities and the sector to get outdoor events running safely and successfully once they are permitted.

Asked by Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with local authorities about the case for permitting fairs to take place. [[HL10567](#)]

Baroness Barran: Government has introduced a number of support measures to support the tourism and outdoor events sector through COVID-19, which travelling fairground businesses can access. We introduced a substantial, UK-wide cut in VAT for many tourism and hospitality activities, including admission to circuses and fairs, until the end of March.

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Asked by Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued to local authorities to ensure a consistent approach in allowing travelling fairgrounds to safely re-open. [[HL10568](#)]

Baroness Barran: Government has introduced a number of support measures to support the tourism and outdoor events sector through COVID-19, which travelling fairground businesses can access. We introduced a substantial, UK-wide cut in VAT for many tourism and hospitality activities, including admission to circuses and fairs, until the end of March.

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Financial Services: Environment Protection

Asked by Baroness Hayman

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement on the future of financial services by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 9 November (HC Deb, cols 619–21), what plans they have to consult on the new green taxonomy. [[HL10341](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK Taxonomy will use the EU framework which is already part of UK law, as amended by the EU Withdrawal Act. The UK will be establishing a Green Technical Advisory Group to advise the government on an ongoing basis on any improvements or additions that could be made to the taxonomy for the UK context. We will set out more details on this in due course.

Football: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the reasons behind their decision to ask the Premier League to bail out the English Football League. [[HL10649](#)]

Baroness Barran: Football clubs are often the bedrock of our local communities and it is vital they are protected. That is why the Government has provided an unprecedented financial support package for businesses, which many football clubs have benefitted from.

The Government is focusing its direct support on those sports and clubs most urgently in need after the decision not to readmit spectators from 1 October. Having spent heavily in the recent transfer window, professional football has demonstrated that, at the top tiers, it has the means to support itself through the pandemic.

I was pleased that the Premier League has made it clear that it will not let any English Football League (EFL) club fail due to the pandemic and I expect significant progress to be made imminently on an agreement for a financial support package for EFL clubs.

Fossil Fuels

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 13 November (HL9533), whether (1) the Public Sector Procurement Guidelines, or (2) their Management Consultancy Framework, contain a requirement for contracts not to be awarded to management consultancy firms which regularly advise the fossil fuel industry. [[HL10334](#)]

Lord True: There is no such requirement.

Furs: Trade

Asked by Lord Hague of Richmond

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value of UK (1) imports, and (2) exports, of (a) fur, and (b) articles with fur, for each year since 2015. [[HL10340](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics.

The value of imports to and exports from the UK of raw, tanned or dressed furskins (including heads, tails, paws and other pieces or cuttings, suitable for furriers' use) and of articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other articles of furskin for each year since 2015 are set out in the tables below.

The data provided does not include raw hides and skins of animals which may have hair or wool on them or articles of clothing such as gloves, shoes, hats and coats which are only partially made of fur, for example, containing a fur trim. This is because these goods are declared under commodity codes other than those used exclusively for furskin and articles of furskin.

<i>UK imports of furskins entered to commodity codes 4301 and 4302 by value</i>		2020	14,428,427
		Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics	
<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Trade Value (£)</i>	<i>UK exports of articles of furskin entered to commodity codes 4303 by value</i>	
2015	15,750,831	<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Trade Value (£)</i>
2016	11,197,018	2015	16,991,168
2017	16,766,686	2016	16,697,024
2018	12,487,217	2017	19,735,603
2019	8,735,686	2018	24,825,923
2020	3,076,690	2019	25,163,877
Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics		2020	10,556,697
<i>UK exports of furskins entered to commodity codes 4301 and 4302 by value</i>		Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics	
<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Trade Value (£)</i>	Notes: 1. Data is extracted on a general trade basis for 2015 and for January to April of 2016. For all other periods the data is extracted on a special trade basis.[1]	
2015	15,882,300	2. Data extracted for 2020 is only available for months January to September as per the publishing calendar.	
2016	11,676,202	[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/overseas-trade-statistics-methodologies	
2017	13,199,921	Gambling	
2018	11,444,471	<i>Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans</i>	
2019	7,549,209	To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 10 November (HL9946), what representations they have made to the (1) Gambling Commission, and (2) Electronic Money Association, about encouraging the providers of e-wallets to introduce gambling blocks. [HL10374]	
2020	1,797,965	Baroness Barran: The government works closely with the Gambling Commission to minimise gambling harms and recognises the important role that financial service providers can play in helping their customers monitor and manage their gambling spend. The Commission cannot set controls on financial institutions, however in April this year, new licencing conditions came into effect which banned gambling operators from accepting payments from credit cards, including via e-wallets. The Commission and government engage all areas of the financial sector to actively encourage service providers to adopt effective measures like opt-in gambling blocks. While this extends to building societies where applicable, most building societies principally offer savings products and mortgages which cannot be accessed using debit	
Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics			
<i>UK imports of articles of furskin entered to commodity codes 4303 by value</i>			
<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Trade Value (£)</i>		
2015	32,833,445		
2016	37,279,317		
2017	46,173,860		
2018	51,813,338		
2019	44,174,922		

cards. The Commission has approved funding for a two year programme to increase action among firms from across the financial sector and recently helped facilitate a dedicated conference with the finance industry on the role they could play in reducing gambling harm. This built on progress made following a Secretary of State-hosted roundtable with leading financial institutions in February last year.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising, which enforces the advertising codes set by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP). The codes set out strict rules on the content and placement of gambling advertising which prohibit adverts being targeted at children or vulnerable people, or seeking to appeal particularly to these groups. CAP is currently consulting on proposed changes to the advertising codes aimed at further restricting the potential for gambling adverts to appeal to children or vulnerable people. Data on children's exposure to gambling advertising published by the ASA showed that children saw an average of 2.5 gambling adverts per week on TV in 2019, down from a peak of 4.4 per week in 2013.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 10 November (HL9946), what representations they have made to the Gambling Commission to encourage building societies to introduce gambling blocks on personal current accounts and credit cards. [HL10375]

Baroness Barran: The government works closely with the Gambling Commission to minimise gambling harms and recognises the important role that financial service providers can play in helping their customers monitor and manage their gambling spend. The Commission cannot set controls on financial institutions, however in April this year, new licencing conditions came into effect which banned gambling operators from accepting payments from credit cards, including via e-wallets. The Commission and government engage all areas of the financial sector to actively encourage service providers to adopt effective measures like opt-in gambling blocks. While this extends to building societies where applicable, most building societies principally offer savings products and mortgages which cannot be accessed using debit cards. The Commission has approved funding for a two year programme to increase action among firms from across the financial sector and recently helped facilitate a dedicated conference with the finance industry on the role they could play in reducing gambling harm. This built on progress made following a Secretary of State-hosted roundtable with leading financial institutions in February last year.

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Gambling: Children

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the findings of the survey published by the Gambling Commission Young People & Gambling 2020, published in August, what representations they have made to the Advertising Standards Authority on what further measures can be taken to reduce childhood exposure to gambling. [HL10376]

Baroness Barran: The government works closely with the Gambling Commission to minimise gambling harms and recognises the important role that financial service providers can play in helping their customers monitor and manage their gambling spend. The Commission cannot set controls on financial institutions, however in April this year, new licencing conditions came into effect which banned gambling operators from accepting payments from credit cards, including via e-wallets. The Commission and government engage all areas of the financial sector to actively encourage service providers to adopt effective measures like opt-in gambling blocks. While this extends to building societies where applicable, most building societies principally offer savings products and mortgages which cannot be accessed using debit cards. The Commission has approved funding for a two year programme to increase action among firms from across the financial sector and recently helped facilitate a dedicated conference with the finance industry on the role they could play in reducing gambling harm. This built on progress made following a Secretary of State-hosted roundtable with leading financial institutions in February last year.

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Government Departments and Private Sector: Post Office

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Government departments and bodies, and (2) private institutions, have stopped using the Post Office for payments over the past two years. [[HL10345](#)]

Lord Callanan: While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, the company has the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. Post Office Limited is therefore responsible for decisions on its commercial partnerships with Government Departments and private companies alike.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by *Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications they have received for Green Home Grants; and how many of these are from (1) private residential landlords, (2) social landlords, and (3) owner-occupiers. [[HL10316](#)]

Lord Callanan: As of 18 November 2020, 42,507 grant applications have been received for the Green Homes Grant scheme, with 5,928 application from landlords and the remaining 36,579 from owner-occupiers.

As part of the scheme application process, landlords are not asked to declare if they let their property to private residential or social tenants. Therefore we are unable to provide information on the number of applications received, at this level of granularity.

Health Services: Prisons

Asked by *Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total spend by NHS England on (1) prison healthcare, and (2) substance misuse, services in prisons in each of the last five years. [[HL10211](#)]

Lord Bethell: Information is not published in the format requested as drug treatment services within the health and justice system are sometimes commissioned together with other services.

Higher Education: Antisemitism

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 9 November (HL9589), what legislative options they are considering to ensure that all higher education institutions sign up to the International Holocaust

Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism. [[HL10404](#)]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: As set out in my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education's letter to higher education providers on 9 October 2020, the government sees adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition as a demonstration that providers are taking the matter of antisemitism seriously.

The letter also sets out that officials are exploring how best to ensure that providers are tackling antisemitism, with robust measures in place to address issues when they arise. Options identified by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education in the letter include directing the Office for Students to impose a new regulatory condition of registration, and suspending funding streams for universities at which antisemitic incidents occur and which have not signed up to the definition.

HMS Dasher and Operation Mincemeat

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 12 November (HL9797), whether CAB93/7 contains any records relating to the loss of HMS Dasher; whether (1) the Cabinet Office, or (2) the Prime Minister's Office, hold any other records concerning HMS Dasher; and if so, whether any of these records are publicly available. [[HL10406](#)]

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 12 November (HL9797), whether (1) the Cabinet Office, or (2) the Prime Minister's Office, hold any records concerning Operation Mincemeat; and if so, whether these records are publicly available. [[HL10407](#)]

Lord True: The Cabinet Office (which includes the Prime Minister's Office) does not hold any records on HMS Dasher or Operation Mincemeat. In line with standard practice, historic records are transferred to The National Archives. A number of files relating to both HMS Dasher and Operation Mincemeat are held by The National Archives, including under references CAB 154/66; CAB 154/112; CAB 79/60/18; CAB 79/60/20; CAB 79/60/24; CAB 79/60/26; CAB 79/60/27; and CAB 146/442.

Housing: Construction

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on agreeing new targets for new housing numbers for each local authority area; and what is the timetable for introducing these targets. [[HL10336](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: We committed to reviewing the current formula for local housing need at this year's budget. As under the current system, local housing need will only be the starting point in the process of planning for new homes. Local authorities will still need to consider the constraints they face locally to assess how many homes can be delivered in their areas.

The consultation on changes to the current planning system set out the elements we want to balance when determining local housing need. They include meeting our target of building 300,000 homes, tackling affordability challenges in the places people most want to live, regenerating brownfield sites and renewing and levelling up our towns and cities.

The proposals were out for consultation until 1 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, the Government will publish a response in due course. The response will set out any decisions and any associated proposed implementation.

Jerusalem: Planning

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel is planning (1) to expand settlements in East Jerusalem, and (2) to isolate the Beit Safafa and Sharafat neighbourhoods, before 20 January 2021. [HL10401]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. As the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa made clear in his statement of 18 November, Israel's decision to advance the construction of 1,257 settlement buildings in the Givat HaMatos area of the occupied West Bank risks causing serious damage to the prospects for a viable Palestinian State. We condemn this decision, which is incompatible with Israel's declared goal of peace, and call for both the tender process and the advancement of other settlements in East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the West Bank to be suspended immediately.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Lifetime Skills Guarantee is accessible to all low-paid workers. [HL10395]

Baroness Berridge: As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, for adults who do not currently have a level 3 qualification, we will be fully funding their first full level 3, focusing on the valuable courses that will help them get ahead in the labour market. The offer will be funded from the National Skills Fund and offered from April 2021.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister has also announced skills bootcamps, which will be available in 6

areas across the country. The bootcamp training courses will provide valuable skills based on employer demand and are linked to real job opportunities, helping participants to land jobs and employers to fill much-needed vacancies. We are planning to expand the bootcamps to more of the country from Spring 2021 and we want to extend this model to include other technical skills training.

Through our lifelong loan entitlement we will also make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly - allowing them to space out their studies across their lifetimes, transfer credits between colleges and universities, and enable more part-time study.

Apprenticeship opportunities will also be increased, with more funding for small to medium-sized enterprises taking on apprentices, and greater flexibility in how their training is structured.

Alongside the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the department has been working to provide further support in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. In his Summer Economic Update, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced investment of over £500 million to deliver a package of support for people to access the training and develop the skills they will need to go on to high-quality, secure and fulfilling employment. The Skills Recovery Package includes:

- Apprenticeships: A new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire who is aged 24 or below, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire who is aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021.
- Traineeships: £111 million to triple the scale and reform traineeships for those aged 16 - 24 (25 with an Education, Health and Care plan) with additional funding available to providers in 2020-21 to support 30,000 new places. We have also introduced, for the first time, payments of £1,000 per trainee for employers who offer new or additional work placements (up to 10 trainees).
- Careers information, advice and guidance: £32 million over 2 years to help 269,000 more people of all ages receive advice from the National Careers Service.
- Sector-based work academy programme (SWAP): £17 million to triple the number of SWAP placements in 2020/21, enough funding to support an extra 40,000 job seekers with additional training opportunities and the chance of a job.
- £101 million for school/college leavers to study high value courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

The recent expansion of The Skills Toolkit means that people can now choose from over 70 courses, covering digital, adult numeracy, employability and work readiness skills, which have been identified as the skills employers need the most. These courses will help people stay in work or take up new jobs and opportunities.

In addition, the new Kickstart scheme is underway. This is a £2 billion programme which will create thousands of new jobs for young people aged between 16-24 who will be offered six-month work placements with wages paid by the UK Government.

The government appreciates the importance of adult education to improving people's life chances. We will continue to explore options within adult education to aid the post COVID-19 recovery.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to encourage voter turnout in the (1) local council, (2) mayoral, (3) Senedd, and (4) Scottish Parliament, elections in May 2021; and what arrangements they have put in place to ensure that everyone who wants to vote in these elections can do so. [HL10331]

Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of postal voting in the upcoming local elections in May 2021; whether they have a contingency plan to manage any significant increase in postal voting; and what steps they will take to ensure that any increase in postal voting is managed (1) effectively, and (2) fairly. [HL10332]

Lord True: Further to my answer given to PQ HL10099 on 23 November, the Senedd Cymru and Scottish Parliamentary elections are the responsibility of the Welsh and Scottish Governments respectively. However, all three governments continue to communicate regularly on the delivery of the polls. We are also working with postal vote suppliers, electoral sector partners and election teams to ensure capacity for printing and administering postal votes.

Local Government Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Annual Budget Survey November 2020 by the County Councils Network, published on 12 November, in particular the finding that 60 per cent of councils anticipate a "fundamental reduction" in frontline services; and what steps they are taking to prevent this. [HL10335]

Lord Greenhalgh: Spending Review 2020 confirmed that Core Spending Power is forecast to rise by 4.5 per cent in cash terms- a real terms increase. This package means local authorities will be able to access an estimated additional £2.2 billion to support Adult and Children's Social Care and to maintain universal services.

Within their Core Spending Power, councils will have access to an additional £1 billion for social care next year, made up of a £300 million increase to the social care

grant and 3 per cent Adult Social Care precept. The additional £1 billion of grant funding announced at SR19 for Adult and Children's Social Care will be continuing, along with all other existing social care funding including the improved Better Care Fund.

Complementing this is an unprecedented package of support for local authorities to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, including measures worth an estimated circa £3 billion of additional support for Covid-19 pressures next year, along with extending the current Sales, Fees and Charges scheme (which refunds 75 per cent of eligible income loss beyond a 5 per cent threshold) into the first three months of 2021-22.

This is on top of the support committed this financial year, including over £7.2 billion for local authorities, even before the extension of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund for those authorities under the highest level of restriction – potentially worth over £200 million a month – announced as part of the Covid-19 Winter Plan. This takes the total support committed to councils in England to tackle the impacts of Covid-19 to over £10 billion.

Mental Health Services

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of the budget in each Clinical Commissioning Groups' area is allocated to mental health, excluding dementia services. [HL10250]

Lord Bethell: The information is not collected centrally. It is for clinical commissioning groups to allocate funding to meet the needs of the local population.

Non-governmental Organisations: Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their review of the 2021–22 framework for the aid budget for non-governmental organisations. [HL10390]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following the Chancellor's statement of 25 November announcing the outcome of the Spending Review, the Foreign Secretary has announced he will run a short cross-government review to review, appraise and finalise all the UK's ODA allocations for next year in the lead-up to Christmas.

North Africa: Land Mines

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of landmines laid in North Africa during World War 2 that remain a danger to people in that region. [HL10347]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent work they have done to remove landmines from North Africa following World War 2; and when they estimate any such work will be completed. [HL10348]

Baroness Goldie: The UK currently has no programmes specifically targeting World War II ordnance in North Africa although sometimes World War II mines are encountered by HMG-funded mine action projects in that region, and the UK has provided assistance to the Egyptian authorities. We have made no estimates on the number of landmines laid in North Africa during World War II that remain a danger to people in that region.

Organic Farming: Antimicrobials*Asked by Viscount Ridley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many emergency derogations to use non-organic antimicrobial products were authorised to certified organic producers of (1) beef cattle, (2) dairy cattle, (3) sheep, (4) goats, and (5) pigs, in England in each of the past three calendar years. [HL10370]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Individual derogations are not offered for the use of non-organic antibiotics for organic livestock. Organic farmers may use non-organic antibiotics when necessary, if they have exhausted the possibilities for treatment using other measures.

This decision is under the responsibility of the veterinarian caring for the livestock. Records are kept and maintained by the producer and are referred to as part of annual and ad hoc inspections carried out by Organic Control Bodies. Therefore, no centralised records exist.

In cases where an animal requires non-organic antibiotics more than three times within 12 months, or more than one course of treatment in total if their productive lifecycle is less than one year, it cannot be sold as organic.

Organic Farming: Cereals*Asked by Viscount Ridley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated proportion of the total certified organic area of the (1) wheat, (2) barley, (3) oats, (4) rye, and (5) triticale, crops produced from non-organic seed in England in each of the past three harvest years. [HL10369]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There is no certified organic farmland that uses wholly non-organic seeds, as use of organic seeds is a requirement for certification. In cases where, due to limited availability, a producer cannot source the required seeds in sufficient quantities, the organic regulation does, however, allow producers to use a mixture of organic and non-organic seeds. The organic legislation recognises that the seed sector is not sufficiently developed to meet the demand for organic seeds with a 100% requirement. In these cases, non-organic seeds must make up the minimum proportion possible and the mixture must be evenly mixed and spread across the land in question.

We do not have data on the area of land in England for which such authorisations have been granted. We can, however, supply figures for the total number of authorisations and quantities involved for the UK as a whole.

Non-organic arable seed used by organic farmers: 2017 to 2019

<i>Crop</i>	<i>2017</i>		<i>2018</i>		<i>2020</i>	
	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>
Winter Wheat	80	126.3	69	142.9	90	107
Spring Wheat	11	32.2	23	98.4	20	59.1
Spring Barley	160	348.3	166	250.3	81	141.1
Winter Barley	39	84.4	26	66.5	34	151
Spring Oats	46	129.7	99	230.7	42	65.7
Winter Oats	29	59.5	18	42.3	17	17.6

<i>Crop</i>	<i>2017</i>		<i>2018</i>		<i>2020</i>	
	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>Authorisations</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>
Winter Rye	40	44.2	65	119.3	34	72.5
Spring Triticale	67	63.6	47	19.8	56	75.8
Winter Triticale	17	22.9	23	14.7	9	9.6

Due to variations in year to year harvest and market conditions affecting availability there is still variation. The long-term trend, however, is that over recent years the number of authorisations needed has on average decreased, due to increasing availability of organic seeds.

Outdoor Recreation: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide support for residential outdoor activity centres that are at risk of closure because of the restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10392]

Baroness Berridge: The Department's advice on educational visits can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. It is in line with guidance from Public Health England, the Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It is currently under review and the findings will be available at the end of November.

The Government has introduced an unprecedented and comprehensive package of support worth more than £200 billion to help as many individuals and businesses as possible during this difficult period. This includes small business grants, the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more. The measures introduced have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

Further measures have been announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that build on the significant support already available as well as set out how current support will evolve and adapt. These include the extension of the CJRS until the end of March 2021, the extension of the deadline for applications for the Bounce Back Loan scheme and other loan schemes until 31 January 2021, and increased support for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants.

Furthermore, businesses in England that are forced to close due to national or local restrictions will receive up to £3,000 per month. Local authorities in England will also receive one-off funding of £1.1 billion to support

businesses more broadly over the coming months as a key part of local economies.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, businesses, business representative organisations, and the financial services sector to monitor the implementation of current support and understand whether there is additional need. Businesses can also access tailored advice through our freephone business support helpline, online via the Business Support website or through their local growth hubs in England.

Peat: Pennines

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they have monitored peat burning on the South Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (1) this year, and (2) in the previous three years; and what assessment they have made of the effects of this peat burning. [HL10339]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Natural England monitors and reports on the condition of notified features on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) through its programme of site condition monitoring. This will include site visits and desk assessment. Those features are affected by a range of factors including land management burning and wildfire. In addition to this routine programme of monitoring, Natural England made an assessment of part of the South Pennine Moors SSSI following a wildfire incident in 2020. This assessment has not yet concluded, but when complete the condition will be logged on Natural England's designated Sites database, which is publicly available.

Additionally, Natural England has been working with land managers on the South Pennine Moors SSSI to advise them on the condition of SSSI features on their land, through a contract under its Discretionary Advice Service.

Planning Permission

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether objections by local objectors are given greater importance than objections by non-local objectors in planning decisions taken by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. [HL10398]

Lord Greenhalgh: All material planning considerations are taken into account in planning decisions. These are set out in the published decision letter and accompanying Inspector's report for each case, along with full reasons for the Secretary of State's decision.

Planning Permission: Norwich

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government refused planning permission for the proposed changes to the Anglia Square shopping centre in Norwich. [HL10397]

Lord Greenhalgh: The reasons for the Secretary of State's decision are set out in full in his decision letter of 12 November, which is available to view online at (attached) the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-called-in-decisions-and-recovered-appeals>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Decision letter [201119 Combined_DL_IR_R_to_C-anglia_square - HL10397.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-16/HL10397>

Potatoes: Fungicides

Asked by Viscount Ridley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated area of certified organic potatoes treated in England during 2020 with copper hydroxide under the emergency derogation granted by the Chemicals Regulation Directorate. [HL10368]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Emergency authorisation to use a product containing copper hydroxide on organic potatoes was granted for England only following an application from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board. The application stated that the total area of organic potatoes grown across the UK was 800 hectares and that treatment of the full area might be required. The Government does not currently have a figure for the area that was actually treated. However, the stewardship programme agreed with AHDB requires that this information is collected and is submitted with any future application for a similar emergency authorisation.

Re-employment

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the use of 'dismiss and rehire' strategies by employers. [HL10372]

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) employers, or (2) employers' associations, about the use of 'dismiss and rehire' strategies. [HL10373]

Lord Callanan: The Government appreciates that news about redundancies and job losses will be distressing for many and employers should always treat employees fairly.

Despite the unprecedented package of support provided by this Government, some employers will need the flexibility to be able to offer different terms and conditions to ensure the sustainability of their business. However, using threats about firing and re-hiring as a negotiating tactic is unacceptable and if the employer changes any of the terms without the employee's agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress.

Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss (1) arms control, and (2) arms trade limitation, with the government of Saudi Arabia, including at the next G20 summit. [HL10346]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK participated in the G20 Summit, where the Prime Minister set out his priorities of a coordinated global health response to the pandemic, a sustainable economic recovery, and ambitious action against climate change. As current G20 President, Saudi Arabia played a vital role in delivering a communique agreement on affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

The UK strongly supports the various arms control instruments to which it is a party, as such we regularly call on all States which have not yet done so, to accede to these instruments as soon as possible. The UK takes its export control responsibilities and obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty extremely seriously. We assess all export licences in accordance with strict licensing criteria. The UK regularly raises the importance of International Humanitarian Law and of conducting thorough and conclusive investigations into alleged violations with Saudi Arabia, including at senior levels.

Universities: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in discussions with universities about the mass testing of students at the end of term. [HL10394]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, wrote to all higher education institutions on 7 and 9 November 2020, asking them to work with the Department for Education and Department of Health & Social Care to deliver a lateral

flow devices (LFD) mass testing programme. The sector has engaged enthusiastically with this and we are working with it to set up asymptomatic test sites in as many universities as possible by 30 November to assist in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 during the 'travel window' of 3–9 December for students returning home at the end of term.

LFD tests will be targeted at higher education institutions with higher cases of COVID-19, in areas of highest prevalence, and with more vulnerable students first. LFD testing kits will be allocated based on institutions' specific requests and an understanding of their student population.

Where available, students are strongly encouraged to undertake testing before travelling home from university. We want them to do this to keep them and their families, friends, and home communities as safe as possible.

Students who have not been able to access testing before they travel home are not required to self-isolate. We would ask them to travel home as safely as possible, remembering that the national lockdown restricts travel until 2 December and the 'student travel window' is between 3 and 9 December. If students are symptomatic

or have tested positive, they should follow the standard government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>.

Veterans Advisory Board

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish (1) the names of members of the Veterans Advisory Board, and (2) the minutes of the Board's meetings. [HL10462]

Lord True: The Veterans Advisory Board has been established to bring independent advice, challenge and insight to the Government to help deliver the Strategy for our Veterans and its commitment to make the UK the best country in the world to be a veteran. The membership of the Board is available on GOV.UK and the minutes of the Board, which met for the first time on 16 November, will be published in due course.

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