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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Answers.....1

[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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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<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 Answers

Wednesday, 2 December 2020

Assadollah Assadi

Asked by *Lord Maginnis of Drumglass*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Iran has threatened to retaliate against the government of Belgium if Assadollah Assadi is found guilty of participating in preparations for bombing an international gathering near Paris in June 2018; and what support, if any, they have offered the government of Belgium. [[HL10524](#)]

Asked by *Lord Maginnis of Drumglass*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iran about reports that that government has threatened to retaliate against the government of Belgium if Assadollah Assadi is found guilty of participating in preparations for bombing an international gathering near Paris in June 2018. [[HL10525](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of media reports that an Iranian diplomat, who is charged with involvement in a plot against a conference in Paris in 2018, has threatened "retaliation" should he be convicted. The UK Government does not have access to the court documents on which these reports are based. While the legal process is ongoing it would be inappropriate to comment further on these reports and we have not made specific representations to the Iranian Government. We are not aware of any reporting suggesting that the Government of Iran itself has made any threats to retaliate against the Government of Belgium.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 12 November (HL9789), whether they will identify (1) the number, and (2) the value, of loans taken out under (a) the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and (b) the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, in instances where a former Minister was, or is, (i) a director, (ii) an advisor, or (iii) a consultant, associated with the borrower. [[HL10483](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Department does not hold this information.

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 12 November (HL9789), when they will publish the details of individual aid awards under (1) the Coronavirus

Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and (2) the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. [[HL10484](#)]

Lord Callanan: We intend to publish this information where required within the deadlines required by the European Commission.

Career Development: Young People

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support employers (1) to maintain, and (2) to increase, the number of graduate recruitment schemes. [[HL10493](#)]

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the funding available for career development programmes aimed at employees aged 16 to 29. [[HL10494](#)]

Lord Callanan: Skills and training are vital to our long-term economic growth and recovery from Covid-19 as we build back better across the UK. We are working closely with the Department for Education to ensure that Government support for skills and training is an integral part of our plan for growth.

The Department for Work and Pension's Kickstart scheme is a £2 billion fund to create hundreds of thousands of high quality roles for 16 to 24 year olds that are receiving Universal Credit. The scheme will include wider employability support for participants to gain experience that will improve their chances of progressing to find long-term, sustainable work.

Child Trust Fund

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Department has the overall responsibility for policy to ensure that young people without capacity can access child trust funds after reaching 18 years of age. [[HL10629](#)]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Her Majesty's Treasury is responsible for the policy for Child Trust Funds, including the fact that they can be accessed when a child reaches 18 years of age. However, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which governs the processes around how to obtain the legal authority to manage the finances of people who lack the mental capacity do so for themselves, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

Consequently, policy surrounding access to Child Trust Funds of young people that lack mental capacity is ultimately the remit of the Ministry of Justice.

Cyprus: Peace Negotiations

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they have made to the

government of Turkey following the visit by President Erdogan to the reopened area of Varosha in Famagusta on 14 November about the potential impact of his comments on efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement for the reunification of Cyprus on the basis of the principles laid out in the UN framework. [HL10521]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to follow the situation in Varosha with concern. Prior to the visit of President Erdogan to the island, we made representations to Turkey through our Embassy in Ankara. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue of Varosha during his call with the Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu on 19 November.

The UK continues to strongly support the numerous Security Council Resolutions covering the issue of Varosha, notably 550 (1984) and 789 (1992). The issue underlines the importance of reaching a comprehensive Cyprus Settlement as a matter of urgency.

Deaths: Hospitals

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of deaths from (1) dehydration, (2) malnutrition, and (3) bed sores, in (a) care homes, and (b) hospitals, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10551]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lady Stroud,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am replying to your Parliamentary Question regarding what estimate has been made of the number of deaths from (1) dehydration, (2) malnutrition, and (3) bed sores, in (a) care homes, and (b) hospitals, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (HL10551).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent set of final figures published are for deaths registered in 2019[1]. The final information on deaths registered in 2020 will be released in summer 2021.

As part of our provisional analysis for 2020 so far, we released an article, Analysis of death registrations not involving coronavirus (COVID-19), England and Wales: 28 December 2019 to 10 July 2020[2]. Table 1 shows the number of deaths in each week and the corresponding 5-year average for disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration), malnutrition and nutritional anaemias. Information on bed sores, and breakdowns by care homes and hospitals, is not available.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Weekly provisional figures on Non-COVID-19 deaths due to disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration), malnutrition and nutritional anaemias. England and Wales, weeks 1 to 28 combined[3][4][5][6][7][8][9]

	ICD-10 codes	Cause of death groups	Age group	Deaths
2020	E86–E87	Disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration)		173
	E86–E87	Disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration)	65+	172
5-year average	E86–E87	Disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration)		103.4
	E86–E87	Disorders of fluid electrolyte and acid-based balance (dehydration)	65+	128.8
2020	D50–D53, E40–E64	Malnutrition and nutritional anaemias		29
	D50–D53, E40–E64	Malnutrition and nutritional anaemias	65+	75
5-year average	D50–D53, E40–E64	Malnutrition and nutritional anaemias		20.8
	D50–D53, E40–E64	Malnutrition and nutritional anaemias	65+	66

Source: ONS

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenglandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/analysisofdeathregistrationsnotinvolvingcoronaviruscovid19englandandwales28december2019to1may2020/28december2019to10july2020>

[3] A non-COVID-19 death is a death where COVID-19 is not mentioned on the death certificate. The ICD 10 definitions for COVID-19 are UO7.1 and UO7.2.

[4] 'Due to' refers to when the condition was the underlying cause. An 'underlying cause of death' refers to the main cause of death.

[5] For deaths registered from 1 January 2020, cause of death is coded to the ICD-10 classification using MUSE 5.5 software. Previous years were coded to IRIS 4.2.3. Further information about the change in software is available on the ONS website: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/causeofdeathcodinginmortalitystatisticssoftwarechangesjanuary2019>

[6] These figures represent death registrations. There can be a delay between the date a death occurred and the date a death was registered. More information can be found in our 'Impact of registration delays' release: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/impactofregistrationdelaysonmortalitystatisticsinenglandandwales/2018>

[7] All figures for 2020 are provisional.

[8] Figures include deaths of non-residents.

[9] Caution should be used when analysing conditions with low numbers of deaths as these can have high levels of year on year variation relative to the number of deaths.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the conflict in the Tigray Region, what assessment they have made of the security situation in Ethiopia. [HL10518]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the ongoing violence between federal and regional forces in the Tigray region and the risk it poses to civilians, and by reports of ethnically-motivated attacks both within Tigray and elsewhere in Ethiopia. We are gravely concerned at Amnesty International's report of killings of civilians on 9 November; we call for transparency and accountability to be delivered for such incidents. We are also concerned about the risk these events pose to Ethiopia's overall political stability and its democratic transition of which the UK has been supportive. The Foreign Secretary called Prime Minister Abiy on 10 November to raise our concerns and stress the urgent need

to prioritise the protection of civilian lives, restore services (including banks and telecommunications) and enable humanitarian access. He also urged de-escalation swift moves to political dialogue. The Minister for Africa reiterated our concerns when he spoke to the Ethiopian Ambassador in London on 18 November. We will continue to track the situation and to raise with the Government of Ethiopia and regional leaders these concerns, our concerns about civilian deaths and casualties, and the importance of respect for human rights.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what aid, if any, they are sending to the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. [HL10536]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK-funded humanitarian partners with existing presence in Tigray (UN's World Food Programme (WFP), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund) are continuing to provide assistance, where possible and in very challenging circumstances. We are in close contact with them to understand humanitarian needs and establish the status of on-going activities, such as life-saving nutrition support to children, child protection and the installation of water infrastructure in schools. We are also working to secure humanitarian access to deliver further assistance.

Ethiopia: Family Planning

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) family planning, (2) sexual and reproductive health and rights, and (3) abortion care, services they have made available to the population of Tigray since the onset of the conflict in that region. [HL10677]

Baroness Sugg: In Ethiopia we have a large bilateral family planning programme - Family Planning by Choice - which works to improve access to, quality of and the voluntary uptake of family planning and safe abortion services across the country, including Tigray. Our global Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights programme "WISH" complements this programme, providing lifesaving services across refugee camps in the region. While hampered by the communications blackout, we are in close contact with Family Planning by Choice, WISH and our wider set of health and humanitarian partners to establish the status of ongoing UK-funded activities and understand changing needs, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. We have worked with the UN on response planning, which includes commitment to minimum initial services package for emergency reproductive health. We are working to secure humanitarian access to deliver further assistance.

Globally, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting the Minimum Initial Service Package for

Reproductive Health in Crises and this year provided UNFPA with an additional £10 million for lifesaving SRH services as part of the global humanitarian response plan to COVID-19.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any (1) family planning, (2) sexual and reproductive health and rights, and (3) abortion care, services they have made available to the population of Tigray have changed since the onset of the conflict in that region. [HL10678]

Baroness Sugg: In Ethiopia we have a large bilateral family planning programme - Family Planning by Choice - which works to improve access to, quality of and the voluntary uptake of family planning and safe abortion services across the country, including Tigray. Our global Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights programme "WISH" complements this programme, providing lifesaving services across refugee camps in the region. While hampered by the communications blackout, we are in close contact with Family Planning by Choice, WISH and our wider set of health and humanitarian partners to establish the status of ongoing UK-funded activities and understand changing needs, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. We have worked with the UN on response planning, which includes commitment to minimum initial services package for emergency reproductive health. We are working to secure humanitarian access to deliver further assistance.

Globally, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crises and this year provided UNFPA with an additional £10 million for lifesaving SRH services as part of the global humanitarian response plan to COVID-19.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that women and girls in Tigray continue to have access to (1) family planning, (2) sexual and reproductive health and rights, and (3) abortion care, services during the conflict in that region. [HL10679]

Baroness Sugg: In Ethiopia we have a large bilateral family planning programme - Family Planning by Choice - which works to improve access to, quality of and the voluntary uptake of family planning and safe abortion services across the country, including Tigray. Our global Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights programme "WISH" complements this programme, providing lifesaving services across refugee camps in the region. While hampered by the communications blackout, we are in close contact with Family Planning by Choice, WISH and our wider set of health and humanitarian partners to establish the status of ongoing UK-funded activities and understand changing needs, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. We have worked with the UN on response planning, which includes commitment to minimum initial services package for

emergency reproductive health. We are working to secure humanitarian access to deliver further assistance.

Globally, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crises and this year provided UNFPA with an additional £10 million for lifesaving SRH services as part of the global humanitarian response plan to COVID-19.

Families: Disadvantaged

*Asked by **Lord Farmer***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the budget is for the Reducing Parental Conflict programme for the financial year 2021/2; and whether a budget for that programme has been agreed for subsequent financial years. [HL10803]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department for Work and Pensions' Reducing Parental Conflict programme will continue in 2021-22. Budgets for the financial year 2021-2022 have not yet been set. Following completion of the one year Spending Review, the Department will commence a budget setting process for all its programmes, to conclude before the start of the 2021/2022 financial year. Decisions on subsequent financial years will be taken via future Spending Reviews.

Government Equalities Office

*Asked by **Baroness Gale***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 3 November (HL9125), what assessment they have made of the number of women's organisations in the UK; and what plans they have to increase the number of women's organisations with which the Government Equalities Office engages. [HL10473]

Baroness Berridge: The Government Equalities Office (GEO) does not maintain a list of every women's organisation in the UK, however officials are meeting frequently with women's organisations, primarily to talk about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. GEO continues to work to ensure the government can hear and be influenced by a wide range of women's voices.

Hopewell Chin'ono

*Asked by **Lord Oates***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to government of Zimbabwe about the detention of Hopewell Chin'ono. [HL10362]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the continued prosecution of Hopewell Chin'ono. Media freedom is an essential quality of any open society. People must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, to challenge their governments, and to make decisions informed by a strong and robust media.

Zimbabwe is one of the UK's Media Freedom Focus Countries: we have called on the Government of Zimbabwe to end the harassment of journalists, improve legislation and work with the international community to protect media freedom.

Our Embassy in Harare are closely following developments on Mr Chin'ono's case, including through attendance at court. They continue to raise our concerns directly with the Government of Zimbabwe. Most recently, the Minister for Africa tweeted on 13 November and 23 July to express his concern; reiterating that the UK is committed to defending media freedom and human rights in Zimbabwe. When the Minister for Africa spoke to Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Moyo on 8 June, he urged the Government of Zimbabwe to make concrete progress on human rights and respect the rule of law. The British Ambassador to Harare also met with the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 14 August and raised our concerns.

Horn of Africa: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conflict in the Horn of Africa; what estimate they have made of the number of refugees resulting from such a conflict; and what steps they are taking to bring any such conflict to an end. [HL10465]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the ongoing violence between federal and regional forces in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and the risk it poses to civilians, and by reports of ethnically-motivated attacks. We are gravely concerned at Amnesty International's report of killings of civilians on 9 November; we call for transparency and accountability to be delivered for such incidents.

The UN preparedness response plan estimates that 1.98 million people could be affected by violence in Tigray and neighbouring states. This number includes a caseload of 885,000 people that already rely on humanitarian support plus a further, additional caseload of 1.1 million people that are likely to be exposed to violence many of whom may be displaced from their homes and communities. Ethiopia hosts almost 800,000 refugees primarily from the neighbouring states of South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. We are contributing to UN-led preparedness planning efforts for Tigray and calling for unrestricted humanitarian access and the protection of civilians. In Sudan, flexible UK funding to the UN's World Food Programme and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is already helping new refugees from Ethiopia to receive emergency assistance, including shelter and food.

The Foreign Secretary called Prime Minister Abiy on 10 November to raise our concerns and stress the urgent need to prioritise the protection of civilian lives, restore services (including banks and telecommunications) and

enable humanitarian access. He also urged for a de-escalation of violence and called for moves to political dialogue. We will follow the situation, raise our concerns at the deaths of civilians, and raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with the Government of Ethiopia and regional leaders.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have about (1) missile attacks on Asmara, and (2) the presence of Ethiopian troops on Eritrean territory; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the movement of Ethiopian soldiers from Somalia for the containment of al-Shabaab. [HL10466]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Explosions were reported in Asmara on 14 November as a result of rockets launched from the ongoing military conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia. They all missed their intended targets and only minor injuries were reported. There has been no direct response from the local authorities. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) have taken responsibility, claiming it was in retaliation for attacks by Eritrean forces on Tigray. Eritrea denies any involvement in the fighting. We continue to track the situation, raise our concerns at the deaths of civilians, and raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with regional leaders.

Ethiopian troops are an important part of international efforts to tackle Al Shabaab, in particular through their contribution (alongside four other regional states) to the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM. In our approach to the conflict in Tigray we will continue to underline the need to ensure that spill-over from the conflict does not affect regional stability.

Hospices: Coronavirus

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on charitable hospice care providers. [HL10540]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have put in place to financially support charitable hospice care providers; and what assessment they have made of the impact of visiting restrictions in hospitals on the level of demand experienced by such providers. [HL10541]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement regularly assess the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on the hospice sector and are in regular discussions with stakeholders in the sector about the challenges they face.

Between April and July, £150 million in additional funding was provided to the hospice sector. Further funding of up to £125 million has now been made available to enable hospices to continue their vital end of life care services.

Alongside this, hospices have benefited from the financial support offered by HM Treasury to all charities, such as paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan. Charities, alongside other sectors, can also access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the replacement Job Support Scheme.

No specific assessment has been made of the impact of visiting restrictions in hospitals on the level of demand experienced by charitable hospice care providers.

Immigration Rules: Skilled Workers

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 17 November (HL9917), by what means they are able to introduce a limit on the number of skilled workers able to come to the UK; what is the nature of any parliamentary approval that would be required; and how long would be required for any such changes to take effect. [HL10474]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Points-Based Immigration System will allow the Government to take back full control of our borders. We will suspend the cap on the number of skilled workers able to come to the UK but other controls, such as salary thresholds and the Immigration Skills Charge, will ensure immigration is managed and considered alongside investment in and protection of the UK's resident labour market.

We have considered carefully the possible impacts of the new immigration system, making best use of existing evidence and data. However, variables including Coronavirus are not the only uncertainty. We will need time to monitor the impacts on migration flows and the labour market, and whether this is in line with our detailed planning assumptions, before making any changes.

Any limit could be introduced through changes to the Immigration Rules, which are subject to negative resolution in both Houses. Changes are conventionally laid before Parliament 21 days before they take effect. The cap on skilled workers will be suspended when the new Rules come into force on 1 December, but the Home Office processes required to enforce such a control will remain in place.

Informers: Children

Asked by Lord Davies of Gower

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many instances there were of individuals under the age of 18 being employed in the role of a Covert Human Intelligence Source during the last complete calendar year for which such a record is available. [HL10469]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The most recent available data published by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner reported that 17 Juvenile CHIS

authorisations were approved across 11 public authorities during the four-year period between January 2015 to the end of 2018.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Qatar about the impact of the Israel–United Arab Emirates normalisation agreement, signed on 15 September, on a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. [HL10522]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We warmly welcome the agreements between Israel and Bahrain, and Israel and the United Arab Emirates. We welcome both the decision to normalise relations, as well as the suspension of plans for annexation - a move the UK has opposed - as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region. The changing regional context and converging Arab and Israeli interests presents an opening to make progress on the Israel-Palestine issue. The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution, and supports a regional approach to peace. The UK welcomed therefore the announcement on 19 November that the Palestinian Authority and Government of Israel have agreed to restore cooperation. Restoring cooperation is an important and constructive step towards peace, and shows both sides are willing to put the needs and security of both Israelis and Palestinians first. We need to build on this momentum through further dialogue and compromise to move towards a lasting solution to the conflict.

Legal Aid Scheme

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide extra support to legal aid practitioners to address additional (1) pressures from remote working, (2) demands from vulnerable clients, and (3) workload from domestic violence cases, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10498]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a range of challenges for the legal profession. We have been working closely with legal aid providers across the justice system throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so, monitoring any impact and understanding their concerns.

In April the Legal Aid Agency published operational guidance, including guidance on working remotely and working with clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A range of measures have been introduced to support providers during the pandemic while maintaining access to justice for the most vulnerable in society. These include:

- Reducing the levels of contract administration to allow providers to focus on supporting their clients;

- Expanding how domestic abuse requirements may be evidenced to make it easier for victims to access legal aid during this difficult period;
- Expanding the scope and relaxing the evidence requirements for hardship payments in crown court cases – including reducing the threshold for work done to £450, rather than the previous £5,000;
- Halting the pursuit of outstanding debts owed to the Legal Aid Agency;
- Suspending sanctions in relation to missed deadlines for delegated function applications, substantive amendments and appeals against LAA decisions;
- Publicising existing avenues of financial help for legal firms, such as the ability to apply for early payment for work already done on a case, and changing rules for payment on account for providers, benefitting cashflow in the short-term and ensuring that providers can claim the same amount of money for online hearings as they can for face-to-face hearings.

HMT have introduced and recently extended a range of measures to support individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the furlough scheme, Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan and Bounce Back Loan, to provide some financial stability. We encourage the professions to continue to take advantage of this support where appropriate.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation, working with providers to keep these measures under review.

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 future of democracy in Armenia following (1) the conflict, and (2) the increased Russian military presence, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [HL10489]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of the impact of the recent conflict on the future of democracy in Armenia. The UK Government continues to support the development of a stable, open and prosperous Armenia, including by using the Good Governance Fund to provide support in the areas of democracy and human rights. The UK Government understands that the Russian military is playing a role in Nagorno-Karabakh to end the recent hostilities, as agreed with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, it is important that Armenia and Azerbaijan remain the key actors in ensuring that a sustainable peace deal is reached, under the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group process.

Nigeria: Prisoners

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of

Nigeria about the report from its National Bureau of Statistics, published on 23 April, which found that more than 70 per cent of that country's prison population is on remand without sentence. [HL10481]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government shares the concern about the findings in the report by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics. Although we have not discussed this specific report with the Nigerian authorities, officials at our High Commission have raised the issue of the large numbers of prisoners awaiting trial and the need for due process to be followed in a timely manner in all cases. It is important that the federal and state governments take steps to reduce the number of prisoners on remand without sentence. Our High Commission will continue to engage with the Nigerian Ministry of Justice on this subject.

Parliament: Security

Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what are the current rules on (1) eligibility, and (2) sponsorship of Parliamentary passes for lobbyists. [HL10656]

Lord McFall of Alcluth: Nobody is entitled to a parliamentary pass by virtue of being a lobbyist. Any passholder who has an external lobbying role separate to their parliamentary role is not permitted to use their pass for lobbying purposes. The rules governing the sponsorship of passes by members of the House of Lords, which were recently amended, say: "Such passholders must use their Parliamentary pass only to provide Parliamentary support to the sponsor and other members of the House, and not in furtherance of any other interests of their own or of other organisations for which they work. Members may not sponsor a pass for anybody whose primary role is to support an All-Party Parliamentary Group."

The Code of Conduct for House of Lords Members' Staff requires them to register their outside interests, including "any ... financial interest in businesses or organisations involved in parliamentary lobbying".

Anybody who has evidence that an individual is breaching any of these rules may complain to the independent Commissioner for Standards at atlordsstandards@parliament.uk.

Prisoners on Remand

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners in England and Wales are on remand awaiting trial; and what steps they are taking to reduce that number. [HL10480]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: As at 30 September 2020, there were 8,444 prisoners in England & Wales held on remand awaiting trial. This information is included in Table 1.1 of prison population statistics which can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/930646/Population_30Sep2020.ods

The decision to remand someone is a matter for the independent judiciary. Defendants can be remanded where there is a risk they may abscond or commit offences if released on bail.

Prisoners' Release

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales to extend the Early Conditional Temporary Release Scheme; and when they intend to make a decision on that matter. [HL10477]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: In April we introduced the End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme. It allowed for the early release of stringently assessed low-risk prisoners who were within two months of their release date. It freed up space across the estate so that all prisons could effectively control the spread of the virus by quarantining new arrivals, isolating those with symptoms and shielding vulnerable offenders. This was based on advice from Public Health England and was necessary to protect life and avoid thousands of prisoners becoming infected, overwhelming local NHS services.

The ECTR scheme was paused in August, as it was no longer a necessary part of our overall response. Throughout the pandemic our response has been based on public health advice, and this decision will be kept under constant review over the coming weeks and months.

Prisoners' Release: Christmas

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable the release on temporary licence of people in prison during the Christmas period. [HL10507]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Most release on temporary licence (ROTL) was suspended in March to help tackle the threat from Covid-19 but we have been working with the public health authorities to support prisons to re-introduce ROTL where it is safe and practicable to do so, and in line with restrictions on activity in the community.

Currently, therefore, ROTL is limited to key activities such as work, education, essential medical treatment and in compelling compassionate circumstances. Decisions about release during the Christmas period will be taken in light of community restrictions in place at that time and in consultation with the public health authorities.

Prisoners' Release: Social Security Benefits

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to enable prisoners to submit claims for (1)

Universal Credit, and (2) other benefits, as early as possible prior to their release. [HL10478]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We have been working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to improve access to financial support for prisoners and prison leavers. As part of the Government's Covid-19 response, DWP established a bespoke telephony service to enable those released from prison to make a claim for Universal Credit. All prisoners receive information about the telephone line as part of the Discharge Pack that is issued to them as they leave prison. This service remains in place to assist prison leavers to make benefit claims quickly on release.

Prisoners: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they are taking to reduce mental ill health among prisoners by providing facilities for (1) exercise, (2) education, and (3) work; and how those facilities have been affected by COVID-19 precautions. [HL10479]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary regime restrictions introduced in response to it have brought new and different challenges across the estate. Maintaining safety and the mental health and wellbeing of prisoners has remained a priority throughout. A range of products have been made available to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate any risks. Governors are required to agree a health delivery plan which includes how mental health support will be delivered during COVID-19.

We have tailored guidance for supporting specific groups of people in prison whose wellbeing may be more impacted by the Covid-19 measures put in place, including older prison residents, those with learning difficulties and groups known to be at increased risk of self-harm, suicide, or violence.

We have piloted improvements to Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT), which is the multidisciplinary case management approach used in prisons when someone is thought to be at risk of self-harm or suicide. Following a pause, due to the implementation of Covid-19 measures, we are currently planning the resumption of the roll-out of revised ACCT across the prison estate.

In addition, video health conferencing has been rolled out across the estate to support the delivery of mental health services by enabling contact with community and hospital services. Governors are also considering how mental health services can support people with the potential increased anxiety or other mental illnesses related to Covid-19, as well as 'lockdown' experiences and restrictions.

A range of internal initiatives have been developed, including the development of weekly national wellbeing content through HMPPS Psychology Services and prison

radio content focussed on wellbeing. We have also been working with education providers to support prisons in the adult estate. This has allowed us to enable learning to continue via in cell activity, distraction material and learning packs. Within the Youth Secure Estate the delivery of education remains a particular priority as we seek to mirror the position taken for vulnerable children in the community, where it is possible to do so. It is our desire to continue to provide 'face to face' classroom-based education, notwithstanding local variations and the impact of potential outbreaks amongst staff or children.

In relation to exercise, since the beginning of the pandemic prisons have been authorised to use external exercise yards for access to the open air and to deliver external physical education. All sites have also set out how they will provide prisoners with time out of cell, and the safe equivalent of association time.

Prisons: Visits

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect family visits to prisoners in England and Wales to resume; and whether they intend to give priority to the most vulnerable (1) prisoners, and (2) families. [HL10476]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Following the reintroduction of national lockdown measures on 5 November, we have paused face-to-face social visits in prisons in England. There are exemptions for compassionate reasons, including visits to children in custody. Family visits in Wales are permitted, although in some establishments with active outbreaks they have been temporarily suspended on public health grounds. We will reintroduce face-to-face social visits as soon as safe to do so, guided by public health advice alongside an operational assessment of what can safely be implemented.

Prioritisation of visits is done locally, but we have instructed governors to consider the needs of vulnerable prisoners in their implementation plans.

Public Footpaths

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk posed by private planes (1) landing next to, and (2) taxiing across, public footpaths. [HL10468]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Licensed or certificated aerodromes are required to adequately signpost any public right of way crossing or bordering a landing area. For unlicensed aerodromes, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has published guidance which advises that footpaths should be clearly marked with similar warning signs.

The CAA uses a wide range of information and intelligence to identify and assess any potential risks to

safety posed by aviation activity. The CAA does not have evidence to suggest that this issue poses a safety risk that would necessitate additional regulations or guidance.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the economic, and (2) the diplomatic, consequences for the UK of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. [HL10490]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: As a supporter of free trade, the UK takes a close interest in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which should help standardise rules and facilitate trade between partners in the region. The Government is committed to enhancing our trade in Asia Pacific through our trade negotiations with Japan, Australia and New Zealand, our intention to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and our bilateral trade engagement with partner countries.

Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the average waiting time for callers to the self-assessment helpline of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in each month so far of the current tax year. [HL10438]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC publish information on average speed to answer monthly and quarterly. Breakdowns for individual helplines including self assessment are contained in the quarterly reports. Times for the Self Assessment helpline are provided below:

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September
Mins: Seconds	14:10	24:14	12:57	10:46	13:07	08:42

Seas and Oceans: Wind Power

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) the construction of, and (2) the underwater noise levels caused by, wind turbines at sea on (a) dolphins, (b) porpoises, (c) whales, (d) seals, and (e) other marine life; and what steps they are taking to mitigate any such impact. [HL10482]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Defra has commissioned a number of projects to assess the impact of underwater noise pollution. These include several projects to set targets for Good Environmental Status (GES) under descriptor 11 (marine noise) of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which assesses noise and its effects on marine species including fish, crustaceans

and other invertebrates. Most recently, we have this year published a risk assessment of underwater noise pollution in Special Areas of Conservation for marine mammals, wider Marine Protected Areas and throughout the UK Exclusive Economic Zone.

A Defra project is currently investigating effectiveness of existing, new and emerging mitigation techniques for offshore wind. We are working with other Government bodies, The Crown Estate, industry and wider stakeholders to mitigate against, and prepare for, any environmental impacts of growth in the offshore wind sector.

To mitigate the impact of underwater noise in the Southern North Sea we have worked with the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies to publish guidance for assessing the significance of noise disturbance against Conservation Objectives of harbour porpoise Special Areas of Conservation and continue to work with industry and marine regulators on its implementation.

St Helena

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Saint Helena Airport on the economy of St Helena since that airport opened, broken down by (1) year, and (2) economic sector. [HL10517]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: One of the primary objectives of the St Helena Airport was to develop the island's tourist industry leading to wider benefits for its economy. Since the commercial air service started in October 2017, tourist arrivals have increased by 52% in 2018 with a further increase of 19% on that in 2019 when compared to average leisure arrivals on the island between 2010 and 2017. Estimated spending by tourists and other visitors contributed around £4 million to the St Helena economy in 2018 and £5 million in 2019. However, because of the global Covid-19 pandemic, no tourists or other non-essential visitors have been able to visit St Helena since March 2020. The outlook for the resumption of tourist travel remains uncertain.

The full impact of air access on the economy will take some years to materialise and there is not yet enough data to assess the impact on other economic sectors. The airport has however brought other benefits such as quicker access to the island and allowed for life saving urgent medical evacuations. The UK Government will continue to work with the St Helena Government to support the island's economic development.

Tobacco: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the impact of the imposition of the UK Global Tariff on imports of tobacco products from the EU from 1 January 2021, in the event that a free trade agreement includes Rules of Origin requirements which require more than 10 per cent originating leaf. [HL10531]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The UK Government intends to achieve a Free Trade Agreement with the EU by the end of December 2020.

The UK Global Tariff (UKGT) is tailored to the UK economy and balances the interests of UK consumers and producers. In designing the UKGT, we assessed all available evidence submitted during the public consultation in depth and considered a range of factors, such as the five principles set out in the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018.

More analysis will be published in the Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) alongside the legislation, as is standard practice.

UK Government Union Capability Independent Review

Asked by Lord Morrow

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish the report of the Dunlop Review into UK Government Union capability. [HL10528]

Lord True: As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office told the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 10 September, the Government intends to publish the Dunlop Review before the end of the year.

USA: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government who will represent the UK at the inauguration of the new President of the United States of America. [HL10538]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Arrangements for the inauguration of the next President of the United States have not yet been announced. However, it is customary for the UK to be represented by our Ambassador in Washington DC at such events.

Index to Answers

Written Answers.....	1	USA: Politics and Government	10
Assadollah Assadi.....	1		
Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme	1		
Career Development: Young People	1		
Child Trust Fund	1		
Cyprus: Peace Negotiations.....	1		
Deaths: Hospitals.....	2		
Ethiopia: Armed Conflict	3		
Ethiopia: Family Planning.....	3		
Families: Disadvantaged	4		
Government Equalities Office	4		
Hopewell Chin'ono	4		
Horn of Africa: Armed Conflict	5		
Hospices: Coronavirus.....	5		
Immigration Rules: Skilled Workers.....	6		
Informers: Children	6		
Israel: Palestinians	6		
Legal Aid Scheme	6		
Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict	7		
Nigeria: Prisoners	7		
Parliament: Security	7		
Prisoners on Remand.....	7		
Prisoners' Release	8		
Prisoners' Release: Christmas	8		
Prisoners' Release: Social Security Benefits.....	8		
Prisoners: Mental Health	8		
Prisons: Visits	9		
Public Footpaths	9		
Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership .	9		
Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services.....	9		
Seas and Oceans: Wind Power	9		
St Helena	10		
Tobacco: UK Trade with EU.....	10		
UK Government Union Capability Independent Review.....	10		