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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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

Thursday, 3 December 2020

Cyber and Electromagnetic Activities: Call-out Order

[HLWS611]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister of State for the Armed Forces (James Heapey MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

A new order has been made under section 56(1B) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to enable reservists to be called into permanent service to support HM Forces in connection to HMG's cyber and electromagnetic activities (CEMA).

CEMA involves the carrying out, synchronisation and coordination of offensive, defensive, inform and enabling activities, across the electromagnetic environment and cyberspace. Defence is committed to assisting HMG by the provision of experts in these domains from HM Forces.

As part of this support, Reserve Forces will be on standby, as part of a Whole Force approach with Regular Forces and Partners Across Government, to deliver a range of Defence outputs such as (but not limited to): the reinforcement of Regular units by providing specialist and rare knowledge, skills and experience.

The order shall take effect from the day on which it is made and shall cease to have effect 12 months from the date on which it is made.

Election Spending Limits Uprating

[HLWS610]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith MP) has today made the following Written Statement:

Elections rely upon political parties and candidates' ability to communicate their views and commitments so that voters can make an informed decision. To this end, it is right that registered parties and nominated candidates can incur campaign expenditure, but it is also right that there are limits on this expenditure to ensure a level playing field. Many of the current statutory spending limits have not been changed since they were set out twenty years ago, with a small number raised more recently in 2014. This is a significant length of time, and has the effect of reducing the ability to campaign given inflationary costs of printing and communication.

With elections scheduled for 6 May 2021, I am making this statement to outline the Government's intention to raise the spending limits by inflation for candidates at local council elections in England in time for those May elections. This uplift would take into account the change in the value of money since these amounts were last changed and ensure that limits remain consistent with the

initial intent of spending limits when considered by previous Parliaments. It makes no other substantive or real-terms change. I am keen to ensure that, where possible, parties are given notice of potential updates to electoral law well in advance of those elections. The Government is also mindful that the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic may result in a greater emphasis on postal and digital campaigning ahead of May's elections; this adds to the case for limits to be updated and uprated.

It is the Government's intention to review party and candidate spending limits for all other polls (within the legislative competence of the UK Government) next year, with a view to uprating them in line with inflation since they were originally set. This will create a baseline for regular and consistent reviews of all limits in future. We will work with stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission and the Parliamentary Parties Panel, on this process.

Housing Adaptations

[HLWS609]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister for rough sleeping and housing (Kelly Tolhurst) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am delighted to announce that the Government is releasing an additional £68 million for the Disabled Facilities Grant in England. This funding boost for 2020-21 will help local authorities to provide more home adaptations and bolsters the £505 million that Government already paid to local authorities for the Disabled Facilities Grant in May, raising the headline total for the grant to £573 million this financial year.

I recognise that following the outbreak of Covid-19, local authorities have continued to display excellence, innovation, and resilience in maintaining the delivery of essential services under very challenging circumstances. The Disabled Facilities Grant can play a critical role in both preventing hospital and care home admissions and supporting smoother discharge from hospital. This additional £68 million in Disabled Facilities Grant funding will enable local authorities to deliver more home adaptations for those people with disabilities who qualify.

I am pleased to confirm that Spending Review 2020 includes an investment of £573 million in Disabled Facilities Grant funding for 2021-22, bringing Government's investment into the Disabled Facilities Grant to over £4 billion since 2010. This further outlines our continued commitment to help older and disabled people to live independently and safely, and will provide some welcome certainty to local authorities as they plan their budgets for the coming financial year.

The additional funding for 2020-21 is being provided by the Department of Health and Social Care as part of the Better Care Fund and will be paid by my Department to London Boroughs, Unitary Authorities, and County Councils on 9 December. In two tier areas, Counties must pass the appropriate Disabled Facilities Grant funding to their District councils.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

[HLWS612]

Baroness Berridge: The Lifetime Skills Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister in September promises to help people across the country get the skills they need at every stage of their life as we build back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the Prime Minister announced the expansion of Skills Bootcamps, which are currently available in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, and the Liverpool City Region. These flexible courses last approximately 12-16 weeks, and give participants the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

I am now pleased to announce that Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the Heart of the South West, and the Leeds City Region have today opened course registrations ahead of beginning delivery in January. These bootcamps will expand to cover not only digital skills like software development, digital marketing, and data analytics but also technical skills training such as welding, engineering, and construction.

This is only the start for this innovative approach to adult training. I can confirm that we will invest £43m through the National Skills Fund to extend Skills Bootcamps further across the country in 2021 increasing the national coverage of this new offer and trailblazing new skills to support our labour market and develop this model further.

We will continue to build on our wider plans for adult skills and I will update the House on our progress in due course. In the meantime, we will continue to engage closely with stakeholders as we progress and develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund.

Mali Deployment

[HLWS613]

Baroness Goldie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I would like to provide an update to the statement made by my predecessor, the Right Honourable member for Portsmouth North, on 22 July 2019 (HCWS1779) in which we announced the Government's intention to deploy a contribution from our Armed Forces to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

I can confirm that 300 UK personnel will have deployed to MINUSMA and completed required in-country quarantine by 22 December. The deployment comprises 250 troops from the Light Dragoons, the Royal Anglian Regiment and other attached personnel, and a further 50 forming a National Support Element.

The UK has committed to a three-year deployment to MINUSMA, with a review to be held at the 18-month

point. UK personnel will deploy on 6-month operational tours with a 2-week rest and recuperation break. Accordingly, the first deployment of Light Dragoons will be replaced by a second contingent led by the Royal Anglian Regiment and Queens Dragoon Guards in summer 2021.

As the Foreign Secretary recently said, working alongside our development and diplomatic efforts, the UK's military contribution to UN peacekeeping is a clear illustration of how our defence and security capabilities can contribute to the UK's role as a force for good in the world. This deployment reflects our continued commitment to multilateralism and international peace and security, a responsibility we take seriously as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It is part of a wider Government response in support of progress towards long-term and sustainable stability in Mali and the Sahel. It will help to minimise the impact of violent conflict on UK interests and strengthen partnerships between the international community and Sahel governments to improve the overall response to the crisis.

Mali is at the forefront of countries in West Africa affected by instability, with terrorist violence and conflict between communities sharply on the rise. The violence is costing lives, hindering development across one of the poorest countries in the world, and spreading to the wider region. Our contribution will provide critical capabilities to the UN mission at a vital time. We can have genuine impact on the mission's overall approach, to help reduce the spread of conflict and insecurity, contribute to the protection of civilians, and build a sustainable peace.

Led by the Swedish UN Mission Force Commander, Lt Gen Dennis Gyllensporre, we will be working alongside over 60 nations all contributing to MINUSMA. It is a truly global collaboration with contributions being made by West African nations in the region and our traditional western allies including Sweden, Germany, Canada, France and Ireland. The largest contingents of soldiers on MINUSMA will be coming from Guinea, Chad, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Egypt.

The UK task force will be under the command of the Light Dragoons' Commanding Officer, Lt Col Thomas Robinson. The task force is configured for reconnaissance with their initial objective to understand the operating environment in the area around Gao so that they are well placed to support the UN Mission. This will allow MINUSMA to better plan operations and deter and respond to threats.

Our MINUSMA commitment complements existing distinct and separate commitments we have in the region, including helicopter support to the Operation BARKHANE (the French-led counter-terrorism initiative in Africa's Sahel Region), and sits within wider UK Government seeking to build stability, and support the most vulnerable populations in the region.

This is dangerous mission. We have done all we can to mitigate the risk. Our forces are among the best in the world and they have the right training, equipment and

preparation to succeed. I am confident that they will have a strong impact on the ground in Mali, will bolster our standing in the United Nations and will help us in our endeavours to make the UN and its peacekeeping missions as effective as possible.

Written Answers

Thursday, 3 December 2020

Balkans: Identity Cards

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the agreement to allow travel between Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania using only identity cards, and (2) the deal to bypass Visoki Decani Monastery. [[HL10601](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The October 2019 agreement on ID Card travel between Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia was part of a wider initiative to promote economic cooperation between the three countries. We welcome increased regional economic cooperation in principle but believe that it should involve all six Western Balkans countries. At a Berlin Process meeting on 16 October 2020, Interior Ministers of the Western Balkans endorsed a proposal to develop an agreement to travel using identity cards among all six countries of the Western Balkans. The UK supports this inclusive regional integration and information exchange, although we have cautioned on the need to analyse and mitigate security risks to prevent Organised Crime Groups from exploiting the new arrangements.

The Government welcomes the agreement on the construction of a bypass and rehabilitation of roads in the Deçan/Deçane municipality, endorsed by the Implementation and Monitoring Council on 9 November. Our Ambassador in Pristina visited the site in August, and issued a joint statement with international partners calling for adherence to the 2008 law on Special Protective Zones, and subsequent constitutional court decisions regarding the Deçan/Deçane land dispute. We are pleased a solution has been found that respects the rule of law, and ensures the ongoing protection of cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo.

Cameroon: Boko Haram

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that aid supplied to Cameroon to fight Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa in Cameroon's Far North has been diverted to the Anglophone regions, and (2) that attempts to tackle extremist terrorist groups in the Far North are now subsequently undersupplied. [[HL10559](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of recent reports that the Government of Cameroon is diverting resources from efforts to tackle terrorism in the Far North region to the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions, and reports that this is having an impact on the government's counter-terrorism efforts. We recognise that the Cameroonian authorities have two important security

challenges to manage and we understand that some resources were reassigned in 2018.

Cameroon: Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports (1) that military equipment has been diverted from Cameroon's Far North to the Anglophone regions, and (2) that the Cameroonian military has been implicated in human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings in the Anglophone regions, what discussions they have had with the Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group about its contract to provide maintenance, technical support and training to the Cameroon Air Force's fleet of C-130 Hercules aircraft. [[HL10560](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is deeply concerned about reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and security forces in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions. We continue to call for investigations into all such reports. As the UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, those who have abused and violated human rights in Cameroon, as anywhere else in the world, must be held responsible.

Since Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group was awarded a contract in 2019 to provide maintenance, technical support and training to the Cameroon Air Force's fleet of C-130 Hercules aircraft, a representative of the British High Commission in Cameroon has discussed the contract with the company, as part of our support to British businesses overseas

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they have established to assess independently the capacity of care homes to accept safely COVID-19 positive patients from hospital; and who is responsible for that assessment. [[HL9804](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the National Health Service to ensure everyone discharged from hospital has an updated COVID-19 test result and anyone testing positive is discharged to a setting that is assured to be able to provide safe care.

The CQC has worked with experts to develop an online infection prevention and control (IPC) inspection tool. If settings meet the expectations set out in the CQC's IPC tool, they will be assured as having the practices and processes in place, at the time of the inspection, to provide appropriate post-discharge care for people who have tested COVID-19 positive.

Children in Care: Protection

Asked by Lord Laming

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to address the issue of vulnerable children in public care being placed in unregistered accommodation, (2) to ensure that such facilities fulfil their responsibilities to the children placed in their care, and (3) to prevent these children being exposed to (a) sexual exploitation, and (b) recruitment to County Lines gangs. [HL10516]

Baroness Berridge: The government is clear that children in care and care leavers deserve places to live that meet their needs and keep them safe, and local authorities have statutory duties to ensure this. It is unacceptable for any child to be placed in a setting that does not do this, for any amount of time.

The government has consulted on reforms to the use of unregulated independent and semi-independent provision. This includes banning the placement of children under the age of 16 being placed in these settings. Children of this age need care and should be placed in a children's home or foster care. We are clear that independent and semi-independent provision can be the right option for older children, if it is high quality and meets their needs. We are, however, concerned that provision is not always as good as it should be, which is why we have consulted on new national standards regarding provision for 16 and 17 year olds.

If an unregistered children's home – a setting that should be registered with Ofsted as a children's home but is not – is operating, it is doing so illegally, and Ofsted has powers to prosecute these providers. We have consulted on giving Ofsted additional powers to take earlier enforcement action against illegal unregistered providers.

We will be responding to this consultation, and setting out our plans for next steps in due course.

Local authorities have statutory duties to ensure that care placements are made with consideration of the needs and risks of individual children. This extends to the use of unregulated provision. Local authorities must carry out checks on this provision to ensure that it meets the needs of children and keeps them safe. We are also aware that, due to capacity issues, some local authorities have found it difficult to locate suitable placements for children with the most complex needs. As my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced on 25 November 2020, the government will provide £24 million in 2021-22 to start a new programme to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure children's homes. This will provide high-quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and will mean children can live closer to their families and support networks, in settings that meet their needs.

The multi-agency statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) makes explicit the legal requirements and expectations on individuals, agencies

and organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets out that, as well as threats from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. Assessments of children in such cases, who are referred to local authority children's social care, should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life, and are a threat to their safety. This should be considered when determining what support and accommodation should be provided. The guidance specifically highlights the risks to children of child sexual exploitation, and from exploitation by criminal gangs such as county lines.

China: Freedom of Speech

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Cui Haoxin was arrested in China for speaking out against the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang; what representations they have made to the government of China (1) about his case, and (2) about freedom of speech and media freedom in China. [HL10558]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned at reports of the detention of Cui Haoxin. Although we have not raised this specific case with the Chinese authorities, we oppose all efforts to curtail freedom of expression or freedom of speech, whether in China or elsewhere. We have consistently raised media freedoms with the Chinese authorities and will always defend the right of journalists to do their job.

China: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that factories in China have used forced labour from North Korean workers to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) for export to countries including the UK; what assessment they carried out of factory conditions in China before they purchased PPE produced in that country; what was the total value of the PPE they purchased from companies that manufacture PPE in China; and which companies acted as intermediaries for such purchases. [HL10557]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by reports that Chinese factories have used North Korean overseas workers to produce PPE. The Department of Health and Social Care will investigate the supplier concerned. The UK urges all countries, including China, to meet their obligations under UN Security Resolution 2397 to repatriate North Korean workers, who are sent overseas in large numbers to earn money for the North Korean regime.

We take all allegations of modern slavery and forced labour extremely seriously. We expect suppliers to follow the highest legal and ethical standards and to carry out

proper due diligence for all government contracts. We publish all contracts for transparency and regret the delay in the publication of some but all will be published as soon as possible. Information is already available online on Contracts Finder on the Gov.uk website. We have been working tirelessly to deliver PPE to protect our health and social care staff on the frontline, with over 5.1 billion PPE items delivered so far.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of their proposal to abolish section 106 agreements on the provision of necessary new community infrastructure in areas where (1) the local authority has set the Community Infrastructure Levy at zero, and (2) such infrastructure is currently funded through such agreements. [HL10510]

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government which local planning authorities in England have set the Community Infrastructure Levy at zero. [HL10511]

Lord Greenhalgh: Our consultation on the planning reforms proposed in the white paper 'Planning for the Future' closed on 29 October. We are now analysing responses, and will be engaging with external practitioners, including local authority representatives, as part of this process. We will publish our conclusions and intentions in due course.

Currently, local authorities can choose whether or not to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy: 50 per cent of authorities have introduced the Levy. Authorities which charge the Levy can choose what types of development it applies to, depending on viability evidence, and where, within their area, it applies. Authorities who charge the Levy are required to publish their charging schedule on their website, including identifying any areas or types of development for which zero rates apply.

Contact Tracing: Computer Software

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Bethell on 1 October (HL Deb col 287), how they calculated the figure that 89 per cent of the population have telephones whose hardware and software is compatible with the NHS COVID-19 application; and what assessment they have made of the accuracy of this calculation in the light of (1) Office for National Statistics data on smartphone ownership, and (2) reports of the application's lack of compatibility with some smartphone operating systems. [HL8716]

Lord Bethell: Estimates using the latest data directly from Apple and Google show that 89% of people with a

smartphone in the United Kingdom are able to use the app. These are a device that can install a version of the iOS or Android operating system with the contact tracing technology the National Health Service COVID-19 app uses. For Apple this is iOS versions 13.5 and higher and for Android version Marshmallow (v6.0) and higher. The 89% estimate is made up of 87% of iOS smartphone owners and 93% of Android smartphone owners.

Coronavirus: Israel

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that a COVID-19 placenta-based cell therapy, developed in Israel, has had a 100 per cent survival rate during clinical trials. [HL3216]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to respond to the Question for Written Answer tabled by Lord Roberts of Llandudno on 21 April (HL3216). [HL9743]

Lord Bethell: The Department has noted the findings from this study. The Therapeutics Taskforce is continuing to monitor any new, high quality evidence on COVID-19 therapeutics.

Coronavirus: Mental Illness

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Royal College of Psychologists about the number of people experiencing severe mental illness during the COVID-19 pandemic and the funding of mental health services. [HL10321]

Lord Bethell: We have brought forward our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19, backed by £50 million, to set out the support available for people in the context of a second wave and the winter months. This plan sets out the steps we have taken to strengthen the support available for people who are struggling, including for people with severe mental illness.

This includes the announcement that the National Health Service will receive approximately an additional £500 million next year, to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the NHS workforce.

Coronavirus: Mortality Rates

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional funds they plan to provide for the hospice sector to handle the rising death rate (1) during, and (2) beyond, the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL9988]

Lord Bethell: Hospices have been provided over £150 million in additional funding to the hospice sector to date during the pandemic.

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.

The Department regularly assesses the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on the hospice sector, and through NHS England and NHS Improvement, are in regular discussions with stakeholders in the sector about the challenges they face. We continue to keep funding for hospices under review.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who requested a COVID-19 test could not be tested on the same day from 1 until 15 September inclusive. [HL8160]

Lord Bethell: We do not publish data in the format requested.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from (1) private companies, and (2) manufacturers, about the use of rapid COVID-19 testing kits based on the analysis of saliva. [HL8526]

Lord Bethell: The Government has established a number of partnerships with industry, academia, local government and others to deliver its testing programme - from companies supplying testing kits and supplies to logistics and processing partnerships.

This is a national effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners on innovative solutions to increase capacity where it is needed and introduce larger scale testing. To do this successfully we are securing partnerships with suppliers to pursue new testing technologies and we are acquiring significant numbers of test kits and equipment.

Asked by Baroness McGregor-Smith

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce rapid COVID-19 testing for all workplaces. [HL9999]

Lord Bethell: The Department is running a series of workplace testing pilots across the United Kingdom. Early detection of positive cases is the most effective way to prevent operational shutdown in key industries, performing vital public services. These pilots will enable information gathering which will help towards the

objective of gradually increasing the number of sectors participating in routine workplace testing.

Coronavirus: South Yorkshire

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with authorities in Sheffield or South Yorkshire about mass testing of their populations for COVID-19; and if discussions have taken place, what response they received from those authorities. [HL10187]

Lord Bethell: We are already working closely with local authority leaders to tailor testing to local need. Eighty three local authorities have now signed up to receive regular batches of these new lateral flow tests, which can allow for results in minutes to enable them to start testing priority groups, including in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. This rollout will further develop the evidence base for how testing with fast, reliable COVID-19 tests can be delivered at scale.

Coronavirus: Wales

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposals by the Welsh Government to impose a ban on those travelling from areas in the UK with a high prevalence of COVID-19 to Wales. [HL9263]

Lord Bethell: In England, until 2 December, people must stay at home, except for specific purposes. Different rules apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and we are working closely with the devolved administrations to provide clarity to citizens in all parts of the United Kingdom.

Economic Situation: UK Relations with EU

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the economy of uncertainty of the UK's future relationship with the EU. [HL10533]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government has been clear that the transition period will end on 31 December 2020 and that this will bring both changes and opportunities, regardless of the future trade relationship with the EU.

The Government has provided certainty about the actions businesses and individuals need to take in preparation for the end of the transition period through the 'Time is running out' campaign and published the 'Reasonable Worst Case Scenario' for borders illustrating the costs of a lack of preparedness while there is still time to prepare.

At Spending Round 2019, the government provided £2 billion of funding to departments to prepare for the UK's exit from the EU. These preparations have continued over the course of 2020. SR20 provides over £2 billion to support repatriation of functions from the EU and to take back control of UK borders.

The end of the transition period also brings opportunities for the UK to seize and Spending Review 2020 supports this. For instance, ensuring the UK's economy is ready to attract the best and brightest from around the world as the government introduces a new points-based immigration system, with an additional £217 million to deliver the Future Borders and Immigration System, and ensuring departments can make the most of the opportunities this freedom provides, with effective promotion of the UK to investors around the world, including through the new Office for Investment.

Energy: Social Rented Housing

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Clean Growth Strategy, published on 12 October 2017, what plans they have to ensure that social housing is brought up to the same energy standards, over a similar timetable, to that proposed for the private rented sector. [HL10593]

Lord Greenhalgh: In the Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper published on 17 November 2020, we committed to review the Decent Homes Standard. We will ensure that the Decent Homes review considers how it can work to support better energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of social homes.

At the Chancellor's summer economic update, the Government announced a £50 million demonstrator project to start the decarbonisation of social housing during 2020/21. This will encourage innovation and help inform the design of the future Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

At the Spending Review 2020, The Chancellor announced £60 million of further funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, to continue upgrading the least efficient social housing.

The Prime Minister announced an extension to the Green Homes Grant which social landlords are eligible to bid for. This will fund up to two thirds of the cost of hiring tradespeople to upgrade the energy performance of homes.

Environmental Land Management Scheme

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have (1) to encourage, or (2) to ensure that the environmental and other enhancements that will be included in Environmental Land Management Schemes will also take place on farmland where the owners and

land managers have decided not to take part in such Schemes. [HL10512]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environmental Land Management scheme is being designed to be attractive to a wide range of farmers and land managers to deliver the environmental objectives of the scheme. To achieve this, we are working closely with a range of environmental and agricultural stakeholders to design the scheme collaboratively. The scheme will operate alongside other policies to meet the Government's objectives.

George Pascoe-Watson

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether George Pascoe-Watson participated in any (1) telephone call, (2) verbal discussion, (3) written communication, or (4) other meeting, during his time as an adviser to the Department of Health and Social Care which covered (a) policy, or (b) operational, information about plans (i) to put London into Tier 2 restrictions, and (ii) to introduce a national lockdown from 5 November, to address the COVID-19 pandemic; and if so, when any such communication took place. [HL10447]

Lord Bethell: George Pascoe-Watson provided communications and media support to National Health Service Test and Trace. He was not privy to discussions on the policy or operational plans around the introduction of Tier 2 restrictions in London or the subsequent national restrictions on 5 November.

Global Travel Taskforce

Asked by Lord Snape

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made by the Global Travel Taskforce on its objectives; when that Taskforce expects to report; and when they expect to make public its findings. [HL10546]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Global Travel Taskforce has published its report, which contains a series of recommendations aimed at ensuring there are clear public health measures, increasing demand safely and that the UK is at the forefront in leading global standards.

The report sets out 14 recommendations for the Government to take forward to support the safe recovery of international travel. As well as rolling out the test to release regime, they include the continued development of pre-departure testing models, studying the feasibility of a short stay business exemption, and continuing to advocate for harmonization of global standards.

In addition to 'Test to Release for International Travel', we remain open to new testing technologies and other approaches that will help people travel. As our knowledge and capacity for testing develops, so will our policy.

Home Care Services: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Campbell of Surbiton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether care assistants who are employed directly by older and disabled people but are not registered by the Care Quality Commission will be eligible for the same regular COVID-19 testing as domiciliary care workers. [HL10581]

Lord Bethell: We will provide further information in due course about how we will extend regular testing to other homecare workers, including non-registered Care Quality Commission-organisations and personal assistants.

Hospices: Finance

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial viability of the hospice sector. [HL10169]

Lord Bethell: We have provided over £150 million in additional funding to the hospice sector to date during the pandemic. 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.

We continue to keep funding for hospices under review.

Housing: Construction

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of the New Homes Bonus scheme. [HL10515]

Lord Greenhalgh: Since 2011, the New Homes Bonus has rewarded local authorities for housing growth in their area, providing £8.8 billion to local authorities in England in respect of a net increase in housing stock of 1.9 million homes. As part of the Spending Review, the Government has announced that there will be a further round of New Homes Bonus under the existing scheme in 2021/22. However, we are committed to reforming the New Homes Bonus to ensure it is focussed on incentivising homes where they are needed most and we will consult on changes to the Bonus, for 2022/23 onwards, shortly.

Housing: Standards

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the commitment to implement the Future Homes Standard by 2023 was removed from The ten point plan for a

green industrial revolution, published on 18 November; and if so, why. [HL10700]

Lord Greenhalgh: We committed in Planning for the Future to review the roadmap to the Future Homes Standard to ensure that implementation takes place to the shortest possible timeline. We will be publishing the Government response to the Future Homes Standard interim uplift consultation as soon as possible. This will set out a roadmap to the Future Homes Standard.

Indonesia: Rainforests

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, as part of their coordinated international efforts to address climate change, when they last discussed with the government of Indonesia (1) the issue of increased deforestation in Papua, and (2) allegations of illegal and deliberate fire setting by commercial interests in Papua's rainforests in order to clear the land for palm oil production. [HL10520]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As part of our coordinated international efforts to address climate change, the UK Government works closely with the Government of Indonesia on shared objectives to reduce and avoid deforestation and improve the sustainability of Indonesia's palm oil sector, including through regular bilateral engagement. Our partnership incorporates UK support for a number of programmes designed to reduce and avoid deforestation in key forested provinces, including Papua and West Papua, as well as thematic programmes to promote the Government of Indonesia's initiatives on palm oil sustainability and better governance of the forest and land-use sector.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of plans by the Welsh Government to allow councils to adopt the Single Transferable Vote system for local government elections; and whether they intend to introduce such powers for English councils. [HL10500]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government does not intend to introduce such powers for English councils. This Government has made a commitment to continue to support the First Past the Post system of voting on a national and local level.

Migrant Workers: Interpreters and Teachers

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from the Home Secretary to the Migration Advisory Committee, published on 23 October, on what evidence they based their decision "not to immediately accept the recommendations" contained in the report by

the Migration Advisory Committee Review of the Shortage Occupation List: 2020, published on 29 September, that teachers of modern foreign languages and interpreters be included on the Shortage Occupations List. [[HL10503](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The recent review of the Shortage Occupation Lists (SOL) was commissioned at a time when the main variable under consideration was the broadening of the skills requirement to include RQF level 3-5 occupations.

The UK labour market has changed dramatically due to the economic impacts of the measures necessary to tackle Covid-19. Many UK based workers now face an uncertain future and need to find new employment opportunities. The Government is clear our migration policies need to be considered alongside our strategies for the UK labour market.

Whilst we have considered carefully the possible impacts of the new immigration system, additional variables such as Covid-19 require closer examination. To avoid taking a piecemeal approach to implementing the MAC's advice, we need time to monitor the various influences on migration flows and the labour market, including introduction of a new immigration system, and whether this is in line with our anticipated outcomes, before considering which changes are required.

Monetary Policy

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects of quantitative easing on the increase in house prices compared to increases in wages. [[HL10488](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Monetary policy, including decisions on quantitative easing, is the responsibility of the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England.

The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy, so the Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

Detail on the impact of monetary policy, including quantitative easing, can be found in the Bank's working paper: "The distributional impact of monetary policy easing in the UK between 2008 and 2014."

Nagorno-Karabakh: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the Armenian diaspora about (1) the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and (2) the ceasefire agreement brokered by the government of Russia. [[HL10643](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has received several representations from representatives of the Armenian diaspora in the UK regarding the conflict and the ceasefire agreement.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Cultural Heritage

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the vulnerability of religious and cultural sites in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; and what representations, if any, they have made to UNESCO for the protection of these sites. [[HL10584](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is concerned by reports that both sides in the recent conflict have desecrated and destroyed cultural heritage sites. We have not made an assessment of the vulnerability of religious and cultural sites in Nagorno-Karabakh but have urged both parties to respect the cultural heritage of the region. We support UNESCO's efforts to assess the impact of fighting on sites of cultural significance. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has been in regular contact with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers since the outbreak of hostilities in September. The Minister welcomed the news of the peace deal. She noted that a peaceful settlement was essential to securing the stability of the region; this included the protection of all cultural heritage sites. The British Ambassador to Azerbaijan also raised this issue with representatives of the Presidential Administration on 17 November.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what humanitarian aid they intend to provide in the Nagorno-Karabakh region following the Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement. [[HL10640](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 30 October the Foreign Secretary announced £1 million in funding to the ICRC to support their humanitarian efforts in the region. We are working with international partners and NGOs to understand needs in the region and what further support we can provide. The UK Government is supporting the wider international response by providing funding for additional monitoring and analysis of the humanitarian situation through organisations such as the Humanitarian 2 Humanitarian network and supporting additional posts within the UN offices in-country. We continue to urge both sides to ensure the safety and security of all displaced persons, including through recent calls between the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas and the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers. The UK Government is keeping the situation under close review, coordinating with local and international partners and will continue to explore opportunities to support partners to deliver an effective international response.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Peace Negotiations

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the Azerbaijan-Armenia ceasefire brokered by the government of Russia on 9 November, and (2) the prospects for a more long-term peace settlement in the region. [HL10582]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has been in regular contact with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers since the outbreak of hostilities in September, where she has urged engagement with the OSCE Minsk Group to ensure a sustainable, long-term, peaceful settlement.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the opportunities to secure a peace treaty over the disputed territories between Armenia and Azerbaijan following the recent ceasefire agreement. [HL10619]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has been in regular contact with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers since the outbreak of hostilities in September, where she has urged engagement with the OSCE Minsk Group to ensure a sustainable, long-term, peaceful settlement.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Reconstruction

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist with (1) demining, and (2) reconstruction, efforts in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [HL10583]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 30 October the Foreign Secretary announced £1 million in funding to the ICRC to support their humanitarian efforts in the region. We are working with international partners and NGOs to understand needs in the region and what further support we can provide. The UK Government is supporting the wider international response by providing funding to additional monitoring and analysis of the humanitarian situation through organisations such as the Humanitarian 2 Humanitarian network and supporting additional posts within the UN offices in-country. We continue to urge both sides to ensure the safety and security of all displaced persons, including through recent calls between the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas and the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign

Ministers. The UK Government is keeping the situation under close review, coordinating with local and international partners and will continue to explore opportunities to support partners to deliver an effective international response.

Nigeria: Christianity

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have provided any funding to Christian non-governmental organisations in Nigeria since 2018; and if so, which organisations. [HL10587]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have provided assistance to any programmes which support Christian communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt region since 2018; and if so, which programmes. [HL10588]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government works with a range of partners in Nigeria but does not allocate aid on the basis of faith or religion. Since 2018, the Government has provided funding to Christian NGOs, including the Christian Blind Mission and the Christian Association of Nigeria. The FCDO works with the Christian Association of Nigeria alongside other faith-based organisations to support community peacebuilding and conflict management efforts. The FCDO has also provided funding for Christian Aid and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development to support communities recently displaced due to violence in Kaduna State, which includes Christian communities. We continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to take urgent action to protect those at risk of intercommunal violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence and meet the needs of all communities.

Nigeria: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they employ any staff based in Nigeria's Middle Belt region who are responsible for monitoring (1) religious persecution, and (2) human rights abuses, in those states. [HL10589]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government maintains a network of regional offices in Nigeria, including in Kaduna State. This network facilitates information gathering and engagement with state governments for our High Commission in Abuja. The network monitors human rights issues, including freedom of religion and belief. We will continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting human rights for all.

Overseas Aid

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the level of overseas aid in 2021. [[HL10539](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Due to the severe impact that the pandemic has had on our economy, we are taking the tough decision to spend 0.5 per cent of our national income next year on Official Development Assistance, rather than the usual 0.7 per cent. Despite these fiscal pressures, we remain firmly committed to helping the world's poorest people and we will retain our position as a leader in the global fight against poverty. The government intends to return to the 0.7 per cent target when the fiscal situation allows.

Prisons: Telephones and Video Conferencing

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Gloucester**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made, if any, to enable people in prison to maintain contact with family members where neither in-cell telephony or secure mobile phones are available. [[HL10508](#)]

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Gloucester**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which prisons currently have video calling facilities to allow people in prison to maintain contact with family members; what plans they have, if any, to expand such facilities across the prison estate; and what the cost of video calls will be under any such plans. [[HL10509](#)]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We recognise that family contact provides a crucial lifeline for prisoners. Following the re-imposition of national restrictions on 5 November, we have paused face-to-face social visits in prisons in England, except on compassionate grounds, including visits to children in custody. Family visits in Wales are permitted in line with restrictions in the community, 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.

For those prisons that do not have access to in-cell telephony, we introduced over 1,500 secure mobile handsets which can be used to contact family and friends via the usual PIN phone system. In addition, the Prison Voicemail service and Email a Prisoner service are available in all prisons. There are also further initiatives such as unmarked letter writing resources, 'Bedtime Stories' which allow residents to record themselves reading a story to their child, and opportunities to make items that they can send to them.

Secure video calls provide another option for families, including those with children of all ages, to stay in touch.

Arrangements for secure video calls have been introduced in virtually all prisons across England and Wales. Details of which prisons are operating live services for families and friends can be accessed on GOV.UK. The remainder of the estate is expected to have these facilities by the end of December. We have committed to the fact that there will be no cost of video calls to either families or those in custody during this time. At the appropriate time, we will consider future options for video calling across the estate beyond Covid-19 restrictions.

We continue to learn lessons from this to inform both the current service and longer-term planning in line with the recommendations of Lord Farmer's reviews for maintaining family ties.

Railways: Capital Investment

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) is the timetable, and (2) are their plans, for ending the Governance for Railway Investment Projects scheme; what, if anything, will replace that scheme; and what will be the relationship between any such replacement and the Rail Enhancement Projects Pipeline. [[HL10513](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Network Rail's management approach to projects is under review. Network Rail intend to replace the Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) with Projects Accelerated in a Controlled Environment (PACE) in the coming months. There is no there is no direct relationship between GRIP and the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which projects are presently included in the Governance for Railway Investment Projects scheme; and at which stage is each such project at. [[HL10514](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Every rail investment project managed by Network Rail follows GRIP. It is not practical to list the GRIP stage of each project. Network Rail do, however, publish the Enhancements Delivery Plan each quarter, which sets out progress on Enhancement schemes in delivery. The next iteration of the Enhancements Delivery Plan will be published in December.

Refugees: Resettlement

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many refugees were settled in the UK in (1) 2010, (2) 2014, and (3) 2019. [[HL10537](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These can be

found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics.

To access the number of refugees resettled since 2010, access the latest statistical release using the link above, then “data tables”, “asylum and resettlement” and select either the summary or detailed resettlement tables. The next set of figures will be in the quarterly release on 26 November 2020 (see attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Asylum Application Data Sets - 2020 [asylum-applications-datasets-sep-2020.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-19/HL10537>

Renewable Energy

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of local renewable energy supply in (1) achieving net zero carbon emission targets, and (2) reducing emissions of CO₂. [HL10505]

Lord Callanan: Renewable electricity generation has more than quadrupled since 2010 and low carbon electricity now gives us over 50 percent of our total. We have the world's largest offshore wind capacity (a third of the global total) and auction prices for future offshore wind projects fell by two-thirds between the 2015 and 2019 Contracts for Difference auctions.

We are working to deliver an ambitious Energy White Paper that addresses the transformation of the energy system consistent with delivering our net zero target.

Small-scale low-carbon electricity generation is supported by the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG), which came into force on 1 January 2020. The SEG gives small generators, such as homes with solar panels, the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid. It reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that low carbon electricity is central to the transition to the smart and flexible energy systems of the future.

We are continuing to offer support to communities who want to generate energy locally through the Rural Community Energy Fund. RCEF provides funding to rural communities for feasibility studies and pre-development of renewable energy projects.

In addition, the Government supports the deployment of low carbon heat through a number of different mechanisms, including through local heat networks which will play an important part in meeting our net zero targets.

Provisional BEIS estimates suggest that overall emissions fell by 14.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (MtCO₂) (3.9 per cent) to 351.5 MtCO₂ between 2018 and 2019, driven mainly by the changes in the fuel mix used for electricity generation (as published in March 2020).

Renewable Energy: Housing

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of local renewable energy supply in (1) enabling all homes to achieve Energy Performance Certificate band C, and (2) alleviating fuel poverty. [HL10506]

Lord Callanan: On site renewable energy generation, such as solar photovoltaic panels and wind turbines, can improve the energy performance of homes, and tackle fuel poverty where it reduces energy bills. Other upgrades can also play an important role in increasing the energy performance of homes and tackling fuel poverty, such as improvements to fabric efficiency of homes, upgrading lighting, or replacing heating and hot water systems.

Shipping: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they voted to support amendments to International Maritime Organisation rules in relation to limiting the carbon intensity of ships; and what assessment they made, if any, of the potential impact on the climate of these amendments before casting their vote. [HL10499]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HMG is committed to working through the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce and ultimately phase out greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping. The measure agreed at the recent Marine Environment Protection Committee represents a compromise for short-term carbon intensity improvements and provides a framework upon which we can continue to build in the coming years. This is the first step of many under the Initial IMO Strategy to decarbonise international shipping. HMG will be working closely with other Member States and the IMO to develop robust medium- and long-term measures.

Social Security Benefits: Fraud and Maladministration

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of (1) fraud, and (2) errors, in the social security system in England and Wales in each of the last five years for which records are available. [HL10471]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Whilst the publication includes numbers for previous years, changes in recording methodology mean that comparisons cannot be made with years prior to 2018/19.

The Department's estimates of fraud and error are published annually and are available on line via gov.uk. Fraud and error in the benefits system remains very low, with 96.5% of benefits paid correctly.

The vast majority of benefit expenditure is paid correctly, with front line staff working hard to prevent incorrect and fraudulent payments. We are constantly improving our processes and continue to invest in the use of data and analytics to identify fraud and to better target our investigations.

Once rolled out, DWP expects the high-level design of Universal Credit to lead to around £1bn in benefit savings each year from reduced fraud and error.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their programmes to help address (1) HIV/AIDS, (2) tuberculosis, and (3) malaria, in sub-Saharan Africa. [HL10639]

Baroness Sugg: We expect to see a significant impact from the COVID-19 pandemic on cases and deaths from HIV, TB and malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is not yet possible to quantify the full extent to which COVID-19 has affected these disease burdens. TB case notifications have decreased this year, partly due to laboratory capacity being diverted to COVID-19 testing. The World Health Organisation has predicted that COVID-19 may cause a doubling in malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020. A recent parliamentary report concluded that COVID-19 has disrupted HIV service provision, with marginalised communities worst affected.

The UK is flexing its funding and programming to address these effects by providing up to £1.4 billion for the next 3-year replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). This includes a contribution to the \$1 billion GFATM is making available to countries to respond to COVID-19, reinforce their health systems and adapt their HIV, TB and malaria programming. The UK is also working with governments to ensure that, as far as possible, essential services for these diseases continue, with patients protected from COVID-19. We are also supporting national governments in making sustainable decisions about resource allocation to national COVID-19 programmes.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health systems in sub-Saharan Africa. [HL10638]

Baroness Sugg: COVID-19 has a significant impact on health, as a direct result of the pandemic but also as a result of disruption to health services globally, including in Africa. An analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 14 African countries shows a sharp decline in the demand for and delivery of essential health services between January and September 2020 compared with the

two previous years. Services included outpatient consultations, inpatient admissions, skilled birth attendance, treatment of confirmed malaria cases and the provision of immunisation.

To date, the UK has committed up to £1.3 billion of UK Aid to combat COVID-19 and is balancing its COVID-19 response with support to maintaining access to essential health services. Our bilateral health programmes and £340 million core contribution to the WHO over the next four years will help to support their work to strengthen health systems in vulnerable countries. The UK is also providing up to £1.4 billion for the next 3-year replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Our funding to partnerships such as the Global Fund, Gavi and the Global Financing Facility maintains essential activities, such as bed net distribution, immunisation and the provision of maternal and new-born health services.

Tobacco: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to negotiations on a trade agreement between the UK and the EU, what assessment they have made of the impact of Rules of Origin requirements on (1) the UK tobacco industry, and (2) finished tobacco products imported into the UK from the EU from 1 January 2021. [HL10530]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In the event of a Free Trade Agreement with the EU, as with all Free Trade Agreements and all products, the Rules of Origin for finished tobacco products would be specific to that agreement. The exact rules will be discussed and decided through the negotiations, which, in this case, are still ongoing. The UK and EU have held substantial discussions on Rules of Origin and Defra has supported these conversations.

Transplant Surgery: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they hold details of organ transplant patients who travelled to China for their transplant since 2015. [HL9807]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish (1) the number, and (2) the transplant details, of organ transplant patients who travelled to China for their transplant since 2015. [HL9808]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the number of organ transplant patients who received their transplant overseas since 2015. [HL9809]

Lord Bethell: The National Transplant Registry captures annual follow-up on all patients who receive a

transplant in the United Kingdom, together with a minimal dataset on those who are transplanted outside the UK and return for follow-up care. Such transplant recipients may, or may not, become apparent to the National Health Service, depending on whether they sought follow-up NHS treatment.

Data from NHS Blood and Transplant shows that 48 solid organ transplants have been performed overseas in UK residents from 2015 to 2019. Of the 48 transplants, two were reported to have been in China, one in 2015 and one in 2017. No data is recorded for patients going overseas for a transplant and not subsequently returning or for patients returning to the UK with no need for clinical follow-up and or treatment.

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Snape

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made by the Global Travel Taskforce on the development of a COVID-19 testing regime for international arrivals and departures to and from the UK; and when such a regime might be implemented. [HL10547]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Global Travel Taskforce has published its report, which contains a series of recommendations aimed at ensuring there are clear public health measures, increasing demand safely and that the UK is at the forefront in leading global standards.

As well as rolling out 'Test to Release for International Travel' from 15 December for arrivals into England, they include the continued development of potential pre-departure testing models.

The UK continues to explore pilots with partner countries on a bilateral basis, including exploring different possible models for pre-departure testing.

We will of course remain open to new testing technologies and other approaches that help people travel safely. As our knowledge and capacity for testing develops, so will our policy.

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what amount in total has been paid to claimants under the Windrush Compensation Scheme to date; and how much remains to be paid. [HL10534]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many claimants have received compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme to date; and how many claimants are yet to receive compensation. [HL10535]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Information on the amount in total that has been paid to claimants under the Windrush Compensation Scheme and the total amount of claimants that have received payments to date is available to view on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-october-2020>.

There inevitably is a high degree of uncertainty around estimated costs and volumes and the Home Office will continue to review estimates as more payments are made. However, there is no cap on the amount of compensation that the Home Office will pay out.

A total of 196 claimants have received payment up to the end of September 2020. We are processing claims and awarding compensation as quickly as possible. The first payment was made just four months after the scheme was launched and we are making interim payments where parts of a claim can be resolved more easily than others.

An offer must be accepted by a claimant before it can be paid, and claimants have a right of review. Overall, the value of all payments made through the scheme was over £1.6m. A further £1.2m had been offered to individuals, awaiting acceptance or pending review. <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/08/27/windrush-factsheet-august-2020/>. The published figures also show that 80 claims have been rejected on eligibility grounds and 81 claims had a zero award under entitlement.

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