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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Lord Agnew of Oulton</b>	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Ashton of Hyde</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Baroness Barran</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Bethell</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
<b>Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Lord Stewart of Direleton</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

*Monday, 7 December 2020*

## **Armed Forces Covenant: Annual Report**

[HLWS617]

**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.

Today, I am laying before Parliament the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2020. The pandemic has seen our Armed Forces once again step onto the front line to protect our nation, from leading mass testing in Liverpool to constructing NHS Nightingale Hospitals. Such contribution demonstrates that the Armed Forces Covenant is as important today as it was in 2011 and we are therefore proud to lay this report before Parliament.

The Government has built its support for Armed Forces families in 2020 with the launch of a wrap-around childcare pilot at test sites across the UK. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has also been awarded £7.2M to 60 projects for military families. As well as the MOD's investment of £123M to Service Families Accommodation, we have committed an extra £200M to improve MOD accommodation to support the regeneration of the UK economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also extended the Forces Help to Buy scheme until December 2022, giving more Service personnel and their families the opportunity to buy a home of their own.

Partners across the UK, in the public, private and charitable sectors, have been working hard to support those who serve or have served, and their families, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The private sector has continued to demonstrate its support for the Armed Forces Community, with the total number of Armed Forces Covenant signings rising to over 5,800 by the end of September.

Ensuring that all veterans' healthcare needs are met remains crucial. The number of GP practices accredited as Veteran Friendly has more than tripled to over 800. The Defence Recovery Capability Review made 42 recommendations about future Defence Recovery Pathways for our wounded, injured and sick personnel, and in April we launched HeadFIT, an important tool to support mental fitness in the Armed Forces and to promote the good management of mental health.

While progress has been made, both this year and in previous years more still needs to be done. Next year, the Government will honour our Manifesto commitment to further strengthen the Covenant in law. The Government, with partners across all levels of Government in the UK, Service charities and the private sector, will continue to mitigate disadvantage wherever it is found within the Armed Forces community, seeking special considerations where appropriate.

This report is a collaborative effort. I would like to thank colleagues across Government, the Devolved Administrations and Local Authorities, and partners across the UK who are continuing to drive forward the work of the Covenant. I am also grateful to the external members of the Covenant Reference Group for their involvement throughout the process and for their independent observations.

## **Free Trade Agreements: Transparency and Scrutiny Arrangements**

[HLWS614]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liz Truss MP) has today made the following statement.

I am today setting out transparency and scrutiny arrangements for our new international trade deals with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and for the UK's proposed accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This includes a clear statement of intent by the Government and reflects our commitment to transparency and effective scrutiny of our trade agenda. Furthermore, my department will continue to work closely with the International Trade Committee and the International Agreements Sub-Committee to review these intentions.

We have committed to publishing the objectives for new Free Trade Agreements and scoping assessments at the outset of negotiations. The Government led a comprehensive public consultation before commencing its negotiations with Japan, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Just as happens in the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand systems, the Government has kept Parliament updated on negotiations as they progress, including close engagement with relevant Select Committees.

The Government will continue to keep Parliament and the public informed of progress for these negotiations through the publication of 'Round Reports'. The Government will also continue to hold regular briefings for Parliamentarians so that they are kept informed and can ask questions of Ministers. We will work constructively with the relevant Select Committees to keep them apprised of negotiations, including through public and private briefings with Ministers and Chief Negotiators.

The Government has further built on commitments to transparency and scrutiny through the recent announcement of the extension of the Trade and Agriculture Commission. The Trade and Agriculture Commission will now be placed on a statutory footing in the Trade Bill. It will provide advice on the impacts on farming and animal welfare arising from these new Free Trade Agreements before they are laid in Parliament, under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 procedure.

In addition, the Government will work with the International Trade Committee and International Agreements Sub-Committee to ensure they have treaty text and other related documents or reports on a confidential basis, a reasonable time prior to them being laid or deposited in Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act procedure. This is to enable the Committees, should they decide to do so, to produce a report on these new Free Trade Agreements. As with the Japan agreement, this will provide Parliamentarians with an additional reference point on which to scrutinise what we have negotiated.

When a signed treaty text is laid in Parliament, it will be accompanied by an Explanatory Memorandum and the Government will publish an independently verified impact assessment which will cover the economic and environmental impacts of the deal. Parliament will then have 21 sitting days to scrutinise the deal. Should the International Trade Committee or International Agreements Sub-Committee recommend a debate on the deal, the Government will seek to accommodate such a request subject to Parliamentary time. The Government wants these agreements to be examined by Parliamentarians and effectively scrutinised.

Widespread prior consultation and the publication of detailed impact assessments and objectives upfront allow informed debate at the start of the negotiations. Extensive stakeholder engagement on the detail of the negotiations as they proceed, and confidential briefing of relevant Committees, combined with the confidential sharing of text at the end of negotiations mean the Government will have provided Parliament with the information to provide effective scrutiny at all stages of the negotiations. This approach to transparency and openness to scrutiny by Parliament and other stakeholders is at least as strong as any other Westminster-style democracies such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

These arrangements are appropriate to the UK's constitutional makeup and separation of powers. Ultimately if Parliament is not content with a trade deal, it can raise concerns by resolving against ratification and delay any implementing legislation indefinitely.

This Government is committed to ensuring that no trade deal undermines key industries or lowers standards for consumers. The Government is concluding Free Trade Agreements that benefit all parts of the UK by creating opportunities for our world-leading industries, and maintaining high standards while increasing choice for consumers.

To ensure that the arrangements set out today remain fit for purpose and enable the International Trade Committee and the International Agreements Sub-Committee to conduct their important scrutiny role effectively, the Government will work with the Committees to review further the detail behind these arrangements. For trade agreements beyond the scope of this statement, the Government will always ensure that the appropriate

transparency and scrutiny procedures are put in place and will provide further clarification at the appropriate time.

## Independent Human Rights Act Review

[HLWS615]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland) has made the following Written Statement.

"I am today announcing the creation of the Independent Human Rights Act Review. This review extends from our Manifesto commitment and will take the form of an independent advisory panel which will provide the Government with options for updating the Human Rights Act (HRA). As Lord Chancellor, I am committed to upholding the UK's stature on human rights. The UK contribution to human rights law is immense and founded in the common law tradition. We will continue to champion human rights both at home and abroad, and we remain committed to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The HRA has been in force for 20 years, and therefore it is timely to undertake a review into its operation. The UK's constitutional framework has always evolved incrementally over time, and it will continue evolving. We need to make sure that our human rights framework, as with the rest of our legal framework, develops and is refined to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the society it serves. The review will examine two key areas outlined in detail in the Terms of Reference, which will be deposited in the libraries of each House. Broadly, the panel will consider the following themes:

- i) The relationship between domestic courts and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).
- ii) The impact of the HRA on the relationship between the judiciary, the executive and the legislature.

The examination of the Act will consider the approach taken by domestic courts to jurisprudence of the ECtHR, and whether the HRA currently strikes the correct balance between the roles of the courts, Government and Parliament.

As part of its work, the Review will also examine the circumstances in which the HRA applies to acts of public authorities taking place outside the territory of the UK, with consideration of the implications of the current position, and whether there is a case for change. The Review is limited to consideration of the HRA, which is a protected enactment under the devolution settlements.

It is my intention that the panel shall consider these questions independently, thoroughly, and put forward options for reform to be considered by myself. The panel will report back in Summer 2021 and their report will be published, as will the Government's response.

The following people will become members of the panel. They have been selected on the basis of their

wealth of experience, coming from senior legal and academic backgrounds. They have the breadth and depth of expertise required to consider the issues highlighted within the Terms of Reference effectively. The panel members are:

- Sir Peter Gross – Panel Chair
- Simon Davis
- Baroness O’Loan
- Sir Stephen Laws QC
- Professor Tom Mullen
- Professor Maria Cahill
- Lisa Giovannetti QC
- Alan Bates".

### **Loan Charge: Sir Amyas Morse Report Recommendations**

[HLWS616]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Loan Charge was announced at Budget 2016 to tackle disguised remuneration tax avoidance schemes, which paid income in the form of loans that were not taxed or subject to National Insurance contributions.

In September 2019, the Government asked the former Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir Amyas Morse to lead an independent review of the Loan Charge policy and its implementation. Sir Amyas Morse presented his conclusions in a report published in December 2019 and made twenty recommendations for change. In response the Government accepted all but one of the recommendations (HCWS14).

The Government accepted Sir Amyas’s recommendation that HMRC should report to Parliament on their implementation of the Loan Charge once the changes had been implemented and before the end of 2020.

HMRC have today published their report setting out the actions they have taken to deliver the recommendations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-loan-charge-review-hmrc-report-on-implementation> .

This has been published together with their review of HMRC’s future policy on interest rates: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/interest-rate-review>.

A copy of the report has been shared with the Treasury Committee, Public Accounts Committee and Lords Economic Affairs Committee. The report will also be deposited in the Libraries of the House.

### **Paris Agreement: UK Nationally Determined Contribution**

[HLWS618]

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

On Friday 4 December the Prime Minister announced the UK’s new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. This commits the UK to a new ambitious target to reduce the UK’s emissions by at least 68% by the end of the decade, compared to 1990 levels.

This is a step forward in our ambition to tackle climate change over the next ten years as we accelerate towards meeting our legally-binding commitment to reach net zero by 2050. Just as the UK led the way as the first major economy to legislate for net zero, our NDC raises the bar for global climate ambition by committing the UK to the highest level of emissions reductions by 2030 of any major economy, compared to 1990 levels. The level of the UK’s NDC is consistent with advice from the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC). It is a significant step up from the level of the UK’s previous target as a contributor to the EU’s NDC, which was equivalent to around a 53% UK reduction over the same time period.

As the UK looks ahead to hosting COP26 (the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties) in Glasgow next year, in partnership with Italy, we are urging all countries to follow suit and come forward with ambitious new NDCs and transformational Long-Term Strategies towards next zero emissions, in order to ensure that this will be a decade of ambitious climate action. The Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December, which the UK is co-hosting with France and the UN in partnership with Chile and Italy, provides an excellent opportunity for countries to come forward with new commitments across the three pillars of the Paris Agreement: mitigation, finance and adaptation.

Tackling climate change will remain a top priority for the Government. In November, the Prime Minister announced his Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution. Ahead of COP26, we intend to publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy, setting out the Government’s vision for transitioning to a net zero economy, making the most of new growth and employment opportunities across the UK.

The UK intends to communicate its NDC to the UNFCCC by the 12 December Climate Ambition Summit. This will include the technical annex, known as Information to Facilitate Clarity, Transparency and Understanding (ICTU), which will set out the detail underpinning the UK’s headline 2030 target. The UK also intends to communicate an Adaptation Communication and Finance Biennial Communication to the UNFCCC.

Once formally communicated to the UNFCCC, I will lay the NDC in Parliament and will follow up with letters to relevant Select Committees.

## Written Answers

Monday, 7 December 2020

### Academic Year: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Porter of Spalding*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 26 October (HL9059), what plans they have to close schools and move to online learning before the Christmas holidays to enable (1) children to be isolated in their family groups, and (2) extended family gatherings in a COVID-19 secure manner. [[HL10633](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** It continues to be the Department's aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full time. Returning to school full time has been vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn.

As set out in the Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan, nurseries, schools and colleges should not change their Christmas holidays or close early this term. Parents should continue to send their children to school during term time. A time limited change to social restrictions over Christmas does not require any children to be taken out of school prematurely. The leaders and staff of schools have been doing an extraordinary job to remain open, keep settings safe and provide education.

Schools have implemented a range of protective measures to minimise risk of transmission. The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 is low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. Senior clinicians, including the Chief Medical Officers of all 4 nations, still advise that school is the very best place for children to be, and so they should continue to go to school.

Closing schools early would also cause additional disruption and inconvenience to many parents, including key workers such as NHS staff, due to the additional child care arrangements required as a result of this action.

If parents have concerns about their child attending school because they consider they or members of their household may have particular risk factors, they should discuss these with their school.

### Airports: Non-domestic Rates

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the business rates relief granted to airports on competition between airlines and Eurostar; and what, if any, assistance they plan to provide to Eurostar to enable them to compete on equal terms. [[HL10781](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** During the Covid-19 response, the Government has provided unprecedented financial support that has been made available to all sectors of the economy.

On 24 November, the Department announced a financial support scheme to support eligible commercial airport and ground handling businesses by reducing cash burn, enabling businesses to unlock shareholder and lender support. Eligible businesses will be able to apply to the scheme from early 2021. Further details will be published shortly.

The Government has been engaging closely with Eurostar since the outbreak of Covid-19 earlier this year to monitor its ongoing impact and support the company to access available support to address its particular needs, where appropriate, and will continue to do so.

### Animal Welfare: Indonesia

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Indonesia about the treatment of animals, in particular the treatment of endangered species, including the slow loris, in pet markets in that country. [[HL10608](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are proud of our world-leading animal welfare standards, which are backed by a rigorous legislative framework. The Government takes seriously reports of animal cruelty throughout the world and the UK is at the forefront of international efforts to protect endangered animals and plants from poaching and illegal trade.

In 2018, the UK convened the largest ever global IWT conference at which 65 countries signed up to the London Declaration, committing to take urgent, coordinated action against illegal wildlife trade. The IWT Challenge Fund has committed over £26m to 85 projects around the world, including working in Indonesia to building law enforcement capacity and helping communities to protect their wildlife.

### Antibiotics

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to encourage, (2) to support, and (3) to enforce, the use of antibiotic consumption data as a public health measure in decisions about (a) trade policy, and (b) the protection of public health. [[HL10691](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Public health issues are being actively considered as part of the Government's trade policy development. The Government has been clear that it will uphold the United Kingdom's high levels of public, animal, and plant health.

The UK's five-year national action plan for antimicrobial resistance includes ambitions to reduce antimicrobial use in human and animal medicine. Public Health England (PHE) works with the National Health

Service to develop and maintain robust surveillance systems for monitoring and reporting trends in antimicrobial use. Local data on antibiotic prescribing is published by PHE in an online only format and can be used by healthcare staff, commissioners and directors of public health to benchmark performance and develop local action plans.

### Apprentices: Construction

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of apprentices going into construction to keep up with existing demand. [[HL10604](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** As the economy recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, it is more important than ever that businesses in the construction sector are equipped and empowered to recruit the right people and develop the skills that they need to build the right things better, greener, and faster than before.

To support new apprenticeship starts, employers in all sectors are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25 before 31 March 2021, in recognition of the particular impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the employment prospects of this group, and £1,500 for new apprentices aged 25 and over.

There are currently 105 high-quality apprenticeship standards in construction available for employers to use. We are working closely with the construction sector to make sure that businesses can take advantage of the benefits of apprenticeships. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to enable young people to progress from Kickstart onto an apprenticeship and create another entry route into the construction sector.

As part of our commitment to expand apprenticeship opportunities, we have set out plans to improve the transfers system so that unspent levy funds can better support apprenticeships in small and medium sized enterprises. We are working with the construction sector so that apprenticeships can better recognise prior learning and experience and enable certain construction apprentices to complete their apprenticeship more quickly. From April 2021 employers in construction will be able to front-load training for certain apprenticeship standards. In addition, we are working with employers to develop a bespoke construction traineeship, to further support young people entering the construction industry.

Through the Construction Skills Delivery Group, we are collaborating with industry leaders to develop and deliver these policies. This work contributes to 'Project-Speed' – a cross-Whitehall Taskforce, led by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which will accelerate, improve and reduce the costs of developing, designing and delivering vital economic and social infrastructure projects.

### Armed Conflict: White Phosphorus

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 November (HL10150), what steps they are taking to review the designation of white phosphorus as "a legitimate obscurant"; and what assessment they have made of whether it constitutes a war crime when white phosphorus is used as a weapon against civilian populations. [[HL10688](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** The use of white phosphorus in smoke grenades, decoy and countermeasure equipment and signalling flares is not prohibited under International Humanitarian Law. Incendiary weapons, including incendiary weapons containing white phosphorus, are governed by Protocol III of the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) which prohibits incendiary weapons being deployed against civilians or military targets within a concentration of civilians. Intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population, irrespective of the weapon, is a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law and a war crime under the Rome Statute.

### Arts: Skilled Workers

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure the retention of highly skilled workers in the creative industries. [[HL10819](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** We recognise the crucial role that highly skilled workers play in making our creative industries world-leading, and the Government is providing extensive support to workers in these sectors. The £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund provides targeted support to critical cultural, arts and heritage organisations to help them, and the skilled workers that work in them, survive and recover from the Covid pandemic. In addition Arts Council England has made £119 million available to individuals (including freelancers) and in July, the Government also announced a UK-wide £500m Restart scheme to support film and TV production companies that have been unable to film due to the lack of insurance covering Covid-related risks. As of 19 November, the scheme is supporting over 4,500 jobs.

The Government also recently announced the extension of both the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021. This generous support will help creative businesses across the country to protect their employees' jobs during this difficult winter period.

Government continues to engage regularly with stakeholders such as the BFI, the Creative Industries Federation and the Creative Industries Council to ensure we understand the impact of Covid-19 on the skills and

talent needed to keep the UK's creative industries a global success.

### Aviation and Railways: Carbon Emissions

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on UK carbon emissions if a substantial number of travellers switched from using trains to aviation services. [HL10782]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department has made no such assessment. Rail is a comparatively green mode of transport, accounting for ten per cent of all miles travelled in the UK but less than 1.4% of UK transport greenhouse gas emissions, and the railway is continuing to become greener as we decarbonise the network. At the same time, we are working hard to decarbonise our aviation sector. The Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution included funding to support aviation fuels and zero emission aviation, and earlier this year the Transport and Business Secretaries launched the Jet Zero Council to accelerate action.

### Aviation: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about the provision of support to the aviation industry in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10666]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Government has been working closely with the NI Executive to maintain UK connectivity between Great Britain and Northern Ireland throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thanks to a generous £5.7m financial support package agreed by the Government and the Executive, the air bridge between GB and NI was maintained at the height of disruptions this year, ensuring that critical routes to London from both City of Derry and Belfast City airports remained open to support the movement of key workers within the United Kingdom.

The aviation industry has also been able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures the Government has put in place during this time, including a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme that facilitates access to finance for businesses affected by the outbreak.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has also been available to support wages during this time. On 5 November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that workers across the United Kingdom would benefit from increased support with a five-month extension of the CJRS until the end of March 2021, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked.

The Government continues to work closely with the Executive to ensure critical routes remain open.

### British Nationality: Assessments

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the section on the Northern Ireland Assembly in the Life in the United Kingdom: A guide for new residents states the correct number of Members of that Assembly; and if not, (1) when they intend to correct it, and (2) what plans they have to correct any life in the UK tests which contain questions on that number. [HL10607]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Life in the UK handbook publisher, TSO (The Stationery Office) Ltd, intends to publish an updated impression of the current edition of the handbook early in the new year, which will update the number of Members of the Northern Ireland assembly.

The Life in the UK test is delivered by PSI on behalf of the Home Office. The test questions are not published or disclosed in order to protect the integrity of the test process. Nobody will be disadvantaged by the need to update the text.

### Carbon Capture and Storage: Kelp and Soil

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of (1) soil restoration, and (2) kelp, forests for carbon sequestration. [HL10617]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The most recent published Government review of the evidence on the benefits of soil restoration for carbon sequestration is available at:

[http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=12186\\_SP1113Finalreport.pdf](http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=12186_SP1113Finalreport.pdf).

The Government recognises the importance of effective soil management and the social, economic and environmental benefits it can provide, including biodiversity, carbon storage, flood protection and improved productivity. The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out Government's ambition to have sustainably managed soils by 2030, helping soils to function better to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.

The Government is also committed to publishing an England Peat Strategy to create and deliver a new ambitious framework for peat restoration. It will set out a holistic plan for the management, protection and restoration of our upland and lowland peatlands, so that they deliver benefits for climate and nature. We intend to publish the strategy before the end of the year.

Kelp forests are productive ecosystems and in England are estimated to store 0.06 million tonnes of carbon in their biomass. However, the long-term carbon sequestration benefits are uncertain as the fate of carbon



from these habitats is not well understood. Long-term carbon storage from kelp may occur in sediments outside of the habitat or be recycled within the ocean system. We are currently undertaking an evidence review to assess kelp carbon stock and accumulation rates in the UK.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Soil restoration and carbon report [12186\_SP1113Finalreport.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10617>

## Care Homes: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a national system to enable care home residents to have meaningful visits from relatives by treating named family members in the same way as key workers who are tested weekly. [HL9805]

**Lord Bethell:** We understand how vital it is to allow care home residents to meet their loved ones safely. We appreciate the particular challenges visiting restrictions pose for people with dementia, people with learning disabilities and autistic adults, amongst others, as well as for their friends and family.

On 16 November, we began a trial of testing visitors to care homes. The aim is to support care home providers and families to work together to find the right balance between the benefits of visiting on wellbeing and quality of life, and the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to social care staff and vulnerable residents. This trial is currently taking place in around 21 care homes across three local authorities - Devon, Cornwall and Hampshire - with a view to rolling out nationally in December.

Visitors will still be expected to follow infection prevention and control procedures. Holding hands and hugs can be allowed with a negative test and personal protective equipment, but visitors should minimise contact as much as possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

## Care Quality Commission: Gender

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to use the word "gender" in place of the word "sex" in its communications; and what assessment they have made of the impact of that decision on the suitability of the CQC to undertake an impartial review of the Gender Identity Services for children and young people at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. [HL10228]

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Care Quality Commission about

the compliance with the Equality Act 2010 of its decision to use the word "gender" instead of "sex" in its Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and its Principles of Workforce Equality Monitoring document. [HL10229]

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the decision of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to use the word "gender" in place of the word "sex" in its communications, what assessment they have made of the suitability of the CQC to assess whether the bodies it inspects are applying single-sex exemptions in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. [HL10230]

**Lord Bethell:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have used the word 'gender' instead of 'sex' in their Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and Principles of Workforce Equality Monitoring since these documents were introduced in 2011. These documents were reviewed by the CQC's Staff Equality Networks and approved by the CQC's Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee, including trade union representatives and senior CQC managers, alongside external, national union officers, and were signed-off by the CQC Board at that time.

The CQC complete Equality Impact Assessments for new Human Resources policies, but this use of wording did not arise as an issue of concern at the time, has not been subject to a specific assessment and was not the subject of legal advice at the time. Government Legal Services have now reviewed our use of the word gender in these documents and confirmed that this meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The CQC are committed to equality and human rights throughout their work, and this approach underpins the way in which they register and inspect services. The decision has no impact on the CQC's ability to ensure that health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care.

## Climate Change Convention

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to discuss the growth in the world population at the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26); and, if so, what changes they will they be advocating. [HL10580]

**Lord Callanan:** Unsustainable consumption remains the primary driver of climate change and environmental degradation.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been clear that tackling climate change is a priority for this government. Over the past 30 years, the UK has been at the forefront of the transition to green – demonstrating that economic growth can be aligned with protecting the climate and environment, with our GDP growing by 75% whilst emissions have fallen by 43%.

In the lead up to COP26, we must listen to all voices to unleash the full potential of the Paris Agreement when we meet in Glasgow next year. Together we can reduce emissions, adapt to climate impacts, build resilience and grow our economies.

### **Construction: Skilled Workers**

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further (1) to the speech by the Prime Minister on the economy on 30 June in which he pledged they would “build, build, build”, and (2) to the rate of retirement rate of skilled workers in the construction sector, how they intend to ensure there are sufficient (1) quantity surveyors, (2) bricklayers, (3) plasterers, (4) masons, and (5) welders, in that sector. [HL10605]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government is supporting the construction sector in its drive to increase investment in skills development, and to equip workers with the skills that they will need for the future. This is a cross-industry drive which includes organisations delivering training to quantity surveyors, bricklayers, plasterers, masons, and welders. This will be achieved through a joint commitment to implement reforms to the Construction Industry Training Board to make it more strategic and industry-led, and to enable the sector to make best use of funding from the Apprenticeship Levy.

On 1 June, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) published its Industry Recovery Plan. Employment and skills in the construction sector are identified as a priority, and a focus of the ‘Restart’ phase of the Plan is to maximise employment opportunities.

The Government has welcomed the Plan and is collaborating with the CLC and industry to ensure that the proposals are implemented.

### **Contraceptives and Hormone Replacement Therapy**

*Asked by Baroness Greengross*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, and if so, why there is a shortage of (1) widely used contraceptive preparations, and (2) hormone replacement therapy products; why (a) Brevinor, (b) Eloine, (c) Norimin, (d) Synphase, (e) Tisnell, and (f) Zoely, oral contraceptive tablets are currently unavailable; when they estimate that those tablets will be resupplied; and what steps they are taking to ensure the continued availability of all contraceptive preparations and HRT products. [HL10753]

**Lord Bethell:** The overall supply position of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products has been improving since the end of February 2020 and will continue to improve in the coming months.

We have been advised that supplies of Brevinor, Norimin and Synphase tablets will be available from late January/early February 2021, with supplies of Yiznell

available from early January 2021. Supplies of Eloine and Zoely tablets remain available via the usual routes.

Issues such as regulatory or manufacturing problems, problems accessing supplies of pharmaceutical raw ingredients and commercial decisions to divest certain products can affect the supply of medicines, including HRT and oral contraceptives.

### **Coronavirus: Christmas**

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about a UK-wide approach to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic during the Christmas period. [HL10755]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK Government and Devolved Administrations continue to work closely together to ensure a coordinated approach to the pandemic across the United Kingdom. As set out in our joint statement on 25 September, the UK government and devolved administrations hold a shared commitment to suppressing the virus to the lowest possible level and keeping it there.

There have been regular discussions between Ministers and officials from the UK Government and from the Northern Ireland Executive. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has been attending COBR meetings, as have the First Minister and deputy First Minister for Northern Ireland on occasion.

We have been co-ordinating with the NI Executive on our response to Covid throughout this year, seeking alignment in policy and approach wherever it is appropriate to do so. I was pleased we could agree on a shared approach across the UK to Christmas planning last week.

### **Coronavirus: Death**

*Asked by Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of potential additional deaths during any reasonable worst case scenario of a peak in COVID-19 infections during the winter period resulting from continued disruption of routine treatment for non-COVID-19 patients. [HL7588]

*Asked by Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on public confidence in the safety of returning to work and schools of the forecasted number of deaths resulting from a reasonable worst-case scenario in a resurgence of COVID-19 during the winter being double that that has already occurred. [HL7745]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government has undertaken no specific assessment. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies reviewed a paper on direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on excess deaths and morbidity in

July, which provides a scenario-based estimate for additional deaths that may result from the changes necessary to routine care during the first six months of the pandemic. A copy of the paper is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

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

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-02/HL7588>

*Asked by Lord Robathan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) doctors, and (2) nurses, employed by the NHS have died as a result of COVID-19; and how many of those had comorbidities. [HL10706]

**Lord Bethell:** The Office for National Statistics publishes mortality data for deaths involving COVID-19 for healthcare workers and social care workers in England and Wales. The last iteration of this release showed that in England there were 305 deaths involving among healthcare workers and 307 deaths among social care workers registered between 9 March and 12 October 2020 in England, aged 20-64 years, using their last known occupation.

The definition of healthcare workers used will include not only those employed in the National Health Service but wider healthcare sector workers. No information is published relating to comorbidities these staff may have had.

## Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by Lord Moylan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the exercise by local authorities of the compliance and enforcement activities related to COVID-19; and whether all such activities have been carried out in compliance with the Guidance to support local authority compliance and enforcement activity, including COVID-19 secure marshals or equivalents published on 8 October. [HL10627]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** On 8 October, the Government allocated £30 million to local authorities in England to help them fund their Covid-19 compliance and enforcement work. There will be a three month review of the spending of that grant. Government's regular engagement with local authorities indicates they are working hard to help people comply with the rules, in partnership other local agencies such as the police.

## Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish an independent public inquiry into their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10685]

**Lord Bethell:** As the Government has already made clear there will be opportunities to look back, analyse and reflect on all aspects of COVID-19. The Prime Minister has said that this will include an independent inquiry at the appropriate time. For now, the Government is focused entirely on responding to the pandemic and saving lives. Further details will be set out in due course and announced in the usual way.

## Coronavirus: Research

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support studies which (1) include non-hospitalised individuals, and (2) are of sufficient scale to be valid, to determine the ages at which critical health changes in response to COVID-19 occur. [HL10807]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation, have launched a £20 million joint research call to fund ambitious and comprehensive research to understand and address the longer term physical and mental health effects of COVID-19 in non-hospitalised individuals. The aim is to support two or three large consortia and a number of extensions to existing studies. These studies will be robust and of sufficient scale to include analysis of age and other factors.

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support studies (1) in a community setting, and (2) that extend into the convalescent period, to establish factors that affect the duration of effective immunity to COVID-19. [HL10808]

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support studies investigating the effect of (1) co-infection, and (2) vaccination against other pathogens, on COVID-19 immunity. [HL10809]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) are jointly funding the United Kingdom Coronavirus Immunology Consortium with £6.5 million, which will address key research themes on immunity to COVID-19 including cross reactivity with seasonal coronaviruses.

Other relevant NIHR-UKRI funded studies include the STORY study to understand the severity of COVID-19 disease in children and evaluate antibody responses; Virus Watch looking at household transmission; and the INSTINCT study investigating the epidemiology and immunology of COVID-19 infection in households.

The NIHR's Health Protection Research Unit in Respiratory Infections is also looking at the size and longevity of the immune response.

## Culture: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to implement the Culture and Community Fund set out in New Decade, New Approach, published on 8 January. [HL10757]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK Government remains committed to delivering what was set out in the New Decade, New Approach agreement published on 8 January.

The UK Government has provided £2 billion of funding to support implementation of the New Decade, New Approach deal. £553 million of this has already been allocated. The £2 billion includes a £1bn Barnett-based investment guarantee from the UK Government, which will include significant new funding to turbocharge infrastructure investment. This guarantee will apply in all circumstances, and allow the Executive to plan new investment over a five year period.

The Northern Ireland Executive are responsible for the establishment and implementation of the Culture and Community Fund. The UK Government's commitment in relation to the Culture and Community Fund is to provide funding to the Executive once they have agreed to progress plans for its establishment. The Executive will then be responsible for administering the funding provided by the UK Government. We continue to work with the Northern Ireland Executive on this matter.

## Customs: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many customs border points will be in place between Northern Ireland and Britain at the end of the transition period of the UK's departure from the EU; where any such border points will be sited; and how many trained inspectors will be employed at each border point. [HL10609]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has been clear that it does not see the need to construct any new bespoke customs infrastructure in Northern Ireland (or in Great Britain ports facing Northern Ireland) in order to meet its obligations under the Protocol.

As set out in the Command Paper on the Northern Ireland Protocol, the Government guarantees unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK market. This means no declarations, tariffs, new regulatory checks or customs checks. There will be only very limited exceptions to this, for example in upholding international obligations (such as in the movement of endangered species).

Goods moving from GB into NI will be subject to very limited additional processes such as electronic import declarations and traders can receive assistance for these from the free-to-use Trader Support Service.

## Cycleways: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Moylan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to produce criteria for the evaluation of bicycle lanes created by local highways authorities in response to the statutory guidance Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19 updated on 13 November; and whether such criteria will include the evaluation of the effects (1) on all modes of transport subject to that Act, and (2) on the emergency services. [HL10626]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department is currently developing a framework to help local authorities monitor and evaluate the schemes that they will be delivering through tranche two of the Active Travel Fund. They will be asked to consider, among other things, congestion impacts before and after scheme implementation. All local authorities are required to consult with emergency services on changes to road layouts that require Traffic Regulation Orders as set out in the statutory guidance, and as a condition of funding for schemes delivered through the Active Travel Fund.

## Dental Services and Football: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Thornhill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) private dental practices, and (2) the English Football League Championship, were excluded from COVID-19 financial support schemes; and if so, why. [HL10648]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has set out a range of measures of support for private dental practices and the English Football League Championship during the Covid-19 outbreak. These include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and further measures to support all businesses, such as tax deferrals, business rates relief and support with Statutory Sick Pay.

## Design and Technology: Nature

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential of the use of (1) biomimicry, and (2) design processes and technology based on natural behaviour models, in the UK economy. [HL10631]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government has funded research through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in a number of areas. This includes investment by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) in the Centre for Nature-Based Engineering (CNIE). Launched in 2013, as one of five EPSRC "Frontier Engineering" Centres, the CNIE draws lessons from nature to engineer innovative solutions to our grand challenges in energy, water, materials, health, and living space. In 2017, the

Centre was awarded an EPSRC Progression Grant, to enable the Centre to continue to explore novel, transformative, multi-disciplinary solutions to key engineering challenges, where mechanisms found in nature systems can deliver superior performance over traditional approaches. In addition, the Centre accelerates translation of its findings into practice, through a wide range of industrial collaborations and entrepreneurship. The Frontier Engineering Progression Grant extends underpinning EPSRC investment in the CNIE until at least the end of 2021.

Biomimicry is also one of the potential features of the National Engineering Biology Programme being developed by UKRI partners and the Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory. As part of the proposed programme, Engineering Biology aims to draw upon discovery-inspired advanced research themes in Bioinspired Design (e.g. biomimicry, biocomputing), Bioengineered Cells & Systems (e.g. artificial life, protocells, genome engineering) and Novel Materials (e.g. smart materials, new chemistry).

### Developing Countries: Debts

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist countries in the Global South with debt reduction. [HL10637]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The UK has been at the forefront of leading the international response in assisting developing countries to deal with debt challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the G20 and Paris Club, the UK has supported a new Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) which has paused the debt service repayments of low-income countries until at least June 2021, ensuring they can focus their resources on the health and economic response to Covid-19. As of 13 November 2020, 46 countries have requested to benefit from the DSSI, amounting to an estimated USD 5.7bn of 2020 debt service deferral.

As well as making £150 million available to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust and doubling the UK's £2.2bn loan to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust to £4.4bn, the UK has also supported the development of a landmark Common Framework between the G20 and Paris Club which aims to facilitate the timely and orderly debt treatment for DSSI-eligible countries where needed.

### Drugs and Vaccination: Imports

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with pharmaceutical company representatives about the risk of shortages of drugs and vaccines arising from the delay in establishing the new import procedures which will apply from 1 January 2021. [HL10778]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government, in consultation with the devolved administrations and Crown Dependencies and with partners across the health and social care sector, has made detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products, including vaccines, to the whole of the United Kingdom from 1 January 2021.

The Department wrote to industry partners and the wider health and social care sector on 3 August this year and on 17 November setting out the Department's plans and preparations to help ensure the continuity of supply of medical goods to the whole of the UK at the end of the transition period. This includes putting in place a £77 million freight contract, to help ensure the smooth flow of Category 1 goods, such as vaccines.

### Egypt: Detainees

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Egypt about the release of (1) Karim Ennarah, (2) Mohammed Basheer, and (3) Gasser Abdel Razeq; and what representations they have made to the government of Egypt about the importance of the work by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights in upholding human rights. [HL10614]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome the release of Gasser Abdel Razeq, Karim Ennarah and Mohamed Basheer. The UK was clear from the outset that we had serious concerns about their arrest and detention, concerns shared by likeminded international partners. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November, the first Foreign Minister to do so. We continue to take a close interest in this case. We continue to have regular discussions with the Government of Egypt on human rights issues, raising concerns where we have them.

### Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure a comprehensive, UK-wide interoperable vehicle charging network to improve consumer take-up of electric vehicles. [HL10615]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department is committed to ensuring consumers have reliable access to a comprehensive vehicle charging network so that they can easily and conveniently charge their cars wherever they live and travel. The Government will invest £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure, targeting support on rapid charge points on motorways and major roads to dash any anxiety around long journeys, and installing more on-street charge points near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. To increase confidence in the charging network and reduce range anxiety, the Department will work with industry to

make chargepoint data available so that drivers can easily locate and access available chargepoints. Government will consult on using its powers under the Automated Electric Vehicles Act to mandate minimum requirements to improve people's experience when using a public chargepoint.

### Energy: Housing

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they have (1) allocated, and (2) propose to allocate to upgrade (a) fuel poor homes, and (b) all homes to achieve Energy Performance Certificate band C. [[HL10594](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** Our manifesto committed £6.3 billion to improving people's homes, to accelerate our progress towards net zero emissions by 2050 and to help households reduce their energy bills.

The Summer Economic Update announced more than £2 billion of funding for upgrading the energy efficiency of homes. The Green Homes Grant is a £2 billion programme which will help improve the energy efficiency of homes in England. Low income and vulnerable homeowners in receipt of certain benefits may be eligible for a grant covering up to 100% of the cost of installation, up to £10,000.

The £50 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will contribute to fuel poverty alleviation and energy efficiency improvements of social housing stock. The Prime Minister announced that the scheme will carry on for an additional year, with £60 million additional funding announced for social housing at Spending Review 2020.

The Energy Company Obligation scheme requires energy companies to deliver energy efficiency and heating measures to low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households. The current scheme is worth £640m per year and ends in March 2022. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced an extension to this scheme until 2026 in his Ten Point Plan. Further details about ECO will be consulted on in the first half of next year.

We will publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy and Fuel Poverty Strategy in the coming months. These strategies will set out further details on how we will work towards alleviating fuel poverty and improving homes' energy performance ratings.

### Environment Protection: Industry

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there is no mention of (1) the rail passenger, or (2) the rail freight, sector in their The ten point plan for a green industrial revolution, published on 18 November. [[HL10569](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** We are already investing tens of billions of pounds in enhancements and renewals in our rail network and electrifying more railway lines. This will enable more passengers and freight to use the

railway, supporting the Green Industrial Revolution and the 10-point plan.

### Equality and Human Rights Commission

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the diversity of the members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in terms of (1) ethnicity, and (2) religion; and what assessment they have made of the value that would be added to the credibility and effectiveness of the EHRC by addressing any deficit in the diversity of the organisation in that regard. [[HL10571](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Minister for Women and Equalities has recently announced five appointments to the board of the EHRC, to take effect from 1 December 2020. With these appointments, the EHRC board will have four permanent members, out of 14, from minority ethnic backgrounds. This exceeds the government's aim for 14% of all public appointments to come from ethnic minority backgrounds by 2022.

One member of the EHRC board identifies as Muslim, seven as Christian, two as having no religion and four prefer not to say.

The government is committed to maintaining diversity of appointments to the EHRC board.

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are (1) Black, or (2) Muslim, and what steps (a) they, and (b) the EHRC, plan to take to improve ethnic and religious diversity on the EHRC. [[HL10572](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Minister for Women and Equalities has recently announced five appointments to the board of the EHRC, to take effect from 1 December 2020. With these appointments, the EHRC board will have four permanent members, out of 14, from minority ethnic backgrounds, including one black commissioner. This exceeds the government's commitment and ambition for 14% of all public appointments to come from ethnic minority backgrounds by 2022. At the moment, one member of the EHRC board identifies as Muslim.

The government is committed to maintaining diversity of appointments to the EHRC board.

At executive levels the EHRC, as an independent body, makes its own operational decisions about staff appointments.

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees at senior civil service grade or equivalent in the Equality and Human Rights Commission are (1) Black, (2) Asian, (3) members of another ethnic minority, or (4) Muslim. [[HL10574](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)'s recruitment practices and human resources strategy is the responsibility of the EHRC itself, as an independent organisation who makes its own operational decisions. I have therefore asked the chief executive of the EHRC to respond directly to the noble Lord and to send me a copy of her response. Copies of the chief executive's response will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission: Black Lives Matter**

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when Ministers last met with members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to discuss the Black Lives Matter movement; whether any Black people were present at that meeting; and if so, in what capacity. [HL10573]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Minister for Equalities, who is the sponsor Minister for the EHRC and is herself black, met the then Chair of the EHRC and its CEO on two occasions during the summer and more recently met the prospective new Chair of the Commission in mid-November. All these discussions covered, among other issues, the EHRC's work on Covid-19 and ethnic minorities, including black people.

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission: Public Appointments**

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their role in the process for appointments to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. [HL10570]

**Baroness Berridge:** Appointments to the board of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are ministerial appointments, and the role of ministers in appointing EHRC commissioners is set out in the Equality Act 2006.

The appointments follow a recruitment process set out in the Governance Code for Public Appointments and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

### **Ethiopia: Armed Conflict**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to African members of the Commonwealth to encourage them to ensure a peaceful solution to the conflict in Tigray. [HL10708]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are in touch with a range of partners, including Commonwealth members, on the current situation in Ethiopia. The Foreign Secretary spoke on 16 November with Foreign Minister Pandor of South Africa in support of President Ramaphosa's efforts to promote mediation. He spoke with President Kenyatta

of Kenya on 24 November. The Minister for Africa spoke with Foreign Minister Kutesa of Uganda on 26 November. We will continue to work with partners in the region and in the international community to urge all sides to protect civilians, avoid ethnic tensions and hate-speech and to allow humanitarian access. We stand with the international community in calling for de-escalation and a political solution.

### **Ethiopia: Famine**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likelihood of (1) harvest failure, and (2) famine, in northern Ethiopia; and what steps they are taking to prepare humanitarian supplies for such an event. [HL10709]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Latest harvests across Tigray have been reasonable but food security is likely to become a concern in pockets of Tigray between February to May 2021. The ongoing violence and insecurity in the Tigray region is likely to affect food security, lower productivity and disrupt markets and supply chains. Our humanitarian partners are working to understand needs and stocks but access into the region is limited. We are concerned by the UN warning that refugee food stocks will be depleted very soon and 600,000 people who rely on monthly food assistance have not received rations for November. The situation is grave, and we assess that needs will increase unless security and access improve.

We have called on all involved to ensure the protection of civilians, and to restore humanitarian access to allow the delivery of aid and essential services. The Minister for Africa reiterated this in his tweet of 19 November and when the Minister for Africa spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador in London on 18 November. We are contributing to UN-led planning efforts for the delivery of assistance in Tigray. In Ethiopia, the UK provides funds to the 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, to provide food assistance, shelter, water and sanitation, health, nutrition and protection support. In Sudan, flexible UK funding to WFP and the UNHCR is already helping new refugees from Ethiopia to receive emergency assistance, including shelter and food. These agencies have proven themselves capable of working in high risk contexts, in Ethiopia and elsewhere, and for managing UK funds adeptly.

### **Eurostar and High Speed One: Finance**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement of financial support for airports and other air infrastructure on 25 November, what plans they have to provide similar support to HS1 and Eurostar. [HL10732]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government recognises that the international rail sector, as with other transport sectors, has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government has been working closely with both HS1 Ltd and Eurostar since the outbreak of the pandemic to monitor its impact on passenger numbers and services, as well as to provide support, particularly through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Department for Transport officials have also been actively participating in discussions with Eurostar and HS1 Ltd to consider and address the longer-term challenges facing the HS1 system as a result of reduced demand for international rail services. The Government will continue to engage in these discussions to identify appropriate solutions to these challenges, as well as to keep under review the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the international rail sector.

### Events Industry: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they expect to publish an indicative date for the re-opening of (1) music venues, and (2) festivals. [[HL10817](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** We recognise the importance of giving the sector clarity for reopening with larger audiences and we are committed to supporting the sector during this time. However we have always been clear that the activity permitted would be in line with the latest public health context.

From 2 December, in tiers 1 and 2 areas, socially distanced indoor audiences are permitted provided capacity in a venue is maintained at maximum 50% capacity or 1000 people, whichever is lower. In addition, the venue needs to follow the appropriate guidance and advice to ensure they are Covid secure.

DCMS has established a Venues Steering Group and a sector-led sub-group on Outdoor Events and Festivals looking at how music venues and festivals can reopen safely. We are committed to continue working with music venues and festivals to understand the challenges they face and to enable events to take place in line with the latest regulations and guidance.

### Events Industry: Economic Growth

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the strategic importance of (1) live music venues, and (2) festivals, to the UK's future economic growth. [[HL10820](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government recognises the importance and significant growth potential of the live music venue and festival sectors to the UK economy.

Before the Covid pandemic, the live music sector showed strong growth in GVA of 17% in 2019 to £1.3bn, up from £1.1bn in 2018. This growth follows an increase

in GVA of 10% in 2018. Similarly, the number of full-time jobs sustained by music tourism has grown from 39,728 jobs in 2016 to 45,633 jobs in 2019. These live music sector jobs cover a broad range, from promoters and sound engineers, to security and bar staff employed at events.

Live music venues and festivals are essential to the music industry's talent pipeline, providing a stage to showcase and export great British talent. More broadly, the sectors play a considerable role in the UK's economy by generating jobs across the country and driving music tourism. The Government is committed to continuing to work with live music venues and festivals to help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery, allowing the music sector to continue to grow in the future.

### Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 24 November (HL10313), when they estimate that the revised project timeline for the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence quality standard on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder will be published. [[HL11005](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence plans to publish the revised timeline for its quality standard on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder on 9 December 2020.

### Food: UK Trade with EU

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what delays they expect to the import of fresh salad products from the EU from 1 January 2021; and what contingency arrangements they have put in place to keep any such delays to the minimum. [[HL10610](#)]

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they expect to see price increases in salad goods imported from the EU from 1 January 2021; and, if so, how much they expect the rise in such prices to be. [[HL10611](#)]

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to increase warehouse capacity for food being imported and exported between the UK and EU from 1 January 2021. [[HL10612](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain based on strong domestic production and supply from a diverse range of sources. The availability of certain fresh seasonal produce, such as salad products imported from the EU may be temporarily impacted by reduced border flow rates but there will not be an overall shortage of food in the UK. Many such



products are short shelf-life and imported on a just-in-time basis, and increased storage capacity would not effectively mitigate this risk.

The UK Government has published on Gov.uk planning assumptions on border flows for imported goods at the end of the transition period.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/920675/RWCS\\_for\\_our\\_borders\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920675/RWCS_for_our_borders_FINAL.pdf).

To support the smooth flow of food goods across the border from January 2021 onwards, we have put in place traffic management mitigations such as Operation Brock, published the Border Operating Model which prioritises border flow in the early months of 2021, and worked with ports to provide additional inland sites for customs checks. The Government is carrying out ongoing work to help businesses and traders get ready for the 1 January including potential border disruption, this includes extensive engagement with agri-food supply chain stakeholders.

Changes to consumer food prices depend on several factors including agri-food import prices and currency exchange rates and energy prices. Many food sub-sectors are accustomed to short-term fluctuations in supply chain costs, and this does not necessarily translate into consumer price rises.

### Fossil Fuels: Overseas Aid

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to end the provision of Official Development Assistance to fossil fuel projects overseas. [HL10636]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Tackling climate change is a key priority for the UK. The Government is committed to working with countries across the world to unlock their renewable energy potential and support their transition away from fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives. The UK will continue to lead by example through aligning our Official Development Assistance (ODA) with the Paris Agreement temperature goals, including our support for energy.

The Prime Minister announced in January that the Government would end direct ODA, investment, export credit and trade promotion support for thermal coal mining and coal power plants overseas. The Government continues to keep its approach to other fossil fuel investments and financing overseas under review.

### Further Education: Small Businesses

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to boost employment through partnerships between colleges and SMEs. [HL10644]

**Baroness Berridge:** As the economy changes and we rebuild after the COVID-19 outbreak, there will be a real need for upskilling, reskilling and retraining to get people back into work as quickly as possible. In order to do this, we need a world-class skills system and we will shortly be delivering a White Paper which will build on this vision in England. Further education will be at the very heart of that vision with its ability to offer flexible and practical training that leads directly to jobs. We will look to colleges to play a leading role in developing skills in their areas, in responding to local economic needs and acting as centres for business development.

We are already encouraging providers to work in partnership with employers, including through our £290 million investment in twenty Institutes of Technology, the government's flagship programme designed to spearhead the delivery of higher technical education in STEM subjects. They bring together employers with further education colleges and universities into a new type of prestigious institution. They will be equipping many businesses, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with the skills they need to drive productivity and take advantage of key growth opportunities.

Employer-designed standards are central to our reforms to apprenticeships, driving up quality and delivering the skills that employers need. We are providing a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25 and a payment of £1,500 for each new apprentice an employer hires aged 25 and over, before 31 January 2021. We have also introduced incentive payments, enabling employers to apply for £1,000 per learner, for employers who offer traineeship work placement opportunities between 1 September 2020 and 31 July 2021.

Colleges provide an important role in supporting SMEs to create new apprenticeships. As we recover from the impact of COVID-19 we want to ensure we grow the number of SMEs offering apprenticeships, supported by funding, given that they are vital to the UK economy. We have already committed to improve the working of the Apprenticeship Levy. We will also work with large employers to improve the transfer process, making it easier for them to find smaller employers to transfer levy funds to, helping them maximise the amount of funding they will be able to transfer.

In addition, training providers are also working alongside employers (many of whom are SMEs), to deliver traineeships which prepare young people for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience.

### Gaza Strip: Water

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the submission by the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, the Al-Haq – Law in the Service of Man, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and the Habitat International Coalition –

Housing and Land Rights Network Joint Urgent Appeal to the United Nations Special Procedures on the escalating water and sanitation crisis in the Gaza Strip, occupied Palestinian territory, published on 9 November. [[HL10652](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain concerned about the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza, including access to a reliable water supply and sanitation services. Through our economic development programme, UK Aid helps improve water and energy supply in Gaza.

We are supporting a World Bank programme that aims to increase the volume, quality and reliability of water supply across the OPTs, by providing technical assistance and developing infrastructure. We will also help fund the construction of pipelines and reservoirs in Gaza to carry water from the Gaza Central Desalination Plant to households and businesses across the strip. When completed this plant will have doubled the water supply in Gaza ensuring that 2 million Gazans have greater access to this vital resource.

### Genito-urinary Medicine: Overseas Aid

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the Department for International Development's total expenditure on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the (1) 2018/19, and (2) 2019/20, financial year. [[HL10722](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) financial reporting estimates that the Department for International Development's total expenditure on sexual and reproductive health and rights was:

- £1.215 billion in 2018.
- £1.202 billion in 2019.

Comparable figures for 2020 are not yet available.

Please note FCDO adheres to the Guttmacher - Lancet integrated definition of SRHR which includes maternal and newborn care, however there is no international consensus on how to calculate SRHR spend. Thus, these estimates have been calculated using the internationally agreed Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) Muskoka methodology as proxy for SRHR spend and is likely to overestimate DFID SRHR spend.

### Geothermal Power

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to develop opportunities for geothermal energy generation to help address climate change. [[HL10618](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** Opportunities for geothermal electricity generation in the UK are limited and only

likely to be economically feasible in certain locations, such as the far South West of England. The Government is supporting the development of the United Downs Deep Geothermal Project in Cornwall.

The most promising use of geothermal energy in the UK is for low temperature applications such as district heating schemes. BEIS has been providing support to the deployment of district heat networks from geothermal through the Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) and the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP). We also announced a further £270m from 2022 to 2025 in the Green Heat Network Fund at the March budget and we will be consulting on eligibility criteria in due course.

### Giulio Regeni

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Egypt about (1) its decision not to hold an inquiry into the alleged torture and subsequent death of Giulio Regeni, (2) reports that it did not comply with requests for information concerning those suspected of his murder from the Italian judicial authorities, and (3) its human rights record and the importance of upholding the rule of law. [[HL10562](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have the deepest sympathy for Giulio Regeni's family and their quest for justice for his appalling murder. As Mr Regeni was an Italian citizen, the Italian Government is taking the lead role on his case. We continue to follow the investigation into his death and to work closely with the Italian Government. We last discussed this at an official level with the Italian authorities on 23 November. We have also raised with the Egyptian authorities at a senior level the need for a transparent and impartial investigation, in full co-operation with Italy, so that Mr Regeni's killers can be brought to justice.

We regularly raise our human rights concerns with the Egyptian authorities in London and in Cairo. A recent example was the Foreign Secretary's call with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November.

### Health Services: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that medical professionals received guidance on how (1) to differentiate between, and (2) to treat, patients with varying severity levels of COVID-19 infections. [[HL7586](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a comprehensive range of online only guides for use by clinical staff and National Health Service managers to support the management of patients.

*Clinical guide for the management of emergency department patients during the coronavirus pandemic,*

published on 17 March, sets out the categories of acute patients to consider for obligatory inpatient emergency admissions, as well as a flowchart for emergency department attendances and key steps in optimising the acute care pathways for all patient groups.

*Reference guide for emergency medicine*, published on 22 April, includes an algorithm agreed with the British Society of Thoracic Imaging that focuses on disease severity and differentiation from other diseases.

*Guidance for the role and use of non-invasive respiratory support in adult patients with COVID19 (confirmed or suspected)*, published on 6 April, should be used to guide clinicians on the appropriate use of continuous positive airway pressure, non-invasive ventilation, and high flow nasal oxygen in patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. It is designed to provide a useful aid to use alongside clinical judgement and can be adjusted to suit individual clinical environments.

### High Rise Flats: Insulation

*Asked by Lord Young of Cookham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the reliance on interim measures such as waking watch and evacuation management plans by residents of high-rise buildings awaiting remediation for building safety defects. [HL10653]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The most effective way to make buildings with unsafe cladding safe and eliminate the need for interim measures and associated costs is to have the unsafe cladding removed as quickly as possible. That is why we are prioritising £1.6 billion public subsidy on remediation of unsafe cladding. However, we recognise residents' concerns about the cost of waking watch measures and the lack of transparency of these costs. That is why we have collected and published information on waking watch costs. This will enable those that have commissioned it to make comparisons and challenge providers on unreasonable costs. The data is available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-waking-watch-costs](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-waking-watch-costs).

The Government also welcomes the National Fire Chiefs Council update to its guidance on Simultaneous Evacuation published in October (available at: [www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance](http://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance)). We have asked the Fire Protection Board to advise Fire and Rescue Services on how best to operationalise the revised guidance including looking into other measures such as installing building-wide fire alarm systems to reduce the dependency on waking watches wherever possible.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Simultaneous evacuation guidance [201204 Simultaneous evacuation guidance - HL10653 (download from 9757347).pdf]

Waking Watch costs [201204 Building Safety Programme\_ Waking Watch costs - GOV.UK - HL10653 (download from 9757347).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10653>

### High Speed 2 Railway Line: Construction

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 9 November (HL9507), which destinations the "six trains per hour that can be reliably operated from Old Oak Common within the existing station design" are planned to serve; and at what frequency. [HL10665]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** No decisions have been made on the exact HS2 train service that will operate to and from Old Oak Common. The Department for Transport has appointed West Coast Partnership Development to analyse passenger demand and present options for train service patterns that best allow this demand to be met with the available infrastructure. The Secretary of State will decide on the preferred option, once it has been subject to a consultation, nearer to the time that HS2 opens.

### Hospitals

*Asked by Lord Wills*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the impact since March of the under-utilisation of capacity in hospitals operated by the Independent Healthcare Providers Network under their partnership agreement with the NHS on (1) postponed (a) diagnoses, and (b) treatment, and (2) costs to taxpayers. [HL9971]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Health Service is working in partnership with private hospitals in the United Kingdom to combat the outbreak of COVID-19. The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked with the Independent Healthcare Providers Network and with independent sector providers themselves to secure all appropriate inpatient capacity and other resource across England.

The addition of around 6,500 additional beds has increased NHS capacity and ensured that facilities are available for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 whilst ensuring continuity of service for non-COVID-19 patients requiring elective activity, including cancer and other urgent treatment.

It is not possible to make an assessment of the impact since March of any underutilisation of independent sector capacity on postponed diagnoses or treatment.

## Incontinence: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 10 November (HL8072), what progress they have made on the National Bladder and Bowel Health Project, including (1) who is serving on the panels, and (2) what the timescales are for the next phases of the project. [HL10623]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Bladder and Bowel Health (NBBH) project was paused at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in line with some other national programmes and membership of the project's panels and timescales for the next phases of the project are not confirmed at this time.

Sue Doheny, Chief Nurse NHS England, is the Senior Responsible Officer for the Excellence in Continence Care Programme which oversees the NBBH project. The project includes representatives from across the health and care profession – patients and carers, suppliers and procurement.

## Internet: Safety

Asked by *Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in the last three months to progress their proposed online harms legislation; and whether such legislation will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny. [HL10850]

**Baroness Barran:** The government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online, and DCMS and the Home Office are working at pace to introduce this legislation. We will publish a Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper later this year. This will be followed by legislation in 2021, when parliamentary time allows.

It is vital that we get this legislation right and we will make a final decision on pre-legislative scrutiny nearer the time of introduction. We are mindful of the need to balance speed and scrutiny when introducing these measures, and we will continue to engage with parliamentarians as we prepare legislation.

## Israel: Palestinians

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 19 November (HL10059), what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) the government of Israel's decision not to recognise the state of Palestine, (2) that government's occupation of other territory, and (3) the blockade of the Gaza Strip, on opportunities to establish peace in that region. [HL10650]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK wants to see an end to the occupation, and the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, living in peace and security, side by side with Israel. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence and a two state solution. Steps to transform the situation in Gaza are also needed. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians in Gaza and that supporting legal trade for Gazans is firmly in Israel's long-term interests.

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that that government has closed roads and thus prevented Palestinians accessing their agricultural land. [HL10651]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement within the West Bank, including to and from Palestinian agricultural land. The UK Government continues to raise our concerns about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with the Israeli authorities. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians.

## Large Goods Vehicles

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are preparing their guidance Transporting goods between Great Britain and the EU from 1 January 2021: guidance for hauliers and commercial drivers, published on 18 November, in languages other than English; and if so, (1) in which languages it will be available, and (2) whether the translations will be available before 1 January 2021. [HL10743]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The haulier handbook is only one part of the wider package the Government has put in place to help and guide hauliers, which also includes the roll out of 45 Information and Advice Sites and a multimillion pound information campaign, running across the UK and Europe.

The haulier handbook will be available in 14 languages and officials have already published translations in Welsh, Polish and Romanian on GOV.UK.

A full list of languages is below:

- English
- Welsh
- Polish
- Romanian

- Czech
- French
- German
- Russian
- Spanish
- Bulgarian
- Dutch
- Hungarian
- Lithuanian
- Turkish

All translations are planned to be available online from week commencing Monday 30 November 2020.

### Large Goods Vehicles: Bath

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to accommodate heavy lorries travelling between the A36 and A46 during repair works to Cleveland Bridge in Bath. [HL10853]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** A weight restriction of 18 tonnes has been placed on Cleveland Bridge, which is to remain in place for the duration of the repair works. A 7.5 tonne weight restriction is in place on many streets in the centre of Bath so HGVs are directed to diversion routes to the east or west of the city.

### Large Goods Vehicles: Kent

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to check and verify documentation for 'Kent access permits' for the purpose of (1) assisting ports in allocating slots, and (2) understanding which cargoes need inspection. [HL10792]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The purpose of the Kent Access Permit (KAP) is to minimise the number of HGVs travelling to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel without the correct export documentation and thus, mitigate against any disruption those 'unready' HGVs would cause. The KAP is obtained from the Check an HGV is Ready to Cross the Border service, where a driver or haulier must check they have the right documentation before proceeding to the ports. The Check an HGV service has not been designed to integrate with the ports operations to allocate tickets and does not link into other Government databases to inform which cargoes need inspection.

In Kent, the Check an HGV service database will be used by DVSA enforcement officials and Kent Police in conjunction with Automatic Number Plate Recognition to check whether EU bound HGVs have a valid KAP. Should it be required, a similar process will take place at the HGV holding sites in Kent using the Check an HGV

Operator Application to scan vehicles number plates to check for the presence of a KAP.

### Large Goods Vehicles: Tyres

*Asked by Earl Attlee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of goods vehicles which are taxed as private and not used commercially that could be affected by the ban on tyres aged 10 years and over. [HL10563]

*Asked by Earl Attlee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Department for Transport and its agents undertook research into the longevity of the life of safe tyres on Heavy Goods Vehicles; how many tyres were (1) selected for, and (2) actually used, in that research; and what steps they took to ensure that their research used controls to allow for the possibility that any changes observed in tyre material over time could have been caused by changes in the mix of the compound used by the manufacturers and not by deterioration. [HL10564]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government commissioned fundamental research to understand whether the material properties of a vehicle tyre change with its chronological age to such an extent that the integrity of the tyre, and therefore its safety, is compromised. 44 used tyres were selected as potential test samples, ranging from 3 to 19 years in age and originating from in-service use within the UK vehicle fleet. However, 18 of these tyres exhibited evidence of physical damage, under-inflation, penetrations or repairs and were rejected from the study. The remaining 26 tyres were included, alongside five new tyres for comparator purposes.

To limit the variability from differences in rubber compound, steel cords and construction, all the tyres selected were from the same manufacturer, and the same size and designated usage i.e. for front axles. However, three different tyre models were used, as no single model spanned the complete age range of the tyres selected for the study.

### Libya: Refugees

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the position of (1) UNHCR, and (2) the International Organization for Migration, on the designation of Libya as a safe third country for the purpose of returns. [HL10602]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We note the UNHCR's position set out in its September report "UNHCR position on the designations of Libya as a safe third country and as a place of disembarkation following rescue at sea". We also note the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) position on this issue, set out in recent IOM communications.

## Local Government: Capital Investment

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the announcement by South Somerset District Council that it intends to develop a battery farm in Fareham, Hampshire with its joint venture partner Opium Power, whether there is any precedent of an English local authority investing in another local authority. [[HL10630](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Local authorities borrow and invest under the Prudential Framework. It is a permissive system that gives local authorities wide freedoms to borrow and invest, and determine their own capital strategies, provided they stay within the legal bounds of the Framework and have regard to the statutory guidance. Local authorities remain accountable to their electorate for their investment decisions.

Government and CIPFA are clear that borrowing to invest for yield is not complaint with the objectives of the Framework. This is consistent with reforms HMT have put in place over the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which prevent councils planning to invest primarily for income from borrowing from the PWLB. There is no specific restriction on where local authorities can invest, but councils investing outside their area will need to ensure they are compliant with the Framework.

## Maira Shahbaz

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about the case of Maira Shahbaz; and what assessment they have made of calls for her to be granted asylum in the UK. [[HL10561](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls from religious minorities in Pakistan. We are closely monitoring Maira Shahbaz's case. We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girls' rights and gender equality with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. On 19 October, I raised our concerns about child, early and forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari. In addition, I raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief with Dr Mazari on 16 November. The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, raised our concerns about the case of Maira Shahbaz with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, on 16 November. We will not comment on an individual case regarding immigration.

## Medical Equipment: Import Duties

*Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of tariff that would be introduced by the UK Global Tariff regime in the event of a no-deal Brexit on adhesive removal sprays for use with incontinence sheaths and stoma products; what assessment they have made of the impact of such a change on patients; and which other essential products for medical use will be subject to such tariffs. [[HL10622](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Our ambition is to ensure there are no tariffs, fees, charges or quantitative restrictions on trade in goods between the United Kingdom and the European Union at the end of the transition period through a Free Trade Agreement. We therefore do not expect the UK Global Tariff to apply to EU imports. We are currently in an intense phase of negotiations with the EU and we are working hard to achieve that.

## Migrant Workers: Construction

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include key construction trades on the Shortage Occupation List to make it easier for migrants to apply for work visas to fill vacancies in that sector. [[HL10603](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** In March, the Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to advise on the composition of the Shortage Occupation Lists (SOL) in light of the expanded skills threshold of the new Skilled Worker route, which will come into effect on 1 December.

The MAC published its findings and recommendations on 29 September. The Government welcomes the MAC's comprehensive advice, which included a recommendation to add bricklayers and masons; however, we do not consider changes to the SOLs should be made at this time, before assessing how the UK labour market develops postCovid19 and in response to the introduction of the new Points-Based Immigration System.

As published on 22 October, the Immigration Rules for the new Points-Based Immigration System include an Appendix Shortage Occupation Lists. This replaces the existing lists under Appendix K. The contents are the same.

## Motor Vehicles: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional VAT will be paid by consumers in Northern Ireland who buy second-hand vehicles transported from Great Britain after the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL10472](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The VAT paid by consumers buying second-hand vehicles will depend on the circumstances of the transaction and the seller of the vehicle.

The Northern Ireland Protocol frames the approach to VAT on goods, including the second-hand margin scheme, in Northern Ireland. As is the case for tax policy generally, the Government is keeping this under review.

### Motorcycles: Sales

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to phase out the sale of motorbikes with internal combustion engines. [HL10698]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government has no current plans to phase out the sale of internal combustion motorcycles. We are supporting those riders wanting to switch to the growing numbers of zero emission two wheelers and benefit from the lower running costs with a grant of 20% off the up-front purchase price of eligible models, up to a maximum of £1,500.

### Music: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the commercial music industry about the challenges of procuring insurance for live music events. [HL10818]

**Baroness Barran:** We are aware of the concerns which have been raised about the potential challenges associated with securing insurance for live music events.

Officials have been working closely with the affected sectors to understand the challenges faced. This includes work to build an evidence base on whether there is a clear market failure that demonstrates insurance coverage is the only barrier to live music events taking place.

### Music: Tourism

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take in the next financial year to support music tourism in the UK. [HL10821]

**Baroness Barran:** VisitBritain research shows that in 2017, over 2.6m international visitors attended a live music event while visiting the UK, representing 7% of the total visitors received.

VisitEngland's £45m Discover England Fund has promoted innovative bookable tourism products to international audiences, including music-related itineraries in the North West. VisitBritain continues to make use of the UK's renowned cultural assets within its global marketing material.

Music sector organisations and tourism businesses have benefited from the unprecedented pan-economic measures that Government has put in place during COVID-19, including the VAT cut for tourism and hospitality activities, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, various grant and loan schemes, as well as business rates relief for the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.

We will continue to engage with a range of stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support all aspects of the tourism and music sectors' recovery from COVID-19.

### Nagorno Karabakh: Cluster Munitions

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Leeds*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use, if any, of cluster munitions during the recent conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [HL10621]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of allegations that cluster munitions were deployed in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has raised the alleged use of cluster munitions with both the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers.

### Nagorno Karabakh: Cultural Heritage

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to protect Armenian cultural and religious sites following the Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. [HL10641]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan about the reported destruction of sites of Armenian cultural and religious significance. [HL10642]

**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: Minorities**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide for the protection for minority communities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [[HL10585](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are monitoring the situation closely and are engaging with both the Armenia and Azerbaijani Governments to highlight the importance of protecting all civilians in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, including minority groups.

### **Nagorno Karabakh: Peace Negotiations**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances they have sought for the safety and rights of Armenian populations in territories ceded to Azeri control under the ceasefire agreement brokered by the government of Russia. [[HL10620](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government welcomes the ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas spoke to Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Bayramov on the 13 November and welcomed Azerbaijan's commitment to keep the Lachin Corridor open to allow the free movement of people between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. The governments of both Azerbaijan and Armenia should continue to work closely with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to ensure the safety and protection of all civilians.

### **Nagorno Karabakh: Refugees**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the humanitarian needs of people in Armenia who have been displaced by the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [[HL10586](#)]

**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 funding 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.

### **Netflix: Taxation**

*Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much tax relief Netflix received under the creative industry tax reliefs for Corporation Tax scheme. [[HL10590](#)]

*Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that Netflix's revenues in the UK are subject to an appropriate level of taxation. [[HL10591](#)]

*Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Netflix will be subject to the Digital Services Tax. [[HL10592](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs. It would not be appropriate for Treasury ministers to become involved in or to comment on the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

### **NHS: Finance**

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to increase NHS funding (1) to maintain, and (2) to improve on, existing standards in the light of the increased expenditure required to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL10485](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Chancellor of the Exchequer has been clear that the National Health Service will get whatever funding it needs to respond to COVID-19.

In July, the Chancellor announced an extra £31.9 billion of support for health services and on 24 September, an additional £16.4 billion for health services. As part of this funding we have provided funding to a £3 billion package of additional capacity initiatives to support the NHS through the winter, including keeping the Nightingale hospitals capacity available during winter, accessing increased capacity from independent sector providers, and supporting increased safe discharge of patients from NHS hospitals.

### **Nutrition**

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide guidance to affected trade bodies regarding legal changes relevant to the Nutrition



(Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020; and what consideration they have given to providing any such guidance more frequently than every three months. [HL10737]

**Lord Bethell:** Guidance for businesses and other interested parties was published on 17 November online at GOV.UK setting out the practical effect of the changes to domestic and European Union legislation relating to nutrition-related labelling, composition and standards made by the Nutrition (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.

Officials developed the guidance in consultation with industry representatives and trade bodies via the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Business Expert Group to ensure it addressed all necessary aspects of the legislation.

The Department has heeded requests from industry to provide updates on this area at more frequent intervals. Officials meet with industry representatives on a more ad hoc basis providing updates on progress relevant to the Nutrition (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, in addition to sharing written updates with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Group in between the scheduled quarterly sessions.

### **Palestinians: Health Services**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority about the provision of healthcare to people with disabilities. [HL10924]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) was ratified in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) in 2014.

The Palestinian Authority's (PA) Prime Minister, Dr Shtayyeh, has also recently committed to finding a solution for comprehensive health insurance for people with disabilities, as guaranteed under PA law.

The UK is supporting people with disabilities through a range of our programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For example, through our CSSF Gender equality projects, following the outbreak of COVID-19, we have approved additional programming to strengthen disability inclusion across Palestinian society, which aims to ensure people with disabilities (PwD) are accounted for in the COVID-19 crisis response through reviewing laws, regulations, HR policies and bylaws in public sector to analyse barriers to PwDs participation in decision making. This will be followed by an advocacy campaign targeting the gaps identified in the analysis.

### **Parliament: Security**

*Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top*

To ask the Leader of the House whether any current Lords Ministers sponsor Parliamentary passes for

individuals other than (1) family members, (2) civil servants, (3) carers, and (4) special advisors; and if so, what the reasons are for the sponsorship of those Parliamentary passes. [HL10660]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** One Lords Minister sponsors a pass for a member of staff who does not fall into any of the four categories listed in the question and who provides non-government administrative support.

In line with the Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for House of Lords Members' Staff, there is an entry in the Register of Interests - Members of the House of Lords staff. The register can be found at:

<https://members.parliament.uk/members/lords/interests/register-of-interests-of-lords-members-staff>

### **Pensions: Public Sector**

*Asked by Baroness Harris of Richmond*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that their proposal to eliminate age discrimination in public sector pension schemes does not create any sex discrimination in such schemes. [HL10597]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** On 16 July 2020, the government published a consultation <sup>[1]</sup> on "Public service pension schemes: changes to the transitional arrangements to the 2015 schemes", accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment <sup>[2]</sup> (EIA). The EIA considered the impacts of the proposals on those with protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010, including sex.

As part of this consultation, the government also asked for views on the implications of the proposals for people with protected characteristics. The consultation closed on October 11, and the government is now considering the issues raised in response to the consultation.

The Equalities Impact Assessment will be updated in response to issues raised and will be published alongside the government's response to the consultation in due course.

<sup>[1]</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/900766/Public\\_Service\\_Pensions\\_Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/900766/Public_Service_Pensions_Consultation.pdf)

<sup>[2]</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/900999/Public\\_Service\\_Pensions\\_EIA\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/900999/Public_Service_Pensions_EIA_.pdf)

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Public service pension EIA [Public\_Service\_Pensions\_EIA\_.pdf]

Public service pensions consultation  
[Public\_Service\_Pensions\_Consultation.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10597>

## Pets: Disease Control

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have considered the introduction of additional controls on the use of flea treatments for domestic pets to help prevent the contamination of rivers and waterways by insecticides. [HL10613]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Medicines containing imidacloprid and fipronil are accompanied by advice to users to keep treated animals out of watercourses for 2 to 4 days after treatment. If these measures are followed, it is expected that exposure to the environment should be negligible.

Due to concerns and uncertainties raised by previous research and monitoring data, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) commissioned research in 2019 to investigate the potential environmental exposure pathways for dog and cat flea and tick products, to assess the significance of the use of neonicotinoids (e.g. imidacloprid) and other parasiticides (e.g. fipronil) on the aquatic environment. This research is ongoing. In addition, the relevance of other sources and exposure routes of these parasiticides, which could be significant, is yet to be elucidated.

Pending the findings from this commissioned research, and other available evidence, currently we do not have any plans to change the existing regulatory controls on veterinary medicines, including the use of flea treatments for pets and the existing risk mitigation warnings, which protect animal health, human health and the environment.

The VMD is committed to continuing to consider the evidence to inform any policy decisions or other interventions such as reinforcing the message not to wash animals for the period stipulated.

## Prison Sentences

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) male, and (2) female, prisoners are currently serving an extended determinate sentence with a custodial term of (a) 12 months to two years, (b) two to four years, (c) four to five years, (d) five to seven years, (e) seven to 10 years, (f) 10 to 14 years, and (g) 14 years or more. [HL10575]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, data on offenders serving extended determinate sentences broken down into the categories requested is as follows:

<i>Sentence length bands</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Total	5,764	74
12 months to 2 years	16	*
2 years to 4 years	111	0
4 years to 5 years	584	23

<i>Sentence length bands</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
5 years to 7 years	862	12
7 years to 10 years	1,547	21
10 years to 14 years	1,335	14
More than 14 years	1,303	*
Sentence length other/ unrecorded	6	0

The data above shows the custodial term imposed under the extended determinate sentence and therefore the maximum time offenders serving the sentence could spend in custody. Such prisoners may be released after having served two thirds of this custodial term at the discretion of the parole board.

The figures in these tables have been drawn from large scale administrative data systems - as such there may be errors in data entry and processing. Small values have been suppressed in the above table to protect the identity of individuals.

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the breakdown of the tariff-expired unreleased life prisoner population by (1) original tariff length, and (2) time over tariff. [HL10576]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** The tariff-expired unreleased life prisoner population, broken down by original tariff length and time over tariff as of 30 September 2020, is shown in the following table:

<i>Original Tariff Length</i>				
<i>Time over tariff</i>	<i>Less than or equal to 10 years</i>	<i>Greater than 10 years to less than or equal to 20 years</i>	<i>More than 20 years</i>	<i>Total</i>
Less than 1 year	46	135	6	187
From 1 year to less than 2 years	43	96	5	144
From 2 years to less than 3 years	25	68	8	101
From 3 years to less than 4 years	27	50	2	79
From 4 years to less than 5 years	22	51	3	76
From 5 years to less than 6 years	29	37	4	70
From 6 years to less than 7 years	37	45	3	85

<i>Time over tariff</i>	<i>Less than or equal to 10 years</i>	<i>Greater than 10 years to less than or equal to 20 years</i>	<i>More than 20 years</i>	<i>Total</i>
From 7 years to less than 8 years	31	39	1	71
From 8 years to less than 9 years	41	33	2	76
From 9 years to less than 10 years	62	31	2	95
From 10 years to less than 11 years	47	27	3	77
From 11 years to less than 12 years	64	13	3	80
From 12 years to less than 13 years	54	14	1	69
From 13 years to less than 14 years	54	14	0	68
From 14 years to less than 15 years	48	19	2	69
From 15 years to less than 16 years	47	13	1	61
From 16 years to less than 17 years	25	9	0	34
From 17 years to less than 18 years	24	18	0	42
From 18 years to less than 19 years	21	10	0	31
From 19 years to less than 20 years	14	7	0	21
20 years or more	80	55	3	138
Total	841	784	49	1,674

These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any large scale recording

systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

It may be useful to note that statistics on the indeterminate population in prisons are routinely published as part of the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly on Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>.

I would like to be clear that our primary responsibility is to protect the public. We do not want to keep indeterminate sentenced prisoners in custody any longer than is necessary, but we have a duty to ensure that they are progressed in a safe manner. It remains the case that prisoners serving life and other indeterminate sentences will be released only when the independent Parole Board concludes that the risk to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community under probation supervision.

## Prisoners

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the offence type breakdown for the (1) male, and (2) female, prison population of (a) 15 to 17 year olds, (b) 18 to 20 year olds, (c) 21 to 24 year olds, (d) 25 to 29 year olds, (e) 30 to 39 year olds, (f) 40 to 49 year olds, (g) 50 to 59 year olds, (h) 60 to 69 year olds, and (i) those aged 70 and over. [HL10578]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Data on the total prison population as at 30 September 2020, broken down by sex, specified age group and associated offence group, can be viewed in the attached table.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table [PQ HL10578 Response Table.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10578>

## Prisoners: Ethnic Groups and Religion

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the prison population in England and Wales in each of the last five years (1) broken down by ethnic group, and (2) further subdivided by religion. [HL10577]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** The information requested is provided on the attached document.

The total prison population also includes those held on remand or under sentence, immigration detainees and those convicted of civil offences.

Figures of five and fewer have been suppressed in order to protect the potential identification of individuals.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table [PQ HL10577 - Lord Bradley - Table.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10577>

## Prisoners: Foreign Nationals

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the last year for which figures are available, what proportion of the prison population were foreign national prisoners, broken down by (1) country, and (2) offence type. [HL10579]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Any foreign national who comes to our country and abuses our hospitality by breaking the law should be in no doubt of our determination to punish and deport them.

We continue to remove foreign national offenders where routes are available.

Since January 2019, we have removed 6,450 foreign national offenders from our prisons, immigration removal centres and the community, with 4,771 removed in 2019/20.

We are absolutely committed to removing foreign national offenders from the UK and continue to work closely with international governments to maximise the removal of serious and persistent offenders. We are constantly reviewing progress to ensure that all options are being pursued and that our early removal mechanisms are working as effectively as possible.

The table attached provides the information on the nationalities and offence types for foreign national prisoners.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table [Copy of HL10579 - Lord Bradley - Data.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-23/HL10579>

## Remote Education: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide self-isolating students from disadvantaged backgrounds with digital devices. [HL10645]

**Baroness Berridge:** As part of over £195 million invested to support access to remote education and online social care, over 340,000 laptops and tablets are being made available this term to support disadvantaged children in year 3 to 11 whose face-to-face education may be disrupted. Since September, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools.

This supplements over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers, which have already been delivered during the summer term.

This represents an injection of over half-a-million laptops and tablets by the end of the year.

Laptops and tablets are owned by the local authority, trust or school who can lend unused laptops and tablets to children and young people who need them most, if they experience disruption to face-to-face education due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Once children who have been self-isolating return to school, and if others are required to self-isolate, schools can choose to reallocate devices to those pupils who are out of school.

We continue to provide 4G wireless routers, with free data, where schools face disruption and children need to access remote education.

In partnership with mobile network operators, we are providing access to free additional mobile data for the academic year, offering families flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

## Rivers: Somerset

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the dataset produced by the Environment Agency Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) Classification Status Cycle 2, published on 29 September, why no rivers in Somerset meet the current criteria for good ecological status or ecological potential. [HL10628]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** While water quality in rivers has generally improved since the 1990s, recent progress has slowed. The 2019 Water Framework Directive classification revealed that no waterbodies in England meet the criteria for good chemical status and therefore do not meet the criteria for overall good ecological status or ecological potential. This compares with about 97% of waterbodies achieving good chemical status in the 2016 classification.

This apparent decline in results is largely due to the use of new monitoring methods rather than a sudden deterioration in water quality, and this means that the 2016 and 2019 classifications are not directly comparable. The use of new monitoring methods by the Environment Agency (EA) to assess the presence of a number of now banned or closely regulated chemicals has meant that in many rivers in Somerset the chemical classification has reduced, although all the other chemical and biological elements which the EA monitors remain largely unchanged. This new method has resulted in a more comprehensive assessment of certain substances in the environment and will allow the EA to begin to understand and address the legacy of these chemicals.

The EA continues to monitor rivers in Somerset and seek improvements in light of this latest classification. It does this by working in partnership with a wide range of local and national organisations to reduce pollution and tackle the areas of biggest concern like storm overflows, working with farmers to support environmentally friendly

farming that doesn't damage water quality, and responding to water quality incidents and prosecuting polluters where applicable.

### Roads: Closures

*Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what conditions councils in London have been given statutory authority to close roads during the COVID-19 pandemic; and how long any such temporary closures will be in place. [[HL10595](#)]

*Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how the average journey time for cars and other vehicles has been affected as a result of road closures in London during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL10596](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Active Travel Fund was announced on 9 May and provided £225 million of funding for local authorities to enable them to reallocate road space and make changes to road layouts in response to COVID-19.

Alongside the funding, the Department published statutory guidance to local authorities under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This provides advice on the changes that Government expects them to make to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. It is for local authorities to decide what specific measures are appropriate on their roads to achieve this.

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 gives local authorities powers to close roads using Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). No new road closure powers have been granted. The emergency legislation which came into force on 22 May made some changes to the procedure for making TROs, but did not alter the pre-existing notice periods. Local authorities are still required to give 7 days' notice of proposed temporary or experimental changes, to allow time for local residents or businesses to send in any comments or objections.

The monitoring and evaluation of schemes, including impact on traffic flows, is a matter for local authorities.

### Secondary Education: Closures

*Asked by Lord Baker of Dorking*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many secondary schools which were judged by Ofsted as "Requires Improvement" have been closed by (1) a local authority, or (2) a multi-academy trust, in each of the last ten years. [[HL10565](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The information requested is not currently available.

The data published by Ofsted shows the number of schools rated as Outstanding, Good, Requires

Improvement, and Inadequate, which can be easily extracted from the published data.

The proportion of secondary schools rated as Requires Improvement was 32% in August 2010, and this has changed to 16% in August 2020.

The proportion of all schools rated as Requires Improvement was 30% in August 2010, and this has changed to 10% in August 2020.

### Self-determination of States: Shetland

*Asked by Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have held, if any, with the Scottish Government about the decision of Shetland Council on 9 September to approve a motion for "exploring options" for achieving "financial and political self-determination"; and what has been the outcome of any such discussions. [[HL10752](#)]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK Government has not held discussions with the Scottish Government about the decision of Shetland Council on 9 September to approve a motion for "exploring options" for achieving "financial and political self-determination".

We recognise the importance of Shetland and its proud traditions and contribution to the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom Government has already demonstrated commitment to devolution of power in areas such as Greater Manchester and Greater London as well as in Scotland. We are keen to see power sit at the most appropriate level of government, including local government, and there is much that the Scottish Government could learn from United Kingdom Government practice in that respect.

### Sports Competitors: Females

*Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address the stigma associated with menstruation for women and girls in sport. [[HL10865](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** Periods should never be a taboo subject. Women and girls should feel comfortable discussing their menstrual cycle, and how it affects their attitude to sport and their sporting performance.

We are determined to encourage more women and girls to get active and break down the barriers that prevent them from doing so, something we set out in our sport strategy Sporting Future. Sport England's This Girl Can campaign was created to get more women active regardless of shape, size and ability, and aims to tackle head on the social barriers that can prevent women from feeling like they can join in. The latest phase of the campaign, launched earlier this year, addressed periods, showing a tampon string towards the end of the advert. The reaction to this in the press and in online discussion was overwhelmingly positive with a recognition that it shows the truth of women's lives.

Sport England are also supporting the government taskforce to tackle period poverty, primarily around actions to tackle the stigma relating to women in sport, and particularly their impact on teenage participation in physical activity in schools.

In addition, we welcome the work that the English Institute of Sport is doing through their SMARTher campaign to open up conversations amongst athletes, coaches and staff in high performance sport around athletes' menstrual cycles in order to improve support.

### **Syria: British Nationals Abroad**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to repatriate British nationals held by Kurdish forces in north-east Syria. [[HL10600](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We do not comment on individual cases. Each request for consular assistance is considered on a case-by-case basis and the support we can offer is tailored to the individual circumstances.

### **Telemedicine: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the uptake of telemedicine as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of the impact of any such uptake on women's health services. [[HL10864](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Online consultations are available in almost 6,000 practices, covering 90% of the population, an increase from about 40% of general practitioner (GP) practices in December 2019. About half a million online consultations between patients, GPs and general practice staff now happen every week, around 12 million in the last six months. Face-to-face appointments are available and routine screening services for cervical and breast cancer have re-started. Women are encouraged to attend screening appointments when invited to do so and to contact their GP if they have any unusual symptoms or concerns.

Three national evaluations are underway to evaluate the impact of online and video consultations, including assessment of the impact on people's health.

### **Tree Planting**

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish a tree planting target for England to achieve an increase in England's woodland cover; and how they plan to ensure that progress towards any target is achieved. [[HL10616](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are committed to increasing planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025 and are exploring whether a

statutory target for trees in England would be appropriate, under the process proposed by the Environment Bill.

Our ambitious England Tree Strategy, being published early next year, will set out more detailed plans for achieving this unprecedented increase in woodland creation, supported by the £640 million Nature for Climate Fund announced in the March Budget.

Plans to help kickstart the nation's Green Recovery Challenge Fund were announced on 18 November. This will include the expansion of protected landscapes, increased access to nature, stronger flood resilience, and the creation and retention of thousands of green jobs.

Over 500 hectares trees will be planted across England's ten Community Forests, from Yorkshire to Somerset over the next five months, backed by £12.1 million of investment. This will also build the pipeline of projects for community planting in future years.

### **UNRWA: Humanitarian Aid**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide emergency funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in light of the call by its Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini on 9 November for humanitarian assistance. [[HL10813](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), and we recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the UN General Assembly to protect and provide protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. We are providing £51 million to UNRWA in 2020/2021. Reports that UNRWA may not be able to pay the salaries of its staff in full are very worrying. To that end, the UK is working with UNRWA and other donors to improve UNRWA's financial viability. This includes broadening UNRWA's donor base, encouraging the full disbursement of pledges and support through multi-year funding.

### **West Bank: Education**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Norwegian Refugee Council *Raided and Razed: Attacks on West Bank Education*, published on 12 November; and what plans they have to raise this subject with the government of Israel in a joint démarche with other European countries. [[HL10598](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by the findings of the report by the Norwegian Refugee Council, *'Raided and Razed: Attacks on West Bank Education'*, published on 12 November. The right to education is basic, and it is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system in order to provide opportunities for the next generation. This is why the UK

is committed to providing support to education workers in the West Bank, and UNRWA education in the West Bank and Gaza. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised UK concerns about the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, including potential demolition of schools, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv also raised our concern about the demolition of schools with the

Government of Israel on 13 October, alongside European partners. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

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