

**Session 2019-21
No. 157**



**Wednesday
9 December 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 9 December 2020

Companies House: Reform

[HLWS627]

Lord Callanan: The Government has today published three further consultations to take forward its plans to reform the UK's register of company information and give businesses greater confidence in who they are doing business with.

These consultations follow the Government's response to the 2019 consultation to enhance the role of Companies House and increase the transparency of companies and other legal entities, which was published on 18 September 2020.

The key proposals of the consultations are:

- **Querying power consultation:** Companies House will have new powers to query information, which will be exercised on a risk-based approach. The consultation also explores how its powers will be strengthened in a range of areas, including to close various loopholes and remove information from the companies register.
- **Accounts filing consultation:** This consultation invites views on how companies might in future be able to file accounts once with government, instead of providing separate filings to Companies House, HMRC and other agencies. We are also reviewing the way small companies submit accounts to get the balance right between minimising burdens whilst ensuring the information provided is actually informative. We are also proposing to require all companies to file accounts to Companies House in digital formats, and to give Companies House more powers to check information in those accounts.
- **Corporate directors' consultation:** To tackle opaque corporate structures, we propose that corporate directors will be prohibited unless their own boards comprise all natural persons, and those natural persons have their identities verified.

These consultations are another important step in the developing the detail of our package of reforms and will have a negligible impact on the speed at which incorporation and other filings are completed: we still expect the vast majority of companies to be able to incorporate easily within 24 hours.

A copy of the consultations will be deposited in the libraries of the House.

Covid-19: Higher Education in Spring Term

[HLWS624]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

As a government we made the commitment that students living at university will be able to go home at the end of term if they need or choose to do so. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that students are able to return to university for the spring term. We understand that students, staff and providers need to be aware of the arrangements that will be in place for the spring term before students travel home so it has been our priority to communicate these plans as early as possible. Today, I am announcing those measures which we are putting in place to enable students to return to higher education following the winter break as safely as possible.

Government, students, staff and our wider communities greatly value the vital work of universities. That is why we are committed to ensuring that in-person teaching and university life can continue as far as possible during these unprecedented times. Universities have remained open throughout this pandemic, continuing to deliver high quality education through a blended learning approach.

The government has prioritised education, including Higher Education, so we have worked to create a plan that supports the safe return of all students who left for the winter break and the resumption of blended learning. We remain committed to ensuring that in-person teaching and university life can continue as far as possible during these unprecedented times. We also recognise the huge amount of work that higher education providers have undertaken to set up asymptomatic test sites, provide Covid-secure teaching and learning to students, and carefully manage any outbreaks, and we welcome the early successes of the asymptomatic testing programme.

That said, the large numbers of students planning to travel in the New Year has been identified by public health experts as a possible risk factor for transmission of infection. The January term start dates are naturally staggered but this staggering is much more compressed than at the start of the autumn term, so we are asking providers to plan for students to return over a longer, five-week period. This will enable universities and higher education providers to test every student upon their return.

HE providers should first plan to welcome back those students on practical courses and placements, with these students returning to campus in line with their planned start dates from 4 January. We expect providers to make assessments of the courses and students that should be brought back first, based on the requirements of the curriculum, taking into account elements of clinical, practical and specialist teaching and learning as well as the needs of their students and staff. Providers may accommodate some other students to return to campus earlier but should only do so where there is a genuine need or extenuating circumstances. These students should be able to access campus facilities but should not commence in-person lessons until face-to-face teaching of their course formally restarts.

Students who do not have a clearly defined practical element to their course will still be able to continue their studies from the start of term remotely but providers

should plan for students to return gradually from 25 January 2021 and staggered over a two-week period.

Staggering the return of students to campus over five weeks has three primary purposes:

- i) to provide more time and capacity for universities in partnership with National Health Service Test and Trace to continue their rapid work to roll out asymptomatic test sites within university campuses;
- ii) to help manage the flow of students so that as many students and staff as possible can be tested immediately upon arrival at university; and
- iii) to help ensure that students who have practical/assessment elements to their learning in the early part of the term can physically return to campus.

In recent months there have been developments on testing which we plan to use to facilitate the safe return of all students. We will work with higher education providers to put in place asymptomatic testing arrangements for all students on arrival to university. However, individual institutions may choose to offer tests using different testing technologies (e.g. polymerase chain reaction, known as a PCR test), or to partner with neighbouring providers.

We also realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for students and we recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some may face financial hardship. I have now announced that we will be making available up to £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. We will work with the Office for Students to do this, and further detail will be set out in due course.

I want to assure students, staff and their families that their welfare is our top priority. I want to thank universities for their tireless dedication in seeking to ensure safe environments for students and staff. The hard work of university staff has meant we are able to keep students and staff as safe as possible during term. We are pleased we can now announce how students can return to university for the spring term, while keeping themselves, their families, and their communities, as safe as possible.

As with all advice, this will be kept under review in light of scientific evidence, and the government will provide further advice if necessary.

High Streets: Rent Arrears Moratorium

[HLWS626]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I have today laid a statutory instrument that will extend the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeit a lease due to the non-payment of rent until 31 March 2021.

This will also automatically amend the Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery measures led by the Ministry of Justice, through which landlords can seize goods in lieu of unpaid rent. To ensure alignment between this measure

and the moratorium, from the next quarter date on 25 December the total number of days' outstanding rent required for this tool to be used will be increased to 366 days, and this will be in place until 31 March. Accompanying restrictions on the service of statutory demands and winding-up petitions, currently in place until 31 December, are also being extended until 31 March 2021. This means formal demands for the repayment of debt and requests to the courts to liquidate a business owing rent, cannot be made until after the final moratorium comes to an end.

The moratorium was established via Section 82 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and was due to expire on 31 December 2020. It has now been extended for a final time by three months and will expire on 31 March 2021.

The objective of this extension is to protect businesses unable to pay their full rent from eviction until March 2021, taking the length of these measures to one year. This will give them time to start to recover from the impact of the pandemic, plan for the future and protect jobs. The Government has brought forward this measure to support the businesses struggling the most during the pandemic, such as those in hospitality. We are clear that those able to pay their rent, must do so.

We recognise the impact that this extension has on landlords and lenders, therefore Government is being clear that this is the final extension to this temporary measure. We expect both sides of the sector to use this time to negotiate and the Government will issue further guidance to facilitate constructive discussions.

We are aware of concerns that some tenants who could pay rent are refusing to do so. The Government is clear that this measure is not a rent holiday: where a tenant is unable to pay in full, landlords and tenants should be coming together to negotiate in good faith, using the principles set out in the voluntary Code of Practice we published in June. This recommends that those tenants who can pay in full should do so, those who cannot should pay what they can and those landlords who are able to grant concessions should do so. This Code of Practice and approach was supported by a wide range of sector bodies representing tenants and landlords.

While we have seen many constructive discussions happening between landlords and tenants, I am aware there are growing concerns that the current commercial leasehold legislation has not kept pace with the commercial realities of the sector.

I am therefore also announcing we will be launching a review of the commercial landlord and tenant relationship in the new year. The review will make recommendations to Government on how to ensure a flexible and fit-for-purpose legislative framework that enables sustainable occupation of thriving high streets/town centres in the future. It will consider a broad range of issues including the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 Part II, different models of rent payment, and the impact of Coronavirus on the market; for example if we can improve the experience of UK businesses by ensuring that foreign based landlords have an agent operating in the UK. Both landlords and

tenants have previously called for such a review and I will make further announcements on the detail, including a timeline and full scope, in due course.

England, Northern Ireland and Wales are covered by the protection from forfeiture in the Coronavirus Act. Section 82 relates to England and Wales, and the Welsh Government are currently considering an extension to their equivalent moratorium. Section 83 relates to Northern Ireland, who are also considering a similar extension. The Scottish Government passed separate emergency legislation to implement similar measures.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

[HLWS625]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In his announcement about the Lifetime Skills Guarantee in September, the Prime Minister set out his vision to transform the training and skills system for the 21st century economy and help the country to build back better from the coronavirus pandemic. As a country, and as a government, we believe passionately that everyone should be helped to reach their potential, and that opportunities to do so, across a lifetime, must be increased. Today I am pleased to be able to update both Houses on key steps we are taking to deliver the Lifetime Skills Guarantee through a major extension to the Level 3 entitlement for adults, which will be funded from the National Skills Fund.

Now more than ever we need to ensure adults can upskill and retrain, to support the immediate economic recovery and to boost the nation's skills with the expertise employers need, which is a key part of the Government's Plan for Jobs. It is also vital that we deliver for the large number of adults who do not go straight from school to university.

The National Skills Fund is a long term, substantial investment of £2.5bn (£3bn including devolved administrations) which will drive adult retraining and support our ambitious agenda for reform to Further Education. It is essential that adults reap the benefits of our reform through a skills system that meets their needs along with the needs of employers across the nation.

Starting from April 2021 any adult looking to achieve their first full Level 3 (which is equivalent to a technical certificate or diploma, or two full A levels) will be able to access a fully funded course. This will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market. We will ensure that, if they choose to study a short course this will not prevent them from taking a further course. We plan to spend £95 million on this important new commitment in year one. This will include a funding uplift for qualifications included in this offer, to support providers to scale up their level 3 provision for adults and meet the needs of learners as we build back better from the pandemic.

It is important that this is a truly national offer, and we must ensure that all learners can access this valuable training regardless of where they live. We are working closely with providers and local areas, including the Mayoral Combined Authorities and Greater London Authority, to ensure this national offer is delivered effectively across the nation and that funding is targeted at valuable subjects that are a key priority for the nation.

We have identified a range of qualifications that will meet current and future skills needs across the nation, and have engaged with business representatives, local areas and education and training providers on the development of the qualifications list. We have focused on provision that ensures good returns for individuals, employers and the economy, as well as those most critical skill areas.

We will keep the course list under regular review to ensure it adapts to the changing needs of the economy. Adults accessing this new level 3 adult offer can do so in the confidence that they will be gaining skills that are valued by employers and will help them secure a better job that may have previously been out of reach. There will be a facility for Awarding Organisations and local areas to suggest additions to the list.

The courses on offer will deliver a wide range of skills that will open the door to many jobs and sectors. Qualifications in these sector subject areas will help individuals access new jobs and, in many cases, earn higher wages too. From April we will be offering access to qualifications to support the following areas:

- Engineering
- Building and Construction
- Manufacturing Technologies
- Transportation Operations and Maintenance
- Business Management
- Public Services
- Accounting and Finance
- Medicine and Dentistry
- Horticulture and Forestry
- Health and Social Care
- ICT Practitioners
- ICT for Users
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Science
- Agriculture
- Nursing and Vocations and Subjects Allied to Medicine
- Child Development and Wellbeing
- Environmental conservation
- Teaching and lecturing
- Warehousing and distribution

We will continue to build on our wider plans for adult skills and I will update the House on our progress in due

course. In the meantime, we will continue to engage closely with stakeholders as we progress and develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund, including our consultation planned for spring next year.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 9 December 2020

Apprentices: Training

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that off-the-job training on apprenticeship schemes are of the required quality. [HL10721]

Baroness Berridge: The government is making apprenticeships longer, better, with more off-the-job training and proper assessment at the end. All new learners starting an apprenticeship, from 1 August 2020, must now start on a high-quality, employer-designed standard. Employer-designed standards are central to our reforms to apprenticeships, driving up quality and delivering the skills that employers need.

We have strengthened the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. The Register provides assurance to employers that the training providers they choose have the capacity and capability to deliver good quality apprenticeship training and are ready to start delivery. A new provider assessed as making 'Insufficient Progress', following a monitoring visit by Ofsted, will be unable to recruit any new apprentices until Ofsted has undertaken a full inspection. Any provider that receives an 'Inadequate' Ofsted assessment for apprenticeships will be removed from the register. From April 2021 Ofsted will inspect apprenticeships at all levels.

Off-the-job training must teach new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will contribute to the successful achievement of an apprenticeship and ensure that an apprentice is fully occupationally competent. The minimum 20 per cent off-the-job training requirement is in line with international best practice of at least a day a week in college but allows more flexibility for employers.

Each apprentice will undertake rigorous and independent end-point assessment and they must be able to demonstrate occupational competence in order to pass and complete their apprenticeship. This assessment gives employers confidence that apprentices completing an apprenticeship standard can perform the occupation they have been trained in and can demonstrate the duties and requirements set out in the occupational standard.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, our intention has been to safeguard the quality of apprenticeships. We introduced flexibilities to support apprentices and employers to continue with, and complete, their programmes. We encouraged providers and assessment organisations to deliver training and end-point assessments flexibly, including remotely, whilst keeping quality in mind.

Arcadia Group: Pensions

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ask the Pensions Regulator to investigate (1) the competence, (2) the conduct, and (3) the decisions, of the trustees of the various Arcadia pensions schemes. [HL11040]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Pensions Regulator is an independent body. The Honourable Lord can refer back to the statement made by the Secretary of State for BEIS in December. The Pensions Regulator has a range of powers to protect pension schemes, and it works closely with other organisations who are addressing the Arcadia business. The Pension Schemes Bill currently progressing through Parliament includes measures to enhance these powers and includes improvements to assist with investigations.

Banks: Company Accounts

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the capital maintenance concepts they expect to be followed by UK banks when preparing their financial statements. [HL10716]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: UK banks are subject to different and separate requirements in respect of solvency, capital maintenance and distribution.

The capital maintenance requirements stem from the Companies Act 2006, which apply to UK companies including companies that are banks. These require the determination of profits available for distribution, including for a public company, to be made by reference to the relevant accounts of a company. These accounts must be properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act, with relevant accounting standards and with the overriding requirement that they must give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company.

Separately, and, in addition, banks in the UK are subject to the Prudential Regulation Authority's (PRA's) prudential capital requirements. These require banks to maintain appropriate capital resources, both in terms of quantity and quality, taking into account the risks to which they are exposed. These use as inputs some numbers taken or derived from a bank's accounts but are otherwise a framework separate from that governing a company's accounts.

Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources they have made available for the establishment of border control posts in Northern Ireland; where any such posts will be established; and what is their current status of readiness. [HL11074]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The UK Government is committed to upholding its obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol. That includes, as we have set out previously including in our Command Paper, expanding some existing Northern Ireland points of entry for agrifood goods. The construction of expanded point of entry facilities is being led by the Northern Ireland Executive, with UK Government support.

We are working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, port authorities, district councils, and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland to take this work forward, and to take all measures possible in a timely way. We are also continuing discussions with the EU in the Joint Committee at pace, informed by close working with the Executive to secure a pragmatic approach to agrifood checks.

Coastal Erosion: Housing

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 25 November (HL10259), whether they intend to provide a geographical breakdown of (1) the 2,000 properties in England at risk from loss to coastal erosion in England by 2060, assuming current Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) policies are implemented, (2) the 5,000 properties potentially at risk by the 2030s from coastal erosion if SMPs are not implemented, and (3) the 28,000 properties potentially at risk by the 2060s (based on high emissions scenarios from UKCP09). [HL10723]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The number of projected properties (residential and non-residential) at risk from coastal erosion loss under three scenarios are as follows:

- 2201 properties at risk from erosion to 2060 'With Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Policy' scenario, 50 percentile (mid-range) projection (England only).
- 5092 properties at risk from erosion to 2030 'No Intervention' scenario, 50 percentile (mid-range) projection (England only).
- 27900 properties at risk from erosion to 2060 'No Intervention' scenario, 50 percentile (mid-range) projection (England only).

National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) erosion projections are available as Open Data, and information for all coastal areas of England can be reviewed by accessing the [NCERM](#). People can also check their risk by inputting their postcode and looking at the flood risk maps on our [website](#), or by looking at the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) for their local area: <https://www.gov.uk/check-coastal-erosion-management-in-your-area>.

The Environment Agency will be updating NCERM to reflect UKCP18 emissions scenarios in 2021, and will be exploring potential ways to share property risk

information from NCERM as part of that exercise, which will conclude in 2023.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the names of the entities that have received financial support through the Job Retention Scheme for the period March to October; and what was the amount received by each such entity. [HL10715]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC are not able to provide information on organisations that have received financial support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), owing to HMRC's duty of confidentiality.

HMRC cannot publish identifying information that relates to their functions, which include the CJRS, unless there is an appropriate legal basis for publication. No such legal basis was in place for the CJRS prior to 12 November 2020 when the CJRS Direction of that date was signed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In line with the published direction, as part of HMRC's commitment to transparency and to deter fraudulent claims, HMRC will publish information about employers who claim for periods starting on or after 1 December 2020. This will not cover employer details for use of the CJRS prior to December.

Although HMRC cannot specify organisations that have claimed under the CJRS, by midnight on 18 October £41,400,000,000 worth of claims had been made under the scheme.

Crime: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive and the government of the Republic of Ireland about addressing cross-border crime during the Christmas period. [HL10950]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: We continue to engage regularly with the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to work towards the successful delivery of north-south policing and security. I commend the excellent work already carried out by the PSNI and An Garda Síochána in tackling cross-border criminality.

The Joint Agency Task Force was established under the Fresh Start Agreement to enhance cross-border law enforcement cooperation aimed at tackling organised crime and criminality. This Task Force brings together expertise from across law enforcement agencies, including PSNI, HMRC, NCA and Border Force and their counterparts in Ireland. This is an excellent example of how UK-based agencies and bodies collaborate effectively with those in Ireland to tackle illegal activity. Its work is ongoing and will cover the Christmas period.

Customs

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prepare companies for any new import commodities codes that will be introduced after the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL10726](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is currently running the 'Check, Change, Go' campaign advising business how to prepare for 1 January 2021. We have met with businesses on this issue and we are listening to their concerns. To help businesses plan for next year we have provided further advice on gov.uk pages on what new customs processes will be in place, including informing businesses that commodity codes will be staying largely the same from 1 January 2021. We will continue to make any routine updates to commodity codes and will provide more information as these updates become available.

As of 1 January 2021, businesses will be able to access this information on the Trade Tariff Tool.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what strategy has been adopted by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to help companies prepare for any new customs procedures after the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL10729](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has provided extensive guidance to traders to support them in their preparations for the end of the transition period, including publishing the detailed Border Operating Model to help traders take the necessary steps.

Recognising the impact of coronavirus on businesses' ability to prepare, the UK Government has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021. From 1 January to 30 June, UK-established traders/agents when importing non-controlled EU goods to GB free circulation will have the option to make a declaration in their own records at the time of import followed by a supplementary declaration up to 175 days later, which provides traders and intermediaries with more time to prepare.

HMRC continue to work closely with industry to ensure it is engaging with the new requirements and can take the necessary steps to prepare, including through the latest public information campaign, cross-Government industry steering groups, webinars and events.

Further, over £80 million of support has been made available to help the customs intermediary sector in scaling up. This includes grant funding for customs IT, training, and recruitment of new staff.

HMRC will continue to engage with industry beyond the end of transition period to understand any concerns and identify any further support HMRC can provide.

Driving Licences: EU Countries

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU on 31 December, what progress they have made on issuing 90,000 new driver permits. [[HL10724](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The UK has an allocation of up to 1668 annual and 5040 short-term ECMT permits available for 2021.

It is not the Government's intention to rely solely on ECMT permits for market access.

ECMT permits would only ever be used to supplement wider market access arrangements, either under an EU-wide agreement or a series of bilateral agreements with EU Member States.

An application window for ECMT permits was open from 2 November 2020 until 20 November 2020. Permits have not yet been allocated; we will take account of the latest negotiations before doing so.

Egypt: Detainees

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the signing of the Memoranda of Understanding by the Foreign Secretary and the Egyptian Foreign Minister on 6 November 2015, what representations they have made to the government of Egypt about its use of anti-terrorist charges against (1) Karim Ennarah, (2) Mohammed Basheer, and (3) Gasser Abdel Razeq; and what discussions they have had with that government about the evidence on which such charges are based. [[HL10699](#)]

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.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken (1) to call for the release of three members of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights organisation who were arrested by the government of Egypt following a meeting with European diplomats on 3 November, and (2) to communicate any concerns to the government of Egypt about civil rights in that country. [[HL10772](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned about the arrest of Gasser Abdel Razek, Mohammed Basheer and Karim Ennarah. We continue to raise our concerns with the Egyptian authorities both in London and in Cairo. All human rights defenders should be able to work without fear of arrest or reprisals. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue directly with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November. We are working closely with partners in the international community who share our concerns.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 January (HL454), what further representations they have made to the government of Egypt about the indefinite detention and access to medical care of (1) Essam El-Haddad, and (2) Gehad El-Haddad. [HL10880]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to raise our human rights concerns with the Egyptian authorities, particularly around detention and prison conditions. Most recently, our Ambassador in Cairo raised concerns over detention conditions with the President of Egypt's National Council for Human Rights during a meeting on 18 November. We continue to urge the authorities to ensure that all detainees are treated in accordance with relevant international human rights standards.

Elections: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case to consider changes to electoral arrangements for elections to be held in May 2021; what consultations they intend to hold with the Electoral Commission and others about any such arrangements; and what plans they have, if any, to change requirements so (1) nomination papers require only two signatures, and (2) that nominations may be accepted by email. [HL10705]

Lord True: Further to the answer I have already given to PQ HL10099, the Government is working with the electoral administrators and Public Health England to identify and resolve challenges involved in delivering the May 2021 elections, including ensuring polling stations are safe and Covid-secure places to vote. People will be able participate in the polls safely, and in a way of their choice, whether by post, proxy or in-person.

This was outlined in the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution's letter to Electoral Returning Officers, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-chloe-smith-mp-to-returning-officers>.

Exchange and Interest Rates: Fraud

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prosecutions for insider trading there have been under (1) the Criminal Justice Act 1993, and (2) the Financial Services Act 2012; and what was the outcome of each such prosecution. [HL10712]

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prosecutions for interest rate rigging there have been under (1) the Criminal Justice Act 1993, and (2) the Financial Services Act 2012; and what was the outcome of each such prosecution. [HL10713]

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prosecutions there have been for rigging foreign exchange rates under (1) the Criminal Justice Act 1993, and (2) the Financial Services Act 2012; and what was the outcome of each such prosecution. [HL10714]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions, convictions and sentences for offences committed under both the Financial Services Act 2012 and the Criminal Justice Act 1993, from 2013 to 2019, available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool, here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx

No defendants were prosecuted where the principal offence fell under the Financial Services Act 2012 between 2013 and 2019.

In this instance, all offences under the Criminal Justice Act 1993 are under one Home Office offence code, so cannot be disaggregated. Search 'Detailed offence' in the data tool linked above for 'Insider dealing'.

12 individuals were prosecuted and 13 were sentenced under the Criminal Justice Act 1993, between 2013 and 2019. Defendants who appear before both magistrates' and Crown courts may be convicted and sentenced for a different offence to that for which they are counted as having been originally prosecuted if the offence is changed on conviction. Sentence outcomes were 3 suspended sentences and 10 immediate custodial sentences.

Financial Services: Taxation

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 11 November (HL Deb, col 1123) whether they intend to provide details of the source and methodology for the statement that the finance industry contributes "£75 billion in tax receipts". [HL10717]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Her Majesty's Government has taken this data from the report published by TheCityUK on the 9th of April this year, entitled 'Key facts about UK-based financial and related professional services 2020' [1]. This report states that in 2018/19, the UK Financial Services sector contributed an estimated £75.5 billion to the UK public finances, which comprised 10.5% of all UK tax receipts.

[1] 'Key facts about UK-based financial and related professional services 2020', TheCityUK, 7th April 2020.

Gibraltar: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are undertaking trade negotiations with the EU on the basis that any future relationship agreement will apply to Gibraltar. [HL10741]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to negotiate for the whole UK family, which includes Gibraltar. We remain fully committed to finding a solution that supports Gibraltar, its people and its economy.

The UK and the Government of Gibraltar have held a number of constructive discussions with Spain on this issue. It is clearly in all parties' interests to find a solution, to ensure ongoing well-being and prosperity in the region.

Giulio Regeni

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Egypt about that government co-operating fully with the Italian investigations into the Egyptian security officials suspected of torturing and killing Giulio Regeni in February 2016, including extradition to Italy for trial. [HL10773]

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.

Headteachers: Labour Turnover

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the poll on school leadership

retention by the National Association of Head Teachers, published on 18 November; and what steps are they taking to increase headteacher retention. [HL10719]

Baroness Berridge: The Department has noted the results published on 18 November 2020 from the survey on school leadership retention conducted by the National Association of Head Teachers during October 2020.

The Department has worked with the sector to design a reformed programme of professional development for teachers and leaders. A reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications, underpinned by new frameworks published in Autumn 2020, will be introduced from Autumn 2021. These qualifications are designed to promote strong teaching and school leadership through a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what works in order to support school leaders to address the challenges they face. The Department has invited organisations to tender to deliver these qualifications from Autumn 2021.

In addition, as part of this reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications, the National Professional Qualification for Headship will offer coaching support for new Head Teachers in their first two years in role, in recognition of the particular challenges they face.

Higher Education: Racial Harassment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Universities UK Tackling racial harassment in higher education, published on 24 November; and what steps they are taking to increase racial diversity training for university staff. [HL10720]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government is committed to levelling up the nation and maximising opportunity for all. As part of that important work, on 16 July 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, more information about which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>.

Our world-leading higher education sector is an engine of social mobility and provides life-changing opportunities for thousands of students from all backgrounds every year. We do not agree with the Universities UK report in every respect, but firmly agree that we must stamp out racism wherever it exists, including in universities and higher education institutions.

Immigrants: Domestic Abuse

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 23 November (HL Deb, col 12) that "it is essential that

migrant victims of domestic abuse, including those with no resource to public funds, are treated first and foremost as victims”, what plans they have to ensure that migrant victims of domestic abuse do not have immigration enforcement action taken against them under the proposed Support for Migrant Victims Scheme. [HL10701]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently reviewing the competition for the Support for Migrant Victims scheme following sector feedback, including considering how information is shared and recorded as part of the scheme to enable an evaluation of the needs of migrant victims.

In particular, we are looking at practical solutions that will provide reassurance to migrant victims of domestic abuse using the scheme that they will be able to access safe accommodation and support as a priority. We will conduct further engagement with the sector on the competition for funding in the near future.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 23 November (HL Deb, col 12) what plans they have to meet representatives of the Step Up Migrant Women campaign to discuss the proposed Support for Migrant Victims Scheme. [HL10702]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We engaged with representatives of the Step Up Migrant Women campaign at our recent webinar with the sector on 22 October.

We greatly value the feedback provided by the sector and are considering their concerns as we review the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme prospectus. We will be arranging meetings with sector organisations in the coming weeks to discuss proposed changes and would welcome a meeting with representatives of the Step Up Migrant Women campaign.

Immigrants: Housing

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 2 November (HL9318), what recent monitoring they have conducted of asylum seeker accommodation in Pembrokeshire and Folkestone; whether they will publish any reports or results of such monitoring; and what steps they intend to take should such reports show that the accommodation is not “safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped”. [HL10707]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government demands the highest standards from contractors and their accommodation and monitor them closely to ensure this is maintained. All accommodation provided is required to be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped, and to comply with relevant national or local housing legislation. These standards apply to all accommodation

used by the Home Office including the Ministry of Defence sites in Pembrokeshire and Folkestone.

Both Penally and Napier Barracks have been inspected during November, neither inspection found any contractual failings. There are no plans to publish the inspection reports.

Intellectual Property: Trade Agreements

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that intellectual property standards within future trade agreements are maintained at a level at least the same as those of the UK. [HL10788]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom's intellectual property (IP) regime is consistently rated as one of the best in the world. HM Government sees future trade agreements as opportunities to build on our global leadership in this area to develop a world-class IP chapter, reflecting the strengths of our domestic regime and supporting growth and innovation.

Getting the right outcome for British inventors, creators and consumers will be key as we develop our trading relationships with other countries. One of our priorities will be making sure that future trade agreement negotiations do not negatively impact on the standards and balance of the United Kingdom's regime or the ability to promote trade in intellectual property.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that their international trade agreements are consistent with their existing international treaty obligations on (1) intellectual property in general, and (2) the Convention on the Grant of European Patents. [HL10789]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom has a robust intellectual property regime and will remain fully compliant with the World Trade Organisation's framework for intellectual property, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. We remain a full member of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and a party to international agreements on intellectual property too.

As stated in our published negotiating objectives for the negotiations with the US, Australia and New Zealand, we are committed to ensuring that any provisions agreed in future trade agreements are consistent with our existing international obligations, including the European Patent Convention (EPC), to which the United Kingdom is party.

International Council for Exploration of the Sea: Finance

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the

International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES); if so, when; and what annual budget they intend to allocate for ICES' research and scientific activities from 2021. [[HL10704](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is in the process of finalising the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The UK expects to sign the MoU in time for it to enter into force on 1 January 2021.

The cost to the UK for advice received from ICES will be outlined within the MoU.

Internet: Safety

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) any governance and regulatory gaps in online harms protections that will emerge at the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU, and (2) the risks to young people from any further delay to the publication of proposed online harms legislation. [[HL10851](#)]

Baroness Barran: As the Government has transposed all relevant legislation, there will not be any gaps in online harms protection at the end of the transition period. The government is also working at pace to deliver online harms legislation next year, which will introduce comprehensive protections for young people.

The Government transposed the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive into domestic law on the 30th September and the Regulations came into force on the 1st of November 2020. UK-established video sharing platforms are required to take appropriate measures to protect minors from content which may impair their physical, mental or moral development, and all users from illegal content.

The AVMS Directive aligns well with the Government's plans to tackle online harms, in particular in its requirements on UK-established video sharing platforms to have systems in place to protect users, especially minors. It should be noted that the video sharing platform regime will be repealed and will be superseded by the online harms regulatory framework, once it comes into force.

The Government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online and is working at pace to introduce this legislation. We will publish the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year, which will contain more detailed proposals on online harms regulation and will be released alongside interim voluntary codes on tackling online terrorist and child sexual exploitation and abuse content and activity. This will be followed by legislation, which will be ready next year.

Malaria: Children

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to prevent children from dying from malaria. [[HL11093](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is committed to driving down malaria deaths. This is closely linked to our manifesto commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children. In 2019, under five-year olds accounted for 67% of all malaria deaths globally.

The UK continues to be one of the most generous donors in the world on malaria. UK investments are broad and lead to significant impact. For example, our support to the Medicines for Malaria ventures has led to the development of the world's first child - friendly antimalarial drug, which has been distributed in more than 50 countries. The UK's current £1.4 billion pledge to the Global Fund is the largest to date and will help to distribute 92 million bednets. The UK's support to countries to strengthen health systems will help to protect the most vulnerable, including children, through sustained malaria prevention and control programmes.

Manufacturing Industries: Trade Agreements

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that manufacturers are aware of the regulatory frameworks established in new trade deals with third countries during the period when 'roll over' agreements continue to apply EU regulations. [[HL10790](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: When trade agreements are signed, the Department for International Trade publishes clear, accurate and up-to-date information about it. [GOV.UK](#) contains links to guidance on continuity agreements signed to date; these agreements aim to secure the existing trading arrangements that British businesses had through EU trade deals.

Palace of Westminster: Fire Extinguishers

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are to install fire extinguishing systems which use water mist or water spray in (1) the roof, and (2) other inaccessible parts, of the Palace of Westminster. [[HL10693](#)]

Lord Laming: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf. Both Houses recognise the value that suppression systems can add to an overall package of Fire Safety. A

requirement to install suppression systems when major refurbishment works are undertaken in all Parliamentary buildings is part of our current fire safety strategy, any decision to use suppression assesses risks and takes account of the historic fabric of our buildings.

As part of the recent Fire Safety Improvement Works a High Pressure Water Mist suppression system was installed in the Palace basement, and the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment has included the installation of a full sprinkler system. Further works on the roof and other parts of the Palace are subject to future projects likely to be delivered through Restoration and Renewal. Design of the plans, including Fire Safety, is the responsibility of the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, with input from House Officials. I understand that suppression is being considered, as part of a suite of fire safety options, in the ongoing work to create the outline business case.

Pesticides: Rivers

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the University of Sussex, Chipping Norton Veterinary Hospital, and the Environment Agency, Potential role of veterinary flea products in widespread pesticide contamination of English rivers, published on 7 November; and what steps they intend to take in response to that report. [[HL10696](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has evaluated the report and while acknowledging the general findings, also recognises that no definitive conclusions can be drawn from it. The VMD works closely with the Environment Agency and was already aware of the monitoring data, which are pivotal to the publication.

The publication suggests that veterinary medicines may be contributing to the levels of parasiticides present in the UK waters. The paper under discussion only loosely acknowledges that there is a lack of understanding and data in key areas to ascertain if veterinary medicines are causing harm in the environment. Such areas include the need to assess how much of these compounds are bound and not in free form, and therefore unavailable to cause harm. These aspects need to be considered when evaluating the potential impact of these compounds on the aquatic environment and are not emphasised in the report. Importantly, the report also did not distinguish exposure routes of other potential sources of parasiticide (e.g. ant baits, use in greenhouses, historic agricultural use and products used to protect textiles), which may be significant. Much uncertainty remains, therefore, over the actual contribution from veterinary medicinal use.

Parasiticides are used in veterinary medicines for the treatment of fleas and ticks on companion animals. It is possible that following their use on dogs and cats, some parasiticides may reach the aquatic environment. The environmental exposure assessments conducted for such

flea products, however, consider the exposure of the aquatic environment to be low.

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 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 due to be completed in March 2023.

Pending the findings of 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.

Defra 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.

Police: Suicide

Asked by Baroness Harris of Richmond

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of police suicides between 2011 and 2019, published by the Office for National Statistics on 30 October 2019. [[HL10697](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The death of any police officer is a tragedy. The Government and police leaders take this matter seriously and are working to support the mental and physical wellbeing of all police officers and staff.

We have invested in programmes which offer help directly to officers and staff. This includes £7.5 to fund the development of the National Police Wellbeing Service, which was launched in 2019. The Service is helping forces to identify where there is most risk of impacts on mental health, and developing work around building resilience, as well as putting in place support for those who need it in response to traumatic events.

The Government has also accelerated work to introduce a Police Covenant, which will ensure our police get the support and protection they need. The Covenant will be enshrined in law, with provisions being brought forward later this session, and the Home Secretary will have a duty to report annually on progress.

Our focus will be on health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families. We are in no doubt that an area we must focus on is mental health support. We will continue to work closely with policing partners to ensure the Covenant has a lasting impact on our police.

Rules of Origin

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that rules of origin may be declared on signed commercial invoices without the need to seek certification from external sources. [HL10791]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is committed to seeking modern Rules of Origin that are clear, simple and facilitate trade. In the United Kingdom-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), for instance, we negotiated a system of self-certification and, in line with our commitments at the World Trade Organisation, HM Government has committed to maintain a self-certification proof of origin on a commercial invoice for Least Developed Countries. Additionally, transitioned agreements will continue to allow the option of a declaration made out on a commercial invoice where this was allowed under the EU agreement. HM Revenue and Customs continues to consider other methods to streamline customs procedures.

Saudi Arabia: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister raised (1) human rights issues in Saudi Arabia, including (a) the continued potential use of the death penalty for those who allegedly committed crimes as minors, and (b) the continued detention of women activists arrested in 2018 for campaigning for the right to drive, and (2) the case for ensuring unimpeded access for human rights groups to Yemen, in his discussions with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia on 24 November. [HL10690]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our close relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to raise our concerns about human rights, including on political detainees and use of the death penalty, in private and in public. The Prime Minister addressed the issue of women's rights and further developments needed in that area in his recent discussions with the Crown Prince.

The UK strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. This is especially the case for juveniles and for crimes other than the most serious. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised the death penalty with Dr Awwad al Awwad, President of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission, during his virtual visit in July. I raised the death penalty in a call with Dr Awwad in June.

We have consistently raised concerns over the continued detention of women's rights defenders at senior levels with the Saudi authorities. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, calling for the release of women's rights

defenders. I raised women's rights defenders during my call with Dr Awwad in June. The Minister for the Middle East most recently raised the women's rights defenders' cases with the Saudi Ambassador to the UK on 16 November.

We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Yemen, which is a human rights priority country for the UK. We call on all parties to facilitate unhindered access for humanitarian actors and agencies and ensure that humanitarian workers are able to conduct their work safely and without harm.

Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Triesman

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received about the data concerning the vulnerability of teachers in the publication by the Office for National Statistics COVID-19 infection published in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK, published on 6 November, following concerns raised by Dr Sarah Rasmussen, TES, and the National Education Union; and what plans they have to issue revised guidance to ensure safety in schools for teachers and pupils in response. [HL10680]

Baroness Berridge: The department regularly engages with a wide range of organisations around its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including on data and the evidence base.

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) COVID-19 Infection Survey results between 2 September to 16 October, published on 6 November, show no evidence of differences in the positivity rate between primary and secondary school teachers, other key workers and other professions.

This evidence was endorsed by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), the body of experts that provides scientific advice to the government for emergencies. More information is available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935102/sage-65-meeting-covid-19-s0863.pdf.

On 26 November the ONS published additional analysis that addresses concerns raised by Dr Rasmussen and others on the number of school workers, key workers and other professions in England who had COVID-19. This also shows no clear evidence as to whether there is a difference in the level of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 between teachers and other key workers.

The department continues to review data, analysis and advice from a number of different sources including SAGE, Public Health England, the ONS, and the Joint Biosecurity Centre to ensure our policies are guided by the most up to date scientific evidence.

Schools: Food Supply

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a no-deal Brexit on school food supplies. [HL10646]

Baroness Berridge: The UK has a high level of food security built upon a diverse range of sources including strong domestic production and imports from other countries. This will continue to be the case whether the transition period ends with or without a deal.

The government is working in partnership with food suppliers to ensure there continues to be a flow of food into the country. We are confident that schools will continue to be able to provide pupils with nutritious school meals at the end of the transition period no matter the outcome of negotiations.

We would still expect schools to meet the School Food Standards. Schools have a great deal of flexibility in the foods that they can deliver under the School Food Standards - if a particular product is not readily available for any reason, the standards allow schools a wide range of freedom to substitute in similar foods that are available.

Teachers: Training

Asked by *Baroness Donaghy*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are undertaking a review of initial teacher training; and if so, (1) how that review is being conducted, (2) what progress they have made in that review, and (3) when they estimate that they will publish that review and its conclusions. [HL10695]

Baroness Berridge: As part of the government's Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy, we committed to reviewing the initial teacher training (ITT) market to identify improvements that reduce costs for providers and exploring how we can encourage high quality providers – including high-performing MATs – to extend their reach, deliver at scale and do more to support the wider system. We started work on this earlier this year with a series of workshops with ITT sector representatives to understand the current market better. This work was paused so that government, and the ITT sector, could focus on the challenges caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are now resuming the ITT market review, building on the opportunities afforded by our Teacher Development reforms, including the ITT Core Content Framework. We are in the process of scoping the next phase of the review which we expect to conclude next summer.

Trade Agreements: Rules of Origin

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the absence of rules of

origin in free trade agreements on the ability of SMEs to price goods accurately. [HL10728]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Rules of Origin are an important aspect of the United Kingdom's free trade agreements, as they ensure that only the parties to a free trade agreement can utilise the preferential tariff rates offered and protect against circumvention. However, HM Government recognises that Rules of Origin create costs for traders (and therefore consumers).

This is why HM Government is seeking Rules of Origin that reflect the requirements of British industry, supported by predictable and low-cost administrative arrangements, which are inclusive and accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). HM Government is committed to providing support and guidance to SMEs so that they can comply with Rules of Origin and understand the costs of compliance.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 25 November, (HL10219), to (1) list the subset of rules concerning goods and electricity markets applying as a result of the Northern Ireland Protocol, (2) set out what, if any, consent arrangements were established for these rules to apply in Northern Ireland, and (3) set out what assessment they have made, if any, of the implications of these rules with regard to the European Commission exercising executive authority over Northern Ireland. [HL10751]

Lord True: The rules applied by the Protocol are outlined in its text and Annexes. Parliament was provided with the assessments made regarding its implications during the passage of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2020 which ratified the Withdrawal Agreement.

The consent arrangements are outlined in Article 18 of the Protocol and the Declaration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the operation of the 'Democratic consent in Northern Ireland' provision of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. These arrangements are being provided in domestic law through The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Democratic Consent Process) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, which is presently making its way through both Houses.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to inform companies on which provisions governing trade with the EU will no longer be in place after the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [HL10727]

Lord True: To help companies get ready, we have launched a major communications campaign in the UK

and EU urging businesses to visit gov.uk/transition to take action now, get their personalised list of actions and subscribe to find out when things change.

The Government will continue to review and update the guidance we have published to help ensure businesses are as prepared as possible for the changes and opportunities the end of the year will bring.

Universal Credit: Appeals

Asked by **Baroness Sherlock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the (1) average, (2) longest, and (3) shortest, clearance time for (a) a mandatory reconsideration, and (b) a successful appeal outcome to be implemented, in relation to Universal Credit in each month of 2020. [HL10711]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Table 1 below shows the Median, Lower Quartile and Upper Quartile of the number of days taken for a Universal Credit (UC) Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) to be cleared from registration. This data covers all UC MRs cleared in each month from January 2020 – October 2020, and does not include those cancelled or withdrawn.

Table 1: Times from UC MR registration to clearance in days from January 2020 – October 2020

Month	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Jan-20	10	27	162
Feb-20	8	23	100
Mar-20	13	30	94
Apr-20	6	22	43
May-20	7	40	79
Jun-20	14	41	112
Jul-20	14	49	166
Aug-20	12	41	147
Sep-20	14	35	105
Oct-20	10	27	63

Please note that information about the extremes of a distribution (e.g. the maximum clearance time) risks being disclosive. We would not release this information publicly. Therefore, we have presented information on the lower quartile, median and upper quartile of clearance times.

Over the same period the UC caseload, expressed as 'People on Universal Credit', increased from 2.77 million to 5.73 million with a sharp increase from 3.00 million to 5.26 million between 12th March and 14th May 2020. People on Universal Credit counts the number of people with an open claim on the count date who had accepted a claimant commitment and verified their identity. These figures are from the Universal Credit official statistics publication available on gov.uk which also includes figures on volumes of claims, starts and households.

The information requested on the clearance times for a successful appeal outcome to be implemented is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Notes

- Figures are for Great Britain only.
- The MR clearance times are unpublished data. They should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- The median is presented as the average instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases.
- Definition of Lower Quartile: The lower quartile is the value for which 25% of all clearance times fall below if you were to order the distribution from lowest value to highest value.
- Definition of median: The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value.
- Definition of Upper Quartile: The upper quartile is the value for which 75% of all clearance times fall below if you were to order the distribution from lowest value to highest value.

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