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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>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<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
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<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
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<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
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# Written Statements

Monday, 14 December 2020

## Blood Donation

[HLWS639]

**Lord Bethell:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

I would like to inform the House that the Government, along with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Government, will be updating the blood donor selection criteria. This move will enable men who have sex with men in a long-term relationship to give blood from summer 2021.

In 2011, the lifetime ban on blood donation by men who have sex with men was lifted following an evidence-based review by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO). This introduced a deferral period of twelve months for men who have sex with men since their last sexual contact with another man. In 2017, the UK reduced this period to three months. These changes did not impact the safety of the blood supply in the UK.

Since then, the Government has taken steps to explore if further changes can be made to the deferral period for men who have sex with men, without risking the safety of the blood supply. At the request of the Department of Health and Social Care, the 'For Assessment of Individualised Risk' (FAIR) steering group was established at the beginning of 2019. The group reviewed whether the UK Blood Services could move to a more individualised blood donor selection policy.

The steering group reported to SaBTO in October 2020, advising that a more individualised risk-based approach to the blood donor selection policy could be taken without risking the safety of the blood supply. SaBTO reviewed the report and formally recommended that the Government implement the changes proposed by the FAIR steering group.

The Government has accepted this recommendation. This will mean a change to the current three-month deferral period for all men who have sex with men to a gender-neutral selection policy, where deferrals are based on higher risk behaviours associated with acquiring infections.

This policy change will mean that anyone who has had the same sexual partner in the last three months will be eligible to donate and men who have sex with men will no longer be asked to declare if they have had sex with another man, making the criteria for blood donation gender neutral and more inclusive.

This is a progressive and welcome step forward, reducing limitations for men who have sex with men to donate blood and creating a fairer system for blood donation. In implementing these changes, the UK will

take on a world-leading role as one of the first countries to recognise that a risk-based approach for men who have sex with men does not pose a safety risk to blood donation.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working with NHS Blood and Transplant and devolved administrations to implement changes which we anticipate will be rolled-out by Summer 2021. We will have monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of donors and patients, including continued monitoring of both acute and chronic infections in new and regular donors. The changes will be reviewed in twelve months.

The report from the FAIR steering group can be viewed here:

<https://www.blood.co.uk/news-and-campaigns/news-and-statements/fair-steering-group/>.

## Energy White Paper

[HLWS636]

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

Today the Government has published the Energy White Paper which sets out the strategic vision for how we will transform our energy system to build a cleaner, greener future for our country, people and planet.

Building on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, this White Paper provides further clarity on the practical actions that will shift our energy system from one reliant on fossil fuels to one that makes us a world leader in clean energy. We will do this in a way that creates jobs, as we build back greener from Covid-19. And we will protect the most vulnerable in society by keeping bills affordable as we transition to net zero.

### *Consumers*

We want to create a fair deal for consumers, protecting the vulnerable and fuel poor with support of £6.7 billion; increasing competition to drive better products and services, saving money on bills; and giving us warmer, more comfortable homes to live in.

The White Paper sets out a raft of measures to help households to save money on their bills. We will support the lowest paid through a package of measures that could save families in old inefficient homes up to £400. This includes extending the Warm Home Discount Scheme to 2026 to cover an extra 750,000 households and giving eligible households £150 off their electricity bills each winter. This is on top of the £2 billion Green Homes Grant announced by the Chancellor, extended by a further year in the Ten Point Plan.

We will also keep bills affordable by making the energy retail market truly competitive. This will include offering people a simple method of switching to a cheaper energy tariff and testing automatically switching consumers to fairer deals to tackle "loyalty penalties".

Putting consumers at the forefront of our approach means not just deploying measures that save energy, but making markets efficient, incentivising energy companies and consumers to choose clean energy, and making sure the rules that govern the market are swift to adapt to new technologies. We will make sure our energy system and networks are fit for the low carbon transition by consulting on new strategic guidance for Ofgem, legislating for competition in onshore networks and delivering greater co-ordination of offshore networks. We will also encourage the development and uptake of innovative tariffs and products, and ensure customers have more transparent and accurate information on carbon content when they are choosing their energy services and products.

#### *Creating jobs and growth*

The Energy White Paper comes at a vital time of rebuilding. It reinforces commitments made in the Ten Point Plan to support a green recovery from Covid-19 through investments in new infrastructure, and technology that will grow the economy, supporting many thousands of jobs and creating new business opportunities at home and abroad.

We estimate that measures in this White Paper could support up to 220,000 jobs in energy by 2030, many in clean industries such as Carbon Capture Usage and Storage, Offshore Wind and Electric Vehicles. Many of these jobs will be created in our industrial heartlands, supporting our promise to level up the whole country and leave no one behind.

#### *Clean energy transformation*

We will transform our energy system from one that is 80 per cent based on fossil fuels today to one that is consistent with net zero. This will see us changing how we heat our homes and travel. It will lead to a doubling in how much electricity we use and the emergence of a new hydrogen economy.

The White Paper reaffirms our commitment to 40GW offshore wind, including 1GW floating wind, by 2030, and sets out £160 million of support for offshore wind Integrated Manufacturing Hubs. This will support our world-leading offshore wind sector in delivering 60% UK content, and up to 60,000 jobs by 2030.

We have also committed to work with industry to aim for 5GW of hydrogen by 2030 and which will unlock £4bn in investment and support up to 8,000 jobs, and will develop low carbon industrial clusters by 2030 by putting in place the framework required to mobilise investment.

Low carbon electricity will be a key enabler of our transition to a net zero economy with demand expected to double due to transport and low carbon heat. Our trajectory will see us have overwhelmingly decarbonised power in the 2030s, and fully decarbonised electricity generation by 2050.

#### *New nuclear power*

The White Paper is clear that nuclear power will continue to be an important and proven source of reliable

clean electricity. With existing nuclear power plants due to cease generation by the end of the next decade, we need to take action to secure our future energy sources. Therefore, the Government is today confirming that we are entering negotiations with EDF, in relation to the Sizewell C project in Suffolk. EDF has proposed two reactors at the site, based on the design of Hinkley Point C, with a combined capacity of around 3.2 gigawatts of low-carbon electricity. By replicating Hinkley Point C, EDF believes it could be built more cheaply.

No decision has yet been taken to proceed, and the successful conclusion of these negotiations will of course be subject to full Government, regulatory and other approvals, including value for money. I will keep the House informed as we progress our discussions with EDF. And if we do reach a successful outcome, this would lead to tens of billions of pounds of investment into the UK and thousands of jobs during construction.

Today the Government is also publishing responses to the consultation on the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model, which involves an economic regulator granting a licence to a company to charge a regulated price to users of the infrastructure. The funding model is based on private investment and is used in many significant infrastructure projects. Such a model could help secure private investment and cost consumers less in the long run. Following the consultation, the Government will continue to explore a range of financing options with developers, including the RAB model. In particular, we will also continue to consider the potential role of government finance during construction, provided there is clear value for money for consumers and taxpayers.

#### *UK Emissions Trading Scheme*

To support businesses to decarbonise the Government is today confirming a new and ambitious UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS), will be in place from 1 January 2021. This new UK carbon market will be the foundation on which the UK achieves net zero emissions cost effectively.

The scheme has been designed by the UK Government jointly with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive and is a crucial step towards net zero, and will bring benefits for business, trade, and innovation.

The UK ETS will replace the UK's participation in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and will be a market-based measure which will provide continuity for participants. The UK ETS will initially apply to power stations, energy-intensive industries, and aviation.

Our UK ETS is more ambitious than the EU system it replaces - from day one the cap on emissions allowed within the scheme will be reduced by 5 per cent, and we will consult in due course on aligning it with net zero.

The UK ETS will also allow us to expand carbon pricing across the economy and encourage innovation in emerging decarbonisation technologies. We have committed to exploring expanding the UK ETS to the two thirds of uncovered emissions, and will set out our

aspirations to continue to lead the world on carbon pricing in the run up to COP26. This will also include how the UK ETS could incentivise the deployment of greenhouse gas removal technologies. In addition to this, the UK is open to linking the UK ETS internationally in principle and we are considering a range of options, but no decision on our preferred linking partners has yet been made.

As we move out of the shadow of coronavirus, this Energy White Paper opens the door to exciting new opportunities for our country, creating new jobs as we build the economy of tomorrow. Taking action now ensures the UK is set on the path to ending its contribution to climate change while enabling UK industry to seize new opportunities.

### **Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime: Designations**

[HLWS634]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 10 December, I imposed asset freezes and travel bans on 11 individuals and an asset freeze on one entity under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020.

This was the third set of designations under this regime since the Regulations were laid in July 2020. Criteria for designation under the regime include involvement in violations of the right to life, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to be free from slavery. These designations address serious violations of human rights in Venezuela, Chechnya, Pakistan and Gambia, including extra-judicial killings and torture.

In Venezuela, the sanctions target figures in the Maduro regime who are responsible for killing and torturing protestors, especially during the period from 2016-17. The designation of senior officials in Chechnya holds to account those responsible for the campaign of persecution of Chechnya's LGBT community which has included extrajudicial executions and torture. In Gambia, the designations include former President Yahya Jammeh, who was responsible for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, kidnappings, torture; and rape during his tenure as President between 1994 and 2016. We have designated one former senior member of the Pakistani police for his involvement in a series of extrajudicial killings.

The full list of designations is below:

#### *Venezuela*

1. Rafael Bastardo Commander of FAES (Special Action Forces) until 2019;

2. Remigio Ceballos Ichaso: Head of the Strategic Command Operations of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (CEOFANB);

3. Fabio Zavarse Pabon: Commander of the National Guard (GNB).

#### *Russian Federation*

4. Magomed Daudov: The Spokesperson/Chairperson of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic;

5. Aiub Kataev: Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation in Argun;

6. Aпти Alaudinov: Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic and Major General of the Police;

7. Terek Special Rapid Response Unit.

#### *The Gambia*

8. Yahya Abdul Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh: Former President of The Gambia;

9. Yankuba Badjie: Former Director General of the Gambian National Intelligence Agency (NIA);

10. Zineb Jammeh: Former First Lady of The Gambia and wife of Yahya Jammeh.

#### *Pakistan*

11. Anwar Ahmad Khan: Former Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in Malir District, Karachi.

### **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Substance Misuse Support**

[HLWS638]

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

At Spring Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced funding for substance misuse treatment and recovery services for vulnerable people sleeping rough in England. Today, I am announcing the allocations of this year's funding, totalling £23 million across 43 priority areas in England with the highest level of need, in addition to 3 pan-London projects. I am also announcing that this funding will be backed by a further £52 million next year, enabling these individuals to continue to access specialist support.

We recognise the importance of understanding the needs of people sleeping rough so that they can access the right support. Through the Rough Sleeping Initiative and our Everyone In response, we have worked closely with local authorities to get a much better understanding of this at a local level. We have also undertaken national research over 2019-20, interviewing over 500 people with experience of rough sleeping across different areas in England to better understand their support needs and use of services. The full report will be published on GOV.UK shortly.

From this research, we know that many people sleeping rough have substance misuse support needs, and many face challenges in accessing the support they need. These vital funds will provide the specialist support needed, to enable these individuals to rebuild their lives off the streets and move towards longer-term accommodation. It

will include evidence-based drug and alcohol treatment, such as detox and rehab services. It will also fund wraparound support which is key to engaging people in drug and alcohol treatment services and improving access, such as co-occurring mental health and substance dependence workers and peer mentors. Public Health England's regional teams and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's expert rough sleeping advisers have worked closely with each of the 43 local areas to develop their plans for this year's funding.

This funding is a critical part of the Government's commitment to ending rough sleeping and to transforming the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society. Backed by significant Government support, these plans are part of over £700 million being provided to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year. By September, our ongoing 'Everyone In' scheme had successfully supported over 29,000 vulnerable people; with over 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

The recently announced £15 million Protect Programme and our Winter Support Package, which includes a £10 million Cold Weather Fund and a £2 million Winter Transformation Fund will build on the continuing successes of 'Everyone In' and ensure that we protect the most vulnerable from the dangers of Covid-19 over the coming months.

Meanwhile, our Next Steps Accommodation Programme has made available the financial resources needed to help prevent as many of those accommodated during the pandemic as possible from returning to the streets.

We are also putting in place an unprecedented level of support to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over 2021-22 with an additional £254 million resource funding. This takes total resource funding in 2021-22 to £676 million, a 60% increase compared to the 2019 Spending Review.

This funding will be supported by wider Governmental work to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society. For example, the Government recently announced £46 million for a new programme - Changing Futures - to provide better outcomes for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, including people experiencing homelessness and substance misuse support needs. The prospectus for the Changing Future Programme, asking for local area expressions of interest, was made available on 10 December.

We are working at pace to prepare for the delivery of next year's funding and will set out further detail about how areas in England can access this additional support under the Substance Misuse Programme shortly.

I encourage all relevant partners and local authorities to consider how they can best use the available support to protect the most vulnerable.

## Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council

[HLWS635]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My hon Friend the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Between Monday 23 and Thursday 26 November, 2020 I chaired, with Baroness Sugg, the Eighth UK-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council. The meeting was held virtually and was attended by OT Leaders and elected representatives from Anguilla, Ascension Island, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St Helena, the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, Tristan da Cunha and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The themes of discussion at this year's Council included the impacts of the Covid-19 global health pandemic; the constitutional relationship; economic resilience, the UK's exit from the European Union; trade; border security; prisons; protecting the vulnerable (including mental health, domestic violence and children); the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Instruments Implementation (III) code; environmental protection and COP26.

The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson addressed the Council. Other Ministerial colleagues attending discussions included The Rt Hon Lord Zac Goldsmith (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), The Rt Hon Robert Buckland, QC, MP (Ministry of Justice), The Rt Hon James Brokenshire, MP (Home Office), James Heapey, MP (Ministry of Defence), Graham Stuart, MP (Department for International Trade), Nadine Dorries, MP (Department for Health and Social Care) and Robert Courts, MP (Department for Transport).

Members of the Council set out a number of important commitments and areas for joint work in the year ahead.

We discussed the impacts of the Covid-19 global pandemic, where the Territories expressed their thanks to the UK for its support. We also discussed the constitutional relationship and held discussions on economic resilience, trade and the UK's departure from the EU, where we confirmed our commitment to supporting the Overseas Territories in building successful and resilient economies and to taking the needs of the Territories into account when negotiating new trading relationships and when considering new funding programmes.

We discussed how we could better support vulnerable groups in the Overseas Territories, committing to strengthen mental health systems; to identify opportunities and take measures to tackle domestic abuse and to explore whether a children's commissioner role or similar might be appropriate for each Territory.

We recognised the importance of the biodiversity of the Territories and agreed to work together on ambitious action to tackle climate change at COP26 and agreed to work together on compliance with international maritime conventions.

We also set out programmes of work to support border security and prisons in the Territories.

We agreed a joint communiqué which was issued following the conclusion of the conference and was published on the GOV.UK website.

The communiqué and an associated press statement reflect the commitment of the Governments of the Overseas Territories and of the UK to continue to work in partnership to achieve the vision set out in the June 2012 White Paper: *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*.

In line with our commitment in the White Paper, we will continue to report to Parliament on progress by Government departments.

### **Overseas Territories: Publicly Accessible Registers of Company Beneficial Ownership**

[HLWS637]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My hon Friend the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 15 July 2020 a written ministerial statement (HLWS361/HCWS369) welcomed the statements from eight Overseas Territories committing to introduce publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership. In a welcome step forward, the British Virgin Islands' Government have also committed to adopt publicly accessible registers, meaning that all on the United Kingdom's inhabited Territories are committed to adopt such registers. This is a major change, and the unanimous action from all the Overseas Territories demonstrates their commitment to tackle flows of illicit finance.

As the next step in the process, the Government is publishing a draft Order in Council, which has been prepared in accordance Section 51 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. The draft Order sets out the Government's expectations of how the Territories will adopt publicly accessible registers. The draft Order has been published on Gov.uk with a short accompanying note.

The draft Order sets minimum requirements for what the UK Government deem to be a compliant publicly accessible register of company beneficial ownership in the Overseas Territories. This includes the form that the register must take and the information that must be made available such that it would be broadly equivalent to that available in accordance with the provisions of Part 21 A of the UK Companies Act 2006.

The draft Order sets out a minimum definition of beneficial ownership. This encompasses both direct and

indirect control over companies and includes, but is not limited to, control through shareholdings, voting rights or the right to appoint or remove a majority of directors. Where a Territory attaches a percentage to the type of control the draft Order sets out that this cannot be higher than 25%.

The information on an individual must include their name, country of residence, nationality, month and year of birth and the nature of their control over the company.

It is the Government's view that only those Territories with companies registered in their jurisdiction need to produce registers, and that Territories' registers should be a proportionate reflection of the number of companies registered in their jurisdiction.

By introducing publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership, the Overseas Territories are showing that they are responsible jurisdictions and a collaborative partner to the UK. This builds on the Exchange of Notes arrangements which sees the Territories with financial centres share invaluable company beneficial ownership information with UK law enforcement agencies at short notice. A statutory review of these arrangements last year found that they are working well and are providing our law enforcement with invaluable information to support ongoing investigations.

In the light of the firm commitments from all of the inhabited Overseas Territories to adopt publicly accessible registers, the UK Government have decided that it is now not necessary to make the Order under Section 51, but will keep this under review.

The UK Government is spearheading an international campaign to encourage more countries to commit to publicly accessible registers by 2023. The UK will continue to work with all Territories to support their implementation of publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership by the end of 2023.

I am sure that members of the House will welcome the publication of this draft Order in Council.

### **UK's Future Trading Relationship with Australia: Update on Negotiations**

[HLWS633]

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

The third round of Free Trade Agreement negotiations with Australia took place between 23rd November and 4th December. During the two weeks, negotiators completed 46 discussions, spanning the breadth of the Free Trade Agreement.

For every area, text was shared before the round. Both sides continued to have detailed textual discussions, and negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in several chapter areas. These include digital, telecommunications, customs, rules of origin, procurement, and cross-cutting provisions such as dispute settlement. Discussions in these chapters indicated areas

of common understanding, where progress could be made.

We held detailed technical discussions on text in areas such as investment, professional business services and financial services, including on regulatory cooperation. Across all areas of the Free Trade Agreement negotiation, we identified areas of convergence and some areas of divergence. Both sides are regularly engaging with domestic stakeholders to ensure our respective proposals are informed by their views.

Both sides exchanged their initial goods market access offers before the round. This exchange of goods market access offers is an early milestone, and the speed at which this stage has been reached demonstrates the momentum behind these negotiations. Discussions on market access will continue in parallel with discussions across the Free Trade Agreement.

During the negotiations, the Secretary of State for International Trade had a call with Senator Simon Birmingham, and they agreed on the need to maintain momentum ahead of the next round.

After this round we have agreed to a number of intersessional discussions to ensure the pace is continued heading into the next round.

Below is a summary list of those areas discussed in the round, which continued to take place by video conference:

- Anti-Corruption
- Competition
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Development
- Digital/ e-commerce
- Environment & Clean Growth

- Financial Services
- Goods
- Good Regulatory Practices
- Government Procurement
- Innovation
- Investment
- Intellectual Property
- Labour
- Legal and Institutional provisions
- Telecommunications
- Trade Remedies
- Rules of Origin
- Services, including movement of natural persons, professional business services, international maritime transport services and delivery services
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State Owned Enterprises
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- State-to-State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Transparency
- Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment

Any deal the UK Government agrees will be fair and balanced and in the best interests of the whole of the UK. As we will in all negotiations, we remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in our trade agreement with Australia, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

# Written Answers

Monday, 14 December 2020

## AWE

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to renationalise management of the Atomic Weapons Establishment. [[HL10939](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** I refer the noble Lord, to the written statement I laid in the House on 2 November, HLWS537.

AWE plc will become a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), wholly owned by the MOD, on the 1st July 2021 following the appointment of a new Board. While NDPBs are distanced from Government, the Secretary of State for Defence will be accountable to Parliament for the degree of independence and levels of expenditure delegated to the AWE plc NDPB.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Defence Update [Hansard Extract HLWS537.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-30/HL10939>

## Belarus: Hospices

Asked by **Baroness Helic**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Belarus about reports of (1) threats to close the Hrodna children's hospice, and (2) harassment of the director of that hospice. [[HL10872](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government has called for an end to the campaign of repression that the Belarusian authorities have waged against peaceful demonstrators, civil society, independent media and opposition supporters. Government Ministers and senior officials have made strong representations in a number of fora, including multilateral, and in frank exchanges with the Belarusian authorities. The most recent occasion was when the FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary spoke to the Belarusian Deputy Foreign Minister on 13 November. We are concerned that the Director of the Hrodna Children's Hospice was fined for her alleged participation in a demonstration against police violence. Our Embassy in Minsk is closely monitoring the subsequent ongoing court case regarding the termination of the hospice's lease.

## Blood and Organs: Donors

Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress the Community Investment Scheme run by NHS Blood and Transplant is making in engaging all communities to

address health inequalities related to blood and organ donation. [[HL11036](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Community Investment Scheme was launched in September 2018 and is run by NHS Blood and Transplant on behalf of the Government. Currently, fifty organisations have been funded to address concerns, barriers and misconceptions about organ donation, with a total investment of £345,000. The funded projects cover Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Hindu and Jain faith organisations and within Indian, South Asian, Chinese, African and Caribbean communities. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on face-to-face contact, many organisations are now delivering educational material online.

An attitudinal survey was carried out twelve months after the launch of the scheme, which showed increasing support for organ donation including in black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The scheme for 2020/21 has been extended to fund projects to increase participation and engagement in blood donation as well as organ donation.

## Brain Cancer: Children and Young People

Asked by **Lord Hunt of Kings Heath**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide additional support to the families of children and young adults with brain tumours. [[HL9925](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Clinical support is ongoing linked to individual treatment plans and children will be seen regularly by specialists. This is to check their progress and how well they are recovering from treatment. It is also to check that they don't have any long-term problems from treatment.

By 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer, including children and young adults, will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support. This will be delivered in line with the National Health Service Comprehensive Model for Personalised Care. This will empower people and their families to manage their care and the impact of their cancer and maximise the potential of digital and community-based support.

## Building Regulations: Scotland

Asked by **Lord Smith of Finsbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Parts 1 and 3 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on building regulations in Scotland; and what plans they have to ensure that Scotland will continue to be able to adopt stricter standards of building regulation. [[HL10912](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The assessment of the impact of Parts 1 and 3 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on building regulations in Scotland is as follows:

- Building regulations stipulate the performance to be achieved in buildings, rather than what goods, e.g. materials, must be used to achieve it. The market access principles only apply to requirements in relation to the sale of goods or to goods sold. We do not consider building regulations would fall into these categories. As a result, we do not expect Part 1 to have any impact on the operation of building regulations in Scotland. Note also that existing regulation is out of scope of the market access principles.

- On Part 3, we do not consider that the Building Regulations for Scotland contain provisions on professional qualifications, and therefore Part 3 of the Bill does not affect the operation of building standards in Scotland as a result.

The Government has no plans to limit Scotland's existing competence in relation to building regulations.

### **Business and Public Sector: Training**

*Asked by **Baroness Mone***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase (1) support for mentoring services and (2) the number of businesses and public sector organisations participating in mentoring programs. [[HL10896](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** We aim to make the UK the best place to start, grow and run a business. The Government provides a wide range of support and information for small businesses. The main source of information is the GOV.UK website, with support also available via the Business Support Helpline on FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098 and via the network of 38 local Growth Hubs in England.

We also provide grant funding to Be the Business, a business-led independent charity. Be the Business is delivering executive leadership and management training, expert mentoring, place-based collaborative peer networks and free online advice and benchmarking tools, including around digitalisation, to help SMEs identify practical steps to transform their business.

For those starting a new business or for businesses which have been trading for up to 24 months, the Start Up Loans Company provides loans of between £500 to £25,000 at a competitive rate of 6%. In addition to finance, every loan recipient is offered a dedicated mentoring service and access to a free expert business mentor for 12 months to help them with every aspect of setting up a business.

There are 2,000 places available on the Small Business Leadership Programme which is being delivered by experts from university business schools and will teach participants how to maximise their business's potential by improving productivity, organisation, and efficiency. There are also 6,000 places on the Peer Networks programme which is focused on helping business owners improve their problem-solving skills through a series of guided exercises.

Further measures include the Young Innovators Programme, launched by Innovate UK and the Prince's Trust to support young entrepreneurs with tailored mentoring and access to £5,000 funding. Innovate UK have also established the Women in Innovation awards, where 10 female inventors will be awarded with a cash boost of £50,000 each, as well as receive vital business support to help them develop and grow their business, including coaching and mentoring.

### **Care Homes: Insurance**

*Asked by **Baroness Hayman of Ullock***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in ensuring that care homes are granted insurance indemnity under the same terms as provided for the NHS under the Coronavirus Act 2020. [[HL10962](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** We recognise that the adult social care insurance market is changing in response to the pandemic. We are working closely across Government, with care providers and insurance representatives to understand the breadth and severity of the issues, and whether there is any action the Government should take to support the sector.

### **Civil Proceedings: Legal Aid Scheme**

*Asked by **Baroness Goudie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the Lord Chancellor's guidance on civil legal aid (1) to recognise the importance of challenging discrimination, (2) to advise that a discrimination claim that seeks other remedies in addition to damages should not be assumed to be primarily a claim for damages, (3) to amend the rules on the application of the cost-benefit test to reflect the non-financial value of discrimination claims, and (4) to provide that cost-benefit assessments should start from the assumption that discrimination claims are not primarily claims for damages and are likely to be in the wider public interest. [[HL10861](#)]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** The government recognises the importance of challenging discrimination and have taken steps to enhance the ability to do this. On 21 April 2020, we laid a Statutory Instrument to fulfil our commitment to remove the mandatory element of the CLA Gateway for those seeking legal aid in discrimination, debt and special educational needs matters, reinstating immediate access to face-to-face advice in these cases. This came into force on 15 May 2020.

Publicly funded advice and assistance continues to be available for Employment Tribunal discrimination claims and legally aided representation may be available under the Exceptional Case Funding scheme if there is a breach, or risk of a breach, of the applicant's ECHR rights or enforceable EU rights if legal aid is not provided. The MoJ is currently reviewing the ECF application process,

together with other aspects of the ECF guidance and forms as part of considering whether the application process can be improved and will give further consideration to the operation of the cost benefit test.

### **Commonwealth: Trade Documentation**

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use their co-Chair role on the Commonwealth Digital Connectivity Cluster to advance the digitisation of trade documentation. [HL10931]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The fourth Commonwealth Digital Connectivity Cluster meeting took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December. The overall theme for the Connectivity Clusters as they have been meeting is digital resilience and economic recovery. This follows the Commonwealth Statement on the Covid-19 Pandemic where Heads of Government sought to reduce barriers and promote the adoption of digital technologies as a positive enabler in order to increase resilient, inclusive and diverse trade and investment. The United Kingdom co-leads the Digital Connectivity Cluster with South Africa, where we have worked to ensure digitising trade documents is among the topics for discussion.

Digital trade facilitation and the digitisation of trade documentation specifically delivers benefits for businesses of all sizes and has acquired an even greater importance in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

*Asked by Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much (1) has been spent to date, and (2) they estimate will be spent this financial year, on the NHS Test and Trace service. [HL8744]

**Lord Bethell:** The spend across Test and Trace for the year to September is £2.7 billion. The Government's winter plan announced an additional £7 billion of funding which will allow NHS Test and Trace to increase testing and continue to improve contact tracing, taking the overall budget for Test and Trace this financial year to £22 billion.

### **Coronavirus: Christmas**

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they received advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies about reducing the restrictions in place to address the Covid-19 pandemic over the Christmas period; and if so, what plans they have to publish that advice. [HL10833]

**Lord True:** The government receives regular advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, including on the Christmas period. All the advice received on this matter has been published on Gov.uk at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies>.

### **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate of the proportion of Covid-19 cases that are asymptomatic they applied to the forecasting models that were used to inform their decision to place England under national restrictions until 2 December; and what was the evidence base used for this estimate. [HL9879]

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate of the percentage of Covid-19 cases that lead to hospital admissions was applied to the forecast modelling used to inform their decision to place England under national restrictions until 2 December; and what was the evidence base used for this estimate. [HL9880]

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate of the percentage of Covid-19 cases that require mechanical ventilation was applied to the forecast modelling used to inform their decision to place England under national restrictions until 2 December; and what was the evidence base used for this estimate. [HL9882]

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate of the percentage of Covid-19 fatalities they applied to the forecasting models that were used to inform the decision to place England under further national restrictions to address the Covid-19 pandemic; and what was the evidence base used for this estimate. [HL9958]

**Lord Bethell:** The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergency's (SAGE) subgroup, Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational, do not have a single estimate for asymptomatic case proportions, infection hospitalisation rates, case hospitalisation rates, infection fatality rates, or case fatality rates. Individual modelling groups use their own estimates of these metrics, which are based on a wide range of data sources, including testing data, hospital admission, intensive care unit admissions, and deaths. Their models are regularly updated to fit to the observed transmission of the disease and further details are publicly available.

The Office for National Statistics Covid-19 Infection Study has estimated that approximately 55% of those individuals who test positive do not record evidence of symptoms at or around the time of the test. This does not mean these individuals will not go on to develop symptoms or had symptoms previously.

Other SAGE evidence has shown that there is wide variation in the estimated proportion of infections that are truly asymptomatic across different studies with the rapid

review providing a pooled estimate, based on 22 studies, of 28% but with very wide confidence intervals.

NHS England use data from their daily Covid-19 situation report collection from individual hospital trusts to estimate current average length of stay and the proportion who require mechanical ventilation. In the run up to the national restrictions this gave an average length of stay of 7.7 days, of which 5.5% of those would be with mechanical ventilation.

The decision to re-introduce greater restrictions from 5 November until 2 December 2020 was based on a wide range of data, not just modelling estimates. These included analysis from the National Health Service on hospital capacity, the rapidly rising hospital admissions, and deaths, and the similar second waves seen across Europe.

SAGE papers from its meetings are published in an online only format on GOV.UK.

### Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the Chair of the Council of the British Medical Association that further action is needed to protect BAME communities in the event of a rise in Covid-19 cases. [HL8431]

**Lord Bethell:** On 22 October, the Minister for Equalities, (Kemi Badenoch MP) published Quarterly report on progress to address Covid-19 health inequalities to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on progress to tackle Covid-19 disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background. The report made 13 recommendations. This includes reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by relevant Government departments to directly lessen disparities in infection and death rates of Covid-19. As well as taking action to modify existing policy and policy in development, to address these disparities. All of which the Prime Minister has accepted. A copy of the report is attached.

Across the NHS Test and Trace service there is ongoing work to better understand the needs of the most vulnerable. We are working with local and national organisations and directly with highest risk communities to increase understanding of the barriers to the service, and changes that need to be made to increase access and reduce inequalities.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Quarterly report health inequalities  
[First\_Covid\_Disparities\_report\_to\_PM\_\_Health\_Secretary\_Final\_22-10-20 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-09-23/HL8431>

### Coronavirus: Screening

*Asked by Lord Trees*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of those testing positive for Covid-19 as a result of a polymerase chain reaction test, and subsequently included in the national statistics, (1) display symptoms of the virus at the time of the test, and (2) subsequently develop such symptoms. [HL8215]

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

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what initial estimate they have made of the cost of plans to introduce same day mass testing for Covid-19 in England. [HL8444]

**Lord Bethell:** An evaluation of testing the whole of Liverpool will inform the potential rollout of whole town or city testing to other areas, as part of the Government's commitment to make mass testing available. Same day testing will involve several different types of technology including lateral flow devices.

A £500 million investment will accelerate the next generation of technologies to support our existing systems and better understand how mass testing could be used.

Our top priorities for testing, as they have been throughout the pandemic, are to allocate testing where it is needed most to save lives, protect the most vulnerable, and enable vital health and care services to operate safely.

In the future, in addition to our existing priorities, we will aim to use new testing technologies to test a higher proportion of the population over time, targeted at where it will have the most impact, and use testing to support the economy and wider society to return to a normal way of life.

### Coronavirus: Students

*Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to pre-book Covid-19 tests for all university students to take before they return to university after the Christmas break. [HL10333]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government has established a large number of asymptomatic test sites across higher education institutions. We are working to make the return to higher education as safe as possible. All students will have the opportunity to be tested on their return to university at the start of the spring term. The Government has provided guidance for universities to implement a staggered return of students over five weeks to minimise the transmission risk from the mass movement of students. Further guidance will be provided in due course, considering future developments and the relevant scientific advice.

## Court of Justice of the European Union: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union will be in relation to Northern Ireland from 1 January 2021. [HL10802]

**Lord True:** The rules that apply to businesses and citizens in Northern Ireland derive from UK law, including rules given effect by the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018. The rules on how to interpret rules given effect by retained EU law, which the courts must follow, are set out in section 6 of the EU Withdrawal Act. Section 6 of the 2018 Act also sets out the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

## Data Protection: Japan

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether commitments in the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement provide grounds for a legal challenge to the UK's measures for the protection of personal data under the Data Protection Act (2018); and what assessment they have made of whether the UK's existing data regulations meet the requirements specified in Article 8.84 of that Agreement. [HL11190]

**Baroness Barran:** UK domestic data protection laws enshrined in the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR are unchanged by the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which recognises the importance of protecting personal data and commits both parties to “maintain a legal framework that provides for the protection of personal information”.

Under CEPA article 8.84, the UK may adopt measures restricting data flows to achieve a legitimate public policy objective, including personal data protection.

## Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody Independent Review

Asked by *Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in implementing each of the recommendations of the report by the Rt Hon. Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC Report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody, published in January 2017. [HL10858]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Every death in custody is a tragedy, and we are committed to delivering meaningful and lasting change to prevent deaths in custody. Good progress has been made in addressing Dame Elish's recommendations, with the majority of

recommendations now delivered, although there is more to be done.

To prevent deaths in police custody in England and Wales, we have significantly restricted the use of police stations as places of safety, for those experiencing a mental health crisis. The National Police Chiefs' Council are driving progress on national training, including how officers identify health risks of detainees, and the Government is making significant investment in mental health. The Home Office have created an annual statistical publication showing data on police use of force, broken down by ethnicity.

In February 2020, the Government implemented reforms to provide the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) with a power to investigate matters on its own initiative, without the need for a referral from the police. Legislative reforms to the IOPC's corporate structure and governance, implemented in January 2018, have helped to improve the timeliness of IOPC investigations.

To support families, we have made inquests more sympathetic to their needs, undertaken a review of the provision of legal aid for inquests, and improved the information available immediately after a death in custody.

The Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody continues to oversee and drive progress on this work. An official government update will be published in early 2021.

## Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Asked by *Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to increase the capacity of the Department of Health and Social Care to provide answers to Questions for Written Answer on time. [HL9106]

**Lord Bethell:** Prior to the pandemic, the Department employed approximately 1,500 people. In the last eight months that has grown to approximately 2,900 staff in the core Department. The Parliamentary Questions team has doubled in size. We have created and put into action an iterative written questions recovery plan, the objectives of which are to increase the number of questions answered on time, to clear the backlog of overdue questions and to ensure high-quality answers.

## Deportation: Aviation

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish (1) the reasons behind the deportation of each individual due to be onboard the deportation flight scheduled for 2 December, and (2) details of whether any of these people have appealed their deportation. [HL10910]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** One of this Government's key objectives is to protect the public by removing foreign national offenders who commit criminal offences and have no right to remain in the UK. Since January 2019, 6,450 foreign criminals have been deported.

We are unable to comment on individual cases and therefore cannot provide you with the reasons for deportation of those due to be on board this flight or the details of any appeals made. However, those due to be removed on the flight include people convicted of murder, rape, manslaughter, violent crime, firearms offences, burglary and the appalling scourge of dealing Class-A drugs. These are serious offences which have a very real and lasting impact on the victims and the communities in which we all live.

Those being deported are provided with the opportunity to raise reasons why they should not be deported, prior to deportation. All issues raised will be fully considered and decided before deportation. The UK only ever returns those who the Home Office and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK.

### **Dover Port: Public Lavatories**

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the debate on 26 November (HL Deb, cols 403–23), whether they have made any assessment of the need to provide portable toilets for use by heavy goods vehicle drivers using the port of Dover after 1 January 2021; and if so, how many such toilets they estimate will be required. [HL10980]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The driver welfare provision within the ports will be provided by the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel under their usual arrangements. The Department for Transport is unable to comment on Port of Dover's procurement process for welfare facilities.

Government Inland Border Facilities for lorry holding areas in Kent at Sevington and Manston will include facilities for HGV drivers, including toilet and hand washing provision.

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the debate on 26 November (HL Deb, cols 403–23), whether they have any plans to procure portable toilets for use by heavy goods vehicle drivers using the port of Dover after 1 January 2021; and if so, what steps they are taking to ensure that Ministers in any such procurement process declare (1) personal interests, and (2) interests of family members, relevant to such a procurement. [HL10981]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The driver welfare provision within the ports will be provided by the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel under their usual arrangements.

The Department for Transport is unable to comment on Port of Dover's procurement process for welfare facilities.

Government Inland Border Facilities for lorry holding areas in Kent at Sevington and Manston will include facilities for HGV drivers, including toilet and hand washing provision.

### **Electoral Register**

*Asked by Lord Hayward*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Boundary Commissions have access to the latest polling district maps and data for the local authorities where local government wards will be considered in the next boundary review. [HL10868]

*Asked by Lord Hayward*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the support that the Boundary Commission for England will need from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in accessing the latest polling district maps and data ahead of the next boundary review. [HL10869]

*Asked by Lord Hayward*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the data held by the Office for National Statistics on the Parliamentary electorate of each polling district and local authority ward as of 2 March. [HL10870]

**Lord True:** The conduct of the next boundary review is a matter for the independent Boundary Commissions.

We are in regular contact with the Boundary Commissions to ensure that any issues, such as the data to be used in the next boundary review, are appropriately addressed.

The Office for National Statistics has confirmed that Electoral Statistics for the 2 March 2020 are scheduled to be published on 5 January 2021.

*Asked by Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord True on 26 November (HL Deb, col 397), what plans they have to ensure the provision of a link to the online electoral registration process in their electronic and other communications notifying people of their National Insurance numbers; and what steps they intend to take to consult with (1) the Electoral Commission, (2) Electoral Registration Officers, and (3) others, about the best ways of using such a process to improve the completeness of the electoral registers, without reducing accuracy, in a cost effective manner. [HL10905]

*Asked by Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord True on 26 November (HL Deb, col 397), what plans they have to provide a link to the

online electoral registration process to those people provided with National Insurance numbers over the last two years in time for those people to register in time for the elections scheduled in May 2021; and what assessment they have made of the impact of such provision on the registration levels for that group. [HL10906]

*Asked by Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult with (a) Operation Black Vote, and (b) representatives of communities under represented on electoral registers, about ways (1) to increase representation on the electoral register, (2) to encourage participation in elections, (3) to increase social mobility through the availability of credit to those on the electoral register, and (4) to help to make juries, drawn from the electoral register, more representative. [HL10907]

*Asked by Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord True on 3 September (HL Deb, col 500), what plans they have to ensure that electoral registration forms are designed as effectively as possible using standards of best practice to increase the rate of return; and what steps they are taking to ensure that such forms, and any accompanying letters, consistently draw prominent attention to the legal requirements to comply with the registration process with reference to the appropriate maximum fines or penalties. [HL10908]

**Lord True:** Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have the statutory responsibility for maintaining complete and accurate registers for their areas. The Government's role is to ensure EROs have the tools they need to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. This includes, for example, the recent changes to the annual canvass in Great Britain which will improve its overall efficiency considerably which will allow EROs to focus their efforts on hard to reach groups, and play an important role in helping to maintain register accuracy and completeness.

As it stands, National Insurance Number letters issued by HM Revenue and Customs state that you need your National Insurance Number to register to vote. Cabinet Office officials are in discussions with colleagues in HMRC regarding what further information could be included to help inform individuals about the registration process, and if it may be clarified.

The Government is committed to making registration as easy as possible and we encourage everyone who is eligible to register to vote.

Responsibility for the design of electoral registration forms, including the Invitation to Register form and all Canvass Communications lies with the Electoral Commission, with the Government providing final approval. The Electoral Commission undertakes extensive user testing of the forms to ensure they are as effective as possible at eliciting the appropriate response. Cabinet

Office officials are regularly consulted by the Electoral Commission during the design stages of any new forms and also when changes are proposed to existing forms.

## Energy Performance Certificates

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their target for upgrading domestic properties to Energy Performance Certificate band C by 2030 is 1.5 million homes, as set out in The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published on 18 November, or all fuel poor homes, as set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, published on 12 October 2017. [HL10806]

**Lord Callanan:** We remain committed to the aspiration set out in the Clean Growth Strategy for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable. We are also committed to ensuring that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030.

There are a number of Government schemes available to support households in improving the energy efficiency of their homes, including the Green Homes Grant and Energy Company Obligation, with some funding specifically targeted towards households in fuel poverty.

In the Ten Point Plan, we specify that our green home finance initiatives could help to improve the energy performance of around 2.8 million homes, improving around 1.5 million to EPC C standard by 2030. These figures refer specifically to the proposals laid out in the consultation, 'Improving home energy performance through lenders', which is focused on mortgaged homes in England and Wales.

## Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of genocide against Tigrayans. [HL10842]

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Ethiopia about (1) reports of atrocities against Tigrayans, and (2) ensuring that civilians are protected. [HL10843]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is concerned by the violence between federal and regional forces in the Tigray region and the risk it poses to civilians, and by reports of ethnically-motivated attacks both within Tigray and elsewhere in Ethiopia. We are gravely concerned over allegations of atrocities and violations; we call for transparency and accountability to be delivered for such incidents. We have repeatedly called for civilians to be protected, including in conversations with both parties to the conflict. The UK's longstanding position is that

determining whether a situation amounts to genocide is an issue for competent national and international courts, not governments: our focus is on seeing an end to violence. We will continue to track the situation and to raise with the Government of Ethiopia and regional leaders these concerns, our concerns about civilian deaths and casualties, and the importance of respect for human rights.

### Fishing Catches: Faroe Islands

*Asked by Lord Teverson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the value of fish caught by Faroese registered vessels in the UK's coastal waters and exclusive economic zone in (1) 2018, and (2) 2019; and what was the value of fish caught by UK vessels in Faroese waters in the same years. [HL10921]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** In 2019, Faroese vessels landed fish valued at an estimated £25.5 million from UK waters. £21million of these landings were of mackerel and £4.5 million were of blue whiting. In comparison, the UK landed fish valued at £1.2 million from Faroese waters in 2019, of which £1 million was cod and haddock.

In 2018, the Faroese figure was an estimated £30.4 million. Of this, £26 million was comprised of mackerel landings and £4.4 million of blue whiting. The UK's landings from Faroese waters in 2018 were valued at £2.2 million of which cod and haddock accounted for £1.7 million.

### Fishing Catches: Norway

*Asked by Lord Teverson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the value of fish caught by Norwegian registered vessels in the UK's coastal waters and exclusive economic zone in (1) 2018, and (2) 2019. [HL10920]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** In 2019, Norwegian vessels landed approximately £248.9 million worth of fish from UK waters. The majority of this was mackerel, which made up £153.1 million of the catch, followed by herring and blue whiting. In contrast, the UK landed £31.0 million worth of fish from Norwegian waters in 2019, the majority of which was demersal species, such as cod and haddock.

In 2018, Norwegian vessels landed approximately £271.5 million worth of fish from UK waters, again with the majority of this made up of mackerel (£166.0 million), herring and blue whiting, while the UK landed £32.4 million from Norwegian waters.

### Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children in England who have been diagnosed as having foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. [HL11105]

**Lord Bethell:** This information is not held centrally.

### Foreign Investment in UK

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) the National Security and Investment Bill, and (2) the Telecommunications Bill, do not inhibit foreign investment in the UK. [HL10932]

**Lord Callanan:** The National Security and Investment Bill will introduce slicker investment routes and more certainty for businesses, as we remain open to trade and recover from Covid-19. This will ensure the UK remains the premier investment destination in the world, providing certainty for businesses that they will not be targeted by hostile actors.

Analysis outlined in the Impact Assessment for the National Security and Investment Bill has shown that, providing national security regimes are clear, objective, and predictable, they do not play a major role in the investment decision-making process.

The Government has been clear that this regime will be exclusively used to protect the UK from national security threats, rather than wider political considerations. The Government is making the process of notifying and screening investments simpler, quicker, and slicker by providing clearance within statutory timelines. The Government will also facilitate businesses engaging with the process by providing informal advice on the regime and not charging fees for submitting a notification.

The powers given to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State to give designated vendor directions in the Telecommunications (Security) Bill is designed to allow for restrictions to be imposed on the use by telecoms providers of goods, services, and facilities from high-risk vendors, in the interests of national security. The restrictions that may be imposed by way of a direction do not extend to restrictions on inward investment from other countries.

The recently announced Office for Investment will work seamlessly across the Government to drive and co-ordinate the deal-enabling activities that are required to land high-impact and high-value investments.

### Gaza: Medical Equipment

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide more polymerase chain reaction machines and swabs to Gaza. [HL11296]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain concerned about the capacity of the Palestinian health system to cope with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases. We are aware of the temporary cessation of Covid-19 testing in Gaza on 6 December and welcome reports from the World Health Organisation that further testing kits arrived in Gaza on 7 December and testing resumed.

We have already delivered vital support to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak in the Occupied Palestinian Territories through £1.25 million in funding (World Health Organisation with £630,000 and United Nations Children's Fund with £620,000). This funding helped to provide over 20,000 testing kits, mainly in Gaza.

### General Practitioners

*Asked by Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 23 November (HL9107), who is responsible for the provision of face to face appointments in each of the seven NHS regions. [HL10730]

**Lord Bethell:** General practitioners (GPs) are independent contractors who are contracted by NHS England and NHS Improvement and/or clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to provide primary medical services. In designing services contractors are required to take into account the reasonable needs of their local population, including the types of appointments that are offered. NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for the provision of primary medical services in England. As such, it is for NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure that patients in all areas have access to GP services.

On 14 September, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to GPs and their commissioners reiterating the importance of providing face to face appointments for those who need them and shared a communications toolkit designed to support clear communication with patients about how they can access the right type of appointment.

Local commissioners, NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams or CCGs with delegated responsibility, are responsible for ensuring general practice providers meet their responsibilities under their contracts.

### Government Departments: Procurement

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their plans for procurement from 1 January 2021; and what plans they have to amend the requirement for contract advertising through the Official Journal of the European Union. [HL10852]

**Lord True:** Leaving the EU offers the opportunity to reform our procurement rules to create a new regulatory framework for public procurement. We will publish our proposals for reform shortly, which will include details on notification.

### HIV Infection: Screening

*Asked by Baroness Barker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities provided access to HIV self-sampling services in each year from 2015 to 2020. [HL10661]

**Lord Bethell:** Access to and provision of HIV testing, including online and self-sampling services, is the responsibility of local authorities. There are no comprehensive data available on the number of local authorities that provide HIV self-sampling services.

To make the procurement of online HIV testing services easier for local authorities a number of frameworks are in place. Frameworks are agreements put in place with a provider or range of providers that enable local authority commissioners to purchase a self-sampling service, the specification of which has already been agreed, without running a full tendering exercise.

One such framework is the national HIV self-sampling service set up by Public Health England at the end of 2015. This framework was used by 87 local authorities in 2015/16, 87 local authorities in 2016/17, 81 local authorities in 2017/18 and 71 local authorities in 2018/19. Data for 2019/20 are not yet available. However, this is just one framework and there are many other examples of locally and regionally commissioned self-sampling services providing HIV testing.

*Asked by Baroness Barker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by Public Health England Trends in HIV testing, new diagnoses and people receiving HIV-related care in the United Kingdom: data to the end of December 2019, published on 3 November, what plans they have to increase access to HIV self-sampling services. [HL10662]

**Lord Bethell:** Access to and provision of HIV testing, including online and self-sampling services, is the responsibility of local authorities. There are no comprehensive data available on the number of local authorities that provide HIV self-sampling services.

To make the procurement of online HIV testing services easier for local authorities a number of frameworks are in place. Frameworks are agreements put in place with a provider or range of providers that enable local authority commissioners to purchase a self-sampling service, the specification of which has already been agreed, without running a full tendering exercise.

One such framework is the national HIV self-sampling service set up by Public Health England at the end of 2015. This framework was used by 87 local authorities in 2015/16, 87 local authorities in 2016/17, 81 local authorities in 2017/18 and 71 local authorities in 2018/19. Data for 2019/20 are not yet available. However, this is just one framework and there are many other examples of locally and regionally commissioned self-sampling services providing HIV testing.

## Holyhead Port: Large Goods Vehicles

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what space will be available for truck drivers arriving at the Port of Holyhead from Ireland to complete documentation papers from 1 January 2021. [HL10839]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The small facility at Roadking in Holyhead, which was prepared last year, will remain for drivers seeking to complete their ATA Carnet paperwork. This will require traders to book in advance with Border Force who will attend to endorse the Carnets.

HMRC will be engaging with Stena and Border Force to explore whether there is any capacity for the port to accommodate other checks.

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 13 October (HL8609), how much of this land has been purchased; and what use is being made of this land. [HL10909]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** No land has yet been purchased. Two potential sites have been identified in partnership with the Welsh Government and commercial discussions are under way.

## Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the VAT deferral scheme to support the hospitality sector as that sector recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL10829]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The VAT payments deferral scheme ended on 30 June 2020, as planned. As part of the Winter Economy Plan, the Government announced further support for those with deferred VAT, allowing them to spread what they owe over smaller monthly payments. More information on the VAT deferral new payment scheme is available on GOV.UK, as is more information on other support for businesses.

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the business rate holiday for (1) hospitality businesses, and (2) their suppliers, as such businesses recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL10830]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has taken the unprecedented step of providing over £10 billion in business rates relief this year for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties.

As announced at the Spending Review, to support businesses next year the Government will freeze the multiplier and will announce any decisions on future rate reliefs in the New Year.

## Hunting

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Boxing Day hunts will be allowed to take place this year; and if so, what enforcement measures will be in place to ensure compliance of such hunts with the law. [HL10867]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Organised outdoor sports and activities can take place in all tiers under the Covid-19 response tier system, and should be organised according to the rules of the tier in which the activity is taking place.

As such, trail hunting and hunting carried out under the exemptions in the Hunting Act 2004 can take place where permitted by the landowner. The enforcement of the Hunting Act is an operational matter for the police.

## Hyperactivity: Health Services

Asked by *Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder they have supported in 2020. [HL10957]

**Lord Bethell:** The data requested is not held centrally.

## Immigration: EU Nationals

Asked by *Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to vary the provisions of the EU Settled Status Scheme to enable students who are (1) registered for courses in the UK to apply for pre-settled status, and (2) unable to provide proof of residence in the UK before 31 December 2020 because of public health restrictions. [HL10866]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EU citizens need to be resident in the UK to be eligible in their own right for the EU Settlement Scheme.

## Insolvency

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they completed an economic impact assessment for the reintroduction of the Crown preference for insolvency. [HL10898]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government's reforms to make HMRC a secondary preferential creditor for certain tax debts (otherwise known as Protecting Your Taxes in Insolvency) came into effect across the UK on 1 December 2020.

The Government has taken a proportionate approach, applying changes only to taxes paid in good faith by

employees and customers, but held temporarily by the business, including Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Income Tax and VAT. The reforms do not reintroduce crown preference, which applied more broadly across all tax debts.

The Government undertook careful work to assess the impact of the reforms ahead of announcement and implementation. As with all tax policy changes, the Government published this assessment in a tax information and impact note which can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] Full web-link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-protect-tax-in-insolvency-cases>.

### International Law: Sanctions

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they use when deciding to introduce sanctions against governments for breaches of international law. [\[HL10922\]](#)

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** After the end of the Transition Period on 31 December the UK will pursue an independent sanctions policy, driven by UK foreign policy and national security interests. The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (SAMLA) gives the Government the legal framework to impose, update and lift sanctions autonomously. SAMLA sets out a range of possible purposes for which sanctions regimes can be introduced. These include purposes relating to international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Where sanctions regimes are set up for these purposes, any decision to designate persons under a particular regime must meet the legal tests set out in the Regulations of that regime. In particular the Secretary of State must consider that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the person is involved in an activity set out in the Regulations, and that the designation is appropriate having regard to the purposes of the regime and the likely effects of the designation on that person. All designations must be underpinned by robust evidence.

### Leasehold: Reform

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the leasehold system of ownership during 2021. [\[HL11002\]](#)

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government is taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. This includes measures to ban the sale of new leasehold houses, restrict ground rents to zero for future leases, give freehold homeowners equivalent rights to challenge unfair charges, and close loopholes to prevent unfair evictions.

We are also working with the Law Commission to make buying a freehold or extending a lease easier,

quicker and cheaper – and to reinvigorate Commonhold to provide consumers with a choice of tenure and the Right to Manage to help empower those that wish to, to take on management responsibilities for their properties.

This is a long-term reform programme; it is complex with many interdependencies and will take time to get the detail right. Once it is enacted the effect will be felt for generations and so we are determined this work considers all the implications with care. We will bring forward leasehold legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

### Low Incomes

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees earned below £12,500 in each region of England in the most recent year that statistics are available. [\[HL10795\]](#)

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many workers earned below the personal income tax threshold in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland, for the tax year 2018/19. [\[HL10796\]](#)

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The table below sets out the number of paid employees residing in English regions who were paid below £12,500 from April 2019 to March 2020, from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Employees</i>
North East	423,000
North West	1,292,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	959,000
East Midlands	881,000
West Midlands	1,050,000
East	1,128,000
London	1,777,000
South East	1,639,000
South West	1,038,000

The table below sets out the number of paid employees in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from April 2018 to March 2019 who were paid below £11,850, from HMRC's PAYE RTI data.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Employees</i>
England	9,900,000
Scotland	893,000
Wales	503,000
Northern Ireland	301,000

Please note:

(1) These figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand employees.

(2) These figures are as accurate as reported through PAYE RTI. However, PAYE schemes not paying any of their employees above the NICs threshold are not obliged to report employees' earnings through RTI. Additionally, PAYE RTI does not include income from self-employment, or any other source of income. Therefore, some employees may be excluded from these estimates and other employees may be included but have total income from all sources above the personal allowance.

### **Maira Shahbaz**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister plans to raise the case of Maira Shahbaz with the Prime Minister of Pakistan; and if not, why not. [[HL10900](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls from religious minorities in Pakistan. Our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girls' rights and gender equality are regularly raised with the Government of Pakistan. We are closely monitoring the case of Maira Shahbaz and engaging appropriately with the Government of Pakistan at Ministerial and senior official levels. Most recently, on 16 November, I raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari. In addition, also on 16 November, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, raised our concerns about Maira Shahbaz's case with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar.

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the assistance they could provide to Maira Shahbaz. [[HL10901](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are closely monitoring developments in the case of Maira Shahbaz. On 16 November, I raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari. Also 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. As you will understand, we cannot comment further on individual cases.

### **Music: EU Countries**

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on any new arrangements required for the transportation of goods for musical events when touring in Europe following the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL11136](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** We understand the importance for musicians to be able to tour and to take their equipment with them. Whilst we are unable to comment on the outcome of negotiations with the EU, we have advised businesses to prepare for a new set of requirements when temporarily moving goods between the UK and EU after the end of the Transition Period.

There are several options currently available which allow certain goods to be imported temporarily into the UK from outside the EU without payment of duties, subject to certain conditions. At the end of the Transition Period, ATA Carnets, Returned Goods Relief and Temporary Admissions will all become options for temporarily moving musical instruments and equipment between the UK and EU.

### **Nagorno-Karabakh: Refugees**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide emergency aid for refugees in (1) Armenia, and (2) the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [[HL10815](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** 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 and will keep the situation under review.

### **Nigeria: Violence**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Nigerian farm workers were killed in an attack by non-state armed groups in Koshobe, Borno State, on 28 November; what assessment they have made of the reasons for that attack; which organisation they believe to be responsible for that attack; and what discussions they have had with (1) the government of Nigeria, and (2) the International Criminal Court, about bringing those responsible to justice. [[HL10844](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government condemns the appalling terrorist attack on Nigerian civilians in Borno State on 28 November in which many were killed and others wounded or abducted. Our thoughts are with the victims and the families of those affected. On 30 November, the Foreign Secretary publicly expressed his condolences, and the Minister for Africa called for the immediate release of all those abducted. The UK led international condemnation at the UN following this attack, and was penholder of a UN Security Council press statement.

We are aware that Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for the attack. We call on the Nigerian authorities to investigate and hold those responsible to account. In line with international law, states retain the

primary responsibility to prosecute crimes within their national jurisdiction. The International Criminal Court is a court of last resort. Terrorist groups, including Boko Haram, have caused immense suffering to communities in North East Nigeria. We continue to provide a comprehensive package of support, including humanitarian assistance to meet lifesaving needs.

### Nuclear Disarmament

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to undertake further work on nuclear disarmament verification; and what budget has been allocated for this work. [HL10893]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government continues to research nuclear disarmament verification through our well-established Atomic Weapons Establishment programme. Areas of focus include solving the challenges of verifying inventories of warheads or fissile material; and determining how non-nuclear weapon states can participate in verification while preventing the release of proliferative information. The Government participates in international initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Partnership. The Government is unable to disclose budgetary information as it may prejudice commercial interests.

### Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their priorities for the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [HL10892]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government's priority is to reinforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a vital part of the international security architecture, and to highlight the UK's strong track record across all three pillars of the treaty. The Government will work to promote transparency between nuclear and non-nuclear states, emphasise the important role of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in achieving our sustainable development goals, and submit a National Report to highlight our achievements in supporting the NPT.

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the UN Security Council's five permanent members have taken to ensure a productive Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [HL10894]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The P5 continue to work towards a successful NPT Review Conference in 2021. During the UK's leadership of the P5, the Government hosted a series of P5 meetings on exchanging nuclear

doctrines, risk reduction and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In February 2020, the London P5 Conference provided a platform for open and frank discussions amongst the P5, civil society and the wider NPT community.

### Nuclear Power

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published on 18 November, what criteria they intend to use to assess the value for money of potential large-scale new nuclear projects. [HL10884]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government consulted on a Regulated Asset Base as a possible funding model for new nuclear projects. The consultation set out a proposed test to assess value for money for consumers and taxpayers.

The Government's response to the consultation was published on 14 December 2020 and is available at the GOV.UK website.

### Nuclear Weapons

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Select Committee on International Relations Rising nuclear risk, disarmament and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, published on 24 April 2019 (HL Paper 338); and what plans they have to ensure high level UK representation at the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [HL10895]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government welcomes the continued engagement with the International Relations and Defence Committee, including during the inquiry. We are grateful for the Committee's feedback on the Government's approach to the NPT, and the Review Conference. The Government's full response to the report's recommendations has been published by the Committee and can be found here: <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/lords-committees/International-Relations-Committee/NPT-and-Nuclear-Disarmament/Government-Response-Rising-nuclear-risk-disarmament-and-the-Nuclear-Non-Proliferation-Report.pdf>. The next NPT Review Conference has been postponed until August 2021; the Government has not yet made a decision on UK representation.

### Older People: Public Appointments

*Asked by Baroness Gale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to appoint a commissioner for older people in England. [HL11118]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** There are no plans to appoint a Commissioner for older people in England.

### OneWeb

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent on the acquisition of OneWeb, including transaction costs; and what costs they have incurred since becoming a shareholder of OneWeb. [[HL10886](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government has committed to invest \$500m in OneWeb, and will continue to work with OneWeb and consortium partners to ensure this is being used to best support the UK investment.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have (1) had discussions, (2) received requests, or (3) given any undertakings, in relation to the future financing of OneWeb; and if so, out of which budget will such funds be allocated. [[HL10887](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** OneWeb presents a significant commercial opportunity and we will work closely with the company and other partners to raise additional private investment.

Further information on the future financing of OneWeb remains subject to commercial sensitivities.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money has been allocated as part of the recently announced increase in defence spending to be available to support OneWeb. [[HL10889](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The procurement of OneWeb is not a Defence matter.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any funds allocated to support the UK space industry (1) have been, or (2) will be, used to support OneWeb. [[HL10890](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The UK Space Agency has supported some research and development activities undertaken by OneWeb and its eligible supply chain through its subscription to the European Space Agency's Advanced Research in Telecommunications Satellites (ARTES) programme.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what agreements or commitments have been reached between the current shareholders of OneWeb with regard to (1) equity, (2) debt, (3) liabilities, and (4) security. [[HL10891](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The contents of the Shareholders Agreement between Her Majesty's Government, Bharti and other minority shareholders are commercially sensitive.

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 3 August (HL7046), whether the OneWeb offering has changed to include defence specific applications since 3 August. [[HL10913](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** While Her Majesty's Government has a stake in the company, it will operate as a commercial entity. The point raised is a commercial matter and should be directed to the company.

### OneWeb: Huawei

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether OneWeb uses any components from Huawei. [[HL10888](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** In advance of Her Majesty's Government's investment, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State took advice from experts both across government and externally commissioned to provide detailed scrutiny of the commercial, financial, and scientific rationales for investment and to ensure its compliance with the policy on High Risk Vendors.

### Osime Brown

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Change.org petition Stop The Deportation Of Vulnerable Autistic Man Osime Brown!, started on 17 March; and what steps they are taking to improve Osime Brown's (1) mental, and (2) physical, health while he remains in prison. [[HL10878](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We only ever return foreign national offenders who we and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK. No action would be taken to deport an individual while there are outstanding legal barriers that would prevent their removal from the UK and until all outstanding representations have been considered.

Mr Brown is no longer serving a custodial sentence and has been released on Immigration Bail to be managed in the community.

It would be inappropriate to comment further on his case while legal proceedings are ongoing.

### Overseas Trade: Finance

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the regulatory framework on the trade finance gap; and what discussions they are (1) having, and (2) have had, with the Prudential Regulation Authority about reducing the trade finance gap. [[HL10928](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The UK's prudential regulatory framework is underpinned by internationally agreed Basel standards in which the UK plays a key role through its membership of the Basel Committee on Banking Standards (BCBS).

Through the Financial Services Bill, the Government is delegating responsibility for the implementation of the latest Basel standards to the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA).

As part of that, the PRA will be required to consider and report on the likely effect of its rules on the sustainable provision of finance to businesses and consumers in the UK.

The Government maintains a regular dialogue with the PRA to ensure our future prudential regulation is appropriate and proportionate for the UK.

### **Pakistan: Bilateral Aid**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why Pakistan is the largest recipient of bilateral country specific official development assistance. [[HL10899](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Helping to ensure a prosperous and stable Pakistan is critical for the future of millions of Pakistanis, and the stability and security of the region as well as the UK.

Pakistan remains significantly off track to attain many of the Sustainable Development Goals. Over a third of Pakistan's population (over 80 million people) lives in poverty. One in fourteen children dies before their fifth birthday, and 8,300 women die in childbirth every year. Food insecurity has increased over time, with four in ten children under five chronically undernourished (stunted) and 2% acutely malnourished (wasted). Pakistan ranks 5th on the list of 10 countries most vulnerable to natural disasters with more than 130 million people at risk. Across Pakistan, there are currently 6.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Since 2011, UK aid has benefited more than 10 million children in primary school education, reached over 1.7 million new family planning users and prevented 4,900 maternal deaths, over 3.49 million unwanted pregnancies, and 490,000 unsafe abortions.

Future assistance for Pakistan in 2021 and beyond will be reviewed against the priorities set out by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary in his statement to the House of Commons on 25 November 2020.

### **Pakistan: Human Rights**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, in Pakistan. [[HL10902](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Pakistan remains an FCDO Human Rights Priority Country. The UK Government remains deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Pakistan, including restrictions on the freedom of expression and reports of discrimination and violence against religious minorities. The UK also remains committed to our longstanding opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We regularly raise human rights as a concern in our dialogue with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. Most recently, I raised our concerns about human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief and the protection of minority religious communities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 16 November. We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, as laid down in the constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

### **Pakistan: Overseas Aid**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last assessed the efficacy of UK aid to Pakistan. [[HL10903](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** All our programmes in Pakistan are reviewed annually and given a performance score. These reviews show that FCDO is achieving the majority of programme outputs across our portfolio. It is mandatory for all of programmes to have robust monitoring arrangements in place, to inform timely decision making, learn lessons, and ensure accountability for achieving results and correct use of funds.

Since 2011, UK aid in Pakistan has benefited more than 10 million children in primary school education; provided training in new skills for almost 300,000 people (of which 39% are women); and helped 6.6 million people (53% women) access loans. Since 2011, UK support has also reached over 1.7 million new family planning users and prevented 4,900 maternal deaths, over 3.49 million unwanted pregnancies, and 490,000 unsafe abortions.

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have identified any misuse of UK aid in Pakistan in the last five years; if so, what; and whether they are currently investigating any allegations that they have received from third parties of the misuse of such aid. [[HL10904](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** All our programmes have systems in place to detect misuse of aid, including active risk management and assessment of the programme delivery chain. The FCDO undertakes Due Diligence and Fiduciary risk assessments for potential partners. A financial audit is conducted annually for implementing partners. A portfolio risk assurance programme conducts in depth reviews of our implementing partners to provide extra assurance. Where cases are detected, officials ensure that a full investigation is carried out, and that action is taken to recover funding and prevent future problems. We are unable to comment on individual cases, however in

the last 3 years the FCDO has overhauled its approach to fraud prevention, detection, and recovery of taxpayers' money. We expect all implementing partners to have the same zero tolerance approach to fraud that we have if they are to receive taxpayers' money.

### **Palestinians: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Palestinian Authority about plans to ensure that people in Gaza receive vaccinations for Covid-19. [HL10926]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK will deliver on its commitment to global equitable access to safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines through our commitment to the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC). The UK has supported the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) to be included in the COVAX. Lord Ahmad most recently raised this issue with Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad al-Malki on 10th December and provided assurances that the UK will continue to coordinate closely with the Palestinian Authority to ensure vaccines are rolled out across the OPTs.

The UK is the largest funder to the COVAX AMC with a commitment of up to £548 million. This will contribute to 1 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines for 92 developing countries in 2021, and immunisation for up to 500 million people (subject to vaccines successfully securing stringent regulatory approvals).

### **Performing Arts: Intellectual Property**

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the UK has a high level of protection for (1) copyright, and (2) other performers' rights, online. [HL10822]

**Lord Callanan:** The UK is widely acknowledged as one of the best places in the world in which to protect and enforce copyright and related rights.

Now that we have left the EU, we intend to maintain these high standards of protection, and to promote them globally, including through future trade agreements.

Our future trade agreements should achieve positive outcomes for owners and users of copyright and related rights, including effective cooperation on tackling online copyright infringement.

The Government takes the enforcement of IP rights very seriously, and is taking forward various initiatives including the development of a new enforcement strategy, continued funding for the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU), strategic coordination of enforcement activity and continuing support for voluntary initiatives with intermediaries and others in the online world.

### **Port of Holyhead: Facilities**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional (1) rest, and (2) refreshment, facilities will be available to arrivals at the Port of Holyhead from 1 January 2021. [HL10840]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Traffic management and rest areas are devolved to Welsh ministers but HM Government through HMRC and DfT are developing potential solutions.

### **Post Office**

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value of the services provided by the Post Office; and what plans they have to support its work in the future. [HL10812]

**Lord Callanan:** Previous analysis, commissioned by BEIS and undertaken by London Economics and YouGov<sup>[1]</sup>, found that users of the Post Office placed a value of between £4.3bn and £9.7bn per annum on the network. The research is attached, but is also available here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/566224/beis-16-37-post-office-network-social-value.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/566224/beis-16-37-post-office-network-social-value.pdf).

More recently, new research by Public First has revealed how much of a vital role Post Offices play in high streets, providing a boost of more than £1 billion for surrounding retailers and businesses. The research is available here: <https://postofficeimpact.co.uk/>.

The £227 million funding the Government has provided through the Spending Review extends the network subsidy at £50 million for a further year and provides Post Office with £177 million to invest in the future of the business.

[1] The Social Value of the Post Office Network, London Economics/YouGov, 2020

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Post Office Network Social Value [beis-16-37-post-office-network-social-value.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-11-27/HL10812>

### **Public Houses: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the future viability of pubs in (1) Tier 2, and (2) Tier 3, areas. [HL10831]

**Lord Callanan:** On the 2 December 2020 the coronavirus national restrictions were replaced by a system of more localised interventions, based on three tiers.

The pandemic is having a serious negative impact on many businesses, including pubs, and this is why we are providing an unprecedented package of support including an extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021 and additional financial support through the Local Restrictions Support Grant, businesses which pay business rates and have been required to close due to local or national restrictions will be able to claim the following additional levels of support:

- £1,334 per month for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under.
- £2,000 per month for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.
- £3,000 per month for businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 or over.

Also £1.1bn is also being given to Local Authorities for one-off payments to enable them to support businesses more broadly.

As well as, for example, a one off £1,000 grant for wet-let pubs and grant schemes for pubs to access in Tiers 2 and 3.

### **Pupils: Absenteeism**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of secondary school absence rates on pupil attainment. [HL10916]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department has published a report on the link between absence and attainment at Key Stage 4, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014>.

The report found that as overall absence levels increase the average percentage of pupils achieving different levels of attainment at the end of KS4 decreases. The relevance of the findings to Covid-19 non-attendance is unclear as pupils who are absent from school as needing to self-isolate should have access to some online education, but this will vary across subjects, schools, and pupils.

We have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England and monitor progress over the course of the year to help us target support across the system, which is currently ongoing.

### **Refuges: Domestic Abuse**

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support domestic abuse refuge services. [HL10854]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** This Government continues to support the provision of safe accommodation with support

to ensure those fleeing from abuse have somewhere safe to go.

Since 2014 we have invested £80 million in safe accommodation services, including refuges to support victims of domestic abuse. This includes a £10 million Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund for safe accommodation charities, supporting a significant number of organisations to keep services running. In addition, we have secured free PPE for domestic abuse refuges.

Following the outcome of Spending Review, £125 million funding will be allocated to local authorities for the new duty to provide support within safe accommodation, including refuges, for 2021-22.

### **Religion: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they have provided to religious groups during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL11128]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Government recognises the huge contributions places of worship and faith groups have provided to the response effort in supporting communities during the pandemic.

We are only too aware of the financial impact the pandemic has caused to our places of worship and faith groups.

In England, charity registered faith groups and places of worship have been able to access the range of government-backed financial support measures available during the pandemic. These include the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Funds and the Local Authority Discretionary Grants.

We regularly engage with faith groups through our Places of Worship Taskforce and faith roundtables and will continue to work with them to further understand how Government can further support their response to the pressures they face during this time.

### **Rolls-Royce: Barnoldswick**

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the closure of the Barnoldswick Rolls-Royce factory. [HL10937]

**Lord Callanan:** Rolls-Royce has not proposed the closure of the Rolls-Royce factory at Barnoldswick. The company is undergoing a global restructuring and footprint review; they announced in August that they would be reducing manufacturing activity across the company's sites globally, including in Barnoldswick. Rolls-Royce also announced that they will retain key capabilities in Barnoldswick, including a fan blade product development and technical centre.

## Schools: Inspections

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the quantity of school inspections on teacher mental wellbeing. [HL10919]

**Baroness Berridge:** We recognise the pressure that teachers and leaders are under and are enormously grateful to them for their efforts, resilience, and service to our country's children and young people as we continue to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Ofsted inspections are carried out on a proportionate basis, with more regular visits to schools that are rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. Ofsted is committed to minimise the burdens associated with inspection, and to playing its part in reducing workload in the sector and improving wellbeing.

In creating the 2019 Education Inspection Framework, Ofsted established a framework that can understand a school's performance without creating unnecessary workload, and looks to assess the extent to which leaders manage the workload and wellbeing of their staff.

Last year, the government set up an expert advisory group to advise on the wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges. It included consideration of the impact of inspections on the wellbeing of teachers. The group's recommendations were accepted by ministers and published in June 2020: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/890547/Nick\\_Gibb\\_letter\\_to\\_EAG.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/890547/Nick_Gibb_letter_to_EAG.pdf). They include the development of a wellbeing charter for the teaching sector, setting out commitments from the government and from Ofsted on measures to promote and protect the wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges.

## Shared Ownership

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the BBC Panorama investigation into (1) shared ownership schemes, and (2) abuses of the leasehold system. [HL11001]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service.

We have confirmed the new model for Shared Ownership which will be more consumer friendly, easier to access and fairer, leading to a better experience for a future generation of shared owners. We have lowered the minimum share to 10%, introduced manageable 1% staircasing and introduced a 10 year period during which the landlord will support the shared owner with the cost of repairs.

We are taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

This includes measures to ban the sale of new leasehold houses, restrict ground rents to zero for future leases, give freehold homeowners equivalent rights to challenge unfair charges, and close loopholes to prevent unfair evictions.

We are also working with the Law Commission to make extending a lease easier, quicker and cheaper – and to reinvigorate Commonhold to provide consumers with a choice of tenure and the Right to Manage to help empower those that wish to, to take on management responsibilities for their properties.

In January this year the Law Commission published their first of four reports, on the valuation aspects of enfranchisement, and on 21 July the Law Commission published a further three reports on the remaining aspects of enfranchisement as well as Commonhold and Right to Manage. Details can be found (attached) here: <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/residential-leasehold-and-commonhold/>. We will be publishing further details of how Government will take forward reform across these key policy issues as soon as possible.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Leasehold and Commonhold [201211 Residential leasehold and commonhold \_ Law Commission - HL11001.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-01/HL11001>

## Shipping: Costs

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any additional costs to shipping companies that will be incurred from the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [HL11057]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government recognises the importance of shipping to global trade and to trade between the UK and EU. The Government continues to engage closely with the shipping sector on the range of changes brought by the end of the transition period. Some of these changes will depend not only on our future trading relations with the European Union but also with the rest of the world. Due to this and the fact that shipping often has complex ownership arrangements, we do not have a unified assessment of the additional costs to all shipping companies. We will continue working closely with the sector to assess and advise on these changes.

## Sizewell C Power Station

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to appoint advisors to assist in assessing the value for money of the proposed Sizewell C nuclear project. [HL10885]

**Lord Callanan:** Nuclear power provides a reliable source of low-carbon electricity. The Government is pursuing large-scale new nuclear projects subject to clear value for money for both consumers and taxpayers and all relevant approvals. We continue to engage regularly with developers to understand the available options. The Government uses advisors to support discussions with developers, including on the value for money of proposed new nuclear projects.

### Small Businesses: Finance

*Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they provide local authorities with (1) guidance, or (2) obligations, in relation to funding provided by the Small Business Fund; and if so, whether the funding provided by Harrogate Council to the Harrogate Conservative Association is in line with any such guidance or obligations. [HL10841]

**Lord Callanan:** Local Authorities were provided with initial guidance on 24 March 2020 regarding the eligibility and distribution of the Small Business Grant Fund.

Under the Small Business Grant Fund, all business hereditaments which were on 11 March in receipt of either the Small Business Rates Relief or the Rural Rates Relief in the business rates system were eligible for a payment of £10,000. Eligible recipients were entitled to receive one grant per qualifying hereditament.

Local Authorities were responsible for determining eligibility for the Small Business Grant Fund in line with the guidance provided to them.

### Small Businesses: Trade

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to simplify their communication with SMEs about trade policy after the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU; and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their communications with SMEs about trade policy after that transition period. [HL10933]

**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](https://gov.uk/transition) to take action now, get their personalised list of actions, and subscribe to alerts to find out when things change.

The Government will continue to review and update the guidance we have published to help ensure businesses including SMEs, which are of such importance to our economy, are as prepared as possible for the changes and opportunities the end of the year will bring.

### Special Educational Needs

*Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the numbers of children registered as having special educational needs in each year since that term was first used to the most recent date for which such data are available; and what plans they have to publish those data in tabular form. [HL10860]

**Baroness Berridge:** The special educational needs (SEN) system was substantially reformed in 2014. One of the features of this was that there was a wider age range than before, meaning higher SEN numbers amongst children. Children can either receive support in schools (known as SEN support) or those with more complex needs are issued with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The department collects and publishes data on the numbers of pupils with SEN support and of children and young people aged 0-25 with EHC plans from 2015 (and the forerunner to EHC plans, constituting statements of SEN, which were phased out between 2015 and 2018).

Data shows that in the academic year 2015/16, 991,981 pupils were on SEN Support; in the academic year 2019/20 this was 1,079,000, and in 2015, 240,183 children and young people aged 0-25 had EHC plans (combined with statements); in 2020, there were 390,109 EHC plans.

Further data on pupils in schools with SEN (EHC plans and SEN support) can be found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

Data on all children and young people aged 0-25 with an EHC plan can be found at <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

The releases contain tables with key figures, and a table tool allowing users to create their own tables by selecting options from the filters available. Information on pupils in schools with SEN is expected to be updated in July 2021 with data for the 2020/21 academic year, and information on EHC plans in May 2021.

### Special Educational Needs: Pupil Exclusions

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that children with special educational needs receive an education and healthcare plan before exclusion from school is proposed. [HL10917]

**Baroness Berridge:** It is important that schools take appropriate steps to address the underlying causes of poor behaviour, which could include pupils' special educational needs (SEN). Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to assess whether children and

young people have special educational needs that require an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. The statutory guidance on exclusions sets out that early intervention measures should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN that a pupil may have. This guidance is available here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/921405/20170831\\_Exclusion\\_Stat\\_guidance\\_Web\\_version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921405/20170831_Exclusion_Stat_guidance_Web_version.pdf).

The law does not prevent a pupil with SEN or a disability from being excluded, however schools have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against disabled pupils by excluding them from school because of their disability. Any exclusion must be lawful, reasonable and fair.

Schools should balance their responsibilities of considering what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs for children with SEN with their responsibility to ensure that all children are able to experience good quality teaching and learning without disruption in the classroom and without being exposed to risks to their health or safety. The guidance also sets out that schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding pupils who have an EHC plan.

The department is pursuing an ambitious programme of work on school behaviour and to rapidly improve the availability of good alternative provision, so that permanently excluded children and children at risk of exclusion receive a high-quality education and support suited to their individual needs.

We are investing £10 million in behaviour hubs which will enable schools and multi-academy trusts with exemplary behaviour cultures and practices to work in partnership with those that want to improve their behaviour culture.

Additionally, to help support and equip staff, the Early Career Framework reforms entitle all early career teachers to 2 years of professional development in 5 core areas including behaviour management.

We will revise guidance on exclusions to make it clearer and more consistent, so that head teachers have the information they need to use exclusion properly and proportionately. We will also continue to engage with key stakeholders, including academics, when revising guidance.

## State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British citizens in receipt of a UK state pension are overseas resident. [HL11236]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** State Pension is payable worldwide to those who meet the qualifying conditions without regard to nationality. In May 2020, there were 1,157,372 UK State Pension recipients living overseas.

These figures broken down by nationality are not available.

Source: Stat Xplore May 2020.

## Stocks and Shares

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the governance processes of equity index construction, including in relation to (1) economic growth, (2) financial stability, and (3) management accountability. [HL10897]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The use and operation of equity indices by UK supervised entities is governed by the Benchmarks Regulation, introduced in 2016. The Government has proposed amendments to the Benchmarks Regulation in the current Financial Services Bill to support the orderly wind-down of critical benchmarks. However, there are no current plans for a broader review of the legislation.

## Telecommunications

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to review the effectiveness of the Electronic Communications Code contained within the Digital Economy Act 2017, and (2) to revise that code in order to address any barriers identified. [HL11101]

**Baroness Barran:** We are committed to consulting on whether further reforms to the Electronic Communications Code are necessary to support the delivery of digital connectivity. Timings for this consultation are still to be finalised, and we will confirm this as soon as possible.

## Test and Trace Support Payment

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether each local authority will be provided with full funding (1) for all £500 self-isolation payments made, and (2) for all the administrative costs of running that scheme. [HL11081]

**Lord Bethell:** Local authorities have been given additional funding to enable them to make discretionary £500 payments to people who do not fulfil the main eligibility criteria but will still face hardship if they have to self-isolate. It is for local authorities to make decisions on applications for discretionary payments, based on the individual circumstances of the applicant.

We have worked closely with local authorities in England and we have provided an initial £50 million to cover their costs for administering the scheme as follows:

- £25 million to cover the costs of the support payment;
- £15 million for discretionary payments; and
- £10 million for administration costs.

## Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to other governments about the use of technology to provide safe international travel without the need for quarantine. [HL10930]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government is in regular contact with our international partners, bilaterally and through international forums, to discuss a range of approaches to support safe international travel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government is keen to learn from our international partners, and to explore systems and testing measures that other countries put in place. We will also look closely at emerging technology and evidence that supports reducing restrictions on travel.

To reduce the period of self-isolation, the 'Test to Release for International Travel' scheme has been announced and will come into force on 15 December. These arrangements allow for anyone arriving in England to pay for a private test on the fifth day of self-isolation and exit self-isolation if the result is negative.

## Turkey: Aviation

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Turkey about the opening of Turkish airspace for flights to (1) Armenia, and (2) Georgia. [HL10816]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK Government has not made representations to the Government of Turkey regarding the opening of Turkish airspace for flights to Armenia and Georgia.

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which EU funding streams were taken into account to inform their allocation of £1.5 billion a year to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [HL10856]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and places. Funding for the UKSPF will ramp up so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match receipts from EU structural funds, on average reaching around £1.5 billion per year. Its funding profile will be set out at the next Spending Review. £1.5 billion is the average annual investment from EU Structural Funds (including ERDF, ESF and ETC) over the previous EU funding round.

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government for how many years will the UK Shared Prosperity Fund be allocated a £1.5 billion annual budget. [HL10857]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and places.

Funding for the UKSPF will ramp up so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match receipts from EU structural funds, on average reaching around £1.5 billion per year. Its funding profile will be set out at the next Spending Review.

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the pilot projects funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will begin; what criteria will be used to select these pilots; and which (1) priority groups, and (2) geographic areas, the Fund will target. [HL10883]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and places.

Funding for the UKSPF will ramp up so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match receipts from EU structural funds, on average reaching around £1.5 billion per year. Its funding profile will be set out at the next Spending Review

To help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UKSPF, the Government will provide £220 million additional funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. This funding will be delivered UK-wide. Further details will be published in the New Year.

## UK Trade with EU: Customs

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to make all of the customs declarations paperwork required by lorry drivers entering the UK from the EU from 1 January 2021 available in languages other than English, including online forms; and if so, in which languages such paperwork will be available. [HL10744]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** HMRC do not make official paperwork available in other languages, except Welsh.

The Department for Transport document entitled "Transporting goods between Great Britain and the EU from 1 January 2021: guidance for hauliers and commercial drivers" sets out all the requirements and is available in other languages covering the countries where most drivers are from (English; Bulgarian; Czech; Welsh; German; Spanish; French; Hungarian; Lithuanian; Dutch; Polish; Russian; Turkish and Romanian).

## Universal Credit

Asked by *Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 16 October (HL8845), what adjustments are made to ensure fairness of treatment between those pension contributions made under net pay arrangements and relief at source pension contributions when calculating the earnings figure used for Universal Credit entitlement. [HL10794]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** It remains the policy, when assessing entitlement to Universal Credit, that all contributions to personal and occupational pension schemes are deducted from the calculation of earnings in the same way as any National Insurance or income tax paid in the assessment period. This ensures equity of treatment of pension contributions in the calculation of Universal Credit.

## Urban Areas: Regeneration

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the regeneration of town centres. [HL10855]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Government is working to deliver a package of long-term measures that support town centre regeneration. This includes the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, where we brought forward over £80 million funding this year to support immediate improvements in 101 towns selected for deals. The fund will support local areas in England to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.

Our £1 billion Future High Streets Fund competition will help create jobs and build more resilient local economies and communities. We are in the final stages of assessing the proposals from the 101 shortlisted applicants and expect to announce the outcome of the competition soon.

Further, the Government is launching a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4 billion for England. This will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery.

Government is also providing support through the High Streets Task Force, helping local leaders in their work revitalising their high streets and town centres by providing proactive support to local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and connect local areas to relevant experts.

In addition, Government has recently reformed the use classes order to create a new 'Commercial, Business and Service' use class which will give businesses greater flexibility to change to a broad range of uses, such as shops, leisure, and offices as well as nurseries and health centres, without the need for planning permission. More widely we are looking to transform the planning system

as set out in the White Paper 'Planning for the Future' which will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible, and more certain for developers.

## Vaccination

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the national vaccine strategy as announced in their consultation Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, published on 22 July 2019. [HL10787]

**Lord Bethell:** The publication of England's national vaccine strategy has been delayed as a result of our ongoing focus on responding to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. As such, plans for the vaccine strategy will be kept under review. We endeavour to update and refresh the strategy in 2021, to accurately reflect the changing landscape and investment in vaccine development carried out by the Covid-19 Vaccine Taskforce.

## Young People: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what Cabinet-level discussions involving the Prime Minister have taken place in the last year about (1) establishing, and (2) monitoring, cross-Government objectives for supporting young people not on Universal Credit through the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL10882]

**Lord True:** In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not usually disclosed.

The Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable.

Young people benefit from many of the interventions introduced by the Government to support the economy during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced on 25 November that a specific £16.5m Youth Covid-19 Support Fund will protect the immediate future of grassroots and national youth organisations across the country. The Government has also released £90m from dormant accounts to support charities tackling youth unemployment.

## Young People: Unemployment

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what Cabinet-level interdepartmental discussions have taken place in the last year about the 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) rate for 18 to 24-year olds; what objectives have been set for this NEET rate; and what steps they will take to achieve those objectives. [HL10881]

**Baroness Berridge:** My hon. Friend, the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills recently met with my hon. Friend, the Minister for Employment to discuss how our respective departments can work even more closely on the skills and employment agenda to ensure people are equipped with the skills they need for their futures and are informed about their options.

We know that 13.1% of 18-24 year olds in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in July – September 2020, according to the Office for National Statistics, which represents a fall on the same quarter from last year (13.3% July – September 2019). We will continue to monitor the NEET rate and review the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on young people NEET.

As part of my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Plan for Jobs, we made a number of skills commitments such as a significant expansion of the traineeships programme, the introduction of high value courses for year 13 leavers to continue in learning and payments for employers to hire new apprentices. We are tripling the scale of the traineeship programme to help even more young people who are NEET or at risk of

being NEET, prepare for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience. Alongside the expansion, we have reformed the traineeship programme to enable providers to deliver a more flexible and tailored programme during the Covid-19 outbreak. We are working with employers to develop sector-focused models of traineeships that prepare young people for specific roles, such as construction.

The National Careers Service in the community prioritises those aged 18-24 NEET and supports those most in need of intensive careers advice and guidance.

Kickstart and the introduction of Youth Hubs by the Department for Work and Pensions will also create many high quality work placements for young people claiming Universal Credit deemed at risk of long-term unemployment. More sector-based work academy programmes will provide vocational training and guaranteed interviews for more people, helping them gain the skills needed for jobs in their local area. We will be monitoring progress and take up of these offers alongside NEET numbers.

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