

**Session 2019-21
No. 160**



**Tuesday
15 December 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers..... 10

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 15 December 2020

Business Impact Target

[HLWS646]

Lord Callanan: This statement sets the Government's Business Impact Target in respect of the economic impact on business of qualifying regulatory provisions which come into, or cease to be, in force for this Parliament, and covers related matters as required under section 21 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 ("the Act").

The Manifesto undertook that Government "*will strive to achieve the right regulatory balance between supporting excellent business practice and protecting workers, consumers and the environment*". The Government does not believe that the current methods of assessing regulatory impacts allow for this. Therefore, the Government will consult with business to ensure the impact of regulation is reflected more effectively, so as to continue to provide necessary protections without placing unnecessary burdens on business. Until the completion of the review the Government will set a target of zero. This will in effect be a holding target and will enable Government to continue to monitor regulatory impacts and remain transparent to business on the impacts of the regulatory programme it is delivering in the immediate term. This holding target makes clear that Government remains committed to achieving regulatory balance and does not intend to increase the regulatory burden on business.

Upon completion of the review, the target and the methodology to be used for assessing the economic impact, along with any other related matters as required under section 21 of the Act, will be revised to reflect the findings of the review.

Business Impact Target[1]

The Government is setting a net target of zero savings to business and voluntary or community bodies from qualifying measures that come into force or cease to be in force during this Parliament.

Interim Target[2]

The interim target covers the savings to be achieved from qualifying measures that come into force or cease to be in force in the first three years of this Parliament. The Government's interim target is also set at zero.

Measurement of the Business Impact Target[3]

The impact of each qualifying measure will be assessed on the basis of its Equivalent Annual Net Direct Cost to Business (EANDCB) measured in 2019 prices and with a 2020 present value base year. As in the previous Parliament, the contribution to the Business Impact Target will be the sum of the EANDCB over the first five years for which the measure will be in force, or the sum of the EANDCB over the full lifetime of the measure for

measures that are, or will be, in force for less than five years.

Qualifying Regulatory Provisions[4]

Under the Act, the measures that are in scope for the Business Impact Target are described as "regulatory provisions". That includes both legislation and the activities of Ministers and listed regulators. The Secretary of State must determine the regulatory provisions that are to be scored against the target ("qualifying regulatory provisions"). Qualifying regulatory provisions are regulatory provisions that do not fall within any of the exclusions set out below:

a) Regulatory provisions that have been certified by departments or regulators as falling under the *de minimis* rule, namely those that have an EANDCB of less than ± £5 million;

b) Regulatory provisions that implement new or changed obligations from European Union Regulations, Decisions and Directives, and other international commitments and obligations, except in cases of gold-plating. This includes measures incorporating EU law into domestic law under the EU Withdrawal Bill and legislation made for the purpose of implementing the EU Withdrawal Agreement, including implementation of new EU law during the implementation period;

c) Regulatory provisions that have been certified by departments or regulators as dealing with deficiencies in retained EU Law (under the EU Withdrawal Bill and other legislation);

d) Regulatory provisions that are intended to deliver – or to replicate – better competition-based outcomes in markets characterised by market power;

e) Regulatory provisions relating to systemic financial risk;

f) Regulatory provisions relating to civil emergencies;

g) Regulatory provisions concerning fines and penalties, and redress and restitution;

h) Regulatory provisions that implement changes to the classification and scheduling of drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 where these follow the recommendations of the relevant independent advisory body;

i) Regulatory provisions that have been certified by departments or regulators as relating to the safety of tenants, residents and occupants in buildings that stem from, or relate to, Government's response to the Grenfell tragedy, reviews, inquiries or working groups;

j) Regulator casework including specific investigation and enforcement activity, individual licence decisions, and individual advice;

k) Education, communications activities, and promotional campaigns by regulators, including media campaigns, posters, factsheets, bulletins, letters, websites, and information / advice helplines;

l) Policy development by regulators, including formal and informal consultations, policy reviews, and ad hoc information requests;

m) Changes to the organisation and management of regulators, except for those resulting from legislative changes or another policy change that is a Qualifying Regulatory Provision.

Independent Verification Body[5]

The Government will reappoint the Regulatory Policy Committee as the Independent Verification Body to verify the impact on business of measures in scope of the Business Impact Target [and the list of non-qualifying regulatory provisions].

[1] As required under section 21(1)(a) of the Act.

[2] As required under section 21(1)(b) of the Act.

[3] As required under section 21(3)(b) of the Act.

[4] As required under section 21(3)(a) of the Act.

[5] As required under section 25(1) of the Act.

Climate Ambition Summit 2020

[HLWS649]

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

On Saturday, 12 December, the United Kingdom co-convened the Climate Ambition Summit with the United Nations and France, and in partnership with Chile and Italy, on the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement. The Summit marked a major milestone on the road to the crucial UN climate conference COP26 in Glasgow next November.

Countries representing around 65% of global carbon dioxide emissions, and around 70% of the world's economy have now committed to reaching net zero or carbon neutrality. This includes announcements made in the run up to and at the Climate Ambition Summit and those expected early next year. This follows a huge diplomatic and cross-government effort to raise ambition.

75 leaders from all continents outlined over 90 commitments at the Summit demonstrating that climate change is a global priority despite the shared challenges of COVID-19. There is mutual understanding that the science is clear. Climate destruction is accelerating, and there remains much more to do as a global community to keep the global temperature rise to 1.5C.

The UK met commitments covering the 3 pillars of the Paris Agreement. We formally communicated our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC which commits the UK to a new ambitious target to reduce the UK's emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, published our first Adaptation Communication and reiterated our commitment to providing £11.6 billion in climate finance. A copy of the NDC has been laid in Parliament.

The Prime Minister announced that the UK will no longer provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, other than in exceptional circumstances, as soon as possible,

and align its support to enable clean energy exports. The consultation, which is now live, will seek views on how to further enable an accelerated growth in UK clean energy exports, and on the impacts of the timing of implementation of the policy shift.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution announced last month which spans clean energy, buildings, transport, nature and innovative technologies and will mobilise £12 billion of government investment to unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030; support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs; and level up regions across the UK.

44 countries and the EU announced headlines of their more ambitious NDCs. This includes a number of countries who have made significant increases such as Colombia, Jamaica, Peru and the EU, as well as the UK.

24 countries have now announced new commitments, strategies or plans to reach net zero or carbon neutrality. With recent commitments from China, Japan, South Korea and Argentina establishing a clear benchmark for G20 countries.

The Summit heard from the poorest and most vulnerable countries, who are already feeling the impacts of climate change. Barbados, Ethiopia and Maldives set themselves an aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, with the right support. Meanwhile, Fiji, Malawi, Nauru and Nepal and others are aiming for 2050.

20 new or forthcoming adaptation commitments including in National Adaptation Plans, Adaptation Communications and NDCs. Countries such as Ethiopia are leading the way, by taking a whole-of-economy approach that protects people and nature and Suriname is stepping up its implementation of its National Adaptation Plan. Developed countries, including the UK, Netherlands and Spain, are also upping their adaptation efforts, showing no country is immune to the impacts of climate change. The Summit also saw the launch of the Race to Resilience setting a goal of safeguarding 4 billion people vulnerable to climate risks by 2030 (more detail below).

A number of leaders set out concrete policies to implement their economy-wide targets. Pakistan announced that they will have no more power based on coal, while Israel has committed to ending fossil fuel energy use by 2050. Canada greatly increased the floor price for carbon. Denmark announced that it will end all new oil and gas exploration in the North Sea. 15 countries profiled their targets to accelerate the transition to renewable energy by 2030 - with Barbados (fossil-fuel free), Vanuatu (100% renewables) and Austria (100% renewables), all turning their backs on fossil fuels. Alongside the UK, France and Sweden set out plans to end international financial support for fossil fuels.

A strong commitment to protecting nature was also clear. Leaders spoke about their existing plans to increase the use of nature-based solutions to combat climate change.

12 donor countries highlighted their commitments to support developing countries, including just under €500m in additional investment from Germany, an additional €1bn per year from France from its previous target, as well as a World Bank commitment to ensure that 35% of their portfolio includes climate co-benefits, and EIB commitment to ensure that 50% includes climate co-benefits, as well as 100% alignment of EIB's activities on Paris agreement. However, it is clear that there is much more to do to ensure that no one is left behind. COVID-19 has impacted international climate finance flows this year. 2021 will be a critical year to show that finance is flowing and to meet and surpass the \$100bn goal.

The Summit also saw commitments from business, cities and investors. Over 2,500 businesses, cities, regions, investors and members of the Climate Ambition Alliance representing nearly 70% of the global economy have now got commitments to net zero by 2050.

- The Race to Resilience campaign, launched at the Summit, brings together non-state actors and initiatives which commit to building resilience actions to safeguard by 2030 the lives and livelihoods of 4 billion people from groups and communities vulnerable to climate risks. Examples of actions include: Zurich Insurance (Switzerland) announced that the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance will triple funding by 2025 and expand its reach from 11 to 21 countries and the Mayor of Freetown (Sierra Leone) committed to planting 1 million trees between 2020 and 2021.
- Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative (Global) - representing US\$9 trillion of assets under management has seen each of the 30 founding members unequivocally commit to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This includes setting individual portfolio targets, as well as engaging companies in each member's portfolio to set decarbonization goals in line with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C.
- C40 Cities (Global) - announced the launch of the Cities Race to Zero campaign and that 70 cities and local governments have joined in the first month.
- Godrej & Boyce (India) - a manufacturing company, announced commitments to key global initiatives including the Business Ambition for 1.5C, setting science-based targets, and advancing energy efficiency, in line with their overall ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- International Airlines Group (Spain/UK) - are the first airline group worldwide to commit to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and the Oneworld Alliance of 13 airlines representing 20% of global aviation, is investing US\$400m in the development of sustainable aviation fuels (over the next 20 years).
- Dalmia Cement (India) - 40 of the world's leading producers of cement issued an industry commitment to deliver carbon-neutral concrete by 2050. The Indian cement company has gone further and established a roadmap to become carbon negative by 2040 and is

working globally to meet its 100% renewable energy objectives.

- Movida-Rent-a-Car (Brazil) - presented the actions that will underpin their pledge of net-zero emissions by 2030 and becoming carbon positive by 2040.
- Apple (United States) - pledged carbon neutrality for its supply chain and products by 2030 and announced new progress that 95 of its suppliers have committed to moving to 100% renewable energy.
- Artistic Milliners (Pakistan) - a textile company announced joining the UN Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action and shared their actions on the circular economy to reduce their carbon footprint and provide zero emissions energy to thousands of homes.

Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 April to 30 June 2020

[HLWS648]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAFSA 2010), the Treasury is required to prepare a quarterly report regarding its exercise of the powers conferred on it by Part 1 of TAFSA 2010. This written statement satisfies that requirement for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime).

Under the ISIL-AQ asset freezing regime, the UN has responsibility for designations and the Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and OFSI has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAFSA 2010.

EU Regulation (2016/1686) was implemented on 22 September 2016. This permits the EU to make autonomous Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) listings.

The following tables set out the key asset-freezing activity in the UK during the quarter.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime Q2 2020 [WMS Q2 of 2020 - Table.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-15/HLWS648/>

Education: Covid-19 Testing

[HLWS650]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) has made the following written ministerial statement.

As a government we have made it a national priority that education and childcare settings should continue to operate as normally as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, and we have continued to work with the profession to continue full-time face-to-face education.

We are therefore deploying the latest rapid-result coronavirus tests to schools and colleges from January. This will help us to find those with the virus and isolate them quickly to break chains of transmission. It will also help us keep close contacts of positive cases – whether staff or students – in education as we will test them every day rather than asking them to self-isolate.

Testing, along with existing infection prevention and control measures such as ventilation, increased hygiene, and wearing of face coverings in communal areas where appropriate, can ensure pupils are given the best chance of continuing face-to-face education.

The testing programme builds on the success of testing pilots in schools and colleges over the past few months. It will start with secondary schools and colleges, with staff eligible for weekly rapid tests.

This will help identify asymptomatic cases – which make up a third of all cases – limiting the spread of the virus.

Staff and students who are close contacts of positive cases will be eligible for daily testing, preventing the need for self-isolation. Only if a daily test returns a positive result will the person need to isolate.

Using daily testing for close contacts of positive cases will help tackle COVID-19 related absence among the workforce and students, allowing them to continue in face-to-face education, with all the benefits that this brings.

To support delivery of asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges, settings will be able to apply for reimbursement for reasonable administrative costs such as staff time.

We realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for staff, students, pupils and parents. I want to thank all involved in education for their tireless dedication. The hard work of our education workforce has already substantially reduced the risk of transmission of coronavirus within education settings and we will now use this new testing approach to ensure more young people are able to remain in education, benefitting from the national priority of keeping education open for all.

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

Government Transparency and Accountability

[HLWS647]

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

Since 2010, the Government has been at the forefront of opening up data to allow Parliament, the public and the media to hold public bodies to account.

Despite the need to reprioritise resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, tremendous progress continues to be made this year by central government departments in publishing core transparency data. Such online transparency is crucial to delivering value for money, cutting waste and inefficiency, and ensuring every pound of taxpayers' money is spent in the best possible way.

The Government will continue to look at how the range of information published by Government can be improved and made as useful as possible to the public, press and Parliament.

The following subject areas include documents and information that the Government is due to publish, or which have recently been made available.

Ministerial Transparency

The Government is today publishing an updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities.

Transparency on Senior Officials and Special Advisers

An annual list of salary details for senior public officials in departments and arms' length bodies earning £150,000 and above will be published today. These government organisations need to be able to attract high calibre people who can deliver quality services and drive forward projects in a way that represents true value to the taxpayer. However, very high salaries in the public sector must be justified, so it is important that we publish this information and allow it to be scrutinised.

In line with legislation, an annual list of current Special Advisers and their costs is being published. Special advisers are a critical part of the team supporting Ministers. They add a political dimension to the advice and assistance available to Ministers while reinforcing the impartiality of the permanent Civil Service by distinguishing the source of political advice and support.

Transparency in the Civil Service

The Government is publishing new annual figures on gender pay differentials across the Civil Service. Our gender pay gap continues to narrow and is still significantly lower than the private sector, but we know there is more to do so continue to work hard to tackle this. In recent years we have introduced blind recruitment, advertised all jobs as flexible and continued to review recruitment policies to ensure fairness and equality.

Demographic data of the 2019 Civil Service People Survey, an annual survey of our employees' attitudes and experiences of working in the Civil Service has also been published. The Employee Engagement Index was 63% in

the 2019 People Survey, the highest it had been since the survey began in 2009.

Transparency on spending

Departments have published routine prompt payment data, demonstrating our continued commitment to supporting businesses by ensuring they are paid on time. Departments will also be publishing routine spend data.

The Government has begun publishing the top three Key Performance Indicators for central government's most important contracts.

Transparency in public procurement

Transparency is a key principle of public procurement. Openness underpins accountability for public money, anti-corruption and the effectiveness of procurements. Long planned reforms in our Green Paper on transforming public procurement, published today, will ensure open and transparent contracting.

Transparency on delivery

HM Treasury will today be publishing new priority outcomes for each UK government department. These capture the government's long-term policy objectives, from reducing crime to improving education standards across the country.

These outcomes and metrics include cross-cutting outcomes and shared metrics in areas where closer working between departments would achieve better results. This reflects the Government's commitment to breaking down silos and enabling stronger collaboration between departments. Citizens will be able to track performance against finalised outcomes through public reporting.

Copies of associated documents are being placed in the Library of the House and will be published on GOV.UK.

Further transparency publications will be published in the New Year, in the usual way.

Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation

[HLWS643]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am publishing a paper on the characteristics of group-based child sexual exploitation, which was prompted by high profile cases of sexual grooming in towns including Rochdale and Rotherham.

An External Reference Group, consisting of independent experts on child sexual exploitation, reviewed and informed this work. Members included Labour MP for Rotherham Sarah Champion, Conservative MP for Wakefield Imran Ahmad Khan, survivor and campaigner Sammy Woodhouse, and Simon Bailey, National Police Chiefs Council lead on child protection.

The paper summarises studies which suggest individuals committing group-based child sexual

exploitation are predominantly, but not exclusively, male and often under the age of 30.

Studies indicate that motivations differ between offenders, but that a sexual interest in children is not always the predominant motive. Financial gain and a desire for sexual gratification are common motives, and misogyny and disregard for women and girls may further enable the abuse.

Offenders can come from a range of social backgrounds – some have been stable middle-class professionals, some of whom were married, whilst others have had more chaotic lifestyles.

Some studies have indicated an over-representation of Asian and Black offenders. However, it is difficult to draw robust conclusions about the ethnicity of offenders as existing research is limited and data collection is poor.

This is disappointing because community and cultural factors are clearly relevant to understanding and tackling offending. Therefore, a commitment to improve the collection and analysis of data on group-based child sexual exploitation, including in relation to characteristics of offenders such as ethnicity and other factors, will be included in the forthcoming Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy.

Victims and survivors of these abhorrent crimes have told me how they were let down by the state in the name of political correctness. What happened to these children remains one of the biggest stains on our country's conscience. I am determined to ensure the government, law enforcement and other partners better understand any community and cultural factors relevant to tackling offending – helping us to safeguard children from abuse, deliver justice for victims and survivors, and restore the public's confidence in the criminal justice system's ability to confront these repulsive crimes.

The paper is available on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/group-based-child-sexual-exploitation-characteristics-of-offending>). A copy of the paper will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

I thank Members for their continued engagement on this important issue.

Investigation of Unauthorised Disclosure on 30 October

[HLWS640]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

At the beginning of Prime Minister's Questions on 18 November, I updated the House on the Cabinet Office investigation into the unauthorised disclosure on 30 October of the decision to put in place further restrictions across England to combat the spread of Covid-19 (official report column 909044).

This investigation remains ongoing. If the final aspects of the investigation identify the source, the Government will provide a further update to the House.

Investigatory Powers Commissioner: Annual Report 2019

[HLWS641]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I have today laid before both Houses a copy of the annual report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner 2019. The report was drafted and submitted by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, Sir Brian Leveson QC.

Overall, this report demonstrates that the security and intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies and other relevant public authorities show extremely high levels of operational competence combined with respect for the law. The report also sets out the breadth and complexity of the powers covered by Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and other legislation, and offers constructive criticism on the practical framework and individual instances of how these are used. Where IPCO have identified problems, departments and agencies have worked rigorously to address these.

Further to Section 234 of the 2016 Act, the Commissioner has also submitted to me a confidential annex to the Report, dealing with the work of the intelligence agencies. I concur with the Commissioner that publication of this annex would be prejudicial to national security and not in the public interest. However, I can confirm that the Annex does not raise substantive concerns or criticisms not covered in the main report.

I would like to add that this Report demonstrates the high quality of the oversight of our security and intelligence agencies' use of the most intrusive powers. I am satisfied that our arrangements are amongst the strongest and most effective in the world.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the current and previous Commissioners and their staff for their work, as well as echoing the Commissioners' thanks to the agencies and departments and civil society organisations which have helped with the establishment of IPCO over the past few years.

I commend this report to the House.

Plan for Jobs Update

[HLWS644]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey MP) has made the following Written Statement:

The Government's Plan for Jobs is already supporting people back into employment. Jobcentres are open across the country, including 262 Jobcentres that recently started opening on Saturdays, and we are now making over 750,000 contacts a week. With an extra 7,000 work coaches already in place, we are on track to meet our commitment to double the number of work coaches by the end of this financial year. While many claimants are ready

to move back into work, others may need additional support including acquiring work experience, training or new skills.

For young people especially, a lack of work experience can be a barrier to stepping on to the jobs ladder. That is why, through our Kickstart scheme, we are funding the creation of new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds, with work coaches referring young people to prospective employers who are able to spread the start date of job placements over the next year.

After inviting expressions of interest from employers in September, young people started benefiting from the first placements in November. We have seen a brilliant response from employers with over 32,000 roles already approved. Vacancies have been created with employers large and small and across a range of sectors, including construction, digital and technology, logistics and manufacturing. Processing of applications is now proceeding at pace and we hope to see many more of our young claimants starting placements early in the New Year.

In delivering Kickstart, it is important we use taxpayers' money carefully to ensure the quality of the wraparound support to young people and avoid fraud. Therefore our processes have rightly been rigorous in assessing applications made directly from employers and those made through a Kickstart 'gateway' where employers, particularly smaller ones, can receive help such as from a local authority or charity. We have over 200 'gateway' organisations now approved with a significant number of roles. However, we know our processes have led to a number of employers and organisations not being approved, particularly applications by sole traders, whether directly or through gateways.

We are continuing to review and improve our assessment and control processes, including those on financial due diligence. For example, currently there is only one route for sole traders to be involved in Kickstart and that is through a gateway that provides a PAYE service as part of their support. We have now approved a new gateway, operated by the Federation of Small Businesses and in partnership with Adecco Working Ventures, to provide such a route. Other organisations are considering creating similar models.

Disabled people receiving support through Access to Work are eligible for Kickstart placements and these will be actively promoted by our work coaches and national employment programme teams. I am pleased that a number of people on Kickstart have come from particularly disadvantaged groups and we will continue to make our work programmes appropriately inclusive.

Other parts of our Plan for Jobs agenda being delivered by DWP include SWAPs, JETS and JFS: Sector Work-based Academy Programmes, Job Entry Targeted Scheme and Job Finding Support. The number of referrals and starts made to SWAPs has exceeded our initial estimates and we are seeing thousands of people being supported through our other schemes. In light of this uptake and to

ensure that we can continue to support claimants we are taking steps to increase the number of placements available on the SWAPs scheme.

Work is also underway on Restart, our long-term unemployment programme, that will support over one million individuals. We have issued our Invitation to Tender for the programme to start in summer 2021.

Our Plan for Jobs is the most ambitious employment programme ever undertaken, particularly the scope and extent of Kickstart. I encourage members of the House to work with local employers to ensure Kickstart helps provide a flying start for our young people.

Transforming Public Procurement

[HLWS642]

Lord True: Today my Honourable Colleague, Julia Lopez, Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office, announced the publication of a Green Paper and public consultation on 'Transforming Public Procurement':

The UK spends around £290 billion per year on public procurement. Leaving the EU offers us a huge opportunity to reform how this money is spent so that it better meets the needs of this country. We can create a new, simpler procurement regime that will reduce costs for business and the public sector by reducing bureaucracy and improving commercial outcomes. Such a large amount of government spending must be leveraged to play its part in the UK's economic recovery and unleash opportunities for small businesses to innovate in public service delivery.

The UK remains open for business and committed to our international obligations. Being a member of the WTO Government Procurement Agreement gives British businesses access to £1.3 trillion in public procurement opportunities overseas. The terms of that trade agreement mean we cannot simply discriminate against suppliers from other GPA countries. Neither would we wish to discriminate against overseas suppliers that deliver inward investment and better value for UK taxpayers.

In support of this, I am launching a public consultation by a Green Paper on 'Transforming Public Procurement'. The consultation will be open until March 2021.

In developing the Green Paper proposals, officials in the Government Commercial Function engaged with over 500 stakeholders and organisations through many hundreds of hours of discussions and workshops. Stakeholders included those from central and local government, the devolved administrations, education, and health as well as start-ups, small, medium and large businesses, the voluntary and charity sectors, academics, international experts and procurement lawyers.

Our proposals are wide-ranging and include:

- reducing the overall volume of legislation by harmonising the different regulatory schemes for the public sector, utilities and concessions contracts;

- overhauling the current seven complex and inflexible procurement procedures and replacing them with three simple, modern procedures;
- increasing the scope to take account of societal benefits when awarding contracts;
- making procurement more transparent through greater use of open contracting and enabling a more efficient 'tell us once' register of supplier data;
- making it mandatory to publish a notice when a decision is made to use the limited tendering procedure;
- providing more scope to exclude suppliers in certain circumstances, such as for poor past performance, and corruption-related matters; and
- reforming the remedies system, through making the court review process faster and less costly, capping damages, and further investigating the feasibility of tribunals.

The consultation published today gives everyone an opportunity to help shape public procurement for the future and I wish to encourage all involved in public procurement to have their say. This includes those small and medium-sized enterprises and voluntary, community and social enterprises who feel the existing EU rules hinder their participation in the market.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Transforming Public Procurement [(CP353) - Transforming Public Procurement.pdf]

Transforming Public Procurement (Large Print) [(CP353) - Transforming Public Procurement, Large Print.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-15/HLWS642/>

Unconscious Bias Training

[HLWS645]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary (Julia Lopez MP) has today made the following written statement:

This government is committed to levelling up opportunity for everyone, no matter what their background. We are also determined to eliminate discrimination in the workplace. To meet those ambitions, we must ensure that policy and advice on equality is evidence-based, and is delivered in a way that means we can respond quickly to new insights.

Earlier this year, the Government Equalities Office commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team for a summary of the evidence on unconscious bias and diversity training. Titled 'Unconscious bias and diversity training - what the evidence says', the report highlights that 'there is currently no evidence that this training changes behaviour in the long term or improves workplace equality in terms of representation of women, ethnic minorities or other minority groups'. It also states

that there is emerging evidence of unintended negative consequences.

The report is published alongside this response, and will be deposited in the House Libraries, today. In light of its findings, Ministers have concluded that unconscious bias training does not achieve its intended aims. It will therefore be phased out in the Civil Service. We encourage other public sector employers to do likewise.

Background

Unconscious bias training typically aims to raise awareness of the potential biases and cognitive shortcuts that may negatively affect decision-making and behaviour in the workplace. The intent is usually to reduce both explicit and implicit bias towards members of particular groups that share characteristics protected under law and change behaviour.

Although unconscious bias training takes a variety of forms, it is normally delivered as a discrete individual or group session that aims to set out the theory behind implicit bias, provide exercises that demonstrate how such biases might potentially affect behaviour, and suggest strategies to participants for avoiding that behaviour in future.

Such training sessions have been introduced by a range of organisations as part of a well-intentioned effort to build fairer and more inclusive workplaces. They have often formed part of a wider employer toolkit aimed at tackling discrimination and building inclusion.

However, in recent years a significant debate has emerged over their effectiveness and quality. Despite a growing diversity training industry and increased adoption of unconscious bias training programmes, a strong body of evidence has emerged that shows that such training has no sustained impact on behaviour and may even be counter-productive.

Lack of evidence to support positive change

To be successful in tackling discrimination, unconscious bias training should change behaviour. However, evidence suggests that attitudes and behaviours are each driven by different psychological systems, so a single intervention is unlikely to impact effectively on both. A systematic review of unconscious bias training examining 492 studies (involving more than 87,000 participants), found changes to unconscious bias measures were not associated with changes in behaviour (1). Formal assessments of bias (eg the Implicit Association Test) have also been criticised for failing to generate replicable results even when the same individuals have been re-tested (2).

Further evidence also suggests that unconscious bias training may even have detrimental effects. The Equality and Human Rights Commission found that evidence for its ability effectively to change behaviour is limited and “there is potential for back-firing effects when UBT participants are exposed to information that suggests stereotypes and biases are unchangeable.” Instructions to suppress stereotypes may not only activate and reinforce

unhelpful stereotypes, they may provoke negative reactions and actually make people exacerbate their biases (3).

Finally, there is no recognised way of assuring the quality of unconscious bias training and multiple interventions of variable content may be given that label. This has serious implications for organisations, who risk putting funding into poor quality and ineffective training.

Government conclusion

The Civil Service is committed to being an open and inclusive employer. Civil servants work on a range of complex policies every day; working inclusively means that they will make better decisions, solve problems more effectively and ultimately deliver better services to citizens. An individual’s background must never be a limiting factor in the workplace. Our aspiration is clear: a Civil Service open to all, with individuals from a variety of backgrounds adding breadth and depth to our understanding of contemporary British society, providing greater challenge to received wisdom and fresh perspectives to the challenges we face as a nation - united by a commitment to the fundamental values of public life and service.

Efforts to ensure the Civil Service is representative of the whole population it serves, and that its workplaces are free from discrimination, must be based on clear evidence of what works, must uphold the merit principle for recruitment and promotion, and must represent value for taxpayers’ money. This approach is the reason, for example, that the Civil Service uses clear, standardised assessment techniques for recruitment and tests the fairness of any such tools with diverse user groups before deploying them.

Given the evidence, now captured in the report accompanying this statement, an internal review decided in January 2020 that unconscious bias training would be phased out in departments. In addition, while there is clearly a role for training to support a more inclusive workplace and Civil Service, evidence also suggests that even the broader category of ‘diversity training’ as a standalone exercise can undermine such efforts if it appears to be a “tick box exercise”. The Civil Service will therefore integrate principles for inclusion and diversity into mainstream core training and leadership modules in a manner which facilitates positive behaviour change. This new strategy will be published in the new year, and will reassert our commitment to being an inclusive employer with a stronger focus on engaging measurable action.

The government expects other parts of the public sector, including local government, the police, and the NHS, to review their approaches in light of the evidence and the developments in the Civil Service. We will continue to build the evidence on what works to make our workplaces fairer, and unite and level up across our country, with the reformed Equality Hub playing a key role.

i) Forscher, P. S.*, Lai, C. K.*, Axt, J. R., Ebersole, C. R., Herman, M., Devine, P. G., & Nosek, B.A. (2019). A meta-analysis of procedures to change implicit

measures. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 117, 522-559.

ii) Gawronski, Bertram & Morrison, Mike & Phills, Curtis & Galdi, Silvia. (2017). Temporal Stability of Implicit and Explicit Measures: A Longitudinal Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 43. 300-312. 10.1177/0146167216684131.

iii) Dobbin & Kalev (2018), Why Doesn't Diversity Training Work? The Challenge for Industry and Academia, 10(2), 48-55; Dobbin & Kalev (2016) Why Diversity Programs Fail, *Harvard Business Review* 94, (7); Michelle M Duguid, Melissa C Thomas-Hunt, Condoning stereotyping? How awareness of stereotyping prevalence impacts expression of stereotypes, March 2015:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25314368/>; Frederick L Oswald, Gregory Mitchell, Hart Blanton, James Jaccard, Philip E Tetlock, Predicting ethnic and racial discrimination: a meta-analysis of IAT criterion studies, 17 June 2013:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23773046/>

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Unconscious Bias Training BIT report [20-12-14 - Unconscious Bias Training BIT report.pdf]

Unconscious Bias Training BIT report (Large Print) [20-12-14 - Unconscious Bias Training BIT report - large print.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-15/HLWS645/>

Written Answers

Tuesday, 15 December 2020

Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Asked by *Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the new alcohol duty system (1) protects public health, and (2) helps to reduce alcohol harm. [HL10968]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Treasury is conducting a review of the alcohol duty system. As part of this it is engaging with public health groups along with other interested stakeholders. However, while public health is an important factor, it is not the sole consideration, as the Government will also need to take account of the wider fiscal and economic implications of reform.

Asked by *Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the health impacts of freezing alcohol duty in the 2020 Budget. [HL10969]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: All taxes are kept under review and the impact of a change to alcohol duty is considered at each fiscal event, including its effect on health. As a freeze in duties involves no changes to rates, the Government expects there to be no direct impact on public health.

Ascension Island: Infrastructure

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 18 November (HL10238), what estimate they have made of the total cost of the infrastructure work required on Ascension Island. [HL10972]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: A 2017 report identified a wide array infrastructure on Ascension Island which required repair. Eleven infrastructure projects have been identified as priorities and are estimated cost approximately £39 million to fix. In order to address the most urgent repairs, £5 million from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund was allocated in 2018 for a capital investment programme over three years. Additionally, the runway repair project, which is now underway is jointly funded with the United States at a total cost of \$170 million. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is working with the Ascension Island Government to ensure that there is a clear prioritised plan for infrastructure repair works along with a detailed asset management plan to ensure the island's critical infrastructure is properly maintained.

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 18 November (HL10238), what application has been made to the Conflict Stability and Security Fund for infrastructure work on Ascension Island for the 2021/22 financial year onwards. [HL10973]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The precise allocations of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund budget for 2021/2022 are still to be confirmed. A prioritisation exercise of infrastructural work for next year including Ascension Island will be undertaken following confirmation of precise budgets.

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 18 November (HL10238), how much revenue has been raised by the government of Ascension Island through taxes in each of the last five years; and what proportion of that revenue has been allocated to infrastructure improvement. [HL10974]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Ascension Island Government has raised the following revenue via taxation over the last 5 years: 2015/2016: £5,105,491; 2016/2017: £4,987,011; 2017/2018: £4,870,185; 2018/2019: £4,579,244; 2019/2020: £4,750,558. These funds have primarily been used to provide essential public services on the island. The cessation of the South Atlantic Airbridge in 2017 due to damage on Wideawake Runway has reduced the Ascension Island Government's ability to raise more in tax revenue. The funding available for infrastructure works therefore has been limited. The Ascension Island Government's budget is discussed as part of on-island Council meetings with any expenditure agreed by island Councillors.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the lockdown restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on the airline industry over the Christmas period. [HL10958]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is in regular contact with the aviation sector to understand their passenger forecasts and financial projections, including regarding the impact of COVID-19 over the Christmas period. Airlines are putting in appropriate operations to meet any increase in demand over Christmas, during which the Government have agreed to lift travel restrictions from 23 – 27 December.

Firms can also continue to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital, tax

deferrals, and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

The Government announced on 5 November that the CJRS will be extended until March 2021 and furloughed employees will continue to receive 80% of their current salary. This will continue to protect jobs across in the UK in the difficult winter months.

The national restrictions as a result of the pandemic have not changed the way we engage regularly with the sector. We continue an open dialogue as we work towards our shared ambition of getting aviation up and running again in a safe and secure way.

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage business travel (1) to help the airline industry, (2) to increase tourism, and (3) to support airport workers back into full-time employment. [[HL10960](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The recent Global Travel Taskforce report set out a range measures to support a safe and sustainable return to international travel.

To support demand, we are implementing a 'Test to Release for International Travel' scheme in England, allowing arrivals from countries not on the travel corridors list to pay for a privately provided COVID-19 test and reduce their period of self-isolation if the test is negative. The Government is also exploring the feasibility of a short-stay business travel exemption and planning public health and communications campaigns to boost consumer confidence. Further measures from the Global Travel Taskforce report are being worked on at pace.

In addition to these measures, the travel and tourism industry has been helped by the Government's substantial business and employment support packages including business rates relief, government backed loans and one-off grants for eligible businesses, and the reduction of VAT for tourism and hospitality to 5% until the end of March.

We are also working with industry partners to support talent and skills retention, through measures that include the Department for Work and Pensions' Flexible Support Fund and Rapid Response Service, to support aviation workers at risk of redundancy to stay in employment or move between sectors.

Belfast International Airport: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources they have made available to support Belfast International Airport during the COVID-19 Pandemic. [[HL10961](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The aviation sector is vital to our future as a global trading nation, playing a critical role in local economies, including in Northern Ireland. The national measures taken in response to COVID-19 have been unprecedented, enabling airlines,

airports and ground handlers to benefit from a very significant amount of taxpayer support. This includes, but is not limited to, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and financing facilities. The Government is also working on a strategic framework for the medium and long-term recovery of the aviation sector in the form of a recovery plan.

Airport policy is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive (NIE). NIE has provided business rates relief to airports in Northern Ireland worth £2.2 million. NIE are continuing to consider appropriate support for airports in Northern Ireland.

Bomb Disposal

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the distinction between commercial and military offshore unexploded ordnance disposal by deflagration, and (2) the effectiveness of deflagration in the offshore disposal of unexploded ordnance. [[HL11009](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognise the potential for significant impact of underwater noise from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance on vulnerable marine species and is taking active steps to manage and reduce the risk. Two phases of a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) funded project to characterise and contrast the acoustic fields generated by UXO clearance using high order detonation and using low-order deflagration have been completed and reported on.

It is our understanding that there is no appreciable distinction between the deflagration technique used by commercial and military clearance of marine UXO.

A third phase has now been initiated to further improve the information base, allowing further assessment of the clearance options. A potential 4th phase of the work involving offshore field work is also being actively explored in which comparative noise measurements would be made during actual UXO clearance campaigns using both deflagration and high order detonations. This would require cooperation and active support from industry (windfarm developers) and the regulatory authorities.

The outcomes from the 3rd and 4th phases would allow an informed discussion and consideration of the adequacy of evidence by regulatory authorities and the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies.

British Overseas Territories: Marine Protected Areas

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing the government of Tristan da Cunha with the establishment of the islands' marine protection zone. [[HL10935](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government has been supporting Tristan da Cunha to enhance marine protection in their waters since 2016, as part of the Blue Belt initiative. This has included two major multi-disciplinary surveys to improve knowledge of inshore, seamounts and open ocean ecosystems to inform management decisions; provided a new vessel for inshore biodiversity monitoring and refurbished the existing fisheries patrol vessel; expert advice on the design of the marine protection zone including recommendations for 'Area To Be Avoided' around the islands to protect vulnerable habitats; assistance with putting in place effective legislation and management strategies to underpin the designation; extensive training (sea-survival, vessel maintenance, enforcement training, fisheries observer training) to build capacity on island; and targeted satellite surveillance to ensure Tristan's waters are effectively monitored and enforced.

Since the designation, the Blue Belt programme has also provided some additional support to assist Tristan diversify its economy from offshore commercial fishing revenue.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the withdrawal of the Coronavirus Job Retention Bonus Scheme on business planning. [[HL10985](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been extended until the end of March 2021 for all parts of the UK, with employees receiving 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month.

The Job Retention Bonus (JRB) will not be paid in February 2021 and the Government will redeploy a retention incentive at the appropriate time. The purpose of the JRB was to encourage employers to keep people in work until the end of January 2021. Having extended the CJRS, the objective of the JRB falls away and the Government will return to that issue once the position on that has become clearer. The Government remains committed to providing some form of employer support of this kind in due course.

Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve connectivity between the national COVID-19 contact tracing system and local outbreak control systems; and if they have any such plans, what are the timescales by which they expect to make any such changes. [[HL9894](#)]

Lord Bethell: Since its inception, NHS Test and Trace has worked closely with local authorities and local directors of public health.

Local Tracing Partnerships, first announced on 5 August, use local knowledge about communities and individuals to help ensure contact tracers reach the greatest possible proportion of people who have tested positive, both to help identify any support needs for them and other members of their households and to gather information about their recent contacts. As at 8 December, 275 Local Tracing Partnerships are in place, with more in implementation.

Local Tracing Partnerships involve local and national teams working together and sharing data as appropriate to ensure an integrated approach to contact tracing, support for self-isolation and preventing and managing local outbreaks.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish any modelling from September 2020 on the economic effect of (1) introducing the COVID-19 'circuit-breaker' recommended by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, and (2) the introduction of a lockdown to address the COVID-19 pandemic in November 2020 for England. [[HL10986](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Throughout the pandemic, economic analysis has been a key part of the advice that ministers use to inform decisions taken in this fast-moving health environment. The Treasury continues to provide economic analysis to ministers on an ongoing basis as part of policy making and design.

The Treasury does not produce formal forecasts for the UK economy. Economic and fiscal forecasting is the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) who updated their forecasts on 25 November 2020.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support behavioural, environmental and social science interventions against COVID-19; and what assessment they have made of investing in such interventions. [[HL9706](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' subgroup the Scientific Pandemic Influenza group on Behaviour (SPI-B) offers insights into the behavioural and psychological impacts of the implementation of proposed interventions or responses to COVID-19. SPI-B is not asked to comment on the effectiveness of particular interventions, nor on when they should be triggered. The group is asked to provide advice aimed at anticipating and helping people adhere to interventions that are recommended by medical or epidemiological experts.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have sufficient quantities of effective alternative vaccines for the entire UK population following the recent AstraZeneca test results. [HL11003]

Lord Callanan: The UK Government has secured early access to 357 million vaccines doses through agreements with seven separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 40 million doses.
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses.
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses.
- Novavax for 60 million doses.
- Janssen for 30 million doses.
- Valneva for 60 million doses.
- Moderna for 7 million doses.

Debts: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for responding to COVID-19-related sovereign debt issues in Africa (1) by allocating special drawing rights by the International Monetary Fund to the worst affected countries, and (2) extending the G20's debt service suspension initiative to permit the participation of multilateral development banks and private sector creditors. [HL10946]

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to support the creation of a permanent mechanism under the UN for the systematic comprehensive and permanent restructuring of sovereign debt, and (2) to set up a programme of continuing technical assistance to improve (a) debt transparency, and (b) the debt management offices, of those countries worst affected by the COVID-19 related debt crisis. [HL10947]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK has been vocal in its support for the IMF, helping economies facing liquidity pressures as a result of Covid-19, including supporting the IMF exploring an SDR allocation. Moreover, the UK has helped the worst affected countries by contributing £150m to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust which provides debt service relief to the lowest-income countries. This has allowed 28 countries to alleviate their funding pressures and helped them increase their social and Covid-19 related spending. The UK has also provided a new £2.2bn loan to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust to provide financial assistance to low income countries at concessional rates to respond to Covid-19.

The UK has engaged with the UN on debt issues, reaffirming our commitment to support debt relief initiatives for vulnerable countries. However, we have not supported the creation of a permanent debt resolution mechanism at the UN. Previous discussions at the IMF could not secure consensus on such a mechanism and we do not judge that this has changed. Instead, the UK has worked through the G20 and Paris Club, first to deliver the Debt Service Suspension Initiative which has paused payments from the poorest 46 countries until at least mid-2021 and second to develop a Common Framework for future debt treatments which will facilitate quicker and simpler restructurings where required. This historic achievement marks the first time traditional creditors from the Paris Club, and emerging G20 creditors, such as China, the largest bilateral creditor, have agreed to participate in coordinated debt restructurings where they are needed.

To ensure that the multilateral development banks are able to continue mobilising large amounts of financing during the crisis, the UK and the G20 has supported the MBDs taking a "net positive flows" approach to DSSI participation. This ensures that borrowing countries receive significantly more funds from the MDBs in 2020 than they repay. For the most vulnerable, much of this funding will be on grant terms. We are disappointed that there has not been significant DSSI implementation by private sector creditors. Our assessment, which is shared by the IMF and the World Bank, has been that this has primarily been driven by a lack of willingness from borrowing countries to request suspensions from private creditors due to risks to their sovereign credit ratings. We strongly encourage private creditors to participate on comparable terms when requested by eligible countries.

Technical assistance and capacity building are critical to ensuring long-term debt sustainability in developing countries and even more important during crises. The UK is a donor to the joint IMF-World Bank Debt Management Facility (DMF), a world leading facility which provides high quality technical assistance in a wide range of areas, ranging from debt monitoring, recording and transparency to debt crisis response. The UK is providing £4m over 5 years to the DMF. We have also recently announced new funding for the African Legal Support Facility, providing £1m over two years, which supports countries to build negotiation capacity and engage with their creditors on a level playing field.

Development Aid: Nature Conservation

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether overseas territories which are eligible for Official Development Assistance will be able to apply for large-scale project funding that is equivalent to that provided through Darwin Plus. [HL11006]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Those UK Overseas Territories that are Official Development Assistance eligible are now able to apply for funding via

the main Darwin Initiative programme, rather than through the Darwin Plus scheme.

Diabetes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to support people with diabetes who return to work in their normal workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10949]

Lord Callanan: Our safer working guidance includes advice specifically on supporting employees with characteristics that put them at higher risk of infection and/or an adverse outcome if infected, including those with health conditions such as diabetes.

This guidance is regularly updated and measures reviewed in line with scientific evidence. The guidance can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the Spending Review 2020 on the UK's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10984]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The OBR set out their latest forecasts of the economy and public finances in their November Economic and Fiscal Outlook ^[1]. The forecasts take into account the effect of measures announced in Spending Review 2020.

The OBR note that "real GDP would have taken a materially-weaker near-term path" ^[2] in the absence of measures announced since the Summer Economic Update. They also note that "in the medium term, the economic recovery is supported by the strong growth in public investment announced in the March Budget" ^[3].

[1] OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook November 2020 <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2020/>.

[2] Page 32, Box 2.1: The impact of fiscal policy on GDP growth and unemployment.

[3] Page 12, paragraph 1.24.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the comparative effect of the COVID-19 financial support package on regional economies. [HL10988]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government recognises that every region is feeling the impact of this crisis and has taken unprecedented steps to support people and businesses across the country.

For example, the government has helped over one million employers furlough 9.6 million employments throughout the country, and supported over £60 billion of loans. Regional breakdowns of the uptake of the income support schemes are regularly published on the government's website.

Additionally, we recognise the impact of local restrictions on businesses and this is why we continue to provide monthly grants to both open and closed businesses in tiers 2 and 3, of up to £2,100 and £3,000 respectively, through the Local Restrictions Support Grants. This is in addition to the funding provided to local authorities in tiers 2 and 3 to enable them to make grants of £1,000 to all wet-led pubs, and the Additional Restrictions Grant, that provided all local authorities with a one-off payment to support their local economies in the Autumn, worth £20 per head.

We collect and monitor regional data on how our economic support schemes are used at regional and local authority level. No final assessment of the impact of the economic support schemes can yet be made.

Economic Situation: UK Relations with EU

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of uncertainty over the UK's relationship with the EU after the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU on the economy. [HL10983]

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

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

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

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

Employment: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from organisations representing people who are ineligible for COVID-19 financial support schemes. [HL10987]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Treasury ministers and officials have had meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors (including MPs, businesses, professional representative bodies, and the unions) throughout the development of the COVID-19 support package including both the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

This engagement has been widely praised; the Institute for Government said: "The government's approach to consultation compensated for some of the difficulties of accelerated policy development, because it gave it fast access to information, and an early sense of whether the measures would work and how they would be received by businesses and workers. This contributed to both positive reception on announcement and successful roll-out."

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

Employment: Disability

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of Job Centre staff who have experience in supporting disabled people to find employment. [HL10918]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We remain absolutely committed to supporting disabled people, including ensuring access to Disability Employment Advisers (DEA). Our DEAs are an integral part of our service, supporting Work Coaches to provide more personalised support, tailored for each claimant's individual needs; this includes peer coaching, three-way conversations with claimants and by sharing knowledge and information about health and disability services nationally and in local communities.

All Jobcentre Work Coaches undergo a comprehensive learning journey designed to equip them with the tools, skills and behaviours required to provide a high quality service to all claimants including people with health conditions or disabilities. They receive on-going learning in their roles and have access to guidance which is refreshed at regular intervals. Part of the training programme advises Work Coaches to consult with their DEA if the claimant has a complex health issue or disability which need to be better understood. We are doubling the number of Work Coaches across our network of Jobcentres, from 13,500 to 27,000, so that

every jobseeker receives tailored support to build skills and move into work.

Additional support for disabled people is also available through initiatives such as Access to Work (ATW), Disability Confident, Work and Health Programme (WHP), Fair Start Scotland, and the Intensive Personalised Employment Support Programme (IPES).

Erasmus+ Programme

Asked by **Baroness Coussins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November, that the Department for Education settlement "provides funding to prepare for a UK-wide domestic alternative to Erasmus+, in the event that the UK no longer participates in Erasmus+, to fund outward global education mobilities", whether such funding would be sufficient to provide for reciprocal arrangements as in the current Erasmus+ programme; and what steps are being taken to secure the recognition of other countries for a possible UK domestic alternative scheme. [HL10953]

Asked by **Baroness Coussins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the domestic scheme to replace Erasmus+ set up by Switzerland; and if no such assessment has been made, what plans they have to assess the effectiveness of the Swiss replacement scheme before committing to a UK domestic alternative. [HL10954]

Asked by **Baroness Coussins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in addition to university student placements, any domestic alternative to Erasmus+ would cover (1) school exchanges for pupils and teachers, (2) technical education and workplace training, (3) work shadowing and youth work, (4) sports, (5) older people, (6) disadvantaged areas, (7) arts projects, and (8) people with disabilities, in line with the current Erasmus+ programme. [HL10955]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Participation in Erasmus+ is subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU.

In parallel with the negotiations, we are continuing to develop a UK-wide domestic alternative to Erasmus+ as a contingency measure. The Spending Review 2020 committed funding to prepare for a UK-wide domestic alternative, in the event that the UK no longer participates in Erasmus+, to fund outward global education mobility schemes. The government will set out further details on this potential scheme in due course.

As part of our ongoing preparations towards this potential scheme, we have looked at comparable schemes across the globe, including the Swiss European Mobility Scheme. The Department for Education is in regular contact with the Swiss government to discuss education-

related matters, maintaining an open dialogue and holding discussions to share insights and best practice, including on the Swiss exchange scheme.

Youth and sport are the responsibility of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and it has been considering the provision of a domestic alternative scheme for the youth elements of Erasmus+ as part of the recent Spending Review. Funding was not, however, allocated to a domestic alternative to the youth element of Erasmus+ at the Spending Review.

Erasmus+ Sport is a very small part of the programme, representing only 1.8% of the overall budget. We are already investing significant sums of money in sport programmes which align with Erasmus+ Sport themes and objectives, and do not consider that there is a need to create a specific domestic alternative programme to replace Erasmus+ Sport activities. For example, through Sport England, we are investing more than £1.2 billion from the 2016 financial year to the 2021 financial year on grassroots sport and physical activity programmes.

Government Departments: Procurement

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which government construction procurers comply with Regulation 113 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which gives public sector bodies a statutory duty to ensure that 30-day payment clauses are inserted in all sub-contracts and sub-sub-contracts. [HL11013]

Lord True: This information is not held centrally. Individual contracting authorities are responsible for complying with Regulation 113 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 on relevant procurements. Businesses are encouraged to report instances of late or unfair payment in public sector contracts to the Public Procurement Review Service.

Gynaecology

Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create women's health hubs to prevent women and girls requiring multiple medical appointments to address different gynaecological and reproductive health needs. [HL10863]

Lord Bethell: There are currently no plans to create women's health hubs. The Government is committed to supporting the National Health Service and local authorities to deliver joined-up care for women across the full range of health and care services.

Higher Education: Travellers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove barriers to higher education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. [HL10998]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Office for Students (OfS), the regulator for higher education (HE) in England, identifies people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller backgrounds as people who are likely to experience issues in accessing, and successfully participating, in HE. As such, they asked HE providers to consider the needs of this group in their Access and Participation Plans for 2021-2024/25. These plans are designed to support all students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups to enter and succeed in HE, and all HE providers charging higher level tuition fees must have a plan agreed by the OfS.

HIV Infection: Preventive Medicine

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate the Dapivirine vaginal ring will be available to women (1) in the UK, and (2) abroad; and what plans they have to ensure that it is free at the point of delivery. [HL11056]

Lord Bethell: The Government has no specific plans to make the Dapivirine vaginal ring available to women in the United Kingdom. The Dapivirine Vaginal Ring 25mg was approved in accordance with the legal basis of Article 58 of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004. This legal basis is intended exclusively for markets outside the European community. The product is not authorised in the UK and the company have not sought a specific medical authorisation in the UK. However, the Government remains committed to reaching zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030. Careful consideration will be given to the recommendations made in the independent HIV Commission's recently published report on reaching the 2030 target as we develop the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021.

In terms of the use of this product abroad, the decision on whether or not to use the product and its availability is a matter for national regulators. It is anticipated rollout of the Dapivirine vaginal ring to some African countries may begin by mid-2021. The cost of the ring has been kept as low as possible. The goal is for the ring to be publicly funded and provided to women at no cost.

Hospices: Finance

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide funding to charitable hospice care providers who have lost community funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10989]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide funding to Rennie Grove Hospice Care to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL10991]

Lord Bethell: The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the huge role palliative and end of life care services, including hospices, have played in the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This importance was acknowledged in the provision of over £150 million in additional funding to the hospice sector between April and July. Further additional funding of up to £125 million has now been announced to enable hospices to continue their vital end of life care services and deliver even greater support for the National Health Service.

NHS England and NHS Improvement can confirm that Rennie Grove Hospice received £1,000,317 between April and July this year. Rennie Grove, like other hospices, will be eligible to apply for the further additional funding now being made available.

Immigration: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow first year university students from the EU, who have not yet moved to the UK, to qualify for EU pre-settled status. [HL10995]

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.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of EU citizens who are resident in the UK; and how many of those have not yet made an application for settled status. [HL11023]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications received can be found on the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics' web page available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>.

The total number of applications received up to 31 October 2020 was 4.26 million (4,260,400).

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and cannot be directly compared with estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK. The published EUSS figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU population. Furthermore, the population estimates do not

take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

India: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that Muslim and Christian minorities are being persecuted in India, and (2) that such persecution has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic following accusations that those minorities had spread COVID-19; and what discussions they have had with the government of India about (a) the reported marginalisation of the Dalit community, in particular Dalit sanitation workers, and (b) the level of poverty among religious minority groups in that country. [HL10944]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continuously assesses the human rights situation in India. We oppose discrimination against minorities because of caste, religion or belief. I speak regularly to my opposite number in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi and the Indian High Commissioner in the UK, and raise concerns where we have them.

The British High Commission in New Delhi regularly meets minority representatives and runs projects promoting minority rights. In 2016-18, we funded a project in Uttar Pradesh empowering 400 Dalit human rights defenders to challenge discrimination and violence against Dalit women. Over the last 3 years, we have worked with local NGOs to bring together young people of diverse faiths to work together on social action projects to promote a culture of inter-faith tolerance.

Internet: Safety

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capability of UK regulators (1) to maintain existing statutory protections relating to harmful online content, and (2) to ensure effective enforcement of these protections, between the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU and the enactment of their proposed online harms legislation. [HL10849]

Baroness Barran: The Government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to be online and the end of the transition period will not affect this. Regulations transposing the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS Directive) came into force on the 1st of November 2020 and require UK-established video sharing platforms (VSPs) to have systems and processes in place to protect the public, including minors, from illegal and harmful material. Ofcom has the power to take enforcement action against UK-established VSPs which do not take adequate

appropriate measures, or which do not implement the measures adequately, in order to protect UK users.

VSPs established in the European Economic Area will not be regulated by Ofcom and will be regulated by the Member State that they are established in. As the regulation under this VSP regime is systems regulation and not content regulation, we expect platforms based outside of the UK to set up and invest in systems in order to comply with the AVMS Directive. It is anticipated that these same systems will also be introduced for their UK subsidiaries particularly in anticipation of the incoming online harms regime. Regulation provided by other EU Member States will therefore be effective and robust enough to provide protection to UK users until such time as the online harms regime is in place.

As the AVMS Directive aligns well with the Government's plans to tackle online harms, the VSP regime will be repealed and superseded by the online harms regulatory framework, once it comes into force. We will publish the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year, which will contain more detailed proposals on online harms regulation.

Israel: Armed Forces

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about ensuring that any Israel Defence Force soldier who is found guilty of (1) killing, or (2) injuring, any Palestinian is sentenced appropriately. [HL10999]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We regularly raise the issue with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether use of live fire had been appropriate. We continue to urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and to bring those responsible to justice and to end the culture of impunity.

Israel: Detainees

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Save the Children Defenceless: The impact of the Israeli military detention system on Palestinian children, published on 29 October; and what response they have made to that report. [HL10992]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by the findings of the Save the Children's report entitled, 'Defenceless: The impact of the Israeli military detention system on Palestinian children'. We remain concerned about the treatment of Palestinian children detained in Israeli prisons. Reports of the heavy use of painful

restraints and the high number of Palestinian children who are not informed of their legal rights, in contravention of Israel's own regulations, are particularly concerning, as is the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv have a regular dialogue with Israel on this issue. We also fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

Jerusalem: Evictions

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Palestinians living in Sheikh Jarrah are being evicted by the government of Israel; and what steps they are taking in response to any such assessment. [HL11000]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are seriously concerned by increasing rates of evictions and demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances they are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concern about demolition of Palestinian property, and eviction of Palestinians from their homes, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October, and the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raises this issue regularly with the Israeli authorities. On 25 November, the UK Consul General Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah, restating UK opposition to evictions of Palestinians from their homes. The UK is focused on preventing demolitions and evictions from happening in the first place through our legal aid programme, which supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

Jobcentres: Training

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide up to date training for Job Centre staff on the skills that employers are currently seeking. [HL10997]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The department is committed to providing the best possible support for all our claimants.

Our Work Coaches undergo a comprehensive learning journey designed to equip them with the tools, skills and

behaviours required to provide a high quality service. Learning provision supports jobcentre staff in coaching claimants to develop their abilities, knowledge and confidence, to promote themselves when applying for vacancies.

Learning provided enables Jobcentre staff to demonstrate the key role of social media and digital vacancy filling. They learn about the latest digital job search methods which employers use to advertise vacancies, for example; Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. This enables work coaches to confidently demonstrate all use of social media to claimants and promote internet job search sites. Jobcentre staff are provided with the skills to coach on creating Curriculum Vitae, uploading and sharing these to increase claimants' on-line presence.

Learning provides Jobcentre staff with the knowledge to explore their districts' labour Market, providing claimants and employers with more choice and expertise when filling vacancies.

Jobcentre staff are taught how to use the District Provision Tool, as the main vehicle to source provision and support claimants, enabling them to obtain and retain a job and progress within their employment.

The District Provision Tool is a directory of the provision and support delivered by Jobcentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Skills Development Scotland, Careers Wales other providers, local authorities, independent, volunteer and charity organisations.

It hosts all the available provision and support in a district and nationally. The tool aids customer facing staff to explore the full flexible menu of support and maximise provision in developing claimant's skills to enable them to obtain and retain a job and progress within their employment.

Methodist Homes for the Aged: Visits

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Methodist Homes' care home visitor policy. [[HL10964](#)]

Lord Bethell: On 1 December, we published updated online only guidance to enable more meaningful indoor visits to take place for care home residents across all tiers. This is enabled by providing testing to visitors, which will be available before Christmas. It is a matter for care providers to make decisions about their visiting policy, based on the national guidance.

The guidance enables care home providers, families and local professionals to work together to find the right balance between the benefits of visiting on wellbeing and quality of life, and the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable residents and social care staff.

When developing this policy, we have engaged with a range of stakeholders from across the sector including the Methodist Home Association.

Military Bases

*Asked by **Lord Browne of Belmont***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many former military bases they are currently using for other purposes. [[HL10948](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is currently utilising two former military bases.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

*Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 18 November (HL9994), how many (1) complaints related to non-compliance of section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 they have received, and (2) subsequent court injunctions the Home Secretary has applied for. [[HL10975](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 18 November (HL9994), when they plan to implement the changes to strengthen and future proof transparency of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 highlighted in their response to the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, published on 22 September. [[HL10976](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report annually on steps taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. To comply with the requirement, statements must be:

- Published annually via a prominent link on the organisation's homepage;
- Approved by the Board of Directors or equivalent;
- Signed by a Director or equivalent.

To assess compliance with the legal requirements, the Home Office contracted the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) to undertake an audit on the Home Office's behalf. The audit findings on levels of compliance were published on 17 September 2020 in the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's annual report (available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-anti-slavery-commissioners-annual-report-2019-to-2020>).

The injunctive power in the legislation has not been used to date. The Government has committed to strengthening the legislation and our response to the transparency in supply chains consultation, published on 22 September 2020, announced an ambitious package of changes to section 54, including introducing mandatory reporting topics, a single reporting deadline and a central Government-run registry, to enable Government and others to continuously monitor compliance. These

measures require primary legislation and will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

In the meantime, we will be asking organisations to start preparing for the new requirements, including by publishing their statements on the new Government-run modern slavery registry, which is due to launch in 2021. The new registry will enhance transparency by making modern slavery statements available in one place for the first time. It will provide greater visibility of the steps organisations are taking to prevent modern slavery in their global supply chains and empower investors, consumers and civil society to scrutinise action and monitor progress.

The Government has also committed to considering enforcement options in line with the development of the Single Enforcement Body for employment rights, led by BEIS.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Modern Slavery Annual Report - 2019-20 [Modern Slavery - Annual Report - 2019-20.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-01/HL10975>

Music: VAT

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow the temporary reduced rate of VAT of five per cent for certain attractions to apply where a concert is being streamed as live, but for technical reasons was required to be pre-recorded. [HL10994]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Where online access is provided for live-streamed entertainment events when no audience can be present due to lockdown restrictions, the temporary reduced rate of VAT may apply as long as the performance is broadcast live. A pre-recorded concert that can be automatically delivered with minimal or no human intervention is likely to be an electronically supplied service; the liability of which will depend upon the place of supply rules.

Further information on the temporary reduced rate for admissions and electronically supplied services can be found on GOV.UK at the Revenue and Customs Brief on VAT on admission charges to attractions.

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Lamont of Lerwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to reply to the letter sent by Lord Lamont of Lerwick to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 1 September. [HL10971]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Chancellor hopes to reply to Lord Lamont's letter shortly. He has asked his officials to look into Lord Lamont's letter, and to consider the policy proposal contained therein.

Protective Clothing: Contracts

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have procured any latex gloves from Top Glove in the last 12 months; and if so, (1) what assessment they have made of the wages paid to Top Glove workers, and (2) whether they have taken any steps to avoid further procurement from Top Glove. [HL10804]

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government which suppliers of latex gloves they have contracts with in the coming 12 months; and what quantity they intend to purchase from each supplier. [HL10805]

Lord Bethell: NHS Supply Chain, the main provider of consumables and equipment into the National Health Service, have led on the procurement of gloves. They approached all suppliers awarded onto their framework contracts during October 2019 requesting confirmation as to whether any of the gloves supplied to NHS Supply Chain were sourced from Top Glove. Two suppliers initially responded at the end of 2019 that they have used Top Glove but have since advised they no longer source gloves from Top Glove for supply to the NHS. This means none of their awarded framework suppliers are now supplying NHS Supply Chain with gloves manufactured by Top Glove.

The Department has not directly procured from Top Glove but has been supplied small quantities of gloves from Top Glove through a handful of intermediary suppliers. The Department has since engaged with these suppliers to understand their modern-day slavery policies. The Department itself has no plans to award further contracts for gloves.

Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

Asked by Lord De Mauley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish the Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations External Scrutiny Team Report 2020. [HL11115]

Baroness Goldie: We are very grateful to the External Scrutiny Team for their work, and the Ministry of Defence will publish their 2020 report early in the New Year.

Ships: Waste Disposal

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) possible sites in the United Kingdom for the dismantling of ships and the disposal of any hazardous materials that they might contain, and (2) the potential global demand for, and value of, such operations. [HL11010]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Defra conducted an assessment of UK ship recycling facilities in 2015 as part of the preparation of a public consultation on the UK's implementation of European Union Regulation 1257/2013 on ship recycling. Defra wrote to all of the UK ship recycling facilities that held valid permits and approvals required under existing legislation to undertake ship recycling activities in the UK at that time to make them aware of the new EU Ship Recycling Regulation and to discuss compliance with its requirements. A total of 18 suitably authorised facilities were identified.

Defra has made no assessment of the global demand for, and value of, ship recycling facilities. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report on ship recycling in April 2019 which includes an assessment of the global market for ship recycling. It is available on the OECD iLibrary website (www.oecd-ilibrary.org).

Slavery

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government which police forces, if any, do not have a modern slavery unit. [HL11021]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The police have taken significant steps to improve the response to modern slavery over the last few years and all police forces in England and Wales now have specialist resources to tackle modern slavery. These can include specialist-led triage processes to oversee investigations, specialist investigative units and specialist research and analytical capabilities.

The Home Office supported this activity by providing £13.6m funding from the Police Transformation Programme between 2016/17 and 2019/20 and a further £2m in 2020/21 to the new Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme. The latest annual report for 2019/20 for the programme can be found at: <https://policingslavery.co.uk/media/2563/ms-annual-report-2020.pdf>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

MS Annual Report - 2020 [ms-annual-report-2020.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-02/HL11021>

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the lockdown restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on the small business sector over the Christmas period. [HL10959]

Lord Callanan: The Government is working closely with Local Authorities in England to support the

implementation of grants to support businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and monitor the distribution of grant funds.

Where local authorities are in Tier 3 (Very High) funding will continue to be provided to support those businesses required to close, through the Local Restriction Support Grant (Closed), a grant up to £1,500 every 14 days.

Alongside those businesses who have been mandated to close, funding will also be provided to support those business who have had their trade adversely affected by restrictions. The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) provides further discretionary funding to Local Authorities whilst in Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions so they can support businesses that are impacted but not required to close.

The Additional Restrictions Grant was provided to Local Authorities as a one-off lump sum discretionary scheme, providing support to businesses severely impacted by restrictions as well as wider business support.

The Christmas support payment for 'wet-led' pubs is a one-off grant payment of £1,000 for wet-led pubs in Tier 2 and 3 who have had their trade effected due to localised restrictions during the Christmas period.

Local Restrictions Support Grant (Sector) will provide funding of grants of up to £1,500 every 14 days for businesses mandated to close on a sector basis, such as nightclubs.

This is in conjunction with the extension of the application deadline to the 31 January 2021 for three Coronavirus business interruption loan schemes – the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

Eligible businesses will be able to 'top up' existing Bounce Back Loans should they need additional finance.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult Northern Ireland businesses about legislation on anti-avoidance measures for qualifying Northern Ireland goods being sent to the rest of the UK. [HL10956]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK Government has been unequivocal in its commitment to unfettered access for Northern Ireland (NI) goods moving to the rest of the UK market.

After the Transition Period, under the Government's phased approach, unfettered access will apply to all goods in free circulation in NI moving directly from NI to GB. This will ensure maximum continuity and avoid disruption.

In order to ensure that this special treatment is available only to Northern Ireland businesses, the Government will

introduce an anti-avoidance requirement which will prevent businesses from moving goods via Northern Ireland if they do this in order to avoid paying import duties.

The first phase of unfettered access is intended to be a bridge to a longer-term regime that will focus its benefits on Northern Ireland businesses. The second phase will be introduced in 2021 and is being developed as a result of engagement with Northern Ireland businesses and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Ministers and officials are meeting Northern Ireland businesses regularly to provide clarity on approach and to allow for detailed discussion of proposals related to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

United Kingdom

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) schemes, and (2) initiatives, they plan to introduce (a) to strengthen the Union, and (b) foster more links between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. [[HL10952](#)]

Lord True: This Government is committed to strengthening the Union and the links between different parts of the UK, including between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Departments are taking a variety of actions to strengthen the Union.

Earlier this year the Prime Minister announced a review would be undertaken into union connectivity, exploring ways to improve connectivity between our four nations

and to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects.

The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations on a variety of different policy agendas including preparations for the end of the UK transition period and the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are also working with the devolved administrations to improve intergovernmental relations.

Youth Services: Finance

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their commitment in The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019, published on 24 November 2019, to invest "£500 million in youth services for young people", what plans they have to make this investment; and why this investment did not appear in the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November. [[HL11008](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Youth Investment Fund remains a manifesto commitment for transformative levelling up across the country over the course of the parliament. In the recently announced Spending Review, £30m of this was committed as capital investment for 2021-22. This will provide an important additional investment in new and refurbished safe spaces for young people, so they can access support from youth workers, and positive activities out of school, including sport and culture. Further details of the timetable for allocation will be announced in due course.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Business Impact Target1	Higher Education: Travellers..... 16
Climate Ambition Summit 20202	HIV Infection: Preventive Medicine 16
Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 April to 30 June 20203	Hospices: Finance..... 16
Education: Covid-19 Testing.....4	Immigration: EU Countries 17
Government Transparency and Accountability ...4	India: Religious Freedom 17
Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation5	Internet: Safety 17
Investigation of Unauthorised Disclosure on 30 October5	Israel: Armed Forces 18
Investigatory Powers Commissioner: Annual Report 20196	Israel: Detainees 18
Plan for Jobs Update.....6	Jerusalem: Evictions 18
Transforming Public Procurement7	Jobcentres: Training 18
Unconscious Bias Training.....7	Methodist Homes for the Aged: Visits 19
Written Answers.....10	Military Bases..... 19
Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties10	Modern Slavery Act 2015..... 19
Ascension Island: Infrastructure.....10	Music: VAT..... 20
Aviation: Coronavirus10	Peers: Correspondence 20
Belfast International Airport: Coronavirus.....11	Protective Clothing: Contracts..... 20
Bomb Disposal11	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 20
British Overseas Territories: Marine Protected Areas.....11	Ships: Waste Disposal 20
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.....12	Slavery 21
Coronavirus: Contact Tracing12	Small Businesses: Coronavirus..... 21
Coronavirus: Disease Control.....12	UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland..... 21
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....13	United Kingdom 22
Debts: Coronavirus.....13	Youth Services: Finance 22
Development Aid: Nature Conservation13	
Diabetes: Coronavirus14	
Economic Situation: Coronavirus.....14	
Economic Situation: UK Relations with EU14	
Employment: Coronavirus.....15	
Employment: Disability.....15	
Erasmus+ Programme15	
Government Departments: Procurement16	
Gynaecology16	