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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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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

Thursday, 17 December 2020

2025 UK Border Strategy

[HLWS660]

Lord True: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Cabinet Office (Michael Gove MP), has today made the following Written Statement:

Today, the Government will publish the 2025 UK Border Strategy. As we reach the end of the transition period, we have a unique opportunity to redesign our border for the benefit of the UK. The 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out how we will do this in partnership across the nations of the UK, the border industry and users of the border.

The 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out the transformations we will make to the border to create the most effective border in the world, harnessing the power of technology and data to revolutionise how the border operates. Implementing these transformations will make it easier for UK businesses to export and import while improving our ability to keep the UK safe and secure.

The strategy has been developed using the wealth of evidence and insight we received from stakeholders across the UK through the consultation we ran over the summer. The Target Operating Model for the border which the strategy sets out will help businesses understand the longer term ambitions for the UK's border, and plan and invest accordingly.

The 2025 UK Border Strategy has today been laid as a Command Paper.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

The 2025 UK Border Strategy [(CP352) The 2025 UK Border Strategy.pdf]

The 2025 UK Border Strategy, Large print [(CP352) The 2025 UK Border Strategy, Large Print.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-17/HLWS660/>

Bilateral Loan to Ireland

[HLWS676]

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

I would like to update Parliament on the loan to Ireland.

In December 2010, the UK agreed to provide a bilateral loan of £3.2 billion as part of a €67.5 billion international assistance package for Ireland. The loan was disbursed in 8 tranches. The final tranche was drawn down on 26 September 2013. Ireland has made interest payments on the loan every six months since the first disbursement.

On 7 December, in line with the agreed repayment schedule, HM Treasury received a total payment of £407,852,313.75 from Ireland. This comprises the repayment of £403,370,000 in principal and £4,482,313.75 in accrued interest.

In October, as required under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010, HM Treasury provided the latest Statutory Report to Parliament covering the period from 1 April to 30 September 2020. The Report set out details of future payments up to the final repayment on 26 March 2021. The government continues to expect the loan to be repaid in full and on time. The next Statutory Report will cover the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. HM Treasury will report fully on all repayments received during this period in the Report.

Budget 2021: Office for Budget Responsibility Forecast

[HLWS681]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I can inform the House that I have asked the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to prepare an economic and fiscal forecast for a Budget on 3 March 2021.

Building Safety Update

[HLWS671]

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

I have today announced the next set of measures as part of our ongoing support to the thousands of leaseholders who have found themselves living in unsafe buildings through no fault of their own.

These measures support our unwavering commitment to improve the safety of buildings across the country which will be enshrined in law next year through the Building Safety Bill.

£30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund

Research undertaken and published by my Department has illustrated clearly the excessive costs some leaseholders are facing to fund interim safety measures such as waking watches. Such excessive costs are a national scandal and it is right that we step in to support leaseholders in this position.

That is why today I have announced a new £30 million fund for leaseholders in England to pay for the installation of fire alarm systems in high-rise buildings with cladding, removing or reducing the need for costly interim safety measures such as waking watch. Our research suggests this will save individual leaseholders an average of £137 per month and collectively over £3 million per month.

This step is supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council who have been clear in their updated October guidance that building owners should move to install common fire alarms as quickly as possible to reduce or remove dependence on waking watch.

The fund will open in January, but importantly, will also provide immediate, emergency support to Wicker Riverside Apartments in Sheffield to ensure that the 35 evacuated families should be able to return to their homes before Christmas. They were told to evacuate after the building failed fire safety tests.

This intervention will help worried leaseholders by providing financial support and delivering a better, long term fire safety system in their buildings.

Building safety fund

In May we launched the £1 billion Building Safety Fund to accelerate the removal of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings, taking Government's total funding for cladding remediation to £1.6 billion.

Demand for this fund has been significant, receiving over 2,700 registrations since opening. My Department has been working at pace and with building owners to process these registrations and ensure that as many buildings as possible can access the fund – a task that has been made challenging by the failure of many buildings to provide basic eligibility information.

It has become clear that many building owners will be unable to complete applications by our intended deadline of 31 December 2020, adding to the concerns of many leaseholders. To address this I have announced that building owners will now have until 30 June 2021 to complete their applications.

This means hundreds more buildings will be remediated and thousands of residents will be protected from costs. We are also making good progress on applications already received and expect many more to be agreed before Christmas.

ACM cladding remediation

Today we have also published the latest data setting out our progress in removing the most dangerous 'Grenfell type' ACM cladding.

We have continued to prioritise this vital safety work throughout the pandemic seeing a 50% increase in buildings where workers have started on site this year compared to December 2019 and an increase of 58% in fully remediated buildings. This work is particularly challenging due to the complex construction issues affecting many buildings which must be overcome to ensure they are remediated safely.

Final figures for the year will be published in January and we expect this to show that around 95% of high-rise buildings with ACM cladding identified last year will have started remediation works by the end of 2020. This is significant progress that we will continue to drive forward to meet our commitment that these buildings should be fully remediated by 2022.

Ongoing work to support leaseholders

Today's measures are another important step in our ongoing work to support leaseholders and builds on progress we have already made. This includes securing agreement that owners of flats in buildings without cladding do not need an EWS1 form to sell or re-mortgage their property – benefitting nearly 450,000 homeowners. Real progress has been made in an incredibly challenging and complex area.

We have been clear that the building industry must contribute towards the costs of making homes safe and set right decades of unsafe practices. Work continues at pace to develop further financial solutions to protect leaseholders. I look forward to announcing further details in the New Year.

Contingencies Fund Advance: National Savings and Investments

[HLWS677]

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

HM Treasury and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury have agreed additional Resource DEL funding of £40,500,000 for National Savings and Investments to respond to Covid-19 issues, build greater operational resilience and prepare for a major retendering event.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £40,500,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for National Savings and Investments. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £40,500,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Covid-19: Tiers System

[HLWS666]

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

Local action is vital to our strategy of suppressing the virus, while protecting the economy, education and the NHS, until a vaccine can make us safe. Help is on its way thanks to the rollout of a safe and effective vaccine, but we are not there yet.

While we have moved to a localised approach through the tiers system, we have been clear that these must be tough, recognising that case rates are rising in many areas of the country, and our knowledge that the winter months are the most challenging for our NHS.

We have assessed each area individually, and as Monday's decisions on Essex and today's decisions on Waverley and parts of Hampshire show, we are prepared to move at a more localised level where the data and human geographies permit.

As set out in the COVID-19 Winter Plan, there are five indicators which guide our decisions for any given area,

alongside consideration of ‘human geographies’ like travel patterns.

These are:

- Case detection rates in all age groups
- Case detection rates in the over 60s
- The rate at which cases are rising or falling
- Positivity rate (the number of positive cases detected as a percentage of tests taken)
- Pressure on the NHS.

While each metric is important in its own right, the interplay between each indicator for a given area is equally important, so a hard and fast numerical threshold on each metric is not appropriate.

These are not easy decisions, but they have been made according to the best clinical advice, and the best possible data from the JBC.

The regulations will require the Government to review the allocations at least every 14 days. We will also take urgent action when the data suggests it is required, as we did on Monday.

The first formal review took place yesterday, and the allocations and a detailed rationale is attached.

I will also deposit the data packs used to inform these decisions in the libraries of both Houses.

These changes will be implemented from 00:01 on 19 December. This list will also be published on GOV.UK and a postcode checker will be available for the public to check what rules apply in their local area.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

16 December Tier Review [16 December Tier Review.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-17/HLWS666/>

Criminal Cases: Guidelines on Disclosure

[HLWS665]

Lord Stewart of Dirlton: My Right Honourable Friend the Attorney General for England and Wales (Suella Braverman QC) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

“I wish to provide an update in relation to the Attorney General’s Guidelines and the CPIA Code of Practice.

Disclosure

The disclosure of unused material in criminal cases remains a crucial part of ensuring a fair trial takes place and is essential in avoiding miscarriages of justice. Unfortunately, the failure to disclose material promptly has led to the collapse of a number of trials and has impacted on the public’s confidence in the administration of the criminal justice system.

It is a priority for this Government to continue to encourage improvements in the disclosure process and to achieve permanent change. It is essential that we ensure

there are fair trials for all and that we increase confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Proposed Changes

In November 2018, the Government published a [Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Disclosure in the Criminal Justice System](#), which made a set of recommendations to improve disclosure performance and to address the key challenges of modern disclosure practice. The Review recommended that the Attorney General’s Guidelines on Disclosure required an update in order to truly reflect the challenges of today’s disclosure regime.

The Guidelines provide a set of high-level principles on the disclosure of unused material in criminal cases, aimed at assisting investigators, prosecutors and defence practitioners in England and Wales apply the disclosure regime contained in the CPIA Code of Practice.

The changes seek to provide a better representation of the challenges the modern-day investigator, prosecutor and defence practitioner faces. The updated Guidelines address the need for culture change, earlier performance of disclosure obligations, the use of technology and balancing the right to privacy with the right to a fair trial.

This is an opportunity to take a crucial step in the disclosure process, both to deal with issues that have been a long-standing concern and to provide practitioners with the tools they need to handle their disclosure obligations effectively.

Following the successful Parliamentary passage of the Statutory Instrument in relation to the Code of Practice, I can now confirm that both the Guidelines and the Code will be effective from 31st December 2020. The Lord Chancellor and I thank all of those who have engaged with us during the process and we are grateful for the role that they have played in recognising the complex challenges that affect the proper performance of the duty of disclosure”.

Department for Health and Social Care: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS659]

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

The Department of Health and Social Care has sought a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £34,000,000,000

The Department of Health and Social Care’s Net Cash Requirement cash limit has been used in full between April 2020 and December 2020 to support the running costs of the department, NHS and Arm’s Length Bodies, including expenditure on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Department of Health and Social care will seek a significant increase to its voted funding at Supplementary Supply Estimate to cover the increased costs of the Covid-19 pandemic and this will be used to repay the

advance after the Supply and Appropriation Act has received Royal Assent in March 2020.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £33,350,000,000 and additional capital of £650,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department of Health and Social Care. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £34,000,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Department for Transport: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS657]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I hereby give notice of the Department for Transport having drawn advances from the Contingencies Fund totalling £5,808,000,000 to enable expenditure on COVID-19 support packages to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act. The schemes include:

Emergency Measures Agreements and Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements with the Train Operating Companies; the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant; safeguarding critical ferry freight routes; and supporting regional transport networks such as Transport for London and light rail networks.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £4,574,000,000 and additional capital of £1,234,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for Transport. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £5,808,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill.

Economy Update

[HLWS680]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Covid-19 is the biggest threat this country has faced in decades and, throughout the first and now second waves of the virus, the government has sought to protect peoples' jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK with over £280 billion of support spent so far. The vaccine deployment is a milestone in the recovery from the pandemic and the eventual return to normal life. While vaccination of the most vulnerable people has begun, it will take some time for the vaccine to be rolled out to the wider population. During this time, the government remains committed to supporting people and businesses and providing them with the certainty they need.

In my previous statement to the house on 5 November 2020, I said we would review the scheme in January 2021. However, to provide certainty to businesses so that they can plan for the remainder of the winter and the New Year, we have undertaken this review earlier. As the CJRS is already UK-wide, these changes will continue to apply to all Devolved Administrations.

Following my last update in November, I can announce today that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will be extended by another month, until the end of April 2021 with employees continuing to receive 80 per cent of their current salary for hours not worked. Employers will be required to pay wages, National Insurance Contributions (NICS) and pensions for hours worked; and NICS and pensions only for hours not worked. The eligibility criteria for the scheme will remain unchanged as I have previously set out.

The Government-guaranteed Covid-19 business loan schemes – the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) have been open since the Spring. As of 13 December, over 1.5 million businesses have been supported with facilities worth more than £68 billion.

To support UK businesses through continuing economic disruption, the government has decided to extend the closing date to new applications for CBILS, CLBILS and BBLs. The schemes, currently due to close on 31 January 2021, will now be open to applications until the end of March. Together, the schemes provide vital support across all sectors of the UK economy for businesses who have been impacted by coronavirus. The loans can be used to support businesses with any liquidity needs, whether covering costs, additional expenditure or investment. We are extending the schemes now, ahead of Christmas and further into the new year, to provide businesses with continued access to the support they need through any continued disruption in early 2021. The British Business Bank will provide accredited lenders with further guidance in due course.

The government will provide a further update on Covid-19 economic support at Budget, which will be held on 3 March 2021.

Educational Settings: January 2021 Return and Funding

[HLWS672]

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.

Since the start of the academic year, the continuing efforts of leaders, teachers and staff across education and childcare has ensured that settings remain as safe and COVID-19 secure as possible. That remains the case but the return at the start of January 2021 will take place in exceptional circumstances, when winter risks are acute and at a critical point in national efforts to control the virus.

We announced on 15th December 2020 that we will be deploying the latest rapid-result coronavirus tests to schools and colleges from January to enable weekly screening for the workforce and daily testing for the workforce and students who are a close contact of a positive case. This will help us to find those with the virus and isolate them quickly. It will also help us reduce the need for self-isolation of close contacts of positive cases, keeping staff and students in education and childcare. We will continue to work closely with schools, colleges, Directors of Public Health and Directors of Children's Services to implement this plan.

Today we can announce that we will be offering all secondary schools (including all-through schools and middle deemed secondary schools), colleges, special schools and Alternative Provision settings the help, support and supplies to test as many secondary-age and FE students as possible as they resume education in January. We have prioritised these settings because they have seen more disruption so far, associated with older children and young adults having had higher rates of COVID-19. This will help identify asymptomatic cases – which make up a third of all cases – limiting the spread of the virus and we strongly encourage all schools and colleges to participate. In middle deemed secondary schools, testing would be for Year 7 and 8 pupils.

Already, the implementation of safety measures and the system of controls in place in education settings creates an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff, in which PHE and DHSC have confirmed the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. Given the exceptional public health circumstances, when settings return in week commencing 4th January, testing will help to identify asymptomatic cases more quickly. This will avoid individuals carrying the infection unknowingly and potentially spreading it in the local community.

For the week commencing 4th January, secondary schools (including middle/all-through schools, special schools and alternative provision) and colleges will only offer on-site provision for vulnerable children and young people, children of critical workers, those studying for or taking exams this academic year. They will provide remote education to all other pupils, before a full return to school and college from 11th January. The groups attending school and college from 4th January will be prioritised for testing, alongside the school workforce. Schools that wish to can use an extra INSET day on 4th January to prepare to deliver the testing. Early years settings and primary schools will be open as normal in week commencing 4th January.

Testing will not be mandated and all students will be expected to attend school or college from 11th January regardless of whether a test has been undertaken (unless they are self-isolating because they have tested positive for coronavirus, have symptoms or have been advised to isolate by NHS Test and Trace).

To deliver testing at this speed and scale Armed forces personnel will support directly through planning with schools and colleges, in every local area. The remaining testing workforce will be made up of volunteers and agency staff and reasonable costs will be reimbursed. Schools and colleges that opt in will need to provide a few members of staff to support the testing programme.

Testing, along with existing infection prevention and control measures such as ventilation, increased hygiene, and wearing of face coverings in communal areas of secondary schools where appropriate, can limit the number of children and young people missing out on face-to-face education because they have to isolate.

We realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for staff, students, pupils and parents. I want to thank all involved in education and childcare for their tireless dedication. The hard work of our education workforce has already substantially reduced the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within education settings and we will now use this new testing approach to ensure to reduce the risk of local community transmission in this age group and ensure more young people are able to remain in education, benefitting from the national priority of keeping education open for all.

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

Today I am also glad to confirm school and early years revenue funding allocations for 2021-22. This announcement covers the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the pupil premium and the free school meal supplementary grant. The DSG distributes the second year of the multi-billion school funding settlement that I announced to Parliament on 3rd September 2019. Compared to 2019-20, core school funding is increasing by £2.6 billion for 2020-21, £4.8 billion for 2021-22, and £7.1 billion for 2022-23. In addition, we continue to fund increases in teacher pay and pension costs from 2018 and 2019, worth £2 billion in 2021-22.

The distribution of the DSG to local authorities is set out in four funding blocks for each authority: a schools block, a high needs block, an early years block, and a central school services block. In July 2020, the Minister of State for School Standards informed Parliament of the publication of primary and secondary units of funding for the schools' block, and the provisional allocations for the high needs block and central school services block. In the DSG, these have now been updated with the latest pupil numbers to show how much each local authority will receive in 2021-22.

In the schools' block, funding in 2021-22 is increasing by over 3% per pupil, or 3.5% overall, compared to this

year. In the high needs block, funding to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is increasing by 10%.

I am also confirming the final hourly funding rates for the free early education entitlements in 2021-22. As a result of the £44 million investment in 2021-22 announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review, we will increase the hourly funding rates for all local authorities for the two year old entitlement by 8 pence an hour. Funding for the three and four year old entitlement will increase by 6 pence an hour in the vast majority of areas. We are increasing the minimum funding floor for the three and four year old offer to £4.44 per hour.

Twelve local authorities have had their 2020-21 hourly funding rates for 3 and 4 year olds protected by the “loss cap” in the Early Years National Funding Formula, to ensure that they do not face large drops to their funding rate. Funding for ten of these local authorities will be maintained in 2021-22 and two will see an increase to their hourly rate as they come off the loss cap in 2021-22.

I can also confirm that supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools will continue for the whole of the 2021-22 financial year and, the government’s commitment to the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools is unchanged.

Today, I am also announcing that the Pupil Premium will continue in 2021-22 with the same per pupil funding rates as in 2020-21. We will use the October 2020 census to calculate individual school-level allocations. This will ensure that this targeted investment can continue to support the most disadvantaged children in our schools.

Finally, I am also confirming that the free school meal supplementary grant, which was due to end in 2019-20, will be extended for one additional year, to 2020-21.

Financial Services Update

[HLWS682]

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

On 24 November, in a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) (HCWS595), I committed to working with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to lay before Parliament and publish online Dame Elizabeth Gloster’s report into the FCA’s regulation and supervision of London Capital & Finance plc (LCF) and the FCA’s response before the December recess.

This WMS provides an update on the investigation, the FCA’s response and the Government’s response. Pursuant to Section 82 of the Financial Services Act 2012 the Report into the Independent Investigation, the FCA’s response and a statement of reasons for withholding any material have been laid in the House today.

LCF was an FCA authorised firm that primarily offered an unregulated investment product – commonly known as mini-bonds – to retail consumers. It entered

administration in January 2019, impacting 11,625 people who invested around £237 million.

The Serious Fraud Office and FCA enforcement have launched an investigation into individuals associated with LCF. The Financial Reporting Council have also launched investigations into the audits of LCF.

I know that this has been a very difficult time for LCF bondholders. For some, this will have formed part of an investment portfolio, but for others, it will have represented a significant portion of their savings.

In May 2019, I directed the FCA to launch an independent investigation into the events relating to the FCA’s regulation and supervision of LCF. To lead the investigation, I approved the appointment of Dame Elizabeth Gloster, who has had a distinguished career as a barrister and as a judge, on the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

On 23 November 2020, Dame Elizabeth delivered her report to the FCA. It concludes that the FCA did not effectively supervise and regulate LCF during the relevant period. She makes nine recommendations for the FCA, focusing on how they should improve their internal authorisation and supervision processes. The Government welcomes the FCA’s apology to LCF bondholders and their commitment to implement all of Dame Elizabeth’s recommendations.

Dame Elizabeth also makes four recommendations for HM Treasury regarding the regulatory regime, which we accept in full.

Firstly, Dame Elizabeth rightly recognises the challenges the FCA faces in regulating almost 60,000 firms and recommends that the Treasury should consider the optimal scope of the FCA’s remit. The Government agrees that it needs to consider whether this scope is manageable, but it would be premature to do so before the ongoing FCA Transformation Programme has been delivered. I have discussed this reform programme with the Chair and Chief Executive and I am convinced it is the best means to address the recommendations. I have today exchanged letters with Mr Rathi agreeing that he will provide regular updates on the progress of these vital reforms.

Secondly, with regards to the regulation of mini-bonds, in May 2019 I announced that the Treasury would review the regulation of non-transferable debt securities. The FCA have also banned the promotion of high-risk ‘speculative illiquid securities’ – including some of the riskiest ‘mini-bonds’ – to ordinary retail consumers. Building on this work, and in light of Dame Elizabeth’s report, the Treasury will launch a consultation in the New Year on the regulation of non-transferable debt securities.

Thirdly, Dame Elizabeth raises concerns about a potential gap in responsibilities between Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the FCA in relation to the Innovative Finance ISA (IF ISA) products.

The FCA is making improvements to its oversight of financial promotions and, with HMRC, the Treasury is urgently looking at the sufficiency of checks on IF ISA

managers and the penalties regime. To improve communication and intelligence sharing, the FCA and HMRC are working to update their Memorandum of Understanding, and will set up an ISA Intelligence Working Group. And reflecting the findings in Dame Elizabeth's report, the Treasury will also look at how understanding of the ISA wrapper could be increased so that consumers recognise that, as with any investment, there can be risks as well as possible rewards.

Finally, Dame Elizabeth notes the challenges that increased financial activity online poses for regulation. The FCA already has powers to take a variety of enforcement action against firms that carry out fraudulent activity. Nevertheless, the Treasury will continue to keep the legislative framework under review. As part of this, the Treasury is working with the FCA to consider whether paid for advertising on online platforms should be brought into the scope of the financial promotions regime. The Treasury is also working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to ensure that fraudulent online advertising is addressed as a priority harm through its Online Advertising Programme.

It is important to acknowledge again that LCF's failure had a significant impact on the bondholders who have lost their hard-earned savings. There are several ongoing, interlinked processes addressing the reasons for the failure of LCF and seeking to recover bondholders' investments. The three main channels through which bondholders can seek compensation are:

- First, LCF's administrators are pursuing legal action to recover money. This process is ongoing but is not expected to recover bondholders' investments in full, with the current estimate being that recoveries will be as low as 25% of a bondholder's investment.
- Second, the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) has carried out extensive investigations to determine if LCF bondholders were eligible for FSCS compensation, and it has since compensated 159 bondholders who transferred out of stocks and shares ISAs to LCF bonds. The FSCS is also continuing to issue decisions to LCF bondholders who may have received misleading advice and will provide an update in the New Year. These activities – arranging transfers and advising on investments – are regulated activities and therefore eligible for compensation. In total, as of the start of December, the FSCS has paid out just over £50.9 million in compensation to 2,584 LCF bondholders. There is also an ongoing legal process, with a hearing scheduled for January 19, which may further affect eligibility for FSCS coverage.
- Lastly, the FCA will consider claims for compensation from LCF bondholders through their complaints scheme, which is available to bondholders who believe they have suffered financial loss as a result of actions or inactions of the FCA.

The Government recognises that LCF's failure and the loss of investment has had a significant and distressing impact on LCF's bondholders. With any investment there is a risk that, sometimes, investors will lose money. The

purpose of regulation is to ensure that investors have the right information to understand their risk. Within this system, even the best regulators, doing everything right, will not be able to, and should not be expected to, ensure a zero-failure regime. And the Government cannot, and should not be expected to, step in to compensate for every failure and every loss.

But it is clear in the case of LCF that there are multiple, complex reasons why people lost money. And the Government recognises that there is likely to be some variation in how much of their investment bondholders are able to recover through these processes.

The Government therefore announces that, taking into consideration the specific and complex set of circumstances surrounding the collapse of LCF, the Treasury will set up a compensation scheme for LCF bondholders. The scheme will assess whether there is a justification for further one-off compensation payments in certain circumstances for some LCF bondholders.

I will provide a further update in the New Year with more detail on the Government's approach.

I would like to reiterate my sympathy for LCF bondholders and my commitment to act on Dame Elizabeth's recommendations, to ensure our regulatory system maintains the trust of the consumers it is there to protect.

Follower Notices and Penalties

[HLWS670]

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

The Government introduced the Follower Notice regime in Finance Act 2014, following a consultation titled 'Raising the Stakes on Tax Avoidance'. The Government considers that the Follower Notice regime is an important element in the legal framework available to HMRC to tackle tax avoidance.

In December 2018 the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee published its report 'The Powers of HMRC: Treating Taxpayers Fairly'. In that report, the Committee recommended that the penalties associated with Follower Notices be abolished. The Government rejected the recommendation to abolish Follower Notice penalties as this would render the regime ineffective. However, I said in testimony to the Committee that HMRC would examine the possibility of providing greater judicial oversight of the Follower Notice safeguards.

The Government understands the concerns that have been raised about Follower Notices, but it has not been possible to identify any effective means of providing greater judicial oversight of the Follower Notice regime which would not re-introduce, or even worsen, the delays in settlement and payment of disputed tax, which the regime was designed to address. However, the Government has also taken the opportunity to look closely

at other options to ensure the Follower Notice regime can best achieve its objectives. It accepts that a better balance can be found between encouraging taxpayers who have used tax avoidance schemes which have been defeated in the courts, to reach agreement with HMRC; and allowing those who genuinely believe their case is different from that heard by the courts, to continue their dispute. This can best be achieved with a stronger focus on those whose continuation of their dispute, even once they have received a Follower Notice, is without merit.

Therefore, I am announcing publication today of a consultation document 'Follower Notices and Penalties'. This consultation proposes to reduce the level of penalty for a taxpayer not acting in response to a Follower Notice, from fifty per cent of the disputed tax to thirty per cent. A further penalty of twenty per cent would be chargeable only in cases where those receiving Follower Notices continue their disputes to litigation, and the tax tribunal rules that it was not reasonable for them to have done so.

The Government is committed to tackling all aspects of the avoidance market, including those who promote tax avoidance schemes. The Government announced measures in July and November aimed at strengthening HMRC's ability to tackle those who sell avoidance schemes.

The consultation has been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/follower-notices-and-penalties>. It will run to Wednesday 27 January.

Future Nuclear Deterrent

[HLWS664]

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

On 18 May 2011, the then Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr. Liam Fox) made an oral statement to the House (Official Report column 351) announcing the approval of the Initial Gate investment stage for the procurement of the successor to the VANGUARD Class ballistic missile submarines. He also placed in the Library of the House a report "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report".

As confirmed in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, this Government has committed to publishing an annual report on the programme. I am today publishing the ninth report, "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2020 Update to Parliament".

A copy has been placed in the Library of the House. The Statement includes the following attached material:

Future Nuclear Deterrent Annual Update 2020 [2020 Nuclear Deterrent Update to Parliament.docx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-17/HLWS664/>

Government's Civil Estate: Efficiency and Sustainability

[HLWS662]

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

I have today laid before Parliament, pursuant to Section 86 of the Climate Change Act 2008, the "State of the Estate in 2019-20". This report describes the efficiency and sustainability of the Government's Civil Estate and records the progress that Government has made since the previous year. The report is published on an annual basis.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

State of the Estate in 2019-20 [(Unnumbered Act Paper) - State of the Estate in 2019-20.pdf]

State of the Estate in 2019-20, Large Print [(Unnumbered Act Paper) - State of the Estate in 2019-20, Large Print.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-17/HLWS662/>

Independent Review of Terrorist Supervision: Government Response

[HLWS674]

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

"In November last year, Usman Khan, a convicted terrorist being supervised in the community on licence and managed under the statutory Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPP), attacked and killed Jack Merritt and Saskia Jones at Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge. This was a terrible atrocity that understandably aroused significant public concern, and as part of our response to it, my Right Honourable Friend the Home Secretary and I commissioned a review into the effectiveness of MAPP in the management of terrorist and other extremist offenders. We appointed Jonathan Hall QC, the Government's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, to undertake the review.

In his report, Jonathan Hall found that MAPP is a well-established process and did not conclude that wholesale change is necessary. However, he made important recommendations to enhance the statutory agencies' capabilities in managing terrorist offenders under MAPP. We published his report on 2 September and indicated that we would in due course provide him with a formal response to his recommendations. I can tell the House that the Home Secretary and I have today written to Jonathan Hall, setting out how we are implementing the key changes which he recommended.

I have placed a copy of our letter in the Library of the House.

The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill is introducing a number of changes which Jonathan Hall subsequently recommended, including giving judges the power to define crimes as terror-related, even if not terror offences as set out in law, and requiring high-risk terrorist offenders to undergo polygraph tests while on licence. We will legislate next year to introduce further powers for the police and probation service in line with Jonathan Hall's recommendations.

The creation of a new National Security Division in the National Probation Service will mean there are twice as many probation staff dedicated to the supervision of terrorism-risk offenders and strengthen its work with police, prisons and the security services.

Keeping our communities safe is the Government's first priority and we have made considerable investment in counter-terrorism. Our security services, police, prison and probation officers epitomise public duty and we hope that these new powers and ways of working will help them to further improve the tremendous, challenging work they do.

Recent atrocities in France and Austria have shown us that continued vigilance is needed to protect the United Kingdom from the scourge of terrorism and extremism. We believe that implementing agreed recommendations from Jonathan's report will, alongside improvements already in progress by Counter Terrorism Police and the National Probation Service, strengthen the supervision of these dangerous offenders and give the statutory agencies the tools which they need to defeat those who threaten us and our way of life".

Judicial Conduct Investigations Office: Annual Report 2019–20

[HLWS667]

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

"With the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice, I will today publish the fourteenth annual report of the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO).

The JCIO supports the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord Chancellor in our joint statutory responsibility for judicial discipline.

The judiciary comprises approximately 22,000 individuals serving across a range of jurisdictions. Over the past year, the JCIO received 1,292 complaints against judicial office holders. 42 investigations resulted in disciplinary action.

I have placed copies of the report into the libraries of both Houses, the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office. Copies are also available online at: <https://judicialconduct.judiciary.gov.uk/reports-publications/>".

Local Government Update

[HLWS668]

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

It is a matter of public record that Merseyside Police have for many months been conducting an investigation which has resulted in a number of arrests made on suspicion of fraud, bribery, corruption and misconduct in public office, both in December 2019 and in September 2020. Further arrests were made on 4 December 2020 in connection with offences of bribery and witness intimidation. This investigation involves a significant connection to Liverpool City Council.

This raises significant concerns as to whether the authority is currently complying with its best value duty under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Having carefully considered the evidence available to me, including information provided by the city council in response to requests from my department, it is clear that the council has taken significant steps to improve governance and assurances processes within the council, with respect to the authority's planning, highways, regeneration and property management functions. However, given the seriousness of the issues identified through the police investigation, and to support the council to continue to strengthen its governance, and deliver services for the people of the city, I would like to direct, independent assurance that the council is compliant with its Best Value Duty. I have therefore today decided to exercise the powers granted to me by Parliament under the Local Government Act 1999 to appoint Max Caller CBE to carry out an inspection of the authority's compliance with its best value duty. The matters to be covered by the inspection will be the authority's planning, highways, regeneration and property management functions and the strength of associated audit and governance arrangements.

I have asked Max Caller CBE to report findings to me by 31 March 2021, or such later date as he agrees with me.

I hope Honourable Members will appreciate that we cannot be drawn into more detail while investigations are ongoing. Once the inspection is complete, I will carefully consider the inspection report. If it shows that the authority is in breach of its best value duty, I will then consider whether or not to exercise my powers of intervention under section 15 of the 1999 Act.

At this challenging time with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is critical that Liverpool City Council continues to deliver public services and carry out its other statutory duties as effectively as possible, and I thank those working in the council for all they have done to date. My department is committed to providing the local authority with whatever support it may need to address these issues. Honourable Members and the people of

Liverpool can be assured that the government will do all we can to support the city of Liverpool.

Machinery of Government Change: Social Mobility Commission

[HLWS663]

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

The sponsorship and secretariat of the Social Mobility Commission will move to Cabinet Office to be part of the new Equality Hub. This machinery of government change will put the Commission's work at the heart of Government and ensure our commitment to levelling up and equality of opportunity is the responsibility of all departments. This change is also in line with the recommendation from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. The change will take effect on 1 April 2021.

Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing: National Risk Assessment

[HLWS678]

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

The UK's status as a global financial centre, our openness to trade and investment, and the ease of doing business here are all vital for our prosperity. These remarkable strengths also make us vulnerable to the risk of illicit financial flows from money laundering and terrorist financing. The Government is committed to tackling these risks which undermine our economy and society and enable those who wish us harm to fund their activities.

Today, the Treasury and the Home Office are jointly publishing the UK's third National Risk Assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing (NRA). This assessment updates the findings of the second NRA to take account of new information and developments that have emerged since its publication in 2017. The report has also been laid in Parliament.

The key findings of the 2020 NRA are as follows:

- The traditional high-risk areas of money laundering remain, including financial services, money service businesses (MSBs), and cash. However, new methods continue to emerge within these, as criminals adapt to increased restrictions and exploit vulnerabilities in different sectors and emerging technology.
- The cryptoasset ecosystem has developed and expanded considerably in the last three years, leading to increased risk of money laundering.
- The ability to conceal the beneficial owners make the art market attractive for money laundering, and art market participants have been assessed as posing a high-risk of money laundering.

- Professional services remain attractive to criminals as a means to support laundering the proceeds of crime, through the creation and operation of corporate structures, the investment and transfer funds to disguise their origin, and through lending layers of legitimacy to their operations.

- The UK's terrorist financing threat continues to involve low levels of funds being raised by UK individuals for the purpose of lifestyle spending and low sophistication attacks.

Since 2017, the UK's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime has undergone review by the Financial Action Task Force. The UK achieved one of the best ratings of any country assessed so far in this round of evaluations, outperforming other states who are at the forefront of tackling money laundering and terrorism financing. However, no country can afford to be complacent, and there remain vulnerabilities that we must work to address.

Since the 2017 NRA, the Government has continued to take action to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. We have built on the success of the economic crime public-private partnership through the inception of the Economic Crime Strategic Board and the publication of the Economic Crime Plan in 2019. We have also created the National Economic Crime Centre, and the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision, both of which have helped to further strengthen and coordinate our response to money laundering. The Government is also bringing forward plans to further strengthen corporate transparency through reforms to Companies House and the register of companies.

The UK will look to remain a leader in the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing, and we will continue to revise and reform our response to economic crime as new risks and methodologies emerge. The publication of the third NRA today is an important step in this fight, as it provides a critical component of continued partnership and prioritisation between government, law enforcement, supervisors and the private sector.

National Insurance Contributions Re-rating 2021-22

[HLWS669]

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

In line with the approach set out in the Spending Review document on 25 November (CP 330), the Government will use the September Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure (0.5%) as the basis for setting all National Insurance limits and thresholds, and the rates of Class 2 and Class 3 National Insurance contributions, for 2021-22. A table of these 2021-22 National Insurance rates and thresholds will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Provisional Police Grant Report: England and Wales 2021-22

[HLWS656]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My hon Friend the Home Secretary has today published the Provisional Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2021/22. The Report sets out the Home Secretary's determination for 2021/22 of the aggregate amount of grants that she proposes to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996. A copy of the Report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Today the Government is setting out the provisional police funding settlement for 2021/22. Overall funding for the policing system will total up to £15.8 billion, a £636 million increase on the 2020/21 funding settlement. Within this, available funding to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will increase next year by up to an additional £703 million, assuming full take-up of precept flexibility. This would represent an increase to PCC funding in cash terms of 5.4% on top of the 2020/21 police funding settlement.

Recruitment

The additional funding for PCCs includes an increase of £415 million to government grants for the recruitment of a further 6,000 additional officers by the end of March 2022, the second year of the Police Uplift Programme (PUP). This increased investment for year 2 will allow PCCs and their forces to continue building on the excellent progress made so far in year 1 of the PUP, where, so far, 5,824 of the year 1 target of 6,000 officers have been recruited.

We are expanding the scope of the Police Uplift Programme for year 2 to bolster capability in Serious and Organised Crime Units across forces and Counter-Terrorism policing. Strengthening policing's presence in the organised crime units will help us meet our manifesto promise to counter the growth of serious and organised crime, including fraud, county lines, child abuse and cyber-crime. The uplift in counter-terrorism policing will ensure they have the resources needed to maintain capacity against a changing and increasingly complex threat picture. Recruitment allocations for year 2 of the programme are set out in the tables attached to this statement.

To ensure that progress in recruitment is maintained, and to track the use of this investment efficiently, the Government will continue to ringfence £100 million of the additional funding. PCCs will be allocated their share of ringfenced funding in line with their funding formula allocation, and will be able to access the funding as they progress against their recruitment targets. Further information will be set out as part of the grant agreements for 2021/22. Each PCC will be awarded a local (territorial policing) officer recruitment target as in year 1, and for year 2 will also be provided a Regional and Organised

Crime Unit officer target, also in line with their funding formula allocation. The ROCU uplift will be funded through PCCs using the same mechanism. As ROCU functions require more experienced officers, forces will release existing officers to ROCUs and replace them with the additional officers recruited via the PUP to ensure overall workforce growth.

Funding for the recruitment of officers in counter-terrorism policing will be paid to forces through dedicated counter-terrorism policing grants.

Precept

As set out as part of the Spending Review 2020, PCCs will also be able to raise further funding through precept flexibility, subject to confirmation at the final Local Government Finance Settlement. PCCs will be empowered to increase their Band D precept by up to £15 in 2021/22, without the need to call a local referendum. If all PCCs decide to maximise their flexibility, this would result in up to an additional £288 million of funding for local policing next year. It is for locally accountable PCCs to take decisions on local precept.

In addition to this, PCCs will receive a portion of the £670 million of additional grant funding announced for local council tax support as part of the Spending Review 2020. This funding will help local authorities to continue reducing council tax bills for those least able to pay, including households financially hard-hit by the pandemic. Further details on the proposed allocation methodology has been announced as part of the policy paper on Covid-19 support in 2021/22.

Capital funding

This settlement will provide PCCs with £12.3 million funding for capital expenditure. £52.3 million capital funding will be spent on national priorities and infrastructure including police technology programmes, the College of Policing and Serious Organised Crime programmes.

Counter-terrorism policing

It is important that we ensure counter-terrorism policing has the resources needed to deal with the threat we face. That is why funding for CT policing will total up to £914 million in 2021/22. This continued investment in CT policing will support record high numbers of ongoing counter-terrorism policing investigations and enable the UK to respond more quickly and effectively to keep the country safe from a range of threats, wherever they take place.

In addition, CT policing will receive £32 million for a new CT Operations Centre. The new CT Operations Centre will co-locate partners from across law enforcement, the UK intelligence community and criminal justice system to improve the way in which we respond to a range of threats, including terrorism, and some elements of hostile state activity and organised crime.

PCCs will be notified separately of force-level funding allocations for CT policing, which will not be made public for security reasons.

National priorities

The Home Office will continue to invest in law enforcement through funding for national policing priorities.

This settlement of £1.1 billion in 2021/22 for national policing programmes and priorities builds on the government's commitment to reduce serious violence and crime and clamp down on county lines. This will allow us to 'surge' the police's response to violent crime where it is most prevalent, expand police capacity to tackle online drivers of violence and build stronger evidence on how to prevent homicides. We are continuing to invest in violence against women and girls, and the scourge of domestic abuse.

Tackling serious and organised crime and delivering our manifesto commitment to strengthen the National Crime Agency (NCA) is also a critical part of the Government's wider crime reduction agenda. As criminal networks become increasingly adaptable and resilient, we need to ensure that the funding is available to support the police in disrupting organised criminal activity. To this end, this settlement will protect funding for the NCA to target drug trafficking, child sexual exploitation and abuse, economic crime and organised immigration crime. ROCUs, which are an essential part of this approach, will also see their officer numbers boosted as part of the PUP. This will unlock the outcomes we all want to see for the country – more of the highest harm criminal enterprises disrupted and dismantled, more disruptions and convictions of high harm organised criminals, reducing the cost of serious crime to our economy, and increasing confidence in the UK's financial system.

Transformation and reform

The Government will continue to support the completion of national transformation policing programmes delivering enhanced national capabilities across policing. This will include: continuing delivery of the Single Online Home digital platform to forces and providing better engagement between the police and the public; completing the roll out of the National Enablers Programme to ensure all forces have the enabling tools that support collaboration and agile ways of working in response to Covid-19 and access to cyber-security capabilities to increase resilience; helping forces to deliver a fully accredited, more integrated and sustainable forensic service; maintaining investment in forensics, including digital forensics, to build capability across policing and for new officers; and further development of the National Data Analytics Solution to support preventative policing interventions and the formation of the new National Crime and Justice Lab through the use of data analytics to identify perpetrators and protect the vulnerable to effectively reduce crime. We are also increasing funding for the National Police Chiefs Council to boost co-ordination of, and response to, national issues and providing strong central support so Chief Constables can focus on fighting crime.

I have established and chair the Strategic Change and Investment Board (SCIB), which forms part of the sub-

governance of the National Policing Board. The SCIB will oversee all national law enforcement programmes; it will coordinate, prioritise and drive investment in and delivery of national capabilities across the policing system to ensure they support Government priorities around crime prevention and reduction. The SCIB will also oversee the investment in major technology programmes and, through the newly established Digital and Technology sub-board, it will support delivery of complex technology programmes and prioritise policing's future investment requirements.

Outcomes and efficiency

The Government expects the police to continue to build on the progress made on improving efficiency and productivity in return for the significant increase in investment. As such, the Government expects to see:

- 1) 6,000 further officers – on top of the first tranche of 6,000 to be recruited in 2020/21 – recruited by the end of March 2022. The Government will ringfence £100m of the funding for the uplift, which will be paid to forces in line with their progress in recruitment.
- 2) £120m of efficiency savings from across the law enforcement sector – which are reflected in the funding set out as part of the settlement – delivered in 2021/22. We expect these to be delivered through a combination of improved procurement practices (including the delivery of £20m of savings through BlueLight Commercial) as well as savings in areas such as estates, agile working and shared/enabling services. We expect the policing sector to work with the Home Office in setting up and supporting a new Efficiency in Policing Board. The Board will improve the evidence base on efficiencies delivered to date, identify opportunities for gains over this and future SR periods, share best practice in relation to the delivery of efficiencies, and monitor and support delivery of gains.
- 3) Policing needs to ensure that high quality data is collected and utilised effectively to support local delivery, identify efficiencies and support the National Policing Board's drive to deliver the best possible policing outcomes for the public. The Home Office & National Police Chiefs' Council will bring together in one document their strategies, plans and initiatives for improving data collection and use across the sector and with key delivery partners such as criminal justice agencies.

This settlement sets out the Government's continued commitment to supporting and investing in our police. I am extremely pleased with the progress forces have made on recruitment, and we are firmly on track to meet the first-year target. This year has once again highlighted the police's exceptional bravery and commitment to public service. Sector leaders, frontline officers and staff have responded with speed and flexibility to the unprecedented challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, forces have re-designed their working practices, adapted to implement new and evolving Covid-19 regulations and collaborated to ensure all personnel have had the necessary equipment and support to do their

jobs safely. Officers and staff have worked tirelessly with the public to build understanding of the rules intended to control this deadly virus, all the while continuing to tackle crime and disorder in our communities. This is policing at its best, and I would like to express my immense gratitude for these continued exemplary efforts.

I have set out in a separate document, attached, the tables illustrating how we propose to allocate the police funding settlement between the different funding streams and between Police and Crime Commissioners for 2021/22. These documents are intended to be read together.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Tables [Police Funding (Written Statement) Tables.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-17/HLWS656/>

Reciprocal Healthcare Arrangements

[HLWS661]

Lord Bethell: My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar) has made the following written statement:

Today I am notifying the House about arrangements the Government has made to support people who require ongoing, routine healthcare treatment in order to be able to travel to the European Economic Area or Switzerland after the end of the Transition Period, should there be no further negotiated outcome with the EU. These arrangements would commence from 1 January 2021.

Current reciprocal healthcare arrangements enable large numbers of UK-insured individuals to access healthcare when they live, study, work or travel in the European Economic Area or Switzerland, and visa-versa when European Economic Area or Switzerland-insured individuals come to the UK. Although some people are covered under the Withdrawal Agreement, for everyone else these arrangements will come to an end on 31 December 2020.

Negotiations on future arrangements with the EU are ongoing and include necessary healthcare provisions. If agreed, such provisions would provide effectively the same healthcare cover as the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The Government continues to work hard to secure these arrangements.

In the event we have not reached an EU-wide agreement on reciprocal healthcare, the Government will implement a time-limited healthcare scheme that supports UK residents with ongoing, routine treatment needs, who are visiting the European Economic Area or Switzerland from 1 January 2021. This type of treatment was previously covered under the EHIC scheme.

This Government will introduce the scheme with the intention that it is used by individuals who are certain to require treatment while abroad, such as regular dialysis, oxygen therapy or certain types of chemotherapy. The Government recognises that these ongoing, routine

treatment costs can be expensive, and makes travelling abroad extremely challenging for many people.

The scheme will be temporary and will cover travel that takes place between 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. People applying for the scheme must be ordinarily resident in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and entitled to the treatment on the NHS. Individuals will need to work with their NHS clinician to agree their treatment requirements and confirm they meet the criteria in the scheme.

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) will deliver this scheme for the whole of the UK. NHSBSA is an Arm's Length Body of the Department of Health and Social Care. It provides a range of critical central services to NHS organisations, NHS contractors, patients and the public.

The exception to the new scheme is travel to Ireland as the UK and Irish governments are committed that UK and Irish residents should continue have access to necessary healthcare when visiting the other country.

The Government will assess its options for reciprocal healthcare if we do not achieve an EU wide arrangement. This includes the possibility of negotiating bilateral arrangements on social security coordination, including reciprocal healthcare, with individual EU member states.

The Department of Health and Social Care will publish further guidance on the scheme, its criteria and application process shortly.

Special Resolution Regime Code of Practice

[HLWS679]

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

I have today laid before Parliament an update to the Special Resolution Regime Code of Practice. This update accounts for the transposition of the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) II; changes made to the Special Resolution Regime as a result of onshoring, including removing references to the concept of State aid; and increasing alignment with the Bank of England and HM Treasury Crisis Management Memorandum of Understanding.

The Special Resolution Regime Code of Practice provides industry and the wider public with important guidance on how UK authorities would use the tools provided by the Special Resolution Regime to protect UK financial stability by resolving failing financial institutions in an orderly way.

This version of the Code of Practice reflects the transposition of BRRDII through provisions in the Bank Recovery and Resolution (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/ 1350). These provisions will come into effect on 28 December and update the UK's resolution regime. The approach to transposition has been tailored to suit the UK's resolution regime and the Code

of Practice provides further guidance on what this means for firms.

The UK authorities have taken all the action they can to mitigate risks of disruption to cross-border financial services at the end of the Transition Period. As part of this preparation, the Treasury has amended the Code of Practice where EU legislation, including the concept of State aid, was referenced previously.

As set out in the Banking Act 2009, the Code of Practice has been updated in consultation with the Bank of England, the Prudential Regulation Authority, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

The Treasury has also consulted the Banking Liaison Panel, a group of industry stakeholders who represent the interests of banks, and who have expertise in law relating to the UK's financial system and to insolvency law and practice.

This updated version of the Code of Practice will provide firms with the certainty and clarity they need by setting out how the UK's resolution regime will operate following changes in legislation and as a result of the ending of the Transition Period.

The report has been published on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/banking-act-2009-special-resolution-regime-code-of-practice-revised-march-2017>.

Tax Exemptions: Employers

[HLWS675]

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

Employer-reimbursed coronavirus antigen tests: Exemption from Income Tax and National Insurance contributions

On 9 July 2020, the Government agreed to introduce an income tax exemption and National Insurance contributions (NICs) disregard to ensure that Coronavirus antigen testing provided to employees outside the Government's national testing scheme will not attract tax and NICs liabilities.

The Government is now introducing a second income tax exemption and NICs disregard, to ensure that employees who purchase their own coronavirus antigen test and are reimbursed by their employer, will not attract tax and NICs liabilities.

The Government recognises the importance of COVID-19 testing. Currently, regular tests are available through the Government testing programme to a wide range of employees, including NHS workers. If an individual is tested through the Government testing programme, no tax or NICs liability will arise.

Under normal rules, the cash reimbursement of a test by an employer to an employee, would constitute earnings,

and the amount reimbursed would be subject to income tax and Class 1 NICs as a result. However, the Government introduced NICs regulations - The Social Security Contributions (Disregarded Payments) (Coronavirus) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1523) on 14 December and will introduce a tax exemption in the next Finance Bill to ensure that no tax and NICs liabilities arise.

These exemptions will ensure that Income Tax and NICs will not be due on employer-reimbursed antigen tests carried out during the current tax year 2020-21.

Easement for employer-provided cycles exemption

The tax exemption for the employer provision of cycles and cyclist's safety equipment was introduced to support employers in promoting healthier journeys to work and to encourage green commuting. Many employers offer this in the form of Cycle to Work schemes.

One of the conditions of the exemption is that the cycling equipment provided should be used mainly for qualifying journeys (to or from work or in the course of work).

The Government's COVID-19 restrictions have required many employees to work from home where possible. Therefore, many existing users of the scheme are not travelling to work and may be unable to meet the condition for qualifying journeys. Under the current application of the rules, these individuals would become liable to an income tax Benefit in Kind charge.

However, the Government will introduce a time limited easement to disapply the condition which states that cycles must be used mainly for qualifying journeys. The easement will apply to existing users and will allow those individuals to continue to benefit from the tax exemption without needing to meet the qualifying journeys condition.

The easement will be available to employees who have joined a scheme and have been provided with a cycle or cycling equipment on or before 20 December 2020. The easement will be in place until 5 April 2022, after which the normal rules of the exemption will apply.

Therefore, employees who have joined a scheme and have been provided with a cycle or cycling equipment on or before 20 December 2020, will be permitted to an easement, and will not have to meet the qualifying journeys condition until 5 April 2022. Employees who join a scheme from 21 December 2020 will need to meet all the normal conditions of the exemption.

Trade (Disclosure of Information) Bill

[HLWS655]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Trade (Disclosure of Information) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

United Kingdom Internal Market Bill

[HLWS658]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

The UK Internal Market (UKIM) Bill is fundamental to providing a reliable legal basis for the effective and coherent functioning of the UK internal market. It guarantees that businesses and consumers across the UK are not subject to harmful internal trade barriers following our exit from the EU Single Market regime. Legislation of this kind must be in place across the whole UK in order to provide businesses and consumers from all parts of our country with the same legal protections and advantages.

From the outset, it has been the UK Government's objective to legislate for the UK Internal Market Bill with the consent of all the devolved legislatures. At every stage, we have followed the spirit and letter of the devolution settlement and worked hard to secure legislative consent for this vitally important piece of legislation for all of the UK. We have also engaged with businesses, business representative organisations and wider stakeholders, such as academics, across the entire country since the Bill's introduction to better understand expectations, needs and concerns. The UK Government regrets the Scottish Government's decision to withdraw from UK-wide work on the internal market in Spring 2019.

The engagement with the Welsh Government, in particular, has resulted in tangible changes to the Bill to accommodate concerns as well as strengthen devolved involvement within the machinery of the legislation; this includes putting the relationship between the Market Access Principles and Common Frameworks on the face of the Bill as well as ensuring that the Secretary of State is obliged to seek the consent of the Devolved Administrations when panel appointments are made to the Office of the Internal Market (OIM). We have also agreed to have an annual meeting to review the operation of Parts 1-4 of the UK Internal Market legislation with the Devolved Administrations, including the Office for the Internal Market's reports and new developments that might require the use of delegated powers, using our intergovernmental structures.

The UK Government does however deeply regret that the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru have both refused to provide their consent for the Bill. We have maintained, throughout the Bill's passage, that the Government is open to discussing the concerns of each Devolved Administration, and would make changes to the Bill where it is possible, without undermining the necessary purpose and integrity of the legislation. Proceeding with the Bill to Royal Assent is necessary to put the legal structures in place which provide clarity and consistency for businesses and citizens working across the country.

The Sewel Convention envisages situations where the UK Parliament may need to legislate for the whole country in this way. The exceptional circumstances of our departure from the EU, and the need to provide a UK-wide legal underpinning for the internal market, is clearly one such situation. This Government is fully committed to the Sewel Convention and the associated practices for seeking consent. Indeed, in the current legislative session of Parliament alone, the UK Government has secured (to date) 37 LCMs from the devolved legislatures; this is in addition to the hundreds of other LCMs passed by the devolved legislatures over the last 21 years of devolution. We will, of course, continue to seek legislative consent, take on board views, and work with the Devolved Administrations on all future Bills that engage the legislative consent process, just as we have always done.

The UK Internal Market Bill will allow people to do business reliably and seamlessly across all parts of the UK and enable the UK Government to boost our economic recovery, increase investment across the whole UK, create new jobs and be stronger as a country as we emerge from this pandemic. The UK Government stands as the conservator of this great Union - the most successful political and economic Union in history - as a force for bettering peoples' lives, with devolution delivering clear benefits for all UK citizens. The UK Internal Market Bill will help to ensure that England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland remain more prosperous, stronger and safer together.

Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

[HLWS673]

Lord True: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Cabinet Office (Michael Gove MP), has today made the following Written Statement:

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met today, 17 December, by video conference.

The meeting was co-chaired by the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, and attended by alternate Joint Committee co-chairs, the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and Member State representatives.

The Committee undertook a review of Specialised Committee activity and Withdrawal Agreement implementation throughout the transition period. The Committee agreed to publish the second citizens' rights Specialised Committee Joint Report on Residency and to finalise the list of arbitrators before the end of the transition period. The Joint Committee also adopted the following five Decisions:

Citizens' rights

- i) Triangulation of social security coordination between the UK, EU, European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) States;

The Northern Ireland Protocol

- i) Agricultural subsidies;
- ii) Determination of goods not at risk;
- iii) Errors and omissions in the Withdrawal Agreement;
- iv) Arrangements under Article 12(2) of the Protocol.

Both the UK and EU made five unilateral declarations relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol:

- i) Export declarations;
- ii) Meat products;
- iii) Official certification;
- iv) Human and veterinary medicines; and
- v) Article 10(1) of the Protocol.

The Decisions adopted at this meeting demonstrate the UK's and the EU's commitment to the implementation of the Protocol in full so the people of Northern Ireland can have the fundamental legal assurances they need. Both the UK and the EU reiterated their commitment to upholding obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement and

protecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all respects.

The UK and the EU emphasised their commitment to EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU, and to ensuring their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement are protected. The Committee agreed to extend Withdrawal Agreement social security coordination between the UK and EU to European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) States from 1 January 2021.

The UK and the EU took the opportunity provided by this meeting to underline its commitment to continued constructive engagement through the Joint Committee processes after the end of the transition period.

Separately, the UK has confirmed that it will provide additional funding of over £200 million to the PEACE PLUS programme up to 2027, on top of the £300 million already committed, recognising its important contribution to the promotion of peace and reconciliation, and to cross-border economic and territorial development of Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland.

Written Answers

Thursday, 17 December 2020

Affordable Housing: Construction

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain the use of section 106 agreements to deliver affordable housing. [HL11139]

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on local authority finances of the proposed delay in the collection of the Community Infrastructure Levy until a building is in occupation. [HL11141]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government's White Paper, Planning for the Future proposes that a new 'Infrastructure Levy' will replace section 106 planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy and be set in a way which delivers at least as much - if not more - onsite affordable housing than at present. It also proposes that the Levy will be payable on the completion of development. To better support the timely delivery of infrastructure, local authorities would be allowed to borrow against Infrastructure Levy revenues so that they could forward fund infrastructure.

The consultation on 'Planning for the Future' closed on 29 October. We are analysing the consultation feedback thoroughly and holding meetings with industry and local authority representatives to understand the impacts of our proposals. We will respond formally in due course.

Asylum: Reform

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Home Secretary at the Conservative Party Conference on 4 October, what assessment they have made of the actions of "do-gooders" and "leftie lawyers"; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL9063]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The comments were made in the context of a trend whereby individuals submit last-minute appeals on the basis of human rights claims that we would have expected to have been made far earlier in proceedings and which often transpire to be unmeritorious.

Concerns have been relayed about the behaviour of certain NGOs in France in how they are supporting migrants. We take any information of organised criminality seriously and will investigate appropriately.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish a recovery plan for the aviation industry. [HL11073]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has announced through the Global Travel Taskforce, a number of measures to assist the sector to restart over the winter period. This includes the 'Test to release for international travel' (TTR) scheme to be launched on 15 December, which will boost consumer confidence in air travel.

Following the successful implementation of these measures, the Government will then put forward its strategic framework for the medium and long-term recovery of the aviation sector.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 2 December (HL9789), what assessment they have made of the case for publishing the names of those firms borrowing under Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back Loan Scheme to facilitate identification of fraud; and why they are delaying publication of this information until it is made available on the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module. [HL11087]

Lord Callanan: Given the necessary preparation and administration involved in publishing the information, we consider that the best use of public resources would be directed to pulling this information together to meet our existing obligations.

We continue to work across Departments, and with lenders and law enforcement agencies, to tackle fraudulent abuse of the schemes.

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan (HL9789) on 12 November, who is responsible for collating and acting on information concerning recipients of loans taken out under (1) the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and (2) the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. [HL11088]

Lord Callanan: Lenders accredited to deliver the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme are responsible for collecting data concerning recipients of loans. This data is collated by systems managed by the British Business Bank.

Brain Cancer: Research

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 25 November (HL9924), what assessment they have made of the rejection of all brain tumour research applications made so far this financial year by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR); and what assessment they have made of the performance of NIHR. [HL10875]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the pool of experts used by the National Institute for Health Research contains those who may be classified as brain tumour experts or brain tumour patient advocates. [HL10876]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the rejection of grants for brain tumour research by the National Institute for Health Research on the talent pool of brain tumour experts. [HL10877]

Lord Bethell: The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is helping researchers develop high-quality research proposals in this scientifically challenging area. To encourage such proposals, in April 2018 we called on the research community specifically for brain tumour research funding applications. There was an immediate increase in proposals which continue to be assessed by review panels of scientific experts and involving patients and public. We are relying on researchers to submit research proposals in this difficult area of research, with a number of research applications currently under consideration. The NIHR system uses a gold standard of peer review, essential in identifying and funding only those research proposals that are of high quality. An assessment of the success rate of applications to the NIHR on brain tumour research compared to all other areas grouped together reveals little difference.

The NIHR is also working with the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission towards funding a workshop for researchers to support them in submitting higher quality research. Additionally, through the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce, the NIHR is working closely with NHS England, NHS Improvement and the National Cancer Research Institute to consider ways of increasing the number of high-quality research applications.

British Nationality: Hong Kong

Asked by *Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications have been received for hereditary British citizenship from Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Status holders. [HL11077]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Published data on applications for British citizenship can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets>.

The published data relates to people from Hong Kong, which will include British National (Overseas) status holders. We do not publish data on applications for British Citizenship from British National (Overseas) status holders.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Citizenship data sets - Sept 2020 [citizenship-datasets-sep-2020.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-03/HL11077>

Cash Dispensing

Asked by *Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce legislation to protect consumers' access to cash; and if so, when. [HL11078]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government published a Call for Evidence on 15 October to inform its approach for legislating to protect access to cash. The document sought views on the key considerations associated with cash access, including deposit and withdrawal facilities, cash acceptance, and regulatory oversight of the cash system. The Call for Evidence closed on 25 November; the Government is considering responses and will set out its next steps in due course.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 3 December (HL10511), whether they will now answer the question put, namely which local planning authorities in England have set the Community Infrastructure Levy at zero. [HL11083]

Lord Greenhalgh: Authorities only adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if, having undertaken the necessary viability analysis, the rates that can be applied justify doing so. Therefore none of the 163 levy charging authorities in England have set a zero levy rate for all levy liable development in their area.

Charging authorities set out their levy rates, including any zero rates, in a charging schedule which is required to be published on their website. Authorities can set different rates for different zones within their authority, by reference to different intended uses of development, by reference to the intended gross internal area of development, and by reference to the intended number of dwellings or units. Categories are not consistently applied across all authorities, but are developed to reflect local circumstances.

CIL charging authorities are able to exempt categories of development either by explicitly setting zero rates within a charging schedule, or by setting rates which refer to other types of development only (for instance, if a charging schedule were to include rates only for residential development, then retail and office development would be exempt).

Because categories of development to which CIL is applied vary between authorities, and can vary within them, it is not possible to accurately summarise how rates apply across all CIL charging authorities. However, all of the 163 CIL charging authorities have set a levy charge for residential development in at least part of their area.

Construction: Finance

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Government Construction Strategy 2016–20, published in March 2016, whether they are on course to achieve the forecasted £1.7 billion efficiency saving predicted to be promoted through best practice in construction procurement and delivery; and how any such savings have been so far achieved. [HL11011]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has achieved the efficiency saving set out in the Government Construction Strategy 2016–20 and at the end of March 2020 had recorded over £1.7 billion savings. This has been enabled by improving government's capability as a construction client; developing digital capability in design and construction; improving transparency for industry by publishing the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline; and developing new models and approaches to procurement. It has led to efficiency savings being made through volume and margin reductions, rate discounts, de-scoping of projects and departmental reforms.

The Government has also recently published its Construction Playbook which aims to further improve how construction projects are assessed, procured and delivered.

Construction: Warranties

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the effectiveness of warranties on construction projects. [HL11223]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government is clear that warranties on construction projects need to be fit for purpose and provide proper protection for consumers. It is the responsibility of the Financial Conduct Authority to regulate new build warranties and protect consumers. If a consumer is unhappy with the warranty provider's action, they can contact the Financial Ombudsman Services for free.

Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest estimate of the proportion of people who have had COVID-19 who have presented with (1) a cough, (2) a temperature, (3) a loss of taste, (4) any such symptoms, and (5) no symptoms. [HL9601]

Lord Bethell: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates the percentages of people testing positive for COVID-19 who present with a range of symptoms in the community, which means that they necessarily exclude data from those testing positive in hospitals, care homes or other institutional settings. It should be noted that the symptoms were self-reported, and not professionally diagnosed.

Around 5% of school-aged children presented with cough symptoms, whereas for those under 35 years old and those aged over 35 years old, the percentage for those presented with cough symptoms rose to between 10% and 15%.

In school-aged children, 15% of those who tested positive presented with fever symptoms and in adults, 15% and 20% did. The positivity rate in all age groups for those presenting with a loss of taste or smell is between 35% and 45%, however, there are wide confidence intervals within the data for school aged children. For all age groups, the rates of those reporting other symptoms is around 5%.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergency's (SAGE) subgroup, Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational (SPI-M-O), do not have one consensus estimate for asymptomatic case proportions. The ONS' COVID-19 Infection Study has estimated that approximately 55% of those individuals who test positive do not record evidence of symptoms at or around the time of the test. This does not mean these individuals will not go on to develop symptoms or had symptoms previously.

Other SAGE evidence has shown that there is wide variation in the estimated proportion of infections that are truly asymptomatic across different studies with the rapid review providing a pooled estimate, based on 22 studies, of 28% but with very wide confidence intervals.

Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide funeral workers with access to Test and Trace risk assessments by Tier One contract tracers. [HL11075]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England's Health Protection Teams (HPTs) undertake tier 1 contact tracing and have a key role in investigating workplace outbreaks; this includes in the funeral services industry.

In line with other essential services, COVID-19 cases working in the funeral sector are not automatically

escalated to HPTs. If contact tracing results in staffing levels, due to high numbers of staff being asked to self-isolate, that jeopardise the continued functioning of their essential service then the employers are advised to discuss with the local HPT who can review the risk assessment in this light.

Coronavirus: Scotland

Asked by Lord MacKenzie of Culkein

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the COVID-19 home test kit system is not available to postcodes in (1) Sutherland, (2) Caithness, (3) Ross and Skye, (4) Lochaber, (5) Badenoch, (6) Argyll and Bute, (7) the Western Isles, (8) Orkney, and (9) Shetland; and what steps they are taking to resolve this availability. [HL10351]

Lord Bethell: Due to their remote geographical area, home testing kits are not available in some areas. The home test service relies on Royal Mail's 24 hour guarantee priority post-boxes to ensure tests are returned to the laboratory in a suitable timeframe. Some remote areas in the Scottish Isles have had access to a dedicated testing service set up specifically that enables people to access tests through hospitals without being admitted as a patient. This has been rolled out to the areas of most acute need across the Islands first and is being expanded to provide testing across the Highlands. Residents can also access testing via the nearest regional test site, walk in test site or mobile testing unit.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Baroness McGregor-Smith

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they adjust their estimates of the number of COVID-19 infections to reflect the number of false positive test results. [HL8421]

Lord Bethell: The information is not held in the format requested.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have held discussions with private sector providers about the delivery of plans for same day mass testing for COVID-19 in England; and, if so, who these providers are. [HL8446]

Lord Bethell: The Government is committed to rapid and accessible testing. We are working with private sector and are increasing our testing capacity, both through current swab testing and new, rapid lateral flow tests to cut the spread of COVID-19 nationwide. Where contracts with commercial partners have been finalised the Department publishes contract award notices online at GOV.UK Contract Finder service.

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of people who have had a (1) positive, (2) negative, and (3) inconclusive, COVID-19 NHS test result after requesting a test because of (a) a cough, (b) a temperature, (c) a loss of taste, and (d) multiple symptoms. [HL9690]

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

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many staff from (1) Deloitte, (2) the Boston Consulting Group, and (3) McKinsey, are currently employed within their COVID-19 testing system; and what experience in laboratory-based testing is required in order to be eligible for those roles. [HL9906]

Lord Bethell: The information requested is as follows:
Deloitte - 1,127.

Boston Consulting Group – 27.

McKinsey – 24.

Consultants are not working in roles which require medical expertise such as laboratories or hospitals.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the COVID-19 planned for use vaccines prevent those vaccinated from transmitting the disease. [HL11196]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government to what extent a person who receives only one dose of (1) an adenovirus vector, or (2) an mRNA, COVID-19 vaccination is (a) vulnerable to COVID-19 themselves, and (b) able to transmit the disease on to a second person. [HL11197]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government to what extent a person who completes a two-dose course of (1) an adenovirus vector, and (2) an mRNA, COVID-19 vaccination remains (a) vulnerable to COVID-19 themselves, and (b) able to transmit the disease on to a second person. [HL11198]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government for how long a person who has received the two-doses of the COVID-19 vaccine required under the vaccination protocols is able to transmit COVID-19 on to a second person [HL11199]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the incidence of vaccinated people being able to pass on COVID-19 to those who have not been vaccinated in

the trial COVID-19 vaccination programmes. [HL11278]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government for how long a person who has received the two-doses of the COVID-19 vaccine required under the vaccination protocols can remain asymptomatic. [HL11279]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether a person who has been vaccinated against COVID-19 can acquire COVID-19 asymptomatic status without indicators and transmit the virus on to another person who has not been vaccinated. [HL11280]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether (1) an adenovirus vector, and (2) an mRNA, COVID-19 vaccine (a) does not prevent a vaccinated person from contracting COVID-19 but suppresses the symptoms of the disease, or (2) prevents a vaccinated person from contracting COVID-19. [HL11281]

Lord Bethell: To date the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as well as independent expert advisors on the Commission on Human Medicines and its Expert Working Groups, have completed the assessment of the quality, safety and efficacy data only for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. This vaccine is an mRNA vaccine and data supported a two dose regimen. Efficacy was evaluated in terms of prevention of COVID-19 caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, in terms of vulnerability to COVID-19 of the person vaccinated. Clinical trial data showed that, compared to the placebo, efficacy of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine from first COVID-19 occurrence from seven days after dose two in participants with or without evidence of prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 was 94.6% - a 95% credible interval of 89.9% to 97.3%.

There is currently no data available regarding transmission of COVID-19 to others in a person who has been vaccinated using any of the COVID-19 vaccines. There is also currently no data available for any COVID-19 vaccine on the period after vaccination for which a person can remain asymptomatic.

Deportation: Jamaica

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations in Jamaica co-operated with UK authorities to provide support to those deported to Jamaica from the UK on 2 December. [HL11095]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Extensive cooperation was provided to HMG's returns charter flight by the Jamaican government and its agencies.

Representatives from the Jamaican Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Passport and Immigration Agency and the Jamaican Constabulary Force facilitated arrangements for receiving travellers, conducting COVID19 tests and transfers to pre-arranged hotel accommodation to quarantine, pending test results.

Following quarantine people will be placed into the care of friends or family, with additional support offered by charities Open Arms and the National Organisation for Deported Migrants (NODM). These charities offer on-arrival assistance, including transport to new places of residence, guidance on reintegration to Jamaican society and access to the Open Arms Development Centre, which can provide accommodation and vocational training.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were deported to Jamaica from the UK on 2 December; how many people who were due to be deported on that same flight were not; and why any such people were not deported. [HL11096]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The charter flight to Jamaica departed the UK on 2 December 2020 carrying 13 foreign national offenders (FNOs) convicted of serious offences including murder, attempted rape, aggravated burglary and supplying Class A drugs. They were sentenced to a combined total of over 100 years, which included one life sentence.

There were 23 FNOs who were sentenced to a combined total of 156 years plus one life sentence who were not deported on the charter, including a murderer and rapists.

We are unable to comment on individual cases and therefore cannot provide the detailed reasons why those removed from the flight were not deported; however, the majority were due to last minute legal challenges. We are progressing these cases as a priority.

This Government takes seriously its obligation under the UK Borders Act 2007 to deport any FNO who has served a custodial sentence of at least 12 months; and we will continue to seek to remove dangerous criminals and protect our communities.

Digital Technology: Competition

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on competition of the market dominance of (1) Amazon, (2) Apple, (3) Facebook, (4) Google, and (5) Microsoft; and what plans they have, if any, to address any such impact. [HL11070]

Lord Callanan: Responsibility for investigating individual and market-wide competition issues, including breaches of competition law, falls to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) as the UK's independent competition authority.

In July 2020, the CMA published the final report of its market study into online platforms and digital advertising. In the recent Government response to the market study, we agreed with the CMA's findings that Google and Facebook are dominant in the search and social media markets and that this is leading to higher prices for goods and services, less innovation, and less choice for consumers.

We also announced the Government's intention to establish and fund a Digital Markets Unit (DMU) within the CMA from April 2021, to operationalise a new pro-competition regime for digital markets. We will consult on the form and function of the DMU in early 2021, and legislate to put it on a statutory footing as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Duty Free Allowances

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the economic impact of the loss of duty-free sales on (1) Belfast International Airport, (2) Stansted Airport, (3) Manchester Airport, and (4) Newcastle Airport. [HL11037]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom (UK) will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.

- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering Great Britain from a destination outside of the UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.

The Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation. The Government is also continuing to meet and discuss with stakeholders following the announcement of these policies.

The detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>. A technical note has also been issued to stakeholders to expand on this document and to respond to issues raised by stakeholders.

On 25 November the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out their assessment of the

fiscal impact of the withdrawal of the tax-free airside sales. The OBR estimate that the withdrawal will raise approximately £170 million per year for the Exchequer, after behavioural responses are taken into account and passenger numbers recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

The Government recognises the challenges the aviation sector is facing as it recovers from the impacts of Covid-19 and has supported the sector throughout the pandemic, and continues to do so, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on job losses of changes to the duty-free regime for travellers from outside the EU. [HL11053]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

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The Government recognises the challenges the aviation sector is facing as it recovers from the impacts of Covid-19 and has supported the sector throughout the pandemic, and continues to do so, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that airports in Northern Ireland are treated equivalently to airports in Great Britain in relation to duty-free tax rules for travellers to the EU from 1 January 2020. [HL11028]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: While the EU will also be offering duty-free sales of excise goods for travel to Great Britain, passengers travelling from the EU, including Ireland, will have to pay excise duty on goods they bring into the UK, subject to certain personal allowances. This means passengers will need to go through customs processes and declare goods they are carrying in their luggage where duty is due.

By contrast, the Government has committed to Northern Ireland continuing to have unfettered access to the rest of the UK, including passengers from Northern Ireland being able to carry unlimited amounts of personal goods into Great Britain without having to declare them.

Offering duty-free sales without charging excise duty on entry to Great Britain would compromise the UK internal market by allowing unlimited duty-free goods to enter the UK, undercutting domestic retailers and eroding the tax base.

However, the alternative would be to charge tax and duty on these goods to put Northern Ireland in the same position as Ireland.

In practice, this would mean treating goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain as though there were an international border for passengers. This goes against the Government's clear policy that Northern Ireland is, and will remain, an integral part of the UK, including for excise purposes.

HMRC has published guidance providing further information relating to the VAT and excise treatment of goods under the Northern Ireland Protocol, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accounting-for-vat-on-goods-moving-between-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-from-1-january-2021> and here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-excise-goods-as-freight-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol-from-1-january-2021/moving-excise-goods-as-freight-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol-from-1-january-2021#excise-movements-from-great-britain-to-northern-ireland-via-the-eu>.

Employment: Racial Discrimination

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance is being given to employers to avoid racial discrimination when verifying employees' eligibility to work; and what redress is available to people who may have been racially discriminated against in this manner. [HL11065]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has published statutory codes of practice on GOV.UK for employers on how to avoid unlawful discrimination when undertaking checks. This guidance clearly stipulate that employers should provide individuals with every opportunity to demonstrate their right to work and should not discriminate on the basis of race, or any of the other protected characteristics.

We are clear that those who discriminate are breaking the law. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, may bring a complaint before the courts or before an employment tribunal. The Equality Advisory Support Service is there to support people who may have experienced discrimination in England, Scotland or Wales, and an equivalent is provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Avoiding discrimination while preventing illegal working: code of practice, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-code-of-practice-on-avoiding-discrimination>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Right to work checks - code of practice
[Code_of_practice_on_avoiding_unlawful_discrimination_while_preventing_illegal_working.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-03/HL11065>

Environmental Land Management Scheme

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 3 December (HL10512), whether they will now answer the question put, namely what proposals they have (1) to encourage, or (2) to ensure that the environmental and other enhancements that will be included in Environmental Land Management Schemes will also take place on farmland where the owners and land managers have decided not to take part in such Schemes. [HL11079]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environmental Land Management scheme is being designed to be attractive to a wide range of farmers and land managers to deliver the environmental objectives of the scheme. To achieve this, we are working closely with a range of environmental and

agricultural stakeholders to design the scheme collaboratively. The scheme will operate alongside other policies and schemes to meet the Government's objectives.

We want to attract high uptake and achieve environmental outcomes at scale and so are developing an attractive, simple, trusted and relevant offer across the full range of schemes. Our Agricultural Transition Plan, published on 30 November, sets out details on the schemes which we are running to do this, with the three components of Environmental Land Management at the heart of this. However, we will also offer environmental schemes which cover farming in protected landscapes, and tree health, as well as grants which will help farmers to improve their efficiency and productivity while also benefiting the environment.

Whether or not farmers and land managers decide not to participate in a scheme, they will still be subject to the minimum basic requirements set out in domestic legislation to safeguard the environment, plant health and animal health and welfare. This underpins the move to payments for public goods. We will work with the sector to co-design and establish a new regulatory model for the long term. However, we will ensure that we always have a robust system of inspection and enforcement in place to maintain regulatory protections throughout the agricultural transition.

Financial Services: UK Relations with EU

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the EU about equivalence recognition for UK-based financial services companies after 31 December. [HL11045]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On 9 November, the Government announced as many equivalence decisions for EEA Member States as it could in favour of openness, and where it made sense to do so, in the absence of clarity from the EU. These decisions were made to provide clarity and stability to industry. The granting of these equivalence decisions provides a broad range of benefits in terms of having open markets that are well regulated, facilitating firms' ability to pool and manage risks effectively, and supporting UK and EEA clients' access to financial services and market liquidity.

Equivalence assessments are an autonomous process, managed separately from trade negotiations. This applies in the case of the EU, and where the EU choose to grant the UK equivalence, this will be done in accordance with their own decision-making process. However, the Government has made sure that the EU has the information it requires to make a positive decision for the UK for all equivalence regimes, including decisions for which the EU have announced they are not currently assessing the UK. The Government has not received any further questions from the EU since returning all questionnaires to the EU in early July.

The Government is not ruling out further equivalence decisions for the EEA Member States in the future as it continues to believe that comprehensive mutual findings of equivalence between the UK and the EEA are in the best interests of both parties and we remain open and committed to continuing dialogue with the EU about their intentions in this respect.

The recognition of individual firms for the purposes of equivalence is a matter for the UK and EU financial services regulators. These regulators continue to be obliged to discharge their responsibilities for financial stability, consumer and investor protection and financial market operation. The regulators continue to cooperate on those issues and engage with each other as firms consider their planning for the end of the transition period and what will follow.

Gambling: Rehabilitation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to invest in gambling treatment and support services. [HL11327]

Lord Bethell: The Government remains committed to tackling gambling related harm. The NHS Long Term Plan announced the creation of up to 15 specialist problem gambling clinics 2023/24.

Work continues on phased expansion of these services, enabling the National Health Service to explore how best to use existing treatment models to reach those in most need of support. The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24 has committed to spending up to £6 million a year on gambling-related harms by 2023/24.

Gender Recognition: Children

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the High Court judgment in R (on the application of) Quincy Bell and A -v- Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and others [2020] EWHC 3274, issued on 1 December, what plans they have to (1) prevent, or (2) discourage, GenderGP.com from marketing puberty blocking drugs to anyone under the age of 16; and whether they intend to issue guidance discouraging parents from buying such drugs for children under 16 years old. [HL10977]

Lord Bethell: Strict regulatory controls govern medicinal products for human use including their manufacture, distribution, retail sale and supply and advertisement.

Prescription only medicines cannot be advertised directly to the public and any advertisement offering to sell or supply a prescription only medicine directly to a patient is likely to contravene the requirements of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.

Any report of non-compliant activity relating to the advertising of a prescription only medicine would be investigated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the appropriate action would be taken.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to take action against companies who are advertising puberty blocking drugs online. [HL11216]

Lord Bethell: Strict regulatory controls govern medicinal products for human use including their manufacture, distribution, retail sale and supply and advertisement.

Prescription-only medicines cannot be advertised direct to the public and an advertisement offering to sell or supply a prescription-only medicines directly to a patient would be likely to contravene the requirements of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.

Any report of non-compliant activity relating the advertising of a POM would be investigated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and necessary action would be taken.

German Academic Exchange Service

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the support for the teaching and learning of German in British universities of the German Academic Exchange Service programmes for (1) the German lektor scheme and (2) the German Language Assistant scheme. [HL11282]

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make an exemption for (1) German lectors and (2) German language assistants participating in the German Academic Exchange Service programmes, from the standard skilled worker visa regulations in respect of the salary threshold. [HL11283]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: English universities are independent, autonomous institutions and are therefore free to choose which courses they run. Quality is assessed by the Office for Students, the regulator of higher education providers in England. Whilst the government firmly supports the teaching of German and other modern foreign languages in English universities, the government plays no role in the delivery of these specific schemes.

In terms of immigration arrangements, the government has been clear that all EU, EEA, and Swiss citizens must be resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 to be eligible for settled or pre-settled status in the UK under the EU Settlement Scheme. All EU, EEA, and Swiss nationals arriving in the UK from 1 January 2021 will be required to apply for a visa under the new points-based immigration system. People wanting to come into the UK

to work from 1 January 2021 will be awarded points for a job offer at the appropriate skill level if they speak English, and if they meet the appropriate salary threshold.

The points-based immigration system is a global system which treats EU and non-EU citizens equally, prioritising individuals' skills and talent over where a person happens to come from. The UK's Points Based Immigration System has been designed with huge consideration given to businesses and employers, including the UK higher education sector, which has been consulted by the government throughout.

Hinkley Point C Power Station: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the Lifecycle Assessment of the Carbon Footprint of the proposed Hinkley Point C (HPC) project report, referenced in the Hinkley Point C application for Development Consent, on which Nuclear New Build Generation Company's estimate of the level of emissions from Hinkley Point C is based. [HL11085]

Lord Callanan: The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold a copy of the Lifecycle Assessment of the Carbon Footprint of the proposed Hinkley Point C (HPC) project report.

While there are references to the Lifecycle Assessment in the Sustainability Statement which accompanied the application for development consent for the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station (and which was considered by the Examining Authority), a copy of the Lifecycle Assessment was not submitted with the application.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 3 December (HL10515), what assessment they have made of the extent of the transfer of funding through the New Homes Bonus scheme from (1) poorer local authorities to richer ones, (2) local authorities in the north of England to those in the south of England, and (3) areas where current housing conditions are worse than those where new housing is financially more profitable. [HL11082]

Lord Greenhalgh: The New Homes Bonus is a housing incentive designed to encourage and reward local authorities and communities for welcoming housing growth in their area. Funding for the Bonus is provided from a top slice of Revenue Support Grant and as such it is included in Core Spending Power (CSP), which is a measure of the overall resources available to local authorities to fund mainstream services. The distributional impacts of CSP are assessed as part of the proposals for the annual local government finance settlement, which are

presented to Parliament each year. We will be consulting local government on the future of the New Homes Bonus shortly.

Immigrants: Domestic Abuse

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Bristol***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend (1) to extend the duration, and (2) to increase the budget, of the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot, in the event that demand outstrips the existing level of support provided. [[HL11067](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We very much welcome, and are now reviewing, feedback from the sector on the draft prospectus for the Support for Migrant Victims scheme, including the duration of the pilot. We will consider all options, including future sustainability, should demand for the scheme outstrip the budget already allocated.

As well as providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse, one of the key objectives of the scheme is to gather more information on the scale of the problem, and on which types of migrants it most significantly affects. Therefore, while we recognise that information being shared with the Home Office may deter some victims from seeking support, it will not be possible to measure the effectiveness of the scheme, or develop long term policy solutions, if there is no such exchange of information.

We are, however, reconsidering the proposals to provide as much reassurance as possible that information will be shared securely and will not routinely be shared with other parts of the Home Office. In developing the scheme we engaged with 24 specialist organisations and groups.

These were: Amnesty International, The Angelou Centre, Asiana Women's Project, BAWSO Wales, End Violence Against Women Campaign, The Equality and Human Rights Commission, Imkaan, Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, Latin American Women's Rights Service, Liberty, London Black Women's Project, Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation, Migrants' Rights Network, Project 17, Refuge, Refugee Women, Rights of Women, Safety 4 Sisters Manchester, Sisters for Change, Southall Black Sisters, Step Up Migrant Women Coalition, Welsh Women's Aid, Women for Refugee Women and Women's Aid. The second phase of the review consisted of a series of focus groups and meetings with organisations that specialise in providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds.

Since then, we have held an engagement webinar with the sector on 22 October and are reviewing the feedback from sector organisations. At the webinar we consulted with Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, Latin American Women's Rights Organisation, End Violence Against Women, Southall Black Sisters,

Imkaan, Karma Nirvana, Hestia, Women's Aid Scotland, The Angelou Centre, Women's Aid, Catch 22, We Care Housing and Support, Victim Support and SafeLives. We are currently giving thought to the evaluation process, and will look to share findings with the wider sector soon.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Bristol***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that sharing the immigration status of a migrant victim of domestic abuse with the Home Office may have on (1) a victim's ability to report any such abuse; and (2) the effectiveness of the Support for Migrant Victims scheme. [[HL11068](#)]

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Bristol***

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Safeguarding) on 4 September (HC77656), to what extent they consulted non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the design and delivery of the Support for Migrant Victims scheme; which NGOs they engaged with; and whether they intend to engage with NGOs during the evaluation of the pilot. [[HL11069](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We very much welcome, and are now reviewing, feedback from the sector on the draft prospectus for the Support for Migrant Victims scheme, including the duration of the pilot. We will consider all options, including future sustainability, should demand for the scheme outstrip the budget already allocated.

As well as providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse, one of the key objectives of the scheme is to gather more information on the scale of the problem, and on which types of migrants it most significantly affects. Therefore, while we recognise that information being shared with the Home Office may deter some victims from seeking support, it will not be possible to measure the effectiveness of the scheme, or develop long term policy solutions, if there is no such exchange of information.

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Women's Aid, Women for Refugee Women and Women's Aid. The second phase of the review consisted of a series of focus groups and meetings with organisations that specialise in providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds.

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Immigration

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission Public Sector Equality Duty assessment of hostile environment policies, published on 25 November; and what steps they are taking in response to the finding that they did not comply with section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 "in understanding the impact on the Windrush generation and their descendants when developing, implementing and monitoring the hostile environment policy agenda". [HL11100]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Equality and Human Rights Commission's report highlights a number of important areas for improvement by the Home Office.

I am committed to working closely with the EHRC to develop an action plan, intended to address the issues raised in their report, by the end of January 2021. This action plan will build on the work we are already doing in response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review to ensure our policymaking is more inclusive and robust, and that the Public Sector Equality Duty is front and centre of all our work.

Leisure: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement on 22 October of a £100 million package of support for public leisure services, whether this fund can be used to support leisure centres which are operated by parish and town councils. [HL11098]

Lord Greenhalgh: We fully recognise that the facilities that will be supported by this package of Covid-19 support funding will play a vital role in maintaining

the health and wellbeing of the nation, and the contribution they play in building community cohesion and participation in sport. This is in addition to the existing Sales, Fees and Charges scheme established by the Government which supports leisure centres run directly by local councils and which will be extended into the first three months of 2021-22. My colleagues in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are engaging with the sector to fully understand the challenges faced and are designing their £100 million leisure services scheme accordingly.

Lithium Carbonate

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Priadel lithium tablets continue to be supplied to patients in the UK. [HL11211]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that patients having to switch to other lithium products because of a discontinuation of Priadel lithium tablets do not suffer harm or adverse events as a result of such a switch. [HL11212]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have provided (1) to GPs, and (2) to mental health trusts, on advising patients that have to switch to other lithium products because of a discontinuation of Priadel lithium tablets. [HL11213]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a helpline for patients seeking advice about switching to other lithium products because of a discontinuation of Priadel lithium tablets. [HL11214]

Lord Bethell: Ensuring patients have access to the medicines they need is vital. The Department brought this matter to the attention of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) who opened an investigation.

Essential Pharma has now agreed to continue supplying Priadel to the National Health Service and we have agreed revised prices with the company. This means patients can continue to access this important treatment as normal without the need for widespread systematic switching. The CMA has received a proposed commitment from Essential Pharma that it will continue to supply Priadel for a minimum of five years, thereby securing the long-term availability of this crucial medicine.

We continue to communicate the most up to date information with the NHS, including general practices and mental health trusts and further updates are expected to be issued shortly. As supplies of Priadel remained available no central helpline was considered.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by *Baroness Scott of Needham Market*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage people to stand for election to parish and town councils in May 2021; and what financial support they are providing (1) to the Local Government Association, and (2) to the National Association of Local Councils, to support initiatives to encourage people to stand for election at the local elections in May 2021. [HL11099]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government continues to provide funding to the Local Government Association to support sector improvements in a wide range of areas including improving local leadership and resilience. As the Government does not have powers to offer direct financial support to parish and town councils, they are not eligible for this support. However, the Government continues to encourage local government at all levels to work to encourage greater participation in our democracy.

NHS: Negligence

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce (1) fixed, and (2) capped, costs for defendant lawyers in clinical negligence cases up to £25,000 to deter any so-called 'delay, deny, defend' conduct. [HL11131]

Lord Bethell: NHS Resolution negotiates large-scale contracts for defendant legal services, using its position as a bulk purchaser to obtain the best expertise, including support for NHS Resolution's work to learn from claims to improve safety, at value for money for the National Health Service. The contracts include fixed and capped fee arrangements and competitive hourly rates.

In response to increases in claimant legal costs and their tendency in low-value claims to be disproportionately high relative to damages awarded, we will consult shortly on a new claims-handling process and fixed costs for clinical negligence claims of up to £25,000 drawing on the Civil Justice Council's recommendations published in October 2019.

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce conditional fee arrangements for defence lawyers in clinical negligence cases; and what assessment they have made of the impact such action would have in terms of (1) cost savings, and (2) parity between parties. [HL11245]

Lord Bethell: NHS Resolution has no plans to introduce conditional fee arrangements for defence lawyers in clinical negligence cases.

NHS Resolution negotiates large-scale contracts for defendant legal services, using its position as a bulk purchaser to obtain the best expertise, including support for NHS Resolution's work to learn from claims to improve safety, at value for money for the National Health Service. The contracts include fixed and capped fee arrangements and competitive hourly rates. NHS Resolution monitors and measures its lawyers' performance through Key Performance Indicators and management information.

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost to the NHS in (1) legal fees, and (2) negligence costs, in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [HL11246]

Lord Bethell: The following table shows total payments for the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 for all of NHS Resolution's clinical and non-clinical negligence schemes.

	2019/20	2018/19
Clinical spend	£ million	£ million
Damages paid to claimants	1,683.2	1,778.0
Claimant legal costs	497.5	442.3
NHS legal costs	143.5	139.6
Total	2,324.3	2,359.9
Non-clinical spend	£ million	£ million
Damages paid to claimants	30.0	37.4
Claimant legal costs	18.1	17.8
NHS legal costs	7.4	6.6
Total Non-Clinical	55.5	61.8
Total of all spend	2,379.7	2,421.7

Northern Ireland Office: Recruitment

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they recruit civil servants to work in the Northern Ireland Office based on Irish nationality. [HL11224]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Northern Ireland Office follows the Civil Service Recruitment Principles when filling posts and makes any appointments to the Civil Service on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition and in line with the Civil Service nationality rules.

Other than the rules quoted above, nationality is not a factor in any recruitment decisions to appoint to the Northern Ireland Office.

Nuclear Reactors: Construction

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Nuclear New Build Generation Company and EDF Energy about the possibility of using the site at Wylfa Newydd to construct EPR nuclear reactors (1) instead of, or (2) in addition to, the site at Sizewell C; and what was the outcome of those discussions. [HL11084]

Lord Callanan: We continually engage with new nuclear developers to understand the merits of their proposed projects and we remain willing to discuss new nuclear projects with any viable developers and investors wishing to develop sites in the UK, including at the Wylfa site. Hitachi still own the site at Wylfa, we will have discussions with them about the future of the site in due course.

Parish Councils: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they have provided specifically to parish and town councils during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL11097]

Lord Greenhalgh: The way in which Parish and Town councils have responded to the challenges of the pandemic is testament to the unique position they occupy within our local government family.

Total support committed to councils, businesses and communities since the start of the pandemic is over £30 billion, including over £10 billion for local authorities, £6 billion of which is un-ringfenced recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major Covid-19 service pressures in their local area, in conversation with local partners.

Whilst the Government does not have the necessary powers to pay Parish and Town councils directly, we have written to principal authorities encouraging them to discuss the funding support for parish councils from within the support we have provided them.

Therefore, Parish and Town councils should liaise with the relevant principal authorities on how this money is allocated in their area.

Planning

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on local authority resources of the proposals included in their White Paper Planning for the future, published on 6 August. [HL11140]

Lord Greenhalgh: The White Paper commits to developing a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of

our reforms – so that, as we implement our reforms, local planning authorities are equipped to create great communities through effective civic engagement and proactive plan-making.

We want to reduce the amount of resource-consuming bureaucracy and streamline or abolish assessments and other requirements that are burdensome and slow-down planning departments. Part of achieving this will be through modernising the planning process, so that routine tasks are automated and decision-making is improved by better access to data and digital services. This will allow local authorities to focus attention on plan making and place shaping. We are also exploring options to introduce a new planning fee structure to ensure that local planning authorities are properly resourced to improve the speed and quality of their decisions.

We will continue to work with local planning authorities, as well as professional bodies and the wider planning sector, as we develop our proposals.

Pregnancy: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have undertaken on the impact of the COVID-19 (1) virus, and (2) vaccines, on the development of embryos in the (a) first, (b) second, and (c) third, trimesters of pregnancy. [HL11361]

Lord Bethell: The Department, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has funded various studies into the impact of COVID-19 on pregnancy, through the urgent public health COVID-19 call and the Maternal and Neonatal Health & Care Policy Research Unit. UK Research and Innovation and the NIHR jointly launched the Rapid Response Rolling Call to fund research that aimed to understand, prevent, or manage COVID-19. Two studies were funded that aim to understand the impact of the COVID-19 virus on pregnancy. The NIHR is not currently funding research into the impact of COVID-19 vaccines on the development of embryos but welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health.

Private Sector: NHS

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many operations were conducted by private healthcare providers on behalf of the NHS in (1) March, (2) April, and (3) May; whether any contracts with such providers to provide such operations included financial penalties relating to the number of operations to be undertaken and any subsequent lack of uptake; if so, (a) what were those penalties, and (b) whether they have had to pay any such penalties; whether they have received any representations about the lack of uptake for those operations by private sector operators; and what was the outcome of any such representations. [HL11363]

Lord Bethell: This information is not held in the format requested.

Research: Finance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to channel funding for university research that was previously provided by EU funding; whether they intend to devolve all or part of this funding stream to the devolved administrations; and what plans they have to maintain the overall levels of funding for university research at the level previously provided by EU funds. [HL11089]

Lord Callanan: Negotiations with the EU to associate to Horizon Europe, are ongoing. We are open to participation if we can agree a fair and balanced deal for the UK. If the UK associates to Horizon Europe, universities will be able to apply for funding from Horizon Europe in line with the terms of any agreement and the final regulations establishing the Horizon Europe Programme. We set out in the R&D Roadmap that if the UK does not formally associate to Horizon Europe, the Government will implement ambitious alternatives as quickly as possible from January 2021 and will address the funding gap. Alternatives to Horizon Europe, if required, will cover discovery, or 'curiosity-led' research, global collaborative research, and innovation.

Self-determination of States: Shetland

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what communications they have received from the Shetland Islands Council about exploring options for achieving financial and political self-determination; and what has been the reply. [HL11210]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Shetland Islands Council have communicated their views for achieving financial and political self-determination to the UK Government. The UK Government's position remains consistent; we are keen to see power sit at the most appropriate level of Government, including local government and there is much that the Scottish Government could learn from United Kingdom Government practice in that respect.

The UK Government engages closely with local government and the devolved administrations, as well as wider public and private sector organisations. We will always work constructively with all layers of government to ensure the best outcomes for people, businesses and jobs.

Sizewell C Power Station: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the data collected, and (2)

calculations made, by the Nuclear New Build Generation Company of the lifecycle CO2 emissions of the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power project. [HL11086]

Lord Callanan: Before entering into commitments to support any nuclear project, the Government's assessment would include whether the project was expected to contribute to the target of net zero emissions by 2050.

Stop and Search: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Global City Policing Stop and Search in London: July to September 2020, published in November, and in particular its finding that in London black men between 18 and 24 years old are on average 19 times more likely than the general population to be stopped and searched by the police; what assessment they have made of the efficacy of stop and search (1) target areas, and (2) policy; and what plans they have to review the use of stop and search. [HL11094]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office welcomes any analysis of the effectiveness of police tactics.

The police tell us that stop and search is a vital tool which helps them tackle serious violence and protect communities. We remain clear that no one should be stopped based on protected characteristics, including race and age. Safeguards exist to ensure this, including Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which sets out the statutory requirements for conducting a search, the use of body worn video to increase accountability, and HMICFRS inspections where force level disparities are examined. The Home Office also publishes extensive data on police powers, including the use of stop and search, which allows Police and Crime Commissioners and others to hold forces to account. The latest publication is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>.

The causes of disparities in stop and search are complex. This Government has committed to tackling racial disparities and broader structural inequalities as part of the Prime Minister's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

All operational decisions on how stop and search is carried out in London are a matter for the Metropolitan Police Service and City of London Police.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Police Powers and Procedures Eng Wales 2020 [police-powers-procedures-mar20-hosb3120.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-03/HL11094>

Stop and Search: Greater London

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Global City Policing Stop and Search in London: July to September 2020, published in November; and what discussions they have had with the Metropolitan Police about the impact of its stop and search policies. [HL11181]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office welcomes any analysis of the effectiveness of police tactics.

The police tell us that stop and search is a vital tool which helps them tackle serious violence and protect communities. We remain clear that no one should be stopped based on protected characteristics, including race and age. Safeguards exist to ensure this, including Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which sets out the statutory requirements for conducting a search, the use of body worn video to increase accountability, and HMICFRS inspections where force level disparities are examined. The Home Office also publishes extensive data on police powers, including the use of stop and search, which allows Police and Crime Commissioners and others to hold forces to account. The latest publication is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>.

The causes of disparities in stop and search are complex. This Government has committed to tackling racial disparities and broader structural inequalities as part of the Prime Minister's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

All operational decisions on how stop and search is carried out in London are a matter for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and City of London Police.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Police Powers and Procedures-Eng Wales March 2020 [police-powers-procedures-mar20-hosb3120.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-07/HL11181>

Students: Counselling and Health

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional emergency funding for student counselling and wellbeing services. [HL11326]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Protecting student and staff wellbeing is vital – these are difficult times and it is important that students can still access the mental health and wellbeing support they need. We recognise that many students may be facing additional mental health

challenges because of the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is for higher education providers as autonomous bodies to identify and address the needs of their student body and decide what support to put in place. Throughout the pandemic, my hon Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has asked that providers continue to support their students. This has included making services accessible from a distance, and we encourage students to stay in touch with their provider's student support and welfare teams as these services are likely to continue to be an important source of assistance. Many providers have bolstered their existing mental health services and adapted delivery mechanisms, including contacting students who may be more vulnerable. Staff at universities and colleges responded quickly to the need to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing great resourcefulness and good practice.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, wrote to Vice-Chancellors in October outlining that student welfare should remain a priority and has convened a working group of representatives from the higher education and health sectors specifically to address the current and pressing issues that students are facing during the pandemic.

The government has worked closely with the Office for Students (OfS) to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students affected by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the funding – worth around £256 million for the 2020/21 academic year – towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, announced in December that we will also be making available up to £20 million of hardship funding on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students.

We have also worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, which has been funded by up to £3 million by the OfS. Student Space is a mental health and wellbeing platform which aims to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation and is designed to work alongside existing services. Ensuring students have access to quality mental health support is a top priority, which is why we asked the OfS to look at extending the platform. We are delighted they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year.

In addition, over £9 million has been provided by the government to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. Students struggling with their mental health can also access support via online resources from the NHS and Public Health England via the 'Better Health – Every Mind Matters' website, and mental health charities such as Mind.

Students: Plagiarism

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of (1) essay mills, and (2) contract cheating, by students during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL11247]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and academics around the globe, agree that it is impossible to quantify exactly how widespread the use of essay mills is, as the bespoke nature of these “paid for” assignments can make it difficult for providers to detect that it is not the student’s own work. Students who engage in contract cheating are also less likely to volunteer to participate in surveys about cheating. This is a difficult time for students, and those who are feeling particularly worried about their studies could be more vulnerable to essay mills marketing right now. We are also aware of increasing anecdotal accounts of some students being blackmailed by essay mill services. It is abhorrent for these companies to take advantage of students in this situation and profit from anxiety during a global outbreak.

It is, therefore, vitally important that higher education providers, the Office for Students (OfS), and the QAA take robust action to deter, detect and address contract cheating. The OfS has published information and guidance for providers and students, and the QAA has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards and support student achievement during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes QAA guidance for providers on how to assess digital delivery with integrity.

We have set a clear expectation that the OfS should take a visible lead in challenging the sector to eliminate the use of essay mills. Ministers have called on universities, sector bodies, ed-tech companies, and online platforms to do everything in their power to help stamp out academic cheating of any kind from our world-class higher education sector. We are also exploring, with the QAA, emerging evidence on the effectiveness of legislation on essay mills elsewhere.

Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether anyone representing (1) the Northern Ireland Office, or (2) the Ministry of Defence, attended the meeting at Lambeth Palace on 2 November to discuss the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland; and if so, who authorised any such attendance. [HL11320]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government is committed to working with civic society, including victims groups, the NI parties and the Irish Government to seek a way forward for everyone.

The Archbishop of Canterbury hosted a seminar at Lambeth Palace in November to discuss a presentation from a team of academics at Queen's University on the legacy of the Troubles. Officials from the Northern Ireland Office attended in a listening capacity. The Northern Ireland Office is often invited to discussions on this important issue. Events hosted by the Archbishop are a matter for Lambeth Palace, and not the Government.

Trade Agreements: Turkey and Mexico

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to communicate with interested UK parties in the event of trade deals not being reached with (1) Turkey, and (2) Mexico, by 31 December 2020. [HL11058]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: As of 15th December, we have reached agreements with 58 countries, covering trade worth £198 billion, which includes the agreement with Mexico, which was signed on the 15th December.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has published clear, accurate, and up-to-date information and guidance for business on GOV.UK and we will continue to provide guidance to business, including the latest information on agreements with partners such as Turkey, and will further supplement the detailed guidance already available online, as we approach the end of the transition period.

The Department is in regular contact with business and has also created free-to-use online tools (Trade with the UK and Check How to Export Goods) so that businesses can check product-specific and country-specific information on tariffs and regulations that currently apply to trade in goods. These tools are regularly updated to reflect any changes.

Undercover Policing Inquiry

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Undercover Policing Inquiry to make its final report; what has been the cost of that inquiry to date; and what the final cost of that inquiry is expected to be. [HL11239]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Undercover Policing Inquiry was established in 2015, to investigate undercover deployments conducted by police forces in England and Wales since 1968 and was expected to report within three years.

In May 2018, the Undercover Policing Inquiry published a Strategic Review which anticipated that the Inquiry would begin evidence hearings in June 2019 and that it would report to the Home Secretary before the end of 2023. In January 2019 the Inquiry published an update which explained that several issues, such as the significant complexity of documents and the difficulties

presented by issues such as privacy and data protection, had led to a fresh look at the timelines. Evidence hearings subsequently began in November 2020 and will continue in 2021.

The Terms of Reference state the Inquiry will report to the Home Secretary as soon as practicable. It is important that the Inquiry gets to the truth and makes meaningful recommendations for the future. The Inquiry remains independent of the Home Office, which is crucial to its effectiveness and so, decisions and conduct in relation to the investigations are for the Inquiry to make.

The Inquiry cost, to the end of September 2020, is £32,286,400; this information is published by the Inquiry every quarter on its website. The Government is committed to giving the Inquiry the resources it needs to fulfil its important function of getting to the truth, exposing what has gone wrong in the past, and learning lessons for the future.

It is difficult to provide an expected final cost of the Inquiry at this stage, but this will be published in full, at the close of the Inquiry.

Vagrancy Act 1824

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the campaign by Crisis to repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824. [HL11274]

Lord Greenhalgh: This is a complex issue and we know from our engagement with stakeholders that there are diverging views about the necessity and relevance of the Vagrancy Act. That is why the Government believes that a review is the right course of action and we are looking at all options including retention, repeal, replacement or amendment.

At the heart of the review will be the experiences and perceptions of a range of relevant stakeholders including the homelessness sector, the police, local authorities, business representatives, community groups and individuals with lived experience. This Government is aware of Crisis' views on the Vagrancy Act and have engaged with them to inform the review of the Act. Work is ongoing and the Government will update on its findings in due course.

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