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**Tuesday
5 January 2021**

**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
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
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 5 January 2021

Covid-19 Update

[HLWS684]

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

Yesterday, we conducted the latest formal review of Tier allocations across England. The allocations and a detailed rationale can be found attached.

The new variant means that most of the country is now in Tier 4 and almost all of the country in Tiers 3 and 4. This is absolutely necessary. Where we still can give places greater freedoms, we will continue to do so.

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:

- i) Case detection rates in all age groups
- ii) Case detection rates in the over 60s

- iii) The rate at which cases are rising or falling
- iv) Positivity rate (the number of positive cases detected as a percentage of tests taken)
- v) Pressure on the NHS.

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.

We will also deposit a comprehensive list and the data packs used to inform these decisions in the Libraries of both Houses.

These changes will apply from Thursday 31 December 2020. This list has also been 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:

Narratives [Narratives.docx]

Summary of allocations [Summary of allocations.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-12-31/HLWS684/>

Written Answers

Tuesday, 5 January 2021

Affordable Housing: Construction

Asked by *Baroness Thornhill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the possible impact the changes proposed in the Planning White Paper will have on the delivery of affordable housing. [[HL11624](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The proposal to create a new Infrastructure Levy, as set out in the *Planning for the Future* White Paper, will support a more streamlined and accessible planning system. The new Levy will be designed to deliver at least as much onsite affordable housing as at present and will continue to be collected and spent at the local level, on priorities including infrastructure and affordable housing.

The consultation on the White Paper closed on 29 October. We are currently analysing the consultation responses and will publish a response in the Spring which will set out our decisions on the proposed way forward.

Air Force: Staff

Asked by *Lord Campbell of Pittenweem*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) nominal, and (2) actual, strength of the Royal Air Force. [[HL11524](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The workforce requirement of the Royal Air Force is 31,869 and the actual strength is 29,853.

Such plans however are not static and the Department quite rightly assesses and revises workforce plans to make sure Defence has the right people, with the right skills, at the right time, in the right place to deliver for the UK.

The Prime Minister's announcement on 19 November 2020 to increase Defence funding by £24.1 billion over the next four years marked the first outcome of the Integrated Review. The review is due to be published in early 2021 and further details of the new platforms, capabilities, programmes and personnel opportunities that stem from it will follow in due course.

Automation

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase spending on job support and skills training for jobs at the highest risk of redundancy due to automation. [[HL11558](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The department (DWP) has a comprehensive package of support through the Plan for Jobs, with new funding to ensure more people will get tailored support to help them find work. This will include:

- support from Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches
- the recently launched Kickstart Scheme - a £2 billion fund which will create paid, quality 6-month work placements for over 250,000 young people on Universal Credit, deemed to be at risk of long term unemployment
- the new DWP Youth Offer and
- the recently announced Restart programme. The government is investing £2.9 billion in the Restart programme over 3 years. Restart will provide intensive and tailored support to over a million people who have been unemployed for over 12 months in England and Wales to help them find work.

We recognise that that automation may result in job losses in some sectors, but we also expect jobs to be created in other sectors, to allow unemployed people to pivot into priority sectors, for example in construction, and social care.

In the 'Plan for Jobs', the Chancellor announced an extra 32,000 Sector-based Work Academy Programme participant starts in 2020/21, providing £17 million for the Department for Education to triple the number of associated vocational training placements. DWP's Secretary of State also pledged to increase further the number of people taking part in 2021/22. The Sector-based Work Academy Programme offers training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview to those ready to start a job. This is alongside the expansion of support for traineeships in England and for apprenticeships, which enable people to work while having a structured training programme.

Brexit: Costs

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what amount they have budgeted to cover the total cost of the UK's departure from the EU, including the end of the transition period. [[HL11437](#)]

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost to the UK of the negotiations leading up to the UK's departure from the EU, including the negotiations for any future free trade agreement with the EU. [[HL11438](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury has made available £9.7 billion of additional funding to support EU Exit and the Transition in any outcome between financial years 2016-17 and 2020-21. As part of this funding, HM Treasury has made available £3.6 billion of additional funding in 2020-21. This includes £2 billion of allocations made at Spending Round 2019 as well as more recent allocations, such as the additional £705 million of border funding announced in July 2020 to support HMRC and other departments' delivery of new border arrangements. All funding for 2020-21 will be confirmed at Supplementary Estimates 2020, to be published in the new year.

Spending Review 2020 also allocates over £2 billion for 2021-22 to support departments following the end of the Transition. This includes £1 billion for HMRC to reform and enhance the UK customs system and £363 million for the Home Office to maintain law enforcement cooperation with EU member states and recruit Border Force officers to deliver transit customs arrangements.

Cats and Dogs: Meat

Asked by *Baroness Fookes*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban the consumption of meat derived from (1) a cat, or (2) a dog, in the UK. [HL11584]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare, including the welfare of dogs and cats, and we are committed to making the UK a world leader in the protection of animals now we have left the EU.

The Government is appalled by the prospect of dogs and cats being consumed. However, it is already illegal to sell dog and cat meat for human consumption and the Government has seen no evidence that dog and cat meat is being sold or consumed in this country.

We are confident that our current position sends a clear message that the slaughter and consumption of dogs and cats will never be acceptable. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office raises concerns about the welfare of animals with other governments at every suitable opportunity, and we are pleased to hear that authorities in China are proposing to ban the consumption of dog and cat meat.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total value of loans extended under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme where the annual rate of interest exceeds 14.99 per cent; and what is the highest rate of interest at which a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan has been made. [HL11544]

Lord Callanan: Interest rates are set by lenders under the scheme. The British Business Bank and BEIS do not approve individual commercial terms. Some delivery partners accredited before the 14.99 per cent maximum rate of interest was in place can issue CBILS facilities with interest rates above 14.99 per cent.

Facilities worth a total of £19.64 billion have been offered under CBILS. The total value of loans offered under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) where the annual rate of interest exceeds 14.99 per cent is £35,364,874. The highest individual interest rate for a loan offered under the scheme is 34.9 per cent (all figures correct as of 17 December 2020).

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by *Lord Campbell-Savours*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have commissioned on the development of a Covid-19 vaccine which can be administered in a single dose. [HL11573]

Lord Callanan: The Government has invested in a portfolio of Covid-19 vaccines across a range of modalities to secure UK access to the most promising candidates.

The clinical trials of these vaccines involve testing their safety and efficacy across a range of scenarios, including testing efficacy rates of both single and multi-dose delivery methods.

This will ensure the UK has early access to those vaccines that offer the most protection against Covid-19.

Coronavirus: Waste

Asked by *Lord Campbell-Savours*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have for the prevalence of Covid-19 in waste matter globally. [HL11572]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: International evidence on the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 virus in human faeces, urine and wastewater has been examined by the Transmission of Covid-19 in the Wider Environment Group (TWEG), an expert group commissioned by Defra.

This group published its initial findings in a report to SAGE on 12 June, on www.gov.uk, - TWEG: Evidence of wider environmental transmission of SARS-CoV-2 - and is continuing to examine new evidence as it emerges.

While the virus is present in human waste, evidence shows that it is rapidly inactivated so transmission risk from exposure to contaminated wastewater is assessed to be very low.

Courts: Standards

Asked by *Baroness Taylor of Bolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what targets they have set, if any, for reducing the backlog of outstanding cases across courts and tribunals in England and Wales. [HL11553]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HMCTS has published an update on their response to Covid-19 in the criminal courts, Civil and Family Courts and Tribunals in England and Wales, please see attached.

This provides a comprehensive update on recovery plans and the work being undertaken to restore capacity. This includes installing plexiglass screens to make the estate COVID-secure, recruiting additional staff and establishing Nightingale courts.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Report [HMCTS_CFT_Recovery_Plan_v2b.pdf]

Report2 [HMCTS401_recovery_overview_for_crime_WEB.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11553>

Delivery Services: Automation

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to enable below surface automated delivery systems to be built in UK cities. [HL11609]

Lord Callanan: The Government is monitoring industry work in this area. In 2019, the Department for Transport published the Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy, which established principles for facilitating innovation in urban mobility for freight, passengers and services. The Strategy sets out the Government's support for innovation that encourages more efficient movement of goods, reducing congestion and improving environmental outcomes.

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the opportunities for urban fulfilment centres to connect warehousing and factories to urban customers using automated delivery systems. [HL11610]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises the potential benefits of automation for the movement of people and goods. Since 2015, the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles has enabled joint government and industry investment of £440m into UK connected and automated mobility technology.

The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles has engaged with the connected and automated mobility, logistics and manufacturing sectors to understand potential use cases of automation in delivery systems.

Dover Port: Customs

Asked by The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure sufficient funding to enable adequate passport checking facilities at the Port of Dover following the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [HL11578]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Passport checks conducted by Border Force at Dover are limited to those conducted on outbound passengers, as UK immigration controls are located at the juxtaposed controls in France for inbound journeys.

All passengers travelling inbound to the Port of Dover are already required to show a passport (plus any relevant UK immigration document or permission) or an EEA National Identity card to pass through the juxtaposed controls.

The operation of the juxtaposed controls is based on bilateral agreements with France, rather than us being part of the EU, so will continue after the transition period has ended.

Passport checks are already conducted on 100% of outbound passengers by the carrier on behalf of Border Force under exit check provisions.

Employment

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 11 December (HL10795), what was the total number of paid employees residing in (1) each of region in England, and (2) each country of the UK, from April 2019 to March 2020 recorded in HMRC Pay As You Earn Real Time Information data. [HL11560]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The table below sets out the number of paid employees residing in each of region in England from April 2019 to March 2020, as recorded in HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data.

Month	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East
Apr-19	1,065,409	3,137,816	2,300,551	2,120,447	2,485,313	2,772,974
May-19	1,066,080	3,137,620	2,300,333	2,120,439	2,485,075	2,771,953
Jun-19	1,066,562	3,138,906	2,302,000	2,121,030	2,484,875	2,772,962
Jul-19	1,065,660	3,139,186	2,301,235	2,119,597	2,481,664	2,772,737
Aug-19	1,069,074	3,144,592	2,306,052	2,122,111	2,486,040	2,776,981
Sep-19	1,071,202	3,146,634	2,309,501	2,124,047	2,487,774	2,779,943
Oct-19	1,071,728	3,147,835	2,308,300	2,123,763	2,488,441	2,780,209
Nov-19	1,072,399	3,150,222	2,309,815	2,124,824	2,487,414	2,781,880
Dec-19	1,072,789	3,150,342	2,310,246	2,124,354	2,486,609	2,783,622
Jan-20	1,074,192	3,152,781	2,312,715	2,126,676	2,488,194	2,785,231

Month	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East
Feb-20	1,075,642	3,153,077	2,312,765	2,127,755	2,488,819	2,785,062
Mar-20	1,076,053	3,152,661	2,313,687	2,124,924	2,488,551	2,783,615

Month	London	South East	South West
Apr-19	4,116,863	4,076,344	2,408,685
May-19	4,112,387	4,077,830	2,412,936
Jun-19	4,117,530	4,079,886	2,414,122
Jul-19	4,117,859	4,079,868	2,411,973
Aug-19	4,125,424	4,084,737	2,417,680
Sep-19	4,131,487	4,090,166	2,420,027
Oct-19	4,132,412	4,088,062	2,419,985
Nov-19	4,133,033	4,090,528	2,420,215
Dec-19	4,139,300	4,092,004	2,421,205
Jan-20	4,142,490	4,094,403	2,425,980
Feb-20	4,139,134	4,094,158	2,422,459
Mar-20	4,132,450	4,088,675	2,420,358

The table below sets out the number of paid employees residing in each country of the UK, from April 2019 to March 2020, as recorded in HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data.

Month	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Apr-19	24,484,402	1,255,933	2,391,779	741,714
May-19	24,484,653	1,256,903	2,392,995	742,256
Jun-19	24,497,873	1,257,748	2,392,860	743,088
Jul-19	24,489,779	1,257,585	2,391,974	745,959
Aug-19	24,532,691	1,260,027	2,393,484	746,570
Sep-19	24,560,781	1,260,392	2,395,389	747,484
Oct-19	24,560,735	1,259,622	2,395,250	748,139
Nov-19	24,570,330	1,260,986	2,394,490	750,560
Dec-19	24,580,471	1,261,581	2,397,707	751,309
Jan-20	24,602,662	1,264,215	2,401,985	752,946
Feb-20	24,598,871	1,264,787	2,396,300	754,489
Mar-20	24,580,974	1,262,454	2,395,550	755,739

Please note:

(1) These figures have been taken from the publication "Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information" published jointly by HMRC and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 15 December 2020 ^[1].

(2) These figures are as accurate as reported through PAYE RTI. However, PAYE schemes not paying any of their employees above the NICs threshold are not obliged

to report employees' earnings through RTI. Therefore, some employees may be excluded from these statistics.

(3) The address information has been taken from individuals' addresses as at March 2020.

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/realtimereferencestatisticsreferencetableseasonallyadjusted>

Energy: Conservation

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a fully funded network to provide comprehensive, independent and trusted advice on energy efficiency measures in England similar to the Home Energy Scotland network. [HL11601]

Lord Callanan: The [Simple Energy Advice Service](#) (SEA) was launched in 2018, in response to the Government-commissioned Each Home Counts Review, as a digital and phone line service to provide homeowners with impartial and tailored advice on how to cut their energy bills and make their homes greener. Since the launch of SEA, over 1 million unique users have accessed the site. We are committed to improving the SEA website, based on user needs and user research.

At a local level, the Government has provided £4.7 million to six local supply chain demonstration pilots, which are testing new approaches to supporting home energy retrofit in the able-to-pay sector in England. We are also working with Local Authorities through the Local Energy Programme to develop support for local retrofit programmes by addressing local barriers to clean growth activity.

Environment Protection: Planning

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that any reforms to the planning system protect the environment. [HL11623]

Lord Greenhalgh: Our proposals in Planning for the Future seek to improve environmental outcomes. This will be achieved by amending the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits, while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England. The Government will respond to this consultation in due course. The Environment Bill will make 10 per cent net gains for biodiversity mandatory for most new developments, and also introduce Local Nature

Recovery Strategies to secure enhancements through development schemes and contributions. We have also committed to review the environmental assessment process to help promote a clean, green recovery from the effects of coronavirus, and are taking this forward as part of the Planning for the Future reforms. Environmental protection will be at the heart of this review and where possible, any new framework will go further to take advantage of opportunities for environmental improvement.

Erasmus+ Programme

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their requirements for the continuation of the UK's participation in the Erasmus+ programme beyond the 2021/22 academic year; whether they have any plans for a UK-only scheme if an agreement for such participation is not reached; and if so, what are the (1) principles, and (2) requirements, of any such scheme. [HL11588]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: As part of our negotiations with the EU about our future relationship, the government considered the EU programmes with which the UK was involved and decided whether or not we should continue to seek participation in these programmes.

Our public mandate set out that we would consider options for participation in elements of Erasmus+ on a time-limited basis, provided that the terms were in the UK's interests. Unfortunately, the only terms on offer would have meant that the UK would have been likely to pay in around £2 billion more than we would get out over the term of the next programme. The government decided that that would not have provided value for money and be in the interests of the UK taxpayer.

Instead, as an independent and sovereign country, we will proceed with the introduction of a new international educational exchange scheme which has a genuinely global reach and which increases social mobility.

The newly announced Turing scheme, which replaces the UK's participation in Erasmus+, will allow thousands of students to study and take part in work placements in the EU and beyond. The scheme will be backed by over £100 million, providing funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges, and schools to go on placements and exchanges overseas, starting in September 2021.

The new scheme will also target students from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas which did not previously have many students benefiting from Erasmus+, making life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country.

The programme will provide similar opportunities for students to study and work abroad as the Erasmus+ programme, but it will include countries across the world, and it aims to deliver greater value for money to taxpayers.

The government will set out further details in the coming weeks.

Family Proceedings

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many family law cases were outstanding in each month of this year. [HL11551]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HM Courts and Tribunals Service publishes management information on workload and timeliness within the family courts on a monthly basis. This includes the number of outstanding cases which have been received but not yet disposed of at the end of each month.

The following table details the number of private family law (children) cases and public family law cases outstanding at the end of each month of this year. This presents the most current data at the time of responding.

Month	Private Family Law – outstanding cases	Public Family Law – outstanding cases
January 2020	51,906	18,841
February 2020	53,844	19,367
March 2020	56,378	19,958
April 2020	58,819	19,626
May 2020	62,528	20,478
June 2020	66,271	21,156
July 2020	69,993	21,915
August 2020	73,126	22,390
September 2020	72,812	22,881

This information is extracted from HMCTS case management systems and as management information, it is not subject to the same quality assurance process as official statistics. The latest HMCTS management information report (October 2020) can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-management-information-october-2020>.

The information relating to outstanding private family law case excludes applications made under the Family Law Act 1996. This information is not published.

Information about the volume of outstanding divorce applications each month is not published. However, this HMCTS management information report does contain other data about the management of divorce applications.

Food Poverty: Children

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision of UNICEF to commence feeding children in the UK. [HL11583]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made. Throughout this pandemic, this Government has delivered an unprecedented package of support to protect jobs and businesses and, for those in most need, injected billions into the welfare system. The new COVID Winter Grant Scheme builds on that support with an additional £170 million for local authorities in England, to support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter. Funding has been disbursed according to an authority's population, weighted by a function of the English index of multiple deprivation.

Devolved Administrations have received equivalent funding through the upfront funding guarantee we have provided, which was recently increased to £16 billion for the year to support their Covid-19 response.

Fort George: Armed Forces

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to close Fort George; and where the military units currently stationed there will subsequently be stationed. [HL11523]

Baroness Goldie: Defence remains committed to the disposal of Fort George, currently scheduled to take place in 2032. This disposal date is under continuous review as part of our assessment of the site, in-line with wider Defence scheduling and priorities.

The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (3 SCOTS) will relocate to an alternative location in Scotland. Work is ongoing to establish the most suitable future location.

Free School Meals

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children were eligible for free school meals in (1) October 2018, and (2) October 2020; and what financial support they are providing to help pay for these meals. [HL11615]

Baroness Berridge: In October 2018, 1,205,000 pupils in England were eligible and claiming free school meals, which is 14.7% of all pupils in state-funded schools. The department plans to publish the information relating to October 2020 in due course.

Where pupils become newly entitled to free school meals, local authorities and schools are able to quickly verify their eligibility using the department's electronic Eligibility Checking System to ensure that this vital support is available immediately.

We have introduced a number of immediate measures, including the launch of the National Voucher Scheme, to ensure that children who usually receive benefits-related free school meals still had access to this support during the period that schools were previously restricted from opening to the majority of pupils. Schools received, and

continue to receive, their funding for free school meals as normal.

Building on the significant support given to the most vulnerable during the Covid-19 outbreak, a new £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme has been launched by the Department for Work and Pensions, and will be run by councils in England. A link to the scheme is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-winter-grant-scheme>.

Freight: Planning Permission

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how they can support local authorities to work together in granting permissions across multiple council areas for automated goods movement systems. [HL11607]

Lord Callanan: The Government's Code of Practice for automated vehicle trialling allows trials with a safety driver to take place anywhere in the UK if carried out in line with UK law. The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles works closely with local authorities and regional transport authorities across the UK that are looking to safely trial automated vehicle technologies.

Gaza: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the shortage of oxygen supplies for Covid-19 patients in Gaza; and what steps they are taking, if any, to address any such shortage. [HL11598]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned about the capacity of the Palestinian health system to cope with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, especially in Gaza. We welcome the recent 30% increase in hospital beds for patients suffering critical and severe cases and the recent procurement by World Health Organization of two additional oxygen generators. The UK continues to monitor the situation closely.

Gaza: Health Services

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of an increase of Covid-19 cases in Gaza, what action they are taking with international partners to support the health care system in that region. [HL11596]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains concerned about the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza and the impact of Covid-19 on an already fragile healthcare system. Recognising the severity of the situation, we were one of the first donors to provide funding to support the health and humanitarian response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We have provided £1.25 million funding (the

World Health Organization with £630,000 and the United Nations Children's Fund with £620,000) to purchase and co-ordinate delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline health workers and scale up laboratory testing capacity - mainly in Gaza.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the progress in increasing the number of businesses which are TrustMark registered and certified to install insulation measures in park homes under the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme; and what steps they are taking to ensure an appropriate geographic distribution of such registered and certified businesses to enable comprehensive access to their services. [HL11621]

Lord Callanan: Over the last two months, we have seen a 350% increase in the number of TrustMark registered park homes installers, with respect to the figure stated in the answer given by my Hon. Friend the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth to my Hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch on 23rd October 2020 to Question 106216.

BEIS officials have been working with the park homes industry, United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and TrustMark to clarify what is required and encourage businesses to obtain Publicly Available Specification (PAS) certification to install insulation in park homes, and register as an installer for the Green Homes Grant.

As part of the £6.9 million Green Homes Grant Skills Competition, we have taken steps to ensure comprehensive access to training for measures offered under the scheme, including for park homes. This includes ensuring good coverage of training providers, as well as retrofit coordinators and assessors required to support park home retrofits, across all regions in England.

High Speed 2 Railway Line

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent on the purchase of land and property in connection with (1) HS2 Phase 1, and (2) HS2 Phase 2A. [HL11563]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: At November 2020, some £3.642bn has been spent or committed on the three phases of the HS2 property programme. The breakdown is: Phase One - £3.314bn; Phase 2a - £100m; and, Phase 2b - £228m.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made, if any, of the resale value of land and property sales purchased in connection with (1) HS2 Phase 1 and (2) HS2 Phase 2A, in the event that part or all of these projects are cancelled. [HL11564]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: At November 2020, £3.414bn has been spent and committed on the property acquisition programme for Phase One and Phase 2a. No detailed estimates have been produced on the resale value of the property acquired to date on those phases in the event of project cancellation. Subject to wider property disposal rules, the Government's policy is to sell any land and property not needed for the HS2 programme for its full, unblighted open-market value. The HS2 property disposal policy is kept under review.

High Speed Two: Consultants

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much HS2 Ltd spent on consultancy services in each financial year since 2015/16. [HL11562]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As HS2 do not categorise consultancy spend within their contracts this information is not easily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

Hinkley Point C Power Station

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their current estimate for the (1) outturn cost, and (2) date to start exporting power to the National Grid, of Hinkley Point C. [HL11565]

Lord Callanan: Under the terms of the Contract for Difference, neither taxpayer nor consumer is liable to contribute to the construction cost of Hinkley Point C. The Contract for Difference defines a Commissioning Window for each of the two nuclear reactors. These are from 1st May 2025 to 30th April 2029 for Reactor One and 1st November 2025 to 31st October 2029 for Reactor Two.

In September 2019, the lead investor in Hinkley Point C published a statement on the project cost and schedule. This said that the capital cost is likely to be between £21.5Bn and £22.5Bn (these figures are in 2015 money). The developer is targeting power generation by the end of 2025.

HIV Infection: Screening

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government which local authorities provided access to HIV self-sampling services through (1) the national HIV self-sampling service, (2) Sexual Health London, and (3) another service; and which local authorities did not fund access to HIV self-sampling services in each year from 2015 to 2020. [HL11388]

Lord Bethell: Data on which local authorities provided access to HIV self-sampling through Sexual Health London or other services are not published by the local authority commissioners.

Public Health England publishes data on the local authorities that participate in the National HIV Self-Sampling Service in the National HIV Self-Sampling Service annual reports. The attached tables show the local authorities signed up to the HIV self-sampling service from 2015 to 2019. The report for 2020 will be published in the spring of 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Local authorities HIV self-sampling service [Tables showing the local authorities signed up to the HIV self-sampling service from 2015 to 2019.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-14/HL11388>

HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Databases

Asked by *Baroness Taylor of Bolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a timetable for implementing the recommendations they accepted in their response to the report by Dr Natalie Byrom Making the most of HMCTS data: HMCTS' full response and update to Dr Byrom's recommendations, published on 9 October. [HL11554]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HMCTS published a full response and progress update in October 2020 to Dr Byrom's report *Digital Justice: HMCTS data strategy and delivering access to justice*. The response is attached and is also available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hmcts-response-and-progress-update-on-dr-natalie-byrom-report> and details HMCTS response and progress made to date on each of the 29 recommendations.

The response confirms timelines for the collection of protected characteristics data; for starting to share data with academic researchers and others as part of the Data First project, and for the development of our approach to open and shared data.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Report [HMCTS_Making_the_most_of_HMCTS_data_v2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11554>

Asked by *Baroness Taylor of Bolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they will make available to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to implement those recommendations they accepted in their response to the report by Dr Natalie Byrom Making the most of HMCTS data: HMCTS' full response and update to Dr Byrom's recommendations, published on 9 October. [HL11555]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HMCTS published a full response and progress update in October 2020 to Dr

Byrom's report *Digital Justice: HMCTS data strategy and delivering access to justice*. The response is attached and details HMCTS response and progress made to date on each of the 29 recommendations.

Delivery of HMCTS response is funded in part through existing budgets including the Reform programme, and in part through funding from Administrative Data Research UK.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Report [HMCTS_Making_the_most_of_HMCTS_data_v2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11555>

Asked by *Baroness Taylor of Bolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the data collected by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service on the outcomes of cases across courts and tribunals since March this year can be disaggregated by (1) case type, (2) whether the hearing was conducted remotely or in person, and (3) the protected characteristic of the parties to the case; and, if not, what plans they have to collect such data. [HL11556]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HMCTS continue to work to improve the data it collects, including following the recommendations in Dr Natalie Byrom's report *Digital Justice: HMCTS data strategy and delivering access to justice*. The full response to the report is attached.

HMCTS' legacy technology systems are limited in the data they collect – as new systems and services are introduced, HMCTS is able to improve the position, in order to support its core purpose to provide an efficient and effective courts and tribunals system, which supports an independent judiciary in the administration of justice - enabling the rule of law to be upheld, and providing access to justice for all.

To summarise the current position

(1) *Case type*

In the Crown Court HMCTS can disaggregate whether a case is triable either way, indictable only, for sentencing or an appeal. In the Magistrates Court HMCTS can report case type by Criminal, Enforcement and Civil, which can be further split by Offence type (ie Indictable, Either-way, Summary Non-Motoring, Summary Motoring, Breaches). In Family courts HMCTS can disaggregate public law and private law cases. Tribunal jurisdictions collect data which allows disaggregation into case type.

(2) *Hearing conducted remotely or in person*

HMCTS rapidly increased capacity for video and audio hearings as part of the response to Covid-19. At present for most jurisdictions the only information is a manual data collection via a 'situation report' (to provide overall picture of use of audio/video) and is not attached to cases. In the Magistrates' Court there is a case marker to show if defendant appears via audio/video.

(3) Protected characteristics

Legacy systems collect some limited data on protected characteristics. As recommended by Dr Natalie Byrom, work has begun to collect data on users' protected characteristics. This is data that we have been able to collect for Probate (digital) since 2 June, for Online Civil Money Claims (specified claims) since 21 July, for Divorce (digital) since 29 September and for Probate (paper) since 11 November. HMCTS will introduce this for new digital services entering public beta in 2021. HMCTS recognise that data about individuals' protected characteristics is sensitive personal information – it is collected on a voluntary basis, held securely and with strict controls. It will only be possible to disaggregate outcomes by protected characteristics if the response rate to the voluntary survey is high enough to ensure individuals cannot be identified.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Report [HMCTS_Making_the_most_of_HMCTS_data_v2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11556>

Horse Racing

Asked by **Lord Moynihan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have completed negotiations on the continuation of the Tripartite Agreement to permit the free movement of racehorses between Ireland, the United Kingdom and France following the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU. [HL11603]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The European Commission has made clear that, as a third country, Great Britain will no longer have access to the Tripartite Agreement from 1 January 2021. Northern Ireland will remain part of it under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The Government is therefore continuing to work closely with industry to facilitate the continued movement of equines following the Transition Period, recognising the value of the equine sector to the entire UK economy. This will include allowing horses from the European Union that pose a low disease risk, including from France and Ireland, to continue to enter Great Britain with only necessary animal health controls.

Hospices: Finance

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the funding that clinical commissioning groups provide to the charitable hospice sector. [HL10990]

Lord Bethell: The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the huge role palliative and end of life care services, including hospices, have played in the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This

importance was acknowledged in the provision of over £150 million in additional central funding to the hospice sector between April and July. Further additional funding of up to £125 million has now been announced to enable hospices to continue their vital end of life care services and deliver even greater support for the NHS.

Housing: Construction

Asked by **Baroness Thornhill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult with local authorities on the development of targets for new homes. [HL11622]

Lord Greenhalgh: We consulted on changes to the standard method formula for assessing local housing need and have now considered the responses carefully. On Wednesday 16th December we announced that in order to ensure that the country meets the challenge of delivering 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s, we changed the formula to focus greater need into urban areas to maximise existing infrastructure and to support development that reduces the need for high-carbon travel.

We believe the new method achieves the balance between these objectives whilst also providing certainty and stability during a period of economic uncertainty for our communities, businesses, and development sector. The figures we published alongside the new formula are only indicative, and local housing need remains the starting point for planning for housing need. Authorities should consider how this is best met based on their local circumstance, based on land availability, and relevant constraints.

We continue to engage with those authorities who are facing challenges. The Spending Review confirmed initial funding of £7.1 billion for the National House Building Fund (NHBF) over the next four years to unlock up to 860,000 homes.

Housing: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the consensus statement by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies Housing, household transmission and ethnicity, published on 26 November, and in particular its recommendations on (1) the under-occupancy levy, (2) the benefit cap, and (3) the No Recourse to Public Funds rule. [HL11475]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made.

(1) The removal of the spare room subsidy has been an important tool to help to manage housing support expenditure and enable mobility within the social rented sector. Making a change to this policy would not increase the size of properties people are currently living in or increase their bedroom entitlement under local authority lettings policies.

(2) There are currently no plans to change the Benefit Cap. The Benefit Cap ensures fairness between those receiving out-of-work benefits and taxpayers. The Government firmly believes that, where possible, it is in the best interests of children to be in working households and the benefit cap provides a clear incentive to move into work. A child living in a household where every adult is working is about 5 times less likely to be in relative poverty than a child in a household where nobody works.

Universal Credit claimants with household earnings of at least £604 in an assessment period are exempt from the cap along with the most vulnerable claimants that are entitled to disability benefits and carer benefits.

(3) The decision to apply a no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition as part of a non-UK national's immigration status is a Home Office policy matter. Non-UK nationals and family members who are issued with a residence permit with a NRPF condition are not eligible to access taxpayer-funded benefits such as Universal Credit, Child Benefit or housing assistance for the duration of their leave to remain. DWP has no powers to award taxpayer-funded benefits to an individual whose Home Office immigration status specifies no recourse to public funds. Public funds do not include contributions-based benefits such as New Style Job Seekers Allowance.

Non-UK nationals can apply for a change to their NRPF condition if, since being granted leave to remain, their financial circumstances have changed and they have become destitute or there are now particularly compelling reasons relating to the welfare of their child on account of their very low income, or there are now exceptional circumstances in their case relating to their financial circumstances.

Winter support package funding is being provided to local authorities, with more scope for distribution to individuals with no recourse to public funds. It will be at the discretion of local authorities to ensure those who need it most receive it. Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

Housing: Energy and Heating

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a directly funded scheme for installing energy efficiency measures and efficient heating for (1) home owners, and (2) private renters, who are fuel poor. [HL11600]

Lord Callanan: There are several government-funded schemes available to help support the installation of energy efficiency measures for fuel poor households. The low-income element of the £1.5bn Green Homes Grant vouchers scheme is open to homeowners in receipt of certain benefits. Installation of measures under the

scheme will be covered up to a maximum of £10,000. This extra support for low-income households, is likely to help those who are unable to keep their homes warm at a reasonable cost, and who are unable to cover the cost of energy efficiency upgrades to their home.

The Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme provides an additional £500 million focused on owner occupiers, those in the private and social rented sector, with a household income of under £30,000. The primary purpose of LAD is to raise the energy efficiency rating of low income and low EPC rated homes (rated D, E, F or G), including those living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes.

In addition, the current Energy Company Obligation continues until March 2022. It requires large energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures to fuel poor domestic households. Homeowners on low incomes are eligible under the scheme and low-income private renters living in the least energy efficient homes can also be eligible for solid wall insulation and renewable heating.

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have appointed an independent reviewer to carry out a review of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration; and if not, when such an appointment will be made. [HL11582]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As outlined in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan, we are progressing with the appointment of an independent reviewer to lead a full review of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. We will announce further details early next year.

Insurance: Accountancy

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the effect of implementing IFRS 17 in the UK on the reported capital of insurance companies, and (2) the financial effect of implementing IFRS 17 for the 10 largest insurance companies in the UK; and, if they have made no such assessments, why not. [HL11570]

Lord Callanan: While the responsibility for adopting International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) sits with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Endorsement Board secretariat has been tasked with assessing IFRS 17 (the new accounting standard relating to insurance contracts) against the adoption criteria set out in the *International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*.

Planning for the work required to assess the standard against those criteria is under way. It is expected to include outreach with representatives from stakeholder groups across the UK's insurance sector, including preparers of financial statements. It will also encompass an Impact Assessment of the standard which will include consideration of the financial effect of implementing IFRS 17, including on capital included in the accounts, for those entities that apply IFRS. These include the largest insurance companies in the UK. The results of the assessment of IFRS 17 against the adoption criteria will be published ahead of any adoption of the standard.

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the involvement of the insurance sector and the Investment Association in their decision to endorse the IFRS 17 financial reporting standard; whether the Investment Association will be excluded from endorsement activities in connection with this standard; and if so, how. [HL11571]

Lord Callanan: IFRS 17 *Insurance Contracts* has not yet been adopted for use in the UK. The International Accounting Standards Board has set an effective date of 1 January 2023 for the standard internationally. Planning for the work to assess the standard has commenced and it will be assessed against the adoption criteria set out in the *International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*.

Those Regulations oblige the Secretary of State to consult such persons as are considered to be representative of those with an interest in the quality and availability of accounts, including users and preparers of accounts. We expect that the Investment Association will have an interest in the quality of accounts prepared by companies as it represents investment managers who manage over £8.5 trillion of assets on behalf of clients in the UK and around the world. As a result, we expect outreach activities, when finalised, to include input from many user representatives including the Investment Association.

Intellectual Property: Small Claims

*Asked by **Baroness Neville-Rolfe***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the £10,000 cap on the value of claims brought to the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court Small Claims Track; and what consideration they have given to raising that cap. [HL11482]

Lord Callanan: The IPO commissioned external research into the functioning of the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court, including the value caps, in 2015. The IPO has also facilitated a series of working groups over the last year looking at the enforcement framework. The cost and accessibility of court processes for IP disputes

was considered as part of this review, and questions on these topics were included in the call for views which closed in November this year. The IPO is currently considering the responses received from that exercise and will carry out further assessment as necessary before any recommendations are taken forwards.

Japanese Knotweed: Weed Control

*Asked by **Lord Greaves***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on the eradication of Japanese Knotweed; and what programmes of action they are proposing for 2021. [HL11591]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Our research into an effective method of controlling Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) continues. The Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) has successfully collected better climatically matched populations of the psyllid, *Aphalara itadori*, from Japan, and is currently evaluating it as a biological control agent for Japanese knotweed in the UK.

In 2021 we will continue to work closely with the CABI on researching and developing biological control methods for this species. Until such a method is found, long term management, using physical and chemical methods, and good biosecurity, to prevent spread, will remain essential.

Motor Vehicles: Technology

*Asked by **Lord Oates***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) linear motor technology developed in the UK, and (2) how such technology can be used to decarbonise the transfer and delivery of goods. [HL11605]

*Asked by **Lord Oates***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to support the introduction of (1) linear motors, and (2) other new technologies, which can be used to decarbonise the transfer and delivery of goods. [HL11606]

*Asked by **Lord Oates***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential for existing road and rail corridors to be utilised for automated goods movement systems; and whether they have included technologies such as linear motors in any such assessment. [HL11608]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Decarbonising transport will require us to embrace new technology and innovation, and multiple solutions will have essential parts to play. Innovate UK is currently part-funding a UK based project to identify the standards and procedures required to design, build, operate and qualify an

Underground Freight Transportation system using linear motors, which will report in 2021.

Testing new technology and business models at scale is essential and that is why we have already invested £92 million in four Future Transport Zones (FTZs). These will support local leaders and industry to trial new approaches and we have committed £20m towards mass scale demonstration of zero emission freight in the next year. Our further plans for the decarbonisation of freight will form part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan which is due to be published by Spring 2021.

Offences against Children

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Group based child sexual exploitation characteristics of offending, published on 15 December, whether they plan to require the police to record the (1) ethnicity, and (2) religion, of offenders; and if not, why not. [HL11611]

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 4 February (HL711) and on 1 October (HL8244), and their report Group based child sexual exploitation characteristics of offending, published on 15 December, whether the majority of members of the External Reference Group wanted to include a reference to any role of religion in group based child sexual exploitation. [HL11612]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Child sexual abuse is a despicable crime and the Government is committed to keeping children and young people safe from all forms of abuse.

The paper, 'Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending' sets out the limited available evidence on the characteristics of offenders involved in group-based child sexual exploitation. An External Reference Group (ERG) of experts was established to advise in the development of the paper.

Members of the ERG provided advice in their capacity as individual experts and votes were not cast to establish whether views were held by a majority of members. While some members of the ERG wanted the paper to provide more detail on the characteristics of offending within certain communities, there was not substantial discussion of religion specifically.

The paper recognises that understanding cultural drivers is one of the key aspects in preventing and tackling offending. In publishing the paper, the Home Secretary expressed disappointment in the lack of robust data on these characteristics. We will set out action to address this in the Government's forthcoming Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy. Any new data collection requirements of police forces will be made in consultation with the police which are rightly independent of Government.

The Police Act 1996 sets out that forces must submit data to the Home Office when requested to do so. All proposals for new data collections are consulted on with policy and operational colleagues, other government departments, National Policing Leads and other key police stakeholders to ensure that such requests are proportionate and eliminate unnecessary burdens. This ensures a proper balance between the accountability and efficiency of police operation and is reviewed on an annual basis.

Overseas Aid: Charities

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the (1) funding, and (2) operational sustainability, of small charities working in the field of international development. [HL11566]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO recognises that this is an uncertain time for the charity sector and we continue to work flexibly with civil society partners to respond to the pandemic, maintain delivery of essential programmes and manage the impacts on organisations and staff. We have kept informed of the level of risk to the sector by the BOND survey of its members. Many charities have benefited from the existing measures announced by the Government to support employers and businesses and all charities have also been eligible for the job retention scheme.

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the Small International Development Charities Network on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the continuing viability of such charities; and what plans they have to meet with representatives of the Network. [HL11567]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO has received a number of MP's letters requesting a response to their constituents who have expressed support for the Small but Mighty campaign championed by the Small International Development Charities Network. The FCDO currently has no specific plans to meet representatives of the Network. However, as an organisation, we attach immense value to engaging with civil society organisations which, like the FCDO, are at the forefront of delivering aid. We will continue to engage directly with organisations that share our objectives in international development and contribute to delivering UK Aid to poor and excluded communities around the world.

Overseas Trade: Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to undertake trade with a state if a court has predetermined that a genocide is under way; and what

assessment they have made of the impact on the UK's ability to undertake international trade of amendments to the Trade Bill relating to trade agreements with states accused of committing genocide. [HL11561]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom have long promoted our values globally. We are clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of our values.

Our experience is that political freedom and the rule of law are vital underpinnings for both prosperity and stability and that, by having strong economic relationships with partners, we are able to have open discussions on a range of issues. Despite our varying approach to agreements with partners, we will always have open discussions on a range of issues, including rights and responsibilities.

Clause 2 of the Trade Bill allows HM Government to implement those trade agreements the EU including the United Kingdom had with third countries, prior to the United Kingdom leaving the EU. The list of countries in scope can be found at: [gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries)

The Trade Bill has no provisions to implement a free trade agreement with those countries, such as China, who did not have a free trade agreement with the EU prior to 31st January 2020.

Palestinians: Food Supply

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of food insecurity in Palestine during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL11597]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) has exacerbated the humanitarian and food insecurity situation. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, food insecurity, driven by high poverty and unemployment, affected 1.6 million Palestinians - nearly a third of the population in OPTs.

We recognise the importance of tackling food insecurity. To support, we are providing £2.5 million to the World Food Programme to provide food and cash assistance to the most vulnerable Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza. We have also contributed £1 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's Emergency Appeal in the OPTs which will help provide emergency food to over one million food-insecure refugees in Gaza.

Port Infrastructure Fund

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they granted funding from the Port Infrastructure Fund for infrastructure at the entrance to the Port of Dover; if

not, (1) why not, and (2) what other funding they consider will be available for this purpose. [HL11613]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the criteria for funding bids to the Port Infrastructure Fund from (1) ports, and (2) airports. [HL11614]

Lord True: All allocations from the Port Infrastructure Fund (PIF) have been published by HMG online at gov.uk.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-infrastructure-fund-allocations/port-infrastructure-fund-successful-applicants>).

The criteria for awarding grants were set out in the PIF Prospectus.

Public Footpaths: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the rate of (1) erosion, and (2) widening, of footpaths in upland, coastal and other popular areas due to any increased usage during the Covid-19 pandemic; and what plans they have to provide extra funding to national parks and other relevant authorities for any resulting extra costs for the repair and maintenance of such footpaths. [HL11589]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The maintenance of public rights of way is a local issue and local authorities are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to plan improvements to the existing rights of way network in their area.

Local authorities receive most of their rights of way funding from central Government through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to deliver various duties, including ROWIPs. It is not ring-fenced, and we cannot say how much of the RSG authorities should spend on ROWIPs. It is up to local authorities to manage their own budgets and decide how much they should spend on their different duties and for local people to hold them to account.

RAF Leuchars: Armed Forces

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government which military units are currently stationed at Leuchars Station. [HL11522]

Baroness Goldie: Leuchars Station is currently home to The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and 2 Close Support Battalion Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers.

In addition, the Station is home to elements of 71 Engineer Regiment and also No. 612 Squadron RAF, both Reserve Units. The East of Scotland University Air Squadron also operates from there.

Railways: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan for the North of England has been deferred to 2021; if so, (1) why, and (2) when they now expect it to be published. [HL11590]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Following full consideration of the National Infrastructure Commission's Rail Needs Assessment report, published on 15 December, the Government expects to publish the Integrated Rail Plan early in 2021.

Repossession Orders

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many house repossession claims were outstanding in each month since March this year. [HL11552]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The requested information is not held by HMCTS. Some possession claims do not progress because they have concluded by other means without the court being notified (for example because the Defendant has left the property or paid any arrears) and for this reason outstanding volumes cannot be calculated.

Rolls-Royce: Barnoldswick

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement by Rolls-Royce that it plans to move aero engine manufacturing overseas, what action they plan to take to maintain advanced manufacturing at Rolls-Royce Barnoldswick. [HL11537]

Lord Callanan: The Government understands that Rolls-Royce do not intend to close the site at Barnoldswick but will continue production of fan blades for some of their engines and retain a fan blade product development and technical support centre. Rolls-Royce has also announced proposals to bring back work into the UK. For example, it is proposing to withdraw from its Singapore Assembly & Test facility for widebody engines, consolidating all widebody engine Assembly & Test capability in the UK. It has also closed a site in the US consolidating any future workload in the UK.

Rolls-Royce: Spain

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on the decision by Rolls-Royce to transfer production of aero-engine manufacturing from Britain to Spain. [HL11538]

Lord Callanan: Rolls-Royce has made clear that the restructuring and global site review reflects the change in

medium-term market conditions which have been impacted by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Rolls-Royce has announced proposals to consolidate work into the UK including consolidating all widebody engine Assembly & Test capability in Derby, as well as closing a site in the US and consolidating the advanced manufacturing capabilities into Derby and Washington, Tyne & Wear.

Royal Navy: Staff

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) nominal, and (2) actual, strength of the Royal Navy. [HL11525]

Baroness Goldie: The workforce requirement of the Royal Navy (RN) is 30,700 and the actual strength is 29,030.

Such plans however are not static and the Department quite rightly assesses and revises workforce plans to make sure Defence has the right people, with the right skills, at the right time, in the right place to deliver for the UK.

The Prime Minister's announcement on 19 November 2020 to increase Defence funding by £24.1 billion over the next four years marked the first outcome of the Integrated Review. The review is due to be published in early 2021 and further details of the new platforms, capabilities, programmes and personnel opportunities that stem from it will follow in due course.

Royal Regiment of Scotland: Staff

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) nominal, and (2) actual, strength of the individual battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. [HL11520]

Baroness Goldie: The Army Regular Trade Trained Strength at Regimental Duty against Workforce Requirement for The Royal Regiment of Scotland by Battalion as at 1st October 2020 can be found in the attached table.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL11520 - Royal Scotland Regiments; Battalions [HL11520 - Royal Regiment of Scotland Battalions.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11520>

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards: Staff

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) nominal, and (2) actual, strength of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. [HL11521]

Baroness Goldie: The Army Regular Trade Trained Strength at Regimental Duty against Workforce

Requirement for Royal Scots Dragoon Guards as at 1st October 2020 can be found in the attached table:

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL11521 - Royal Scots Dragoon Guards [HL11521 - Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11521>

Skiing: Training

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK ski instructors will have ongoing access to the Common Training Test for Ski Instructors after the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU; and whether they have reached an agreement with the EU Alpine member states that they will continue to recognise the British Association of Snowsport Instructors qualifications as part of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. [HL11602]

Lord Callanan: The Common Training Test (CTT) for ski instructors was established by the European Commission Delegated Regulation 2019/907, and only applies to citizens of EU Member States. Now the Transition Period is over, the CTT no longer applies in the UK and UK ski instructors do not have access to the CTT.

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, in common with other professionals, UK snow sports instructors who have had their qualifications recognised before the end of the Transition Period, or who applied for recognition before the end of the Transition Period and subsequently have that recognition granted, and who are resident or frontier workers in the EU Member State that recognised them at the end of the Transition Period, will have that recognition protected and will be able to continue to rely upon it.

Following the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, if UK professionals wish to provide services in the EU, the recognition of their professional qualifications across all industries (including snow sports instructors) is subject to the local laws and regulations of individual Member States. Over time, the UK-EU Partnership Council may enter into, and adopt, profession-by-profession mutual recognition agreements.

Stamp Duty Land Tax: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to reconsider the scheduled end of the Stamp Duty holiday on 31 March 2021. [HL11625]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The temporary SDLT relief was designed to create immediate momentum in a property market where property transactions fell by as much as 50 per cent during the Covid-19 lockdown in

March. This measure will also support the jobs of people whose employment relies on custom from the property industry, such as retailers and tradespeople.

The Government will continue to monitor the market. However, as the relief was designed to provide an immediate stimulus to the property market, the Government does not plan to extend this relief.

State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions 2020 inquiry, published on 16 December, and (2) the finding of the report that the governments of Australia and Canada want to cooperate with them to end their policy of freezing state pension payments to British pensioners residing in those countries. [HL11592]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions 2020 inquiry, published on 16 December, that half of pensioners residing abroad whose state pension payments are frozen receive a UK state pension of £65 per week or less. [HL11593]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions 2020 inquiry, published on 16 December, that a majority of pensioners emigrating to countries where a freeze on state pension payments applies were not informed that their pension would be frozen before they left the UK. [HL11594]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to end the freeze on state pension payments to UK pensioners residing in countries where this policy applies. [HL11595]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has not made an assessment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions 2020 inquiry or its findings. The UK State Pension is payable worldwide to those who meet the qualifying conditions. It is up-rated where there is a legal requirement to do so, for example, where recipients are living in countries where there is a reciprocal agreement that provides for up-rating. The Government has no plans to change the policy on up-rating UK State Pensions overseas; the policy is longstanding and has been supported by successive Governments for over 70 years. The Government understands that people move abroad for many reasons and that this can have an impact on their finances.

However, the decision to move abroad remains a personal choice. Advice that the UK State Pension is not up-rated overseas except where there is a legal requirement has been provided to the public for many years. Information is provided in leaflets and on gov.uk.

Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have a timetable for introducing their proposals on addressing legacy issues in Northern Ireland. [HL11535]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government has been clear that it will bring forward legislation to address the legacy of the Troubles that focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims, and ends the cycle of investigations that has failed victims and veterans alike.

Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances presented by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected progress, we are committed to working with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland to move forward on this issue as quickly as possible.

Trade Agreements: Africa

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessments they have made of the impact of bilateral agreements with African countries falling outside the UN category of Least Developed Countries. [HL11579]

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have held with the African Union about the UK's pursuit of bilateral agreements with African countries falling outside the UN's category of Least Developed Countries. [HL11580]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: UK Ministers and officials regularly engage with the African Union on a range of trade related issues, including our support for the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Furthermore, our Parliamentary Reports published alongside signed continuity agreements contain detailed information about the volume of trade, composition of imports and exports, and wider economic impact of agreements. These reports are intended to aid businesses, consumers and parliamentarians in understanding any significant differences made to our trade relationship with partner countries and the reasons for any changes, and their impact.

We will continue to voluntarily lay these Parliamentary Reports, with Explanatory Memoranda, alongside agreements.

Tree Planting

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Lord Callanan on 14 December (HL Deb, col 1410), what specific steps they are taking to meet their tree planting target for (1) 2020, (2) 2021, and (3) any future years. [HL11618]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We committed in our manifesto to increasing planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025 and are exploring whether longer-term statutory targets for trees in England would be appropriate.

To achieve this, we announced a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund to increase planting in England over this parliament and will publish a new England Tree Strategy in spring.

This year we kick-started efforts through:

- £12.1 million investment in expanding England's ten Community Forests;
- £2.5 million from the Shared Outcomes Fund for research pilots to grow trees outside of woodlands;
- £1.4 million of planting along rivers through the Environment Agency;
- Over 84,000 trees planted in towns and cities by the second round of the £10 million Urban Tree Challenge Fund;
- Support from the £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund for a range of charity projects to protect and plant trees.

Type 45 Destroyers: Energy Supply

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards improving the effectiveness and reliability of power plants on Type 45 destroyers. [HL11536]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lord to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin), in the House of Commons on 8 June 2020 to the hon. Member for Dunfermline and West Fife (Douglas Chapman), in response to Question numbers 53459 and 53460.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

53459 - T45 Destroyers; Repair and Maintenance [Hansard Extracts (1).docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-12-16/HL11536>

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in discussions with the government of Ireland on ensuring the unfettered movement of goods which travel from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK via the Republic of Ireland. [HL11581]

Lord True: Our priority throughout 2020 was to give effect to unfettered access in UK law. This has now been done: the definition of “qualifying Northern Ireland goods” to apply from 1 January, as part of our phased approach has been set out; and we have included protections via the UK Internal Market Act 2020 to prohibit new checks and controls, and ensure Northern Ireland goods can continue to access the whole UK market.

During the first phase, we have implemented measures to ensure there are no tariffs due on qualifying goods moving via the Republic of Ireland. Otherwise those movements will be subject to the requirements of our overall phased controls model. This process will be further simplified during the course of 2021 as we bring forward the second, longer-term phase of our unfettered access model. That second phase will identify “qualifying” goods moved by businesses established in Northern Ireland and will be given effect in a light-touch using existing port and airport check-in processes. This will apply whether goods are moved directly from NI to GB, or indirectly via the Republic of Ireland.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with (1) the devolved administrations, and (2) local authorities. [HL11529]

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers.

The Fund will operate UK-wide. We will continue to engage the devolved administrations and other key stakeholders as we develop the fund's investment framework and in advance of its publication.

To help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UKSPF, the government will provide additional funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. We will work closely with stakeholders on how best to use this additional funding to prepare for the introduction of the UKSPF.

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government which government departments will fund the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [HL11530]

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers. It will operate UK-wide.

The Spending Review recognised that many policy challenges require cooperation across multiple departments. The Government published its Heads of Terms for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund at Spending Review 2020 and to help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UKSPF, the Government will provide additional funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. Further details will be published in the new year.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to lay any UK–EU free trade agreement before the House; and what assessment they have made of what further legislation may be needed to implement the final agreement. [HL11406]

Lord True: A copy of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) (together, the ‘Agreements’) have been placed in the House of Lords Library. The European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020 made changes to domestic law needed to implement our international obligations. There will also be a small programme of secondary legislation needed to fulfil all our obligations under the Agreements.

Veterans: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many veterans in Northern Ireland are in receipt of (1) a war disablement pension, or (2) Armed Forces compensation. [HL11532]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many veterans in Northern Ireland are in receipt of a war pension scheme mobility supplement. [HL11533]

Baroness Goldie: As at 31 March 2020 there were 3,558 UK Armed Forces veterans in receipt of a War Disablement Pension under the War Pension Scheme and 65 UK Armed Forces veterans in receipt of a tax-free monthly Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) residing in Northern Ireland.

AFCS tax-free lump sum awards are paid to Service personnel and veterans as compensation for pain and suffering for an injury or illness that is predominantly caused or made worse by Service. Location data is not routinely updated following payment of a lump sum

award. Where a lump sum award has been made at tariff levels 1-11 (reflecting a more serious injury/illness), the claimant will also be awarded a tax-free index-linked income stream known as a Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP).

As at 31 March 2020 there were 654 UK Armed Forces veterans in receipt of the War Pension Mobility Supplement under the War Pension Scheme residing in Northern Ireland.

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