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**Wednesday
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
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 Dirleton	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 of State, Department of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 July to 30 September 2020

[HLWS721]

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

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

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime), for the same period (1 July 2020 – 30 September 2020).

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

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and, throughout the Transition Period while the UK was a member of the EU, OFSI had responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAFE 2010.

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

UK Sanctions following the end of the Transition Period

Since the Transition Period ended at 11:00pm on 31 December 2020, the UK no longer applies EU sanctions regulations and all sanctions regimes will be implemented through UK regulations. The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (the Sanctions Act) provides the legal framework for the UK to impose, update and lift sanctions autonomously. Information on the three new Counter-Terrorism Sanctions regimes can be found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-counter-terrorism-sanctions>

These new sanction regimes ensure that the UK implements its international obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and give effect to the UK's obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2368.

There will be a final Quarterly Report to Parliament on the UK's Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime, covering the period 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020, which will be released in due course.

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

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime Q3 2020 [WMS Q3 of 2020 - Table.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-01-20/HLWS721/>

Covid-19 Update

[HLWS719]

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

On 5 January 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 (All Tier Regulations) were amended. These amendments instructed people across England to stay at home and only to leave where they have a legally permitted reasonable excuse, as well as requiring the closure of many businesses and venues.

Although we are getting the virus under control, the numbers of Covid-19 cases, hospital and ICU admissions, and deaths remain extremely high nationally. As a result, our hospitals are now under more pressure from Covid than at any time since the start of the pandemic.

The weekly case rate in England is 520 per 100,000 for all ages and 414 per 100,000 in people aged 60 and over. There are 127 local authorities with case rates greater than 500 per 100,000. Overall positivity for England is 14.4%, with rates remaining high across all regions and continuing to increase in the North East, West Midlands and South West. The highest positivity is in London (21.7%) and lowest in the South West (9.5%).

These figures are significantly higher in comparison to early December and there still remains considerable pressure on NHS systems nationwide as hospitalisations continue to increase. General and acute bed occupancy for COVID-19 across England has risen by 1,786 to 31,459 from 29,673 last week. Mechanical ventilation bed occupancy for COVID-19 across England has similarly risen to 3,570 from 2,310 in the previous week. Deaths within 28 days of a positive test remain high at 887 on January 13th, the last day of complete reporting.

In line with our commitments, I have kept the measures in place for the national lockdown under ongoing review. On 19 January I completed a review of both the geographical allocations and the restrictions as required by the regulations and have determined that the measures remain necessary and proportionate for all areas in England. Whilst there are early indications that new infections may have started to decline in those areas which have been under stricter measures for the longest,

scientific advice and the latest epidemiological data is clear that lifting restrictions now would be too early. The restrictions are kept under continual review and will be lifted as soon as it is safe to do so.

On 18 January the Government made some minor technical amendments to the All Tier Regulations to clarify policy and ensure consistency. The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) 2021 were laid before Parliament on 19 January and will come into force on 20 January.

Drug Misuse: Project ADDER

[HLWS720]

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

My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) and I have today announced the investment of £148m to dismantle criminal gangs, reduce the demand for illegal drugs and help those in treatment and recovery, to make communities safer.

This Government is determined to take concerted action to address drug misuse, given its associated harms and that it is a significant driver of crime. This funding, which includes the largest increase in drug treatment funding for 15 years, will see more illegal drugs taken off the street and communities made safer, delivering on our pledge to 'Build Back Safer' from the pandemic.

This £148m package comprises of £40 million for financial years 21/22 to tackle drug supply and take down county lines gangs and £80 million for financial years 21/22 for drug treatment services across the country. Additionally, £28m over three years will be directed towards Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery), an innovative and targeted project to reduce drug-related offending, drug deaths and prevalence of drug use.

Funding will be directed to key local areas, to help drive down the prevalence of drug misuse and drug-related deaths in the community. Project ADDER will trial a new system-wide approach to drug misuse, which combines a targeted police approach with enhanced treatment and recovery services. It brings together the police, local councils and health services, to reduce drug-related offending, drug deaths and drug use and will run for three financial years in five areas, including Blackpool, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Norwich and Swansea Bay. These areas will benefit from the £28m funding which will allow local police to ramp up activity to target local gang leaders driving the drugs trade and enable enhanced treatment and recovery services to help those people affected by drug use.

£40m of the funding will be used to disrupt drug supply and 'roll up' county lines. This will stop communities being blighted by drug-related crime. This funding, which doubles our investment from last year, will allow us to

continue and enhance our response to county lines. That response is already delivering real results: since November 2019 more than 3,400 people have been arrested, more than 550 lines have been closed, and more than 770 vulnerable people have been safeguarded as a result of this work. The new funding will also allow us to take wider action against the highest harm criminals involved in trafficking drugs to the UK, including through enhanced work with international partners.

And an extra £80m will also be invested in drug treatment services across England to give more support to people struggling with drug addiction, which we know can fuel crime. This funding will increase the number of treatment places available, including to divert offenders into tough and effective community sentences, and also to make sure that prisoners get into treatment on release. By providing treatment and saving lives, former offenders will also have the chance and support to break the cycle of crime and addiction.

Together the funding will help to drive down crime and violence in communities affected by the scourge of illegal drugs as we build back safer from the pandemic.

Secondary Schools and Colleges: Covid Testing

[HLWS718]

Baroness Berridge: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 15th December 2020 we announced that we would be deploying the latest rapid-result coronavirus tests using Lateral Flow Devices to secondary schools and colleges from 4 January to enable weekly screening of staff and daily contact testing of both staff and students who are a close contact of a positive case. This will help us to find those who have the virus but are not displaying symptoms and isolate them quickly.

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme or not, will still be expected to obtain a PCR test and follow NHS Test and Trace Guidance, self-isolating until they have received their results.

This testing programme, alongside other protective measures such as social distancing and handwashing, can support school leaders to maintain the continuity of education through the pandemic.

We can confirm that, as planned, the rapid asymptomatic testing programme in schools and colleges is being expanded to twice-weekly testing of primary school staff. Primary schools, including attached early years settings, should expect to receive initial deliveries of home testing kits to offer regular testing to all staff from the week commencing 18 January. Deliveries to maintained nurseries will be slightly later – dates to be confirmed.

Primary school staff will be asked to take tests at home rather than take them on-site following the recent approval of home-test kits from the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency).

Primary school staff will be supplied with Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits, which enable self-swabbing. They will be advised to test in the morning before coming into school twice a week (3-4 days apart). The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in up to 30 minutes. Staff will then upload the outcome of their test (positive, negative or void) on the gov.uk website.

Taking part in the testing is not mandatory for staff and they will not be expected to provide proof of having taken a test, to enter the school. However, testing is strongly encouraged, and we expect all primary schools to offer tests to staff.

Those who test positive will need to self-isolate in line with the [stay-at-home guidance](#).

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

Written Answers

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Bank Services

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that bank customers can check continuous payment authorisations with ease to help prevent (1) fraud, and (2) unwanted payment. [HL11855]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: A Continuous Payment Authority, or CPA, is defined as consent given by a customer for a payment service provider (for example, a customer's bank) to make one or more payments from a customer's payment account. They are often established to enable regular payments to be made for goods or services via a payment card - for example, for a magazine subscription - and are distinct from Direct Debits.

The Payment Services Regulations regulate how CPAs are established, and the rights and obligations of payers, payees and payment service providers. In its published guidance on the regulations, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) states that consumers have the right to cancel CPAs by contacting their payment service provider at any time before the end of the business day before a payment is due to be made, and to obtain an immediate refund from their payment service provider if any future payments are debited from their account after they have revoked their consent. The customer may raise a complaint with their payment service provider if unhappy with their response. If this does not rectify the issue, the customer is able to complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Furthermore, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is considering what further action to take on subscription contracts to: prevent consumers being charged unexpectedly; to make it easier for consumers to cancel unwanted subscriptions (including free trials and auto-renewals); and to avoid them facing unreasonable charges.

Biofuels

Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the availability of biodiesel made from used cooking oil for vehicles in England. [HL11883]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In 2019 54% of total renewable fuel supplied under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) was produced from used cooking oil (UCO), this comprised 79% of biodiesel.

Estimates of future volumes of renewable fuel supply were included in "Cost Benefit Analysis: Amendments to the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations Order" which accompanied the Renewable Transport Fuels and

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Regulations 2018. Appendix 3 of the cost benefit analysis includes estimates of total waste based biodiesel supply.

Birds: Pest Control

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to publicise the changed conditions of GL40 licences to kill or take certain wild birds to conserve wild birds and to conserve flora and fauna, and (2) to inform licence holders and affected bodies about the changes to the conditions of such licences. [HL11795]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: On 1 January the Government issued three new general licences, GL40, GL41 and GL42. The new general licences set out when actions can be taken against certain wild bird species, and for what purpose.

Prior to this, Defra published drafts of the new licences on 9 November 2020 on GOV.UK and contacted key representatives of farming, shooting and pest control industry bodies to alert them to this. Defra also met with representatives from the farming and shooting industry to discuss the draft licences. This enabled these groups to inform their members of the changes to help them make any preparations necessary before the licences came into force.

Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the arrangements contained in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland constitute a regulatory border in the Irish Sea. [HL11808]

Lord True: Every part of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, is an integral part of the Kingdom. As a result of the devolution settlements, there are legal and regulatory differences between the constituent nations. The Northern Ireland Protocol and the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill ensure unfettered access for goods from Northern Ireland to the rest of the Kingdom. The Protocol does make specific provisions in relation to the movement of goods, but it does not constitute a "border". The UK government has made extensive investment and arrangements to facilitate free movement of goods to Northern Ireland, and, working with the devolved administration, will keep under review all necessary actions to ensure that is delivered.

Business: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the operation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and its impact on

commercial and retail businesses since 1 January. [HL12001]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The transition period has ended and the Protocol is now in operation. Goods are continuing to flow effectively and we are seeing that in the overall volumes, with high confidence in supplies, including for supermarkets.

The Government's focus is on seeing that continue. That means working through individual issues where they arise and supporting traders to engage with the requirements for moving goods. The Government is engaging regularly with Northern Ireland businesses to this end, including through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's Business Engagement Forum which has met at least 24 times since June of last year.

The free-to-use Trader Support Service (TSS) and Movement Assistance Scheme also support businesses engaged in new processes under the Protocol. Where the correct data are provided, over 99% of TSS-processed declarations have been completed within 15 minutes.

Capital Gains Tax: Tax Allowances

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have estimated how much additional tax revenue would be raised by abolishing the Capital Gains tax-free allowance; and if so, how much additional such revenue they estimate would be raised. [HL11953]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC do not currently publish an estimate for the cost of the Capital Gains Tax Annual Exempt Amount (AEA)[1]. A reliable estimate could only be made available at disproportionate cost.

[1] The AEA appears in the "cost unavailable" table for the structural tax relief official statistics here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/minor-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>.

Community Housing Fund

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of the Community Housing Fund. [HL11824]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Community Housing Fund closed at the end of March 2020. Departmental budgets for 2021/22 have been confirmed at the recent Spending Review and my department is now undertaking a process of allocation of budgets to individual programmes. The needs of the community-led housing sector will be taken into consideration alongside the full range of the Department's priorities. In the meantime, organisations that are registered as providers of social housing may seek capital funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme operated outside London by Homes England.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of potential new build homes that are dependent on the Community Housing Fund. [HL11825]

Lord Greenhalgh: Until the end of March 2020, when the funding period ended, the Community Housing Fund was delivered outside London by Homes England (and its predecessor, the Homes and Communities Agency). Data provided by Homes England in May indicated that it had received applications for funding from projects anticipating the delivery of a total of 10,780 homes, 4,347 of which from applications that have been approved. The overwhelming majority of the funding requested was in the form of revenue grant to cover pre-development costs. Organisations that are registered as providers of social housing may seek capital funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme operated outside London by Homes England and, where appropriate, Homes England has been encouraging them to do so. Within London, the Community Housing Fund is delivered by the Greater London Authority (GLA) with £36 million grant awarded to it by MHCLG. Data provided by the GLA in December indicates a current pipeline of up to 1,387 community-led homes for which funding applications may be made to the GLA.

Consumer Goods: Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Office of Product Safety and Standards intends to address the sale on online marketplaces of unsafe electrical goods. [HL11842]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to ensuring that only safe products can be sold in the UK. Both Local Authority Trading Standards and my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State, through the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), have powers to take action against manufacturers, importers or distributors who sell unsafe electrical goods, including the power to require third-party sellers to recall unsafe products. Trading Standards also have the power to take action against online selling platforms within the UK jurisdiction where they engage in unfair trading practices.

OPSS proactively engages with major online marketplaces to ensure that they are playing their part in protecting UK consumers from unsafe goods.

OPSS is currently conducting a review of the Product Safety framework to ensure it is fit for purpose, protects consumers, and enables businesses to innovate and grow. It will also consider the impact on product safety of new technologies and new business models, including e-commerce.

Corporation Tax

Asked by **Lord Sikka**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK-registered companies have failed to submit corporation tax returns to HMRC in the last five years. [[HL11954](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

Developing Countries: Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 28 January 2020 (HL435), whether funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights provided by Official Development Assistance is allocated by (1) financial, or (2) calendar, year. [[HL11841](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK Official Development Assistance programme budgets, including for sexual and reproductive health and rights, are allocated by financial year. The answer of 28 January 2020 (PQ HL435) on funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights provided by Official Development Assistance refers to 1) financial years.

Dover Port: Government Assistance

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 5 January (HL11614), whether they have (1) received any further requests for funding from Port of Dover authorities, and (2) had any discussions with those authorities about increasing funding to provide capacity for increased border checks; and if any such requests for funding have been refused, what were the reasons for refusal. [[HL11829](#)]

Lord True: The allocation of the Port Infrastructure Fund was announced on 15 December. The Port of Dover was allocated £33,000. The entirety of the £200 million in the Port Infrastructure Fund has been allocated, so no further funding is available for any port.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of closing the (1) telephone helpline, and (2) online advisory support service, of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority; and what plans they have to reinstate these services. [[HL12184](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's contact centre is open between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 4pm on a Saturday.

The DVLA's online services remain available as are the electronic contact centre services provided through email, webchat and social media support channels.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Internet

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the website webchat services provided by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. [[HL12181](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Over recent months the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has made a number of enhancements to both its webchat and associated chatbot services. It has introduced seven new services that include a webchat/chatbot service for queries relating to online driver licensing, the EU transition and the pandemic.

The DVLA intends to roll out webchat to further services over the coming months and keeps the service under continuous review based on customer feedback.

Driving Licences: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 13 January (HL11904), what advice they have provided to people whose driving licences expire in January, or later, who are having difficulty renewing online and who are self-isolating. [[HL12179](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Drivers who cannot apply to renew their licence online will need to make a postal application direct to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

If required, a driving licence application form can be requested by contacting the DVLA's contact centre.

Information about making a postal application and providing a new photo is available on gov.uk.

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make driving licence renewal forms available by post to vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL12180](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The DVLA sends a renewal application form to all drivers who are aged 70 or over 90 days before their licence is due to expire. The DVLA also sends renewal reminders to drivers who need to renew their photocard licence 56 days before it expires. These reminders can be used to renew a licence online or at a post office.

Drivers can request the relevant application form from the DVLA's contact centre or a post office that offers a driver licensing service, if they would prefer to make a postal application.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of electric charging points for vehicles in England. [HL11882]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Figures from 1 October 2020 show that there are 16,456 public charging devices in England.

The number of electric vehicle charging device grants, issued under various schemes are presented in the table below. It is possible that one grant can pay for more than one charging device. Figures are from 1 October 2020.

	<i>Number of Grants Issued in England</i>
Private Domestic Charging Device Grants ¹	129,608
Workplace Charging Device Vouchers ¹	3,159
On-Street Residential Scheme (ORCS) ²	92

1) Data on both private charging domestic and workplace devices comes from three Office for Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) grant schemes: the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) for businesses; the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) and its predecessor, the Domestic Recharge Scheme (DRS) for private domestic charging devices.

2) Local authorities can apply for funding to help with the cost of installation of on-street charging points for residential use under ORCS. This figure includes projects which are in progress and may be included in the public charging device figures.

Eritrea: Armed Forces

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Eritrean soldiers are stealing religious artefacts from churches in Tigray. [HL11897]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are increasingly concerned by the growing weight of credible evidence of the involvement of Eritrean forces in hostilities, including reports of the looting of places of worship, throughout the Tigray region of Ethiopia. We have raised our concerns with Ministers in both governments, making clear the overriding need to protect civilians and adhere to international law and international human rights law. We continue to call for independent, international, investigations into allegations of human right abuses and violations, and that the perpetrators of those incidents that are proven are held to account, whoever they may be.

EU Budget: Contributions

Asked by *Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total UK net public sector contribution to the (1) European Economic Community, and (2) EU, budget since the accession of the UK to the European Communities in 1973 at real 2019 prices. [HL11925]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The total UK Net Public Sector Contributions to the EEC during the period 1973 to 1993, adjusted to real 2019 prices, is equal to £51.5bn. The total UK Net Public Sector Contributions to the EU during the remaining period 1994 to 2019, adjusted to real 2019 prices, is equal to £174.7bn. These figures do not include receipts received by private UK entities, which would reduce the UK's net contributions.

Financial Services

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risks to the economy of shadow banking. [HL11952]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Non-banks are a growing area of the global and UK financial system. While they help to diversify the provision of finance to the economy, they may also pose risks. Recognising this growth, the Office for Budget Responsibility's 2019 Fiscal Risks Report assessed some of the risks of shadow banking.

The Chancellor requested in March 2020, as part of the remit letter to the Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee (FPC), that the FPC publishes a detailed assessment of the oversight and mitigation of systemic risks from the non-bank sector.

The FPC published the preliminary findings of this assessment in the August 2020 Financial Stability Report. It highlighted that, as observed in the March 2020 'dash for cash', some non-banks may be vulnerable to liquidity shocks. The report outlined further work to address these risks, both domestically and internationally. The FPC will follow this with a more detailed report in 2021 outlining gaps in, and potential measures that may be taken to increase, non-bank resilience.

Alongside this, HM Treasury and the financial regulators are working internationally at the G20's Financial Stability Board (FSB) to understand and address the vulnerabilities of the non-bank sector. The FSB has recently published assessments of the risks from non-banks in the 'Holistic Review of the March Market Turmoil' (November 2020) and the 'Global Monitoring Report on Non-Bank Financial Intermediation' (December 2020).

Football: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the English Football League about

the impact of the 'Rooney Rule' on the racial diversity of football managers. [HL11838]

Baroness Barran: The Government is in regular contact with the English Football League on a range of issues, including diversity.

Whilst the 'Rooney Rule' was not explicitly discussed, actions aimed at improving diversity, and their impact, were discussed in a roundtable with key football stakeholders led by Ministers in November 2020.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) applications have been made to, and (2) vouchers issued under, the Green Homes Grant scheme; what is the total value of any such (a) applications, and (b) vouchers; and what is the regional distribution of (i) the applications, (ii) issued vouchers, and (iii) payouts, relating to that scheme. [HL11794]

Lord Callanan: As of 16:22, 11 January 2021, 60,759 grant applications have been received, corresponding to 93,569 vouchers and a total cost of works of £464.3m applications received ¹. Of these, 14,902 vouchers have been issued [reporting 12:19:59, 11.01.2021].

Grant applications ², given by region, are as follows [reporting 16:22:00, 11.01.2021]:

- North East: 2,139
- Yorkshire and the Humber: 8,621
- North West: 10,481
- East Midlands: 6,032
- West Midlands: 7,243
- London: 5,894
- East of England: 6,083
- South East: 7,153
- South West: 6,831

Grant applications ³ that have been issued vouchers, given by region, are as follows [reporting 16:22:00, 11.01.2021]:

- North East: 492
- Yorkshire and the Humber: 1,593
- North West: 1,601
- East Midlands: 1,491
- West Midlands: 1,640
- London: 1,373
- East of England: 1,727
- South East: 1,895
- South West: 1,359

The first vouchers have been redeemed, and more vouchers are being redeemed every day. BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

Homeowners and landlords submit grant applications for energy efficiency and clean heat measures they want to install in their properties, under the scheme. Once approved, vouchers are issued for each measure that has been applied for.

¹ This value has been derived by taking the sum of the cost of all works applied for within the scheme, for all applications to date.

² The total grant applications by region is 60,477. This differs from the headline total of 60,759 due to a slightly different reporting period.

³ The values provided for this figure describes the regional breakdown of grant applications that have been issued vouchers. This is different to the regional breakdown of vouchers, in that more one application may generate more than one voucher.

Iran: USA

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the government of the United States' sanctions against Iran in their discussions about Iran returning to the obligations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. [HL11799]

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States about the effect of its sanctions against Iran on the return of the government of Iran to the obligations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. [HL11800]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the prospect of a US return to the JCPoA. President-elect Biden has said that if Iran returns to compliance with the deal, the US would re-enter the agreement and seek to both strengthen it and extend it. This is an important opportunity to restart engagement between Iran and the US, and realise the objectives of the JCPoA which we support. A return to diplomacy represents the best means of bringing greater security to the region, upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. We look forward to engaging with the new administration on this issue.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the use of (1) force, and (2) firearms, by Israel Defence Force soldiers on Palestinians seeking to prevent the confiscation of property. [HL11840]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by Israeli confiscations of Palestinian homes and structures. The practice of confiscations causes unnecessary

suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate transparent investigations.

Libya: Foreign Relations

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs last met the Ambassador of the State of Libya to the UK; and when the Foreign Secretary last discussed with the Ambassador the issue of compensation for victims of Irish Republican Army terrorism carried out using Semtex purchased from Libya. [HL11872]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Ministers and senior officials, including Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya, continue to impress upon senior Libyan interlocutors the importance of engaging constructively with the UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, in pursuit of justice. Libya is currently represented in the UK by a Charge d'Affaires.

Lighting: Pollution Control

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to reduce levels of light pollution; and if so, how they intend to do so. [HL11812]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government recognises the problem of light pollution. The Government's 25-Year Environment Plan includes a commitment to cut all forms of pollution and ease the pressure on the environment, including ensuring that light pollution is managed effectively.

Current measures include Defra working with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in the development of their Planning Policy Guidance on Light Pollution, which outlines factors which may be relevant when considering where, when and how much lights emanates from new developments together with possible human and ecological impacts.

The Department for Transport encourages all local authorities to replace their street lighting with low-impact LED lighting wherever economically feasible.

Additionally, Highways England is responsible for the strategic road network in England and is obliged to minimise the environmental impacts (including of road lighting) across the network. A full appraisal is carried out before any lighting project is commissioned, including in-

depth analysis of the environmental impact and economic benefits of the scheme. All lighting on the network is designed according to current British standards which emphasise the importance of limiting light pollution, and older forms of lantern are in the process of being replaced with environmentally sensitive lighting when they become due for renewal.

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what policies exist to encourage local authorities and other public bodies to reduce light pollution levels. [HL11813]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As the department responsible for protecting and enhancing our urban and natural environment, Defra plays a co-ordinating role across Government to ensure coherence in this area.

Other departments are responsible for specific policy areas including the Department for Transport for street lighting and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for lighting policy in the planning regime. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that local planning policies and their decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light.

This Framework is supported by MHCLG planning guidance, which was revised in November 2019 and sets out how environmental and other impacts of light pollution should be considered in the planning system. Local planning authorities must take the Framework into account when preparing their plans and its policies, including those on light pollution.

Additionally, a local planning authority can attach conditions to the grant of planning permission, in order to enhance the quality and mitigate the adverse effects of a development, including, for example, noise, air, light and other forms of pollution. It is important to ensure that conditions are tailored to tackle specific problems, rather than standardised or used to impose broad unnecessary controls.

Local highway authorities have a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the public highways in their charge, and it is for them to decide what type of lighting they use to meet local needs.

Highways England, which manages our motorways and major roads, is also working actively to minimise light pollution.

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of light pollution on wildlife and the environment. [HL11814]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Defra has published or contributed to a range of assessments of the impact of artificial light on insects and wider biodiversity, as well as global and national assessments of the drivers of biodiversity loss more generally.

Following publication of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, 'Artificial light in the environment' in 2009, Defra has supported assessments of impacts of artificial light on insects and on other organisms such as bats. These are published on our science website. Defra has also funded or co-funded national and international assessments of drivers of change on insects and wider biodiversity such as the global IPBES Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, which notes effects of light on nocturnal insects may be growing and identifies the need for further study.

There have been a number of externally funded studies which have highlighted potential impacts of artificial light pollution on insects, but based on the current available evidence, artificial light is not considered one of the main drivers of species decline. We are confident that we are focusing and taking action on the issues that will make a real difference to insect pollinators.

We recognise that there is ongoing research into the topic and together with our academic partners, we will keep this under review.

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of excess CO2 created as a result of light pollution. [HL11815]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has not made an assessment specifically of the amount of excess CO2 created as a result of light pollution. Artificial light is a complex issue that falls across a number of central Government departments, the devolved administrations and, on a local level, local authorities and highways authorities. However, the Government is committed to cutting the UK's emissions to net zero by 2050 and has put a wide range of policies in place to achieve this.

Minimum Wage: Prosecutions

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employers have been prosecuted for their failure to comply with regulations relating to the National Minimum Wage in each of the last five years; and what was the outcome of each such prosecution. [HL11951]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) should receive it.

HMRC enforce the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) in line with the law and policy set out by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The majority of NMW cases are subject to civil (non-criminal) sanctions, which include penalties of up to 200% of the arrears, and public naming.

Prosecution does not guarantee payment of arrears to workers, can be lengthy, and is expensive for the taxpayer. HMRC therefore balance recovering NMW

arrears for workers as quickly as possible with the robust enforcement of NMW and prosecution is generally reserved for the most serious cases that form part of a pattern of wider criminality and are referred to the Crown Prosecution Service who decide whether or not to prosecute.

HMRC have a strong enforcement record on the NMW and since 2010-11 have completed nearly 25,000 NMW investigations, identifying over £100 million in national minimum wage arrears for over 950,000 workers and levying more than £59 million in penalties.

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of employers prosecuted for breaches of National Minimum Wage legislation and the related outcome (fine imposed, costs imposed and compensation awarded) for each of the prosecutions in the last five (2015–2020) years.

Year	Number of prosecutions	Fine ¹	Cost ²	Compensation ³
2015/2016	0	£0	£0	£0
2016/2017	4	1) £0 2) £500 3) £5,000 4) £14,000 or face possible 12-month jail term	1) £0 2) £0 3) £1,860 4) £2,000	1) £3,247 2) £0 3) £9,300 4) £4,403
2017/2018	1	£2,977	£633	£0
2018/2019	0	£0	£0	£0
2019/2020	1	£250	£0	£500

¹ Fine imposed by the court on the business.

² Court costs payable by the prosecuted individual.

³ Compensation is any sum as decided in the judgment, to be paid to the individual affected by the employer's actions to cover any financial loss or damage the successful party has suffered.

Money Laundering

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allocate further resources to monitor incidents of money laundering associated with trade finance involving (1) misleading invoices, (2) bills of lading, and (3) the role of banks and other finance specialists in this field. [HL11827]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government's ambitious Economic Crime Plan sets out the significant action we are taking – in conjunction with the private sector – to combat money laundering and other economic crimes. Many of the reforms committed to in the Plan will benefit efforts to tackle trade-based money laundering (TBML), which the 2020 National Risk Assessment on Money Laundering & Terrorist Financing assessed as a growing risk.

On TBML specifically, HMRC has established this threat as a priority illicit finance risk. HMRC's work

includes reviewing current trade compliance procedures and identifying opportunities to enhance our risk detection capabilities.

More widely, we are also investing more to tackle economic crime. The 2020 Spending Review announced an increase in the government's efforts to tackle economic crime by providing an additional £30.5 million in resource and £32.5 million in capital funding in 2021/22, including support for the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) which coordinates law enforcement's response to money laundering.

Further to this, we are also currently formulating our response to the Economic Crime Levy consultation. It will raise £100 million of additional funding per year to help fund reforms outlined in the Economic Crime Plan, including for the Suspicious Activity Reports reform programme and an uplift for the UK Financial Intelligence Unit. It will be an important source of funding for our ongoing action to tackle money laundering in all its forms.

Nigeria: Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Genocide Watch Nigeria is a Killing Field of Defenseless Christians, published on 13 April 2020, which states that "over 11,500 Christians have been murdered since June 2015"; and what action they have taken (1) to verify the reported figures, or (2) to seek independent verification. [HL11715]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Intersociety 2,200 Nigerian Christians hacked to death in 2020 and 34,400 since 2009, published on 16 December 2020; and what action they have taken (1) to verify the reported figures, or (2) to seek independent verification. [HL11716]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the report from Genocide Watch Nigeria and Intersociety. While we cannot investigate the figures in each individual report, we routinely engage with a range of academics, NGOs, affected communities and other experts, and in particular make use of the data collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), to verify the facts on the ground (including shocking reports of killings) and to inform our understanding of developments and trajectories. The Government condemns all violence against civilians in Nigeria, irrespective of their religion.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria about reported killings of Christians in that country; and when any such representations were last made. [HL11717]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in answer HL9271, the UK Government condemns all violence against civilians in Nigeria. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to protect those at risk of violence, to bring perpetrators to justice, and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence and meet the needs of all communities. The Minister for Africa has discussed the impact of violence in Nigeria with President Buhari's Chief of Staff. Our High Commissioner visited Kaduna State in December 2020 and met a range of interlocutors, including Christian and Muslim leaders, who recognised the causes of the intercommunal violence are complex and relate frequently to criminality, competition for resources and failures of governance. We will continue to engage with the federal and state authorities to stress the importance of transparent investigations when attacks occur that respect human rights and the rule of law.

Northern Ireland Parliament: Anniversaries

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to mark the centenary of the opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland. [HL11941]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In line with the Government's *New Decade, New Approach* commitments, Northern Ireland's centenary provides an opportunity to facilitate national recognition and international awareness of this important anniversary, in which we will both reflect on the past and build for the future. There are a number of key historical milestones which fall during the centenary year, one of which is the anniversary of the opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, which we are keen to see marked.

There are a number of important strands to our centenary programme, including historical understanding and engagement, as well as supporting trade and investment which will showcase Northern Ireland's rich potential, giving crucial support to its recovery from the pandemic. We also want to focus on the future, especially our young people, and will ensure that their voices are heard in the centenary programme.

We are currently developing these plans and will be publicising them over the coming months.

Ports: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial resources are being made available to the Northern Ireland Executive to erect border inspection posts at ports in Northern Ireland. [HL11807]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The expansion of existing point of entry facilities in Northern Ireland for agrifood goods handled under the Protocol is being led by the Northern Ireland Executive with UK Government support.

In giving effect to these limited new procedures required under the Northern Ireland Protocol, we have been focused on keeping the facilities for checking animals and agrifood products at Belfast Port, Larne, Warrenpoint and Foyle to a minimum, reflecting the proportionate approach adopted. We have provided the funds to support this work, with £50m in support thus far, including £5m for the interim facilities that will operate in some areas from 1 January 2021 while the full builds are completed.

Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the evidence on which they based their decision to allow early years settings to remain open while all other education settings have been closed for the physical attendance of the majority of students; and if not, why not. [HL11849]

Baroness Berridge: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on 4 January 2021 that early years settings remain open for all children during the national lockdown. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>.

Schools have been restricted because additional measures are needed to contain the spread of COVID-19. The wider significant restrictions in place as part of the national lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 enable us to continue prioritising keeping nurseries and childminders open, supporting parents, and delivering the crucial care and education needed for our youngest children.

Early years settings remain low risk environments for children and staff. Current evidence suggests that pre-school children (0 to 5 years) are less susceptible to infection and are unlikely to be playing a driving role in transmission. There is no evidence the new strain of the virus causes more serious illness in either children or adults and there is no evidence that the new variant of coronavirus disproportionately affects young children.

This report from PHE shows that, at present under 5s have the lowest confirmed case rate of all age groups: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports>.

Public Health England (PHE) advice remains that the risk of transmission and infection is low if early years settings follow the system of controls, which reduce risks and create inherently safer environments.

Early years settings have been open to all children since 1 June and there is no evidence that the early years sector has contributed to a rise in virus cases within the community. Early modelling evidence from SAGE showed that early years provision had a smaller relative impact on transmission rate when modelled with both primary schools and secondary schools.

Early years childcare providers were one of the first sectors to have restrictions lifted last summer, in recognition of the key role they play in society. Childminders and nursery staff across the country have worked hard to keep settings open throughout COVID-19 so that young children can be educated, and parents can work. The earliest years are the most crucial point of child development and attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. We continue to prioritise keeping early years settings open in full because of the clear benefits to children's education and wellbeing and to support working parents. Caring for the youngest age group is not something that can be done remotely.

These plans are being kept under review in the light of emerging scientific evidence. We are working with the scientific community to understand the properties and dynamics of the new variant VUI-202012/01 in relation to children and young people.

Remote Education: WiFi

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children and young people have been provided with free WiFi to enable virtual working from home. [HL11831]

Baroness Berridge: We are partnering with the UK's leading mobile network operators to provide free data to disadvantaged families which will support access to education resources, including Oak National Academy, and other websites.

We are grateful to Three, EE, Tesco Mobile, Smarty, Sky Mobile, Virgin Mobile, O2 and Vodafone. We continue to invite a range of mobile network providers to support the offer.

The country's major telecommunications providers are also working to make it easier for families to access selected educational resources by temporarily exempting them from data charges.

We have also provided over 54,000 4G wireless routers, with free data for the academic year so that children continue to have access to remote education.

Retail Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mitigate the impact of reported stock shortages at food and other retail outlets in Northern Ireland, following the end of the transition period for the UK's departure from the EU and the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL12003]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Goods are flowing effectively and in normal volumes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and no disruption has been reported at Northern Ireland ports.

The UK Government's Trader Support Service (TSS) is an end-to-end service which guides traders through all import processes at no additional cost. The TSS provides free advice and support to businesses of all sizes and since 1 January 2021, where the correct data are provided, over 99% of TSS processed declarations have been completed within 15 minutes.

In addition, the agreement that the UK Government reached on the Northern Ireland Protocol provides a sensible, phased solution under which trusted traders such as supermarkets and their suppliers will benefit from a three month grace period from official certification. The grace periods for businesses moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland are in operation and working well. We recognise some challenges faced by the haulage industry, such as on the issue of groupage, and we are working intensively with industry to resolve these. We continue to work closely with traders as they adapt to the new arrangements.

Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) advice, and (2) additional support, (a) special schools, and (b) alternative provision settings, will receive to enable them to stay open safely for those students who need to attend physically while there are restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL11850]

Baroness Berridge: We published guidance on 7 January 2021 setting out how we want all schools to operate during this new lockdown. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

The guidance makes it clear that all schools, alternative provision (AP), special schools, colleges and wraparound childcare and other out-of-school activities for children should allow vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers to attend (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). As well as setting out our expectations, the guidance includes advice on a range of matters including public health advice on minimising coronavirus risks, opening hours, recording attendance, transport, workforce, school funding and remote learning.

We must ensure as far as possible that vulnerable children and young people continue to receive high-quality education and support because we know that they, and their families, can be disproportionately impacted by being out of education. Therefore, we expect AP schools to remain open to vulnerable children and young people (along with children of critical workers) and to actively encourage those they consider to be vulnerable – identified in partnership with local services – to attend provision. AP should provide robust remote learning for those who are not attending. Similarly, special schools

should continue to welcome and encourage pupils to attend full-time where parents/carers wish for their child to attend. Special post-16 settings should also continue to welcome and encourage students to attend as per their usual timetable where the young person wishes to attend.

We will continue to update guidance and support in due course, providing more detailed advice and support for special schools and AP.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to offer financial assistance to the owners of small businesses that are required to close as a result of restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic and who can furlough their employees but not themselves. [HL11798]

Lord Callanan: Substantial grant support is being made available for businesses that are required to close or which are severely affected by restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives.

Businesses that are mandated to close due to the national or local Covid restrictions are eligible for up to £1,500 for each 14-day period of closure. Local authorities may also choose to provide grant funding for businesses via the discretionary grant schemes.

Further to this, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on the 5th January an additional one-off top-up grant of up to £9,000 for business required to close. Additionally a top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant of £500m has been announced, alongside the £1.1 bn of discretionary funds made available in November 2020.

The application deadline for three Coronavirus business interruption loan schemes – the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme – has been extended. Eligible businesses will be able to 'top up' existing Bounce Back Loans should they need additional finance.

Tolls: Greater London

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Greater London Authority about the potential impact on business of proposals to extend the congestion charging zone; and what has been the outcome of any such discussions. [HL12207]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government agreed a further extraordinary funding and financing package for TfL in October 2020 of up to £1.7 billion to ensure the continuation of public transport services in London.

Transport in London is devolved and decisions around the congestion charge are a matter for the Mayor. The Mayor recently confirmed his plans to maintain the

current temporary changes to the daily charge, operating hours and days of the Congestion Charge into 2021/22.

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to limit travel into the UK to those who have had a negative COVID-19 test. [HL11861]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Secretary of State for Transport announced on 8 January that the Government will introduce a requirement for all international arrivals to have received a negative result for a coronavirus test taken no more than three days prior to their departure to England from 4am 18 January.

Children under the age of 11 and those unable to take a test for medical reasons will be exempt. There will also be a limited number of exemptions for those whom taking a test within three days of departure and receiving a result on time would be impossible, such as hauliers and international transport crew.

All other existing measures remain in place, including the need to self-isolate for 10 days (or 5 days if you choose to opt into Test to Release scheme) after leaving a place not on the Travel Corridor list.

Turing Scheme: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on greenhouse gas emissions of the replacement of the Erasmus+ Scheme with the Turing scheme; and what plans they have to mitigate any such impact. [HL11796]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government is committed to bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 – being the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming in this way. In order to achieve this target, we are building on our Clean Growth Strategy and recognise the

importance of considering the environmental impact across all policy areas, including the recently announced Turing Scheme. We also note the importance of academic and educational exchange in driving forward international work to combat this shared challenge.

Turing Scheme: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether students in Northern Ireland will have access to the Turing scheme. [HL11826]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Yes. The Turing scheme will be UK-wide. Universities, colleges, and schools in Northern Ireland will be eligible to bid for funding under the scheme, so that students in Northern Ireland can benefit from the opportunities of study and work placements abroad.

UK Government-Northern Ireland Executive Joint Board

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the United Kingdom Government–Northern Ireland Executive Joint Board last met; and what was discussed. [HL11939]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The most recent meeting of the Joint Board was on 21 October 2020. Consistent with the Joint Board's purpose, a number of issues relating to the implementation of the New Decade, New Approach agreement were discussed.

It was acknowledged that whilst Covid-19 has impeded the implementation of the ambitious programme of public service transformation set out in NDNA, good progress has been made on investing the £50million worth of funding for decarbonisation, in particular on addressing public transport emissions.

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