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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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|---|--|
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| 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 |
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| 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 |
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| 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

Monday, 25 January 2021

Ministerial Correction: Response to Baroness Bull on Care Quality Commission Report

[HLWS729]

Lord Bethell: I regret to inform the House that there was an inaccuracy in an answer I gave to Baroness Jolly in the course of the debate which followed Baroness Bull's question of 15 December 2020, Official Report, column 1550.

The response indicated that guidance on family involvement in any seclusion and restraint decision had been issued.

I can confirm that it is currently in development and that as we develop the guidance we will consult on including as best practice that families, carers or advocates are notified after every use of a restrictive intervention, as we set out in the Government response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights (published 22 October). We will consult on the statutory guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

[HLWS730]

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

Last week, on 22 January, the Government published the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse strategy. As the first strategy of its kind, it sets out an ambitious blueprint for preventing and tackling all forms of child sexual abuse – whether these crimes take place within the family, in the community or online. In the past, a culture of denial emboldened offenders committing these heinous crimes. This must never happen again.

The Strategy builds on previous work across Government to tackle child sexual abuse. It recognises the scale of the problem, its hidden nature, and the way it continues to evolve, outlining a fresh approach focused on the relentless pursuit of offenders and better protection for victims and survivors.

The recently published [paper on group-based child sexual exploitation](#) highlighted that the data collected on offender and victim characteristics is inadequate, and that there is a need to improve the quality and extent of data

collected in relation to the modus operandi of offending. The Strategy therefore commits to working with local authorities to understand and respond to threats within their communities, and to collecting higher quality data on offenders so that the government can build a fuller picture on the characteristics of perpetrators and help tackle the abuse that has blighted many towns and cities in England.

In addition, the Strategy outlines the immediate steps we will take to tackle all forms of offending, including:

- Investing in the UK's world-leading Child Abuse Image Database to identify and catch more offenders quicker, including new tools to speed-up police investigations;

- Committing to a review of Sarah's Law to make it easier for parents and carers to ask the police if someone has a criminal record for child sexual offences;

- Supporting local areas to improve their response to exploitation through funding for the Home Office-funded Prevention Programme;

- Preventing abuse by raising awareness through communications and engagement with parents and the wider public, as well as providing professionals with skills and resources to intervene early;

- Providing victims and survivors with the support they need to rebuild their lives, ensuring their rights are protected in the criminal justice system and investing to improve support services and embed best practice;

- Working with partners overseas to strengthen child protection systems in countries where children are particularly at risk, and clamping down on individuals who travel abroad to rape and abuse children;

- Using new legislation and enhanced technology to stop offenders in their tracks, including introducing the ground-breaking Online Safety Bill and GCHQ collaborating with the tech industry to identify and develop solutions to crack down on large scale online child sexual abuse; and

Protecting children and the most vulnerable in our society is one of the government's most fundamental and important roles. This Strategy underlines my unwavering determination to crack down on perpetrators, place victims and survivors at the heart of our approach and restore confidence in the criminal justice system's ability to tackle these repulsive crimes.

The Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy is available on [GOV.UK](#). A copy of the Strategy will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Monday, 25 January 2021

Accelerated Access Collaborative: Prosthetics

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the NHS Accelerated Access Collaborative has supported new types of socket for prosthetic limbs. [HL9285]

Lord Bethell: Whilst the Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) has not directly provided support specifically for new types of socket for prosthetic limbs to date, partners of the AAC have provided support in this area, including through the Small Business Research Initiative.

Air Pollution and Environment Protection

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to reduce air pollution in addition to the measures in the Environment Bill. [HL12005]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Our Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. We have also put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

We have also implemented the Medium Combustion Plant Directive which will help to reduce air pollution by bringing in emission controls for plant used to generate heat and power for large buildings and industrial processes, as well as for power generation.

Together these measures will significantly reduce the impact of emissions from pollution sources on the environment and public health.

Airports: Safety

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to accelerate safe travel through UK airports, including through testing and use of other technology. [HL12033]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has introduced mandatory pre-departure testing for international travellers to England from outside the Common Travel Area. Persons arriving in England from 04:00 on Monday 18 January must comply with the new requirement.

Travellers must take a test no more than 3 days prior to departure to England, and will only be permitted to travel if they have proof of a negative result. This action helps to protect fellow travellers from the risk of transmission of Coronavirus during travel itself.

All other border measures, such as completing the passenger locator form and the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days on arrival (or 5 days with test to release), remain in place, and must be adhered to regardless of the pre-departure test result.

Apprentices: Digital Technology

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage private companies to provide digital resources to apprentices. [HL12122]

Baroness Berridge: We are committed to supporting apprentices and employers to safely continue with, and complete, their programmes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Following the announcement of a new national lockdown on 4 January 2021, employers and training providers must ensure that training takes place remotely. Face to face training can continue for vulnerable young apprentices, which includes 16 to 18 year olds who may have difficulty engaging with remote training at home due to a lack of devices or connectivity. It can also continue in employers' COVID-secure settings where it is essential for workers to attend their workplace, and where it is safe and practical to do so. Employers are responsible for providing their employees, including apprentices, with the tools they need to work remotely and should support apprentices with the digital resources they need to also continue their apprenticeships training remotely.

To support businesses during this time, we have extended the incentive payments for employers of up to £2000 for each new apprentice they hire until the end of March 2021. Employers can use this funding to help meet any of the costs associated with supporting a new apprentice in the workplace, including providing laptops and other resources for learning.

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how much money has been allocated in total to the COVID-19 Secure Marshal programme, (2) how many marshals have been employed, (3) for how long such marshals have been contracted to work, (4) in which local authorities those marshals are located, and (5) what assessment they have made of the impact of such marshals on the level of adherence to social distancing rules. [HL12041]

Lord Greenhalgh: In October last year, the Government announced £30 million of ringfenced grant funding to unitary and lower tier authorities to support COVID-19 compliance and enforcement activity. The funding can be used for a range of activity to encourage business, individual and community adherence to COVID-19 rules. It is ringfenced for any activity which will support compliance and enforcement of COVID-19

regulations guidance, including funding for COVID-19 Marshals or their equivalents such as stewards or ambassadors, thereby helping to control the spread of COVID-19 across individuals, businesses and in the community.

Local authorities are best placed to determine how best to use their grant allocations to encourage adherence to COVID-19 rules. To date, authorities have reported grant allocations have been used to recruit COVID-19 Marshals or their equivalents and for overtime costs of existing staff, staff training to work on COVID-19 compliance and communications activity to promote understanding of COVID-19 regulatory and guidance requirements. The Department has issued a request for all local authorities in receipt of the grant to report the activity funded and its impact.

Armed Forces: Misconduct

Asked by **Baroness Stern**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are (1) the terms of reference, and (2) timelines, for the judge-led review into how allegations of wrongdoing by military personnel are raised and investigated, announced in October 2020; and what opportunities will be provided for parliamentarians, experts, and civil society to feed into the review. [HL12010]

Baroness Goldie: The Review, which is due to report by the summer, was commissioned by the Government to ensure that we have the most up-to date and future-proof skills and processes in place to investigate and, where appropriate prosecute, cases where serious allegations of criminal wrong-doing are made against UK forces on operations overseas. Where necessary, improvements will be made. Whilst there is no formal consultation process in place, it will be for the Judge to decide who can best help him with the review. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Review is attached to this answer.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Judge Led Review Terms of Reference [ToR without Context FINAL.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-11/HL12010>

Armed Forces: Sexual Offences

Asked by **Lord Touhig**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases relating to sexual assault have faced trial in military courts in each year since 2010; and how many of these cases have resulted in (1) guilty and (2) not guilty verdicts. [HL12021]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence has made it absolutely clear there is no place for unacceptable behaviour in the Armed Forces. We recognise the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual

offence and Commanding Officers must always refer any allegation of rape and sexual assault, or any other offence which may have a sexual element, to the Service Police. All allegations are thoroughly investigated, and support provided to victims.

Anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately, which may include imprisonment and dismissal from service.

Starting from 2016, Defence has published an annual Official Statistic on Sexual Offending in the Service Justice System, currently covering the years 2015 to 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sexual-offences-in-the-service-justice-system>.

Information for 2020 is due to be published in spring 2021. The following table provides a summary of those statistics, covering all sexual offending in the Service Justice System:

| Year | No. of Individuals Court Martialled (Sexual Offences) | No. of Defendants Not Guilty | No. of Defendants Guilty |
|------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2019 | 59 | 42 | 17 |
| 2018 | 55 | 33 | 21 |
| 2017 | 80 | 57 | 29 |
| 2016 | 51 | 31 | 22 |
| 2015 | 51 | 24 | 21 |

Table notes: Sexual offences as defined within sections 1 to 3, 5 to 15A, 16 to 25, 66 and 67 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (or its historical equivalent) and section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956.

The total number of individuals Court Martialled for sexual offences will not always equal the sum of the guilty and not guilty in each year as some cases were discontinued. Also, some defendants faced more than one charge and each of these charges will have a guilty/not guilty count in the corresponding column, resulting in more verdicts than defendants in some cases.

Comparable information for the years 2010 to 2014 has not been published as an Official Statistic, but information held by the Service Police covering rape and sexual assault cases and convictions in the Military Court Service between 2010 – 2013 has been published in answer to a Parliamentary Question:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140407/text/140407w0003.htm>.

Art Works: Trade Agreements

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how artworks created in the UK but from materials originating elsewhere will be treated by the EU under the region of origin rules as set out in the Trade and Cooperation

Agreement reached between the United Kingdom and the European Union, published on 24 December 2020. [HL11915]

Lord Callanan: Artworks classified in Chapter 97 of the Harmonised System (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques) are currently eligible for import at zero tariffs under both the UK Global Tariff and the EU Common External Tariff. This means that businesses who trade artwork between the UK and EU do not need to comply with Rules of Origin under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement to export or import under zero tariffs.

Traders should refer to the UK Global Tariff: (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tariffs-on-goods-imported-into-the-uk>).

and to the EU Common External Tariff: (https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/trade-non-eu-countries/import-eu_en).

If in the future the EU Common External Tariff changed to make artwork subject to tariffs, artwork produced in the UK would have to comply with Rules of Origin to export zero tariff to the EU under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. In that scenario, UK producers should refer to the full Rules of Origin requirements set out in the text of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Detailed guidance is available on GOV.UK: [SEP] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-of-origin-for-goods-moving-between-the-uk-and-eu>.

Bahrain: Torture

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement issued by the government of Bahrain on 27 December labelling reports relating to concerns raised over the Home Secretary's visit to Muharraq Governorate Police in Bahrain as "misinformation... targeted at impacting the reputation and achievements of Bahrain's human rights record". [HL12008]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that (1) torture, and (2) cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, has occurred in the Muharraq Security Complex in Bahrain; and whether they received any such reports (a) through the Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance, published in March 2011, or (b) through public representations or records. [HL12009]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government welcomes the clarification from the government of Bahrain and its commitment to continue to address concerns about its human rights record. When making assessments, published in our annual human rights report, we take note of a number of sources of information and continue to monitor closely developments on all matters that relate to human rights within the country. The Home

Secretary's visit to the Muharraq police station allowed her to see their approach to community policing, an important area of development.

Balance of Trade: Tunisia

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current balance of trade between the UK and Tunisia; and what assessment they have made of whether such economic activity will increase following the UK's departure from the EU. [HL12171]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Total trade between the United Kingdom and Tunisia was £506m in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2020, with a surplus to the United Kingdom of £38m. At the end of the transition period, we brought into effect the United Kingdom-Tunisia Association Agreement, which secures preferential bilateral trading arrangements, allowing British and Tunisian businesses and consumers to benefit from continued preferential access to each market. Looking ahead, this agreement is a clear signal of our enduring commitment to our close bilateral relationship with Tunisia and will help strengthen trade and investment ties in the future.

Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on the sovereignty of the UK. [HL11940]

Lord True: The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 was approved by Parliament on 23 January 2020. It implemented the agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union. It sets out the arrangements for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU including the Northern Ireland Protocol. As the Protocol itself makes clear, the UK as a whole, including Northern Ireland, has left the EU customs territory. The future of the Protocol is in the hands of the people of Northern Ireland, with Northern Ireland's elected institutions to determine whether to extend or end its alignment provisions four years after the end of the transition period.

Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to implement the recommendations of the report by Sir Charles Godfray A strategy for achieving Bovine Tuberculosis Free Status for England: 2018 Review, published on 13 November 2018. [HL12065]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In March 2020, the Government published its response to Professor Sir

Charles Godfray's 2018 review of England's bovine TB (bTB) eradication strategy. Sir Charles' review set out a number of potential options for the future.

The Government response sets out our top priorities for the next five years. The steps we have taken in 2020 to start to deliver this next phase of the strategy include:

- Accelerating our cattle vaccination work by appointing a Clinical Research Organisation to run cattle vaccination field trials. The aim of these trials is to support applications for UK marketing authorisations of the vaccine and a test to detect infected animals among vaccinated animals.
- Evolving our badger control policy, including tendering for a farmer-delivered project in East Sussex to vaccinate badgers against TB, and publishing a map showing the estimated distribution of TB infection in badgers in England's bTB Edge Area.
- Improving our TB testing programme, through awarding £500,000 funding for innovative research to diagnose bTB more quickly, and starting to increase the default frequency of mandatory surveillance TB testing of cattle across England's bTB High Risk Area from annual to every six-months, with some exceptions for lower risk herds.
- Evolving and strengthening partnership working through recruiting for a new Bovine TB Partnership to replace the existing Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group for England.

Work is ongoing and we plan to announce further steps in due course.

British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to record and certify vaccinations given to UK nationals abroad. [[HL12060](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are no plans to record vaccinations given to UK nationals abroad.

Bus Services and Trams: Finance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of providing one funding package for bus and tram services on an area rather than a modal basis. [[HL12239](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has provided separate funding packages for Bus and Light Rail services.

On 8 August, the Government announced funding at up to £27.3 million per week to support the bus sector through the Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) Restart scheme, until a time when the funding is no longer needed.

On 22 October, the Government announced up to £67.8 million of funding for light rail services in Manchester, Tyne and Wear, Sheffield, West Midlands, Nottingham and Blackpool. This includes up to £35.4 million for light rail services for the 12 weeks from 27 October and a further indicative allocation of up to £32.4 million for the 11 weeks thereafter.

Providing separate funding packages for Bus and Light Rail services has allowed the Government to respond to the specific needs of transport operators in terms of supporting essential journeys throughout the pandemic. The allocation of CBSSG funding reflects the structure of the bus market and ensures that both Local Transport Authorities and operators have the funding they need to support up to 100% of pre-pandemic service levels, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Bus Services: Finance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to announce funding to support bus services during the COVID-19 pandemic after current funding runs out at the end of March; and what plans they have to announce funding that will cover the full 2021/22 financial year. [[HL12238](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 8 August, the Government announced rolling funding of up to £27.3 million a week to support bus services until a time when funding is no longer needed. Government does not have defined conditions for winding down the funding, but instead will continue to work with bus operators and local authorities to review when it is appropriate to end the funding.

Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, by what date they estimate that orders for the "800 cleaner, greener, quieter zero emission buses" will need to be placed for delivery in financial year 2021/22. [[HL12373](#)]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, what analysis they have undertaken on how the "800 cleaner, greener, quieter zero emission buses" can be delivered in financial year 2021/22; and whether they plan to publish any such analysis. [[HL12374](#)]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, how they plan to fund the "800 cleaner, greener, quieter zero emission buses" in financial year 2021/22;

and when they plan to begin the procurement of such buses. [HL12376]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As set out in the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the Spending Review 2020 the Government will invest £120 million in 2021-22 to start the delivery of the 4,000 zero emission buses announced by the Prime Minister last year.

Together with existing funding for the All Electric Bus Town or City, Government funding could support the purchase of 800 zero emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them.

The Department is considering all funding mechanisms in delivering the first of the 4,000 zero emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them.

Further details on how funding will be distributed will be announced in the spring.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that small businesses can access COVID-19 financial support schemes. [HL12013]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Throughout this crisis, the government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. To do this, the government has put in place an economic package of support which will provide businesses and individuals with certainty over the coming months, even as measures to prevent further spread of the virus change. The government has spent over £280 billion this year to provide this support.

In response to the latest restrictions, the Chancellor announced further support to businesses on top of those adopted at the Covid-19 Winter Plan and our previous economic responses. These support measures are carefully designed to complement each other to ensure we protect jobs and livelihoods. This support includes a new one-off grant of up to £9,000 to support businesses in England which are legally required to close. This comes in addition to the existing monthly grants for closed businesses of up to £3,000 per month. Local authorities will also receive an additional £500m, to a total of £1.6bn, of discretionary funding to allow them to support their local businesses.

In order to support businesses to retain their employees and protect the UK economy, the Chancellor has extended both the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) until the end of April 2021. HMRC have supported businesses to access the CJRS by communicating directly with employers, running over 400 live webinars, and ensuring that online support via gov.uk is updated regularly.

Businesses have also received billions in loans, tax deferrals, Business Rate reliefs, and general and sector-

specific grants. And individuals and families have benefited from increased welfare payments, enhanced statutory sick pay, a stay on repossession proceedings and mortgage holidays.

Business: Regulation

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Callanan on 15 December (HLWS646), what plans they have to consult with civil society groups and the wider public as part of their review into how regulatory impacts are assessed in advance of setting the next Business Impact Target. [HL11911]

Lord Callanan: The Government is required by the Small Business, Enterprise, and Employment (SBEE) Act 2015 to set a Business Impact Target at the start of each Parliament, ensuring that we remain accountable and transparent to both business and the public for the decisions we make. As set out in the Manifesto, we "will strive to achieve the right regulatory balance between supporting excellent business practice and protecting workers, consumers and the environment" (p.33). The Government does not believe that the current methods for assessing regulatory impacts allow for this. Therefore, we will consult with civil society groups and the wider public to ensure the impact of regulations are reflected more effectively, so as to continue to provide the necessary protections without placing unnecessary burdens on business. The Government will set out the details of who we intend to consult when we come to announce proposals for the review of the Business Impact Target.

Children in Care: Supported Housing

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they regularly (1) collect, and (2) assess, data from all relevant local authorities relating to the placement of children and young people in unregulated accommodation. [HL11973]

Baroness Berridge: Information on children who are looked after by local authorities (including information on placement setting) is submitted to the department by local authorities on an annual basis. The latest collection, which closed in August 2020, related to children who were looked after during the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The latest information on children looked after in England, including the number of looked after children placed in independent and semi-independent placements on 31 March 2020, is contained in the 'Children looked after in England' statistics release, which is available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>. Information on numbers of looked after children by type of placement

can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/9fb76a8e-ab86-4746-871a-925810cfb302>.

Children in care and care leavers are some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society. We must do all that we can to ensure that they have access to suitable, safe and secure accommodation that meets their needs and keeps them safe. Our consultation on unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers asked for views on a set of ambitious proposals to reform unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, including banning the placement of children under the age of 16 in these settings and introducing national standards for providers to drive up quality, keeping young people safer and delivering better outcomes.

The consultation received a strong response from the sector, and care-experienced young people. We will publish the government's response to the consultation in due course.

China: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 7 January (HL Deb, col 288), in what ways "China continues to be an important international and strategic partner" for the UK. [HL11916]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As a major economy and leading member of the international community, China has to be part of the solution to any major global problem we face; whether ensuring we do not face another devastating global health crisis, supporting vulnerable countries or addressing climate change. China is also the UK's fourth largest trading partner and total bilateral trade was worth over £76bn in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2020. There is considerable scope for constructive engagement and cooperation. But as we strive for a positive relationship, we will not sacrifice either our values or our security. We are clear-sighted about the challenges. As we continue to engage, we will always protect our national interests and hold China to its international commitments and promises.

Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the obligation contained in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to enact legislation that gives effect to that Convention and to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide; what legislative measures, if any, they have taken to meet that obligation; and whether they consider trade sanctions an effective penalty against states accused of genocide. [HL11956]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the UK is fully committed to the prevention and punishment of genocide under the convention. The UK has enacted legislation to give effect to the convention. In particular, the International Criminal Court Act 2001 provides that it is an offence for a person to commit genocide, in the UK, or for a UK national or resident to commit genocide anywhere in the world.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

Her Majesty's Government whether they have had any discussions with the World Health Organization (WHO) about when the governments of (1) Italy, and (2) France, first reported the emergence of COVID-19 to WHO; if so, when in (a) 2019, and (b) 2020, any such emergence was reported by those countries; what assessment they have made of reports of COVID-19 appearing in waste water in Barcelona in 2019; and when they became aware of any such reports. [HL11575]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom has not had any specific discussions with the World Health Organization on the emergence of COVID-19 in France and Italy. The UK Government received notification of France and Italy's first COVID-19 cases through the European Early Warning and Response System. France reported its first three COVID-19 cases on 24 January 2020. Italy reported its first two COVID-19 cases on 31 January 2020.

The Government has not made any assessment of reports of COVID-19 appearing in wastewater in Barcelona in 2019. In the UK, a national wastewater surveillance programme was announced on 12 June 2020 by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish and Welsh devolved administrations, focusing on sewage monitoring as part of an advance warning system to detect new outbreaks of COVID-19.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on public compliance with the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic of the guidance issued by the National Police Chiefs' Council relating to the enforcement of those restrictions. [HL11963]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Throughout the pandemic, the Home Office has worked closely with operational partners to ensure they have the powers, resources and guidance they need to enforce the law. The enforcement of the restrictions is an operational matter for police forces, and officers will continue to use their common sense, discretion and experience in enforcing the law.

The vast majority of the public have followed the guidelines throughout the pandemic, and that remains the case. However, the police can take steps to enforce the

rules where a minority of the public do not comply. As they have done throughout the pandemic, the police apply a four-step escalation method - engaging, explaining and encouraging compliance before taking enforcement action.

Latest data published by the NPCC on 8 January shows that a total of 28,744 fixed penalty notices have been recorded as having been issued in England under Coronavirus Regulations between Friday 27 March and Monday 21 December.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Home Office discussed the guidance issued by the National Police Chiefs' Council in relation to the "engaging, explaining, encouraging and enforcing" strategy prior to that guidance being issued. [HL11965]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Throughout the pandemic, the Home Office has worked closely with operational partners including the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to ensure that police forces across the country have the powers and guidance required to effectively enforce restrictions.

The police in the UK have always policed by consent. The four Es guidance was introduced in spring 2020 to help policing provide a measured and consistent approach during this unprecedented situation. The College of Policing has produced a range of resources to explain the new powers and to help forces across the country in their response to COVID-19.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Home Secretary has raised any concerns with police forces about the targeting of individuals to enforce the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic instead of large groups, including raves and demonstrations. [HL11966]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Throughout the pandemic, the Home Office has worked closely with police forces to ensure they have the powers and guidance required to effectively enforce restrictions and maintain public order. In response to individuals or groups who repeatedly flout the rules or are responsible for the most blatant and egregious breaches, the police will continue to engage, explain and encourage. They will not hesitate to move to enforcement action where necessary.

The enforcement of restrictions remains an operational matter for individual forces, and we expect officers to continue to use their common sense, discretion and professional judgement in enforcing regulations.

Coronavirus: Immigration

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on immigration to the UK. [HL11534]

Lord Bethell: The Department has made no such assessment.

Coronavirus: Protective Clothing and Vaccination

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards ensuring the secure supply of (1) vaccines, and (2) personal protective equipment. [HL11974]

Lord Callanan: The UK was the first country in the world to start a vaccination programme using the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, followed by the AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine.

We have signed deals for substantial future supply of both vaccines to replenish our stocks and to enable swift vaccination across the UK in the months ahead. Our supply and scheduled deliveries of these vaccines will fully support vaccination of priority cohorts 1 to 4, as advised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, by the middle of February.

The Government has also been working tirelessly to deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect our frontline workers throughout the pandemic. We have significantly strengthened and diversified our supply chains for PPE, looking to new suppliers abroad as well as boosting our domestic manufacturing capability. This has helped to build our resilience into the future. We have ordered almost 32 billion items of PPE (of which the majority has been delivered or is on its way) to provide a continuous supply to the frontline over the coming months. As of December 2020, the Government had built a four-month stockpile of all COVID-critical PPE, with a tremendous contribution from UK manufacturers.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what administrative arrangements are in place to ensure that people comply with the requirement to receive a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; and what information is being retained as to the identity of those who do not receive a second dose of a vaccine having been scheduled to do so. [HL11801]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom operates a system of informed consent for vaccinations. When advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation informed changes to the timings of the secondary dose, general practitioners (GPs) were asked to rebook the appointments. Vaccination centres book in appointments with individuals for both the first and second dose at the same time. Additionally, vaccinations are noted in GP health records and the National Immunisation Management System, which can be accessed by the national booking service to follow up on any missed second doses.

Previous incomplete vaccinations, where the course has been interrupted or delayed, should be resumed using the same vaccination. However, the first dose should not be repeated.

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee about COVID-19 vaccinations; and what has been the outcome of any such discussions. [HL11809]

Lord Bethell: The Government, with NHS England and NHS Improvement, has met with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee to discuss community pharmacies' involvement in the COVID-19 vaccination service.

Some pharmacists and members of their team are already working with general practitioners to deliver the vaccine in many areas of the country and, as more supply becomes available, community pharmacies will play a major role in the programme. Since 11 January 2021, some pharmacies have already been administering COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cricket: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on grassroots cricket of allowing golf clubs to reopen while retaining restrictions on cricket clubs. [HL12158]

Baroness Barran: Sports and physical activity, including golf and cricket, are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus.

On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The National Restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions. All decisions made by the Government relating to the pandemic and sport have been based on advice and guidance from health and scientific experts.

You can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, in a public outdoor place and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. Indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including golf courses and cricket pitches, must close.

Dartmoor Prison: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any prisoners in HMP Dartmoor who have tested positive for COVID-19 are confined to cells for 24-hours per day without access to showers; if so, (1) how many

prisoners are being so confined, (2) how long they expect that confinement to continue, and (3) what assessment they have made of the impact of any such confinement on the mental health of prisoners. [HL11990]

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisons, other than HMP Dartmoor, have used 24-hour lock-ups to address the transmission of COVID-19; and what measures are in place, or planned, to improve access to education and training throughout the prison estate. [HL11992]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: HMP Dartmoor is delivering essential elements of prison regime even during the current restrictions. In each 24-hour period, prisoners are allowed phone calls (mobile phones when required for isolators), time in the open air, showers, meals and medication distribution. Even for those who are Covid-19 positive and in isolation, showers are facilitated in prisoner groups. Regime is additionally supplemented through access to gymnasium, keywork sessions and wellbeing checks, chaplaincy services, visits, video calls and other localised activities. Between 30 November 2020 and 11 January 2021, prisoners at HMP Dartmoor averaged 1.3 hours out of cell per day.

These measures are in line with the requirements of the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services. Following the Prime Minister's announcement of 4 January, all prisons changed their regimes because of the growing rate of infection within the community. All adult prisons are currently in a stage four regime as outlined in the National Framework to reduce contact between people and therefore reduce the chance of transmission. All prisons are required to deliver the essential elements of prison regime as outlined above. We have also introduced a range of measures and products designed to manage prisoners with specific needs, including mental health needs. The National Framework also provides a roadmap for easing restrictions in prisons when it becomes appropriate, guided by public health advice, alongside an operational assessment of what can be achieved in custodial settings while keeping staff and those in our care safe.

Data Protection

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to encourage engagement with the Data Sharing Code of Practice, published by the Information Commissioner's Office on 17 December 2020. [HL12140]

Baroness Barran: The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent data protection regulator and has a statutory duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) to produce a code of practice that provides practical guidance on data sharing. The ICO is engaging with organisations to help them understand

the code and promote the benefits of sharing data. Alongside the code, the ICO has launched a [data sharing information hub](#) on its website, where organisations can find clear guidance and practical tools for organisations and businesses on how to share data fairly, lawfully and transparently, while protecting people's personal information.

The Government is committed to working with the ICO to promote responsible data sharing which can have benefits for the economy and the delivery of public services. The National Data Strategy recognised that better use of data can help organisations of every kind succeed – across the public, private and third sectors. Data can be a driver of scientific and technological innovation, and central to the delivery of a whole range of vital public services and societal goals, from tackling climate change to supporting the National Health Service.

Development Aid: Agriculture

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the UK Official Development Assistance spend is directed towards agriculture; and what percentage of that spend is directed towards (1) agroecological approaches, and (2) small farms; and whether they benchmark those figures against the level of such provision from other countries. [[HL11913](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is committed to supporting the agricultural sector in developing countries. In 2018 the UK Government spent £322 million in Official Development Assistance on agriculture projects and provided significant additional funding for agriculture through its core funding of multilateral institutions working in the sector. This makes us a middle-ranking donor in the sector.

Whilst the UK Government does not break down expenditure on agroecological approaches or small farms, we are supporting a wide range of programmes in both these areas. For example, we have been supporting smallholder farmers and their agriculture systems in 47 countries through our bilateral agriculture programmes as well as the multilateral flagships Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme and Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme.

Disease Control

*Asked by **Lord Cashman***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of behavioural science in driving personal responsibility to ensure (1) continued hand hygiene, (2) social distancing, and (3) mask wearing; and what plans they have to launch public information campaigns to underline those messages and promote hygienic behaviour as a life-long habit amongst the general population to support future pandemic preparedness plans and public health strategies. [[HL11919](#)]

Lord True: Behavioural science has been fully embedded in Covid-19 communications since the start of the pandemic. The evidence-based principles from this field have been applied across all key campaigns, such as 'Hands Face Space' and 'Stay Home, Protect NHS, Save Lives'. Behavioural science support during the pandemic has been provided by internal government teams and academic experts, including those who are members of SPI-B.

Hand hygiene, social distancing and mask-wearing remain a core pillar of the on-going campaign. However, the communication response to the pandemic must be flexible and reflect restrictions aimed at the immediate threat level. This is now at the highest level, and national 'Stay Home' communication addresses the most pressing behavioural challenge. Life-long hygiene habits are important and are being factored into future plans, however, message discipline is imperative so we must prioritise the urgent and immediate 'Stay Home' behaviours.

Divorce

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Stewart of Dirleton on 6 January (HL Deb, col 131), what progress they have made with the review of financial provision law. [[HL11921](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government has committed to set up a Lord Chancellor's working group to assess any evidence for changing the law of financial provision on divorce and dissolution. This review will be led by evidence, which is yet to be gathered, on whether there are problems with the current law. The Government will seek to ensure a balance of members from across different professions. The Government will make an announcement in due course.

Donald Trump

*Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the President of the United States about the outcome of the United States Presidential Election and following the riots at the United States Capitol on 6 January, what plans they have to prohibit Donald Trump from entering the UK in future. [[HL11879](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All foreign nationals wishing to enter the UK must comply with UK Immigration Rules.

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

Employment: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of workers who are not

eligible for any COVID-19 financial support; and what steps they are taking to reduce that number. [[HL12015](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Throughout the crisis, the Government's priority has been to protect people's jobs and livelihoods. Since the start of the pandemic the Government has committed over £280 billion to supporting the economy, including supporting 9.9 million jobs through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and about 2.7 million self-employed individuals via the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

The Government has continued to review its support and brought in ineligible groups where possible. For example, the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is available to those directors who paid themselves a salary between 19 March and 30 October 2020, and to new starters who were employed and on their employer's PAYE payroll on 30 October 2020. Both the CJRS and SEISS have also been updated to provide support to those on maternity leave and to reservists. The Government continues to work closely with stakeholders to explore how it can best support different groups.

Those who are ineligible for the CJRS and SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the COVID-19 support available. This substantial package of support includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support and other business support grants. The Government has also temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 by £20 per week and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor, meaning that where claimants' earnings have significantly fallen, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings.

Employment: Young People

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development COVID-19 and the youth labour market, published in December 2020; and what steps they are taking to raise awareness of traineeships. [[HL12075](#)]

Baroness Berridge: This government recognises the challenges currently faced by young people looking to enter the labour market, as highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's report. Through our Plan for Jobs, we are committed to providing young people with the tools they need to begin and progress in their careers and are supporting businesses across the country to meet their skills needs, now and in the future.

Apprenticeships will be more important than ever in helping businesses to recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow. We have extended the incentive payments for employers of up to £2000 for each new apprentice they hire under the age of 25 until the end of March 2021. It is encouraging that employers continue to see the value apprentices can bring

to their businesses; as of 1 December employers had claimed incentive payments for over 11,000 apprentices.

The Kickstart scheme is investing £2 billion to create hundreds of thousands of high quality 6 month work placements for eligible 16–24 year olds. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support young people on Kickstart placements to progress to apprenticeships where this is right for them and their employers. To support this, we have ensured that employers taking on an apprentice who has previously been on the Kickstart scheme are eligible for the incentive payments.

In addition, we are working on the largest ever expansion of traineeships and have introduced £1000 incentive payments for employers who offer traineeship work placements to support this. We are taking a number of steps to raise awareness of traineeships among young people, employers, and providers. We have created a new online collection of free resources for schools including fact sheets, case studies and a guide for teachers. We are working with stakeholders, including the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, and youth focused organisations to raise awareness amongst providers and young people. We are also working with the National Careers Service and DWP to ensure that young people understand the different options available to them and are supported on the right path, and with major employers and sector bodies to develop new pipelines to apprenticeships opportunities.

Energy

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish an Energy Bill or a draft Energy Bill this year. [[HL11977](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government intends to bring forward an Energy Bill as soon as parliamentary time allows. The Energy Bill will aim to enable progress to be made on commitments made by the Prime Minister in his Ten Point Plan as well as deliver policy commitments set out in the Energy White Paper.

Environmental Land Management Scheme

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Environmental Land Management Schemes are being established on an open data basis; and what plans they have to ensure that (1) data are available to inform local and national knowledge, and (2) rapid feedback loops are put in place so that best practice can be shared and incentivised, through such Schemes. [[HL11914](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environmental Land Management Scheme is being developed in partnership with farmers, other land managers and stakeholders from initial concept to full launch. We already have around 3000 farmers and other land managers involved in the

Environmental Land Management Test and Trials and initial reports can be accessed on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-tests-and-trials>

Ahead of full launch of the new Environmental Scheme in 2024 there will be a National Pilot, starting later this year, where the focus is on learning from farmers and other land managers as they apply different scheme components and begin to deliver outcomes. The focus will be on sharing their feedback with them and with scheme designers, building on the co-design work started through our Test and Trials and wider evidence reviews.

We will use GOV.UK, open to all, to share comprehensive information about the purpose of the scheme and its components, how to apply and how best to deliver outcomes it pays for. There is already overview information published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-environmental-land-management-scheme-an-overview>, with more information following in the coming months. Using feedback from farmers, other land managers and their advisers the National Pilot will help us refine and improve the information on GOV.UK relating to the new Environmental Scheme.

Ethiopia: Homicide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of a mass killing on 15 December 2020 at the Mariam of Zion church in Aksum, Ethiopia. [HL12040]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are shocked and saddened by further reports from Tigray of massacres of civilians, sexual violence, and attacks on humanitarian facilities and places of worship. An ongoing lack of access to the Tigray region for humanitarian agencies, means that it remains difficult to fully corroborate these reports, but we will continue to try to do so. We have however made clear our concerns with Ethiopian Ministers, and underlined 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. The UK continues to call for sustained, free and unfettered humanitarian access across Tigray.

Eurostar: Freight

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with Eurotunnel and Eurostar about using surplus capacity and rolling stock for the conveyance of freight by rail. [HL12191]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government engages regularly with the international rail sector to discuss a range of issues, including freight traffic flows and proposals to operate additional intermodal rail freight services through the Channel Tunnel, similar to those already operating.

It is ultimately a commercial decision for rail freight operators as to whether to facilitate new services, but the Government is open to engaging with industry-led proposals and potential new operators where there is a commercial proposition.

There is currently sufficient capacity through the Channel Tunnel to run additional, conventional rail freight services similar to those already operating. Running additional services would be dependent on commercial demand for such services, which has always been a key challenge to the sector.

Ferries: Isles of Scilly

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) have given, and (2) plan to offer, any support to companies providing lifeline services (a) to, and (b) within, the Isles of Scilly; if not, why not; and what is the funding source for any such support. [HL12091]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Since the start of the pandemic and through to March 2021, up to £9.7 million has been made available by the Government to support lifeline services to and within the Isles of Scilly. These services are deemed to be of critical need, to deliver vital freight and provide the means of accessing key life support facilities.

This bespoke package of support is in addition to the £330 billion package of financial support the Government provided to all sectors to support them through the pandemic.

We are working closely with the Council of the Isles of Scilly to administer the funding and to monitor the impact of the pandemic to ensure that these lifeline services are maintained.

Film and Tourism: Iraq

Asked by Lord Austin of Dudley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there are new opportunities for British companies in (1) in the tourism sector, and (2) the film industry, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. [HL12136]

Baroness Barran: Our Departmental priority for the Kurdistan region of Iraq is to support the continuing reconstruction of its infrastructure and the protection of its cultural heritage. We work closely on this issue with the British Embassy, British Council and heritage experts from the UK and Iraq. If we are successful in protecting its cultural heritage, UK and Iraqi businesses in the tourism sector will be among the beneficiaries.

Flats: Leasehold

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the extension of leases by 990 years by all leaseholders in a block of flats would have on the viability of commonhold. [[HL12027](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government will establish a new Commonhold Council as a partnership of industry, leaseholders and Government that will prepare homeowners and the market for the widespread take-up of commonhold.

Long leases provide long term security for leaseholders now and in the future and save money by avoiding the need for multiple lease extensions. Through our reforms, the length of a statutory lease extension will increase to 990 years, from 90 years (for flats) and 50 years (for houses). Leaseholders will be able to extend their lease as often as they wish with zero ground rent.

Flood Control: Somerset

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the performance of flood prevention and mitigation measures in Somerset in 2020. [[HL11999](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Environment Agency's (EA) top priority has been to maintain flood defence assets to ensure communities in Somerset and across England are incident ready and resilient for potential flooding this winter. The EA has strengthened working arrangements with the support of delivery partners in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The EA's flood risk assets have performed satisfactorily across Somerset. During 2020 the EA operated coastal flood defences to protect people, properties and low lying land in Somerset. The risk from seasonal wet weather in October and most of December for the most part was managed without issue although it meant catchments were very wet. However, both Storm Alex and Storm Bella, sadly resulted in flooding.

During Storm Alex, over 100mm of rain (more than the monthly average of rain) fell in two days on the steep sided upper reaches of the River Sheppey and this resulted in flooding at Croscombe and Shepton Mallett (initial estimates are that 20 properties flooded in total). Roads were also flooded from surface water. This is a complex flooding issue and the EA is assisting Somerset County Council with its Section 19 investigation (Flood and Water Management Act) into the cause, likelihood of recurrence and need for measures to reduce the risk.

Over Christmas, Storm Bella on wet, saturated catchments generated rivers flows in excess of the River Parrett and Tone's capacity. This passed into the adjacent flood plains and moors, Currymoor, Haymoor, Wetmoor,

Westmoor Allermoor and the King's Sedgemoor Drain. Using these areas as water storage is an established approach and has been a frequent and normal winter occurrence over many decades.

The EA has been using its pumps and other assets to reduce river levels, and clear water from the moors, making use of the enhanced pumping capacity at Currymoor pumping station.

Food: Imports

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) whether they plan to reduce the amount of food imported to the UK, (2) if so, what their target is for such a reduction, and (3) how they plan to achieve any such reduction. [[HL12054](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Our food security depends on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports from stable sources. We produce 64% of our entire food supply need, and that increases to 77% for indigenous food that we can grow or rear here in the UK for all or part of the year. These figures have been steady over the past 20 years.

UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements our excellent domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Football: Governing Bodies

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their commitment in the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019, published on 24 November 2019, what progress they have made in setting up a "fan-led review of football governance." [[HL12185](#)]

Baroness Barran: Football clubs are a vital part of their local communities and must be protected, as we work to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Government continues to have regular discussions with the football authorities on the future direction of the sport, and how to ensure it is sustainable. We are currently deciding on the scope and structure of the fan-led review of football governance, and will announce details of this in due course.

Freezers: Production

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what production capacity is available for the (1) manufacture, and (2) supply, of sub-60 degrees freezers in the UK. [[HL11967](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government has engaged in strategic procurement activity to ensure that we have the necessary ultra-low cold chain capacity needed for the storage and distribution of our portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines.

Further Education

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the Further Education White Paper. [HL12085]

Baroness Berridge: We published the White Paper Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth on 21 January 2021.

Gambling: Video Games

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further (1) to the report by the Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry Gambling Harm—Time for Action, published on 2 July 2020 (HL Paper 79), and (2) to the letter to that Committee from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage on 21 December, whether (a) secondary, or (b) primary, legislation would be required to bring loot boxes within scope of gambling regulation by defining their contents as money or money's worth. [HL11976]

Baroness Barran: The government remains committed to delivering on its manifesto pledges and ensuring young and vulnerable people are protected from harm. Our bespoke call for evidence on whether loot boxes cause harm and, if so, the nature of the harm, closed in November and received more than 30,000 responses (including individual responses to the survey of players' experiences). We will publish a government response and next steps in the coming months, including implementation details for any changes proposed.

Gardens and Listed Buildings: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many listed historic houses and gardens have been supported with grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund for recovery and business continuity purposes. [HL12230]

Baroness Barran: The Cultural Recovery Fund for Heritage has been jointly coordinated by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Heritage England. In the first round of funding, 277 awards were made to historic areas, buildings and monuments, totalling £49,486,500.

At least 15% of these awards were made directly to historic houses and gardens, including Blenheim Palace, which received £1,896,000.

The second round of funding is now live. Listed historic houses and gardens can apply for grants that will support reopening to the public in the late spring.

Gaza: Borders

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Israel Defence Force fire machine guns in the border areas of the Gaza Strip when there is low visibility due to fog in order to deter any attempt by those wishing to infiltrate the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [HL12019]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defence Forces police the border areas, including use of live ammunition. We will continue to do so.

Gibraltar: Borders

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government who will be responsible for border checks at points of entry to Gibraltar. [HL11995]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK, working side by side with the Governments of Gibraltar and Spain, reached agreement on 31 December over a political framework to form the basis of a separate treaty between the UK and the EU regarding Gibraltar. The political framework covers issues of key importance to Gibraltar and the surrounding region, including on border fluidity, and provides a firm basis to safeguard Gibraltar's interests. We have sent this framework to the European Commission in order to initiate negotiations on the treaty.

Gibraltar: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the interests of Gibraltarians. [HL11917]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 31 December the UK, working side by side with the Governments of Gibraltar and Spain, reached agreement on a political framework to form the basis of a separate treaty between the UK and the EU regarding Gibraltar. This covers issues of key importance to Gibraltar and the surrounding region, and the Governments of both the UK and Gibraltar judge that it provides a firm basis to safeguard Gibraltar's interests. We remain steadfast in our support for Gibraltar and its sovereignty.

Golf: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Moynihan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the evidence on which they based their policy to only allow two-ball golf matches to be played during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL11944]

Baroness Barran: Sports and physical activity including golf are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus.

On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The National Restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions. All decisions made by the Government relating to the pandemic and sport have been based on advice and guidance from health and scientific experts. We have no plans to publish the evidence for individual decisions relating to specific sports.

You can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, in a public outdoor place and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. Indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including golf courses, must close.

Government Communication Service

Asked by *Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received about the Reshaping Government Communication Service programme; from whom they have received such representations; and what have been their responses. [HL11979]

Lord True: The Reshaping Government Communication Service programme will further strengthen and unify the Government Communication Service (GCS), making an effective and efficient service.

Cabinet Office is leading the programme and working closely with ministerial departments and other public sector bodies.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a value for money test is applied to all quotations submitted for partial support under the Green Homes Grant scheme; and if so, whether any such assessments are required to be made by appropriately qualified persons with knowledge of local conditions. [HL11910]

Lord Callanan: The scheme administrator checks all applications to ensure that they are eligible for the scheme, and that the applications are value for money and reflective of typical market prices. These checks take

account of factors such as different sizes of property, types of system and geographic area. This ensures that government funding is spent appropriately.

The Green Homes Grant scheme aims to ensure that households are given the best possible service when installing greener adaptations. All primary installers must be TrustMark registered, as well as Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certified for heat and Publicly Available Specification (PAS) certified for energy efficiency. It is through this that it is ensured that installations are of the highest quality.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chilterns

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Chiltern Society Area of Neighbourly Behaviour? HS2 in the Chilterns since Notice to Proceed, published on 14 January; what plans they have to follow up the concerns raised in that report that HS2 has failed to comply with assurances given to petitioners during the Hybrid Bill process; and what plans they have to place a copy of their response to this report in the Library of the House. [HL12189]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: At this stage of the HS2 construction programme, the Government appreciates that communities are mostly experiencing negative impacts from the project, such as road closures and other visible changes in their areas, like the removal of trees. A lot of effort has been invested in minimising these impacts, as well as in increasing the volume and quality of community engagement activity along the route. Further improvement is a key focus for the Government, and it is accepted that more can be done to ensure that local communities are given ample warning of significant changes in their area and that concerns are dealt with promptly and sensitively.

The Chiltern Society report referred to in the question contains an account of complaints, most of which have already been raised on an individual basis with HS2 Ltd or with the Department for Transport and are the subject of ongoing correspondence. For this reason, the Government has no plans to issue a formal response. The Government will however consider the contents of the report and work with HS2 Ltd to review and address the issues raised, where it is appropriate to do so.

On a project the size of HS2, it is inevitable that problems will arise and that contractors will sometimes get things wrong. Where this is the case, the Government expects HS2 Ltd to resolve matters swiftly. The Government is also committed to embedding a culture of continuous improvement in the way HS2 Ltd interacts with local communities.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Finance

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money has been (1) budgeted, and (2) spent, on HS2 (a) in the

London area within the M25, and (b) outside the London area. [[HL12252](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Specific information on funds spent and budgeted on HS2 inside and outside the London area is not available. However, investment in HS2 will bring greater connectivity to the Midlands and the North and generate transformational economic benefits, helping to achieve our plans to level up the country and play a key role in reaching our 2050 carbon net zero objectives.

Horses: Exports

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what progress has been made in agreeing a replacement of the Tripartite Agreement between the UK, France and Ireland to provide for the free movement of thoroughbred courses for racing and breeding purposes, underpinned by high standards of animal health. [[HL11945](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: As a third country, Great Britain no longer has access to the Tripartite Agreement, however, Northern Ireland remains part of the Agreement under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The Government is working closely with representatives of the equine industry to support the continued movement of all horses, including thoroughbreds, to and from the European Union. This has included clarifying the specific requirements of individual EU Border Control Posts to avoid unnecessary delays at the ports and ensuring the European Commission and EU Member States are fully aware of the detail of GB import arrangements.

Hospitality Industry: VAT

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the reduced Value Added Tax rate for the hospitality industry. [[HL12014](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The temporary VAT reduced rate came into effect on 15 July 2020 and was initially scheduled to end on 12 January 2021.

In order to continue supporting the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and to protect 2.4 million jobs, the Government extended the temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors until 31 March 2021.

While the Government keeps all taxes under review, this relief comes at a significant cost to the Exchequer, and there are currently no plans to extend the length of the reduced rate further.

Housing: Insulation

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial levers or incentives they are considering, if any, to persuade people to insulate their homes to Energy Performance Certificate band C levels. [[HL11978](#)]

Lord Callanan: Several government-funded schemes are in place to improve the energy efficiency of homes by installing insulation, most of which focus on homes with low-energy performance, and fuel poor homes.

The £1.5 billion Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme aims to deliver upgrades to 600,000 homes across England, with insulation forming one of the groups of primary measures available. Support is available for low-energy performing (rated EPC D or below) and fuel poor homes through the £500 million Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Green Homes Grant Scheme, and low-income and vulnerable households through the GB wide Energy Company Obligation (ECO) worth £640m per year until March 2022.

Lastly, the £50 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator (SHDF(D)) aims to help Local Authorities retrofit social housing at scale and upgrade the energy performance of poorer-performing homes. We have committed a further £60 million for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to continue upgrading the least efficient social housing.

Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the Specialised Committee on Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol has met since 1 January; and when the minutes of any such meetings will be published. [[HL12154](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee last met on 17 December 2020.

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, it is for the co-chairs of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee to decide to make a summary of the minutes public. Statements following the meetings of the Specialised Committee are published on gov.uk.

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government who constitutes the full membership of the Specialised Committee on Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol. [[HL12155](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Officials from the UK and EU attend the Specialised Committee, as set out in Article 165 of the Withdrawal Agreement.

As the Government committed to in the *New Decade, New Approach* deal, the Northern Ireland Executive attends the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee whenever the Irish Government forms part of the EU delegation.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by BTselem on 1 January 2020 that "in 2019, Israeli security forces killed 133 Palestinians, including 28 minors"; and what steps they have taken in response to that statement. [HL12018]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians, including children, killed by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We regularly raise the issue with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Issa Amro

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conviction of Issa Amro by a military court in Israel. [HL12017]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem attended Mr Amro's court hearing on 6 January. The UK remains concerned about the challenges facing human rights defenders and human rights organisations operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We continue to urge the Israeli Government to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations. We have also raised concerns with the Palestinian Authority about the narrowing of space for civil society to operate in the West Bank.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Prime Minister on the Integrated Review of Foreign, Defence, Security and Development policy on 19 November (HC Deb, col 495), how many F-35B combat aircraft could be embarked in a national emergency on each of the two new carriers by 2023. [HL12034]

Baroness Goldie: It has been longstanding policy that by bringing two aircraft carriers into service we will ensure that there will always be at least one carrier

available 100 per cent of the time, either at sea or in port at very high readiness to deploy. The Carrier Enabled Power Projection (CEPP) programme remains on track to deliver the second operational squadron of F-35 by December 2023. This will provide two squadrons (a total of up to 24 aircraft) available to embark as directed by operational tasking.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to form a (1) third, and (2) fourth, F35B combat aircraft squadron. [HL12035]

Baroness Goldie: The guiding principle of the Integrated Review is to identify the threat and the appropriate capability to meet it. Any decisions on the future direction of the Lightning programme as a result of the Integrated Review will be firmly based on those principles.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether 48 F35B combat aircraft would meet the requirement for 35 embarked aircraft that were originally considered essential for initial war-entry Carrier Strike operations. [HL12036]

Baroness Goldie: 48 Lightning aircraft will be available when the Carrier Enabled Power Projection Full Operational Capability milestone is reached in 2026. The future composition of the UK Lightning Force will be determined by the requirements identified in the Integrated Review.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether personnel in squadrons of F35B combat aircraft embarked in the carriers will be working to the same harmony rules. [HL12037]

Baroness Goldie: Jointly manned UK Lightning air squadrons will operate to the same harmony guidelines. The overall principle is that we will manage all embarked UK air squadrons - which will include Fixed and Rotary Wing forces and personnel from all three Services - to ensure that the different harmony guidelines which the Services routinely apply, do not adversely affect operational output.

Landlords: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce specific financial support for landlords who have lost rent as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12119]

Lord Greenhalgh: We are supporting landlords by supporting tenants to continue paying rent. This includes support for businesses to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has now been extended until the end of April 2021. We have also

introduced a substantial package of wider measures in 2020/21 to help those who are facing financial disruption during the current situation.

The recently published EHS Household Resilience Study found that 93 per cent of private renters are up to date on their rent. This indicates our package of support is working, and has prevented widespread arrears.

Where landlords find themselves in coronavirus-related hardship, mortgage lenders have agreed to offer payment holidays of up to six months, including for buy-to-let mortgages. The application window is open until 31 March 2021. The FCA has been clear that for borrowers who have taken six months' holiday and continue to face ongoing financial difficulties, firms should continue to provide support through tailored forbearance options.

Leasehold

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 11 January (HCWS695), whether leaseholders will retain the right to extend their leases by 90 years. [HL12025]

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

Through our reforms the length of a statutory lease extension will increase to 990 years, replacing the current 90 years for flats and 50 years for houses. Long leases provide long term security for leaseholders now and in the future and save money by avoiding the need for multiple lease extensions.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the affordability of leaseholders extending their leases by 990 years. [HL12026]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that proposals to extend leases to a minimum of 990 years could have on the interests of freeholders. [HL12028]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of leaseholders who will be able to afford extending their leaseholds by 990 years. [HL12030]

Lord Greenhalgh: Long leases provide long term security for leaseholders and save them money by avoiding the need for multiple lease extensions.

The Government remains committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service.

Our reforms seek to achieve this, by taking account of the legitimate rights of freeholders but addressing historic imbalance to ensure fairness for leaseholders. We will continue to ensure we meet this objective as we bring forward reforms. In line with usual practice, the Government's intention would be to publish an impact assessment on our leasehold reforms as part of taking primary legislation through Parliament.

Leasehold: Reform

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of their proposed leasehold reforms on the break-up of large freehold estates in major cities like London. [HL12029]

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

Our reforms seek to achieve this, by taking account of the legitimate rights of freeholders but addressing historic imbalance to ensure fairness for leaseholders. We will continue to ensure we meet this objective as we bring forward reforms.

Libya: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they support the proposal by the United Nations for the provision of monitors for the ceasefire in Libya, and in particular to oversee the withdrawal of foreign forces. [HL11930]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK supports the comprehensive ceasefire brokered by the UN in October 2020, and welcomes the recent commitment shown by Libyans to engage constructively in the UN-led political process. The UN has a central role to play in supporting implementation of the ceasefire, including the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries, a key step towards a sustainable political settlement for all Libyans.

Mediterranean Sea: Shipping

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risks, if any, for UK shipping crossing the eastern Mediterranean. [HL12172]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport regularly assesses the risks posed to British-flagged shipping worldwide. Utilising the fusion approach to security, we work with the UK Defence and Intelligence Community to monitor events in the Eastern Mediterranean.

This information informs the guidance and advice we promulgate to industry.

Where a new threat is identified, we advise the industry accordingly, so they can review and adapt their risk assessment and operating procedures.

Mental Health: Children and Young People

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the reported level of (1) anorexia nervosa, (2) self-harm, and (3) suicide, amongst young and adolescent girls since 23 March 2020; and what were the reported such levels from 23 March 2019 to 22 March 2020. [[HL12046](#)]

Lord Bethell: Information on the incidence of anorexia nervosa among young and adolescent girls under the age of 18 years old is not available due to poor diagnosis recording in the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS).

Between 23 March 2019 and 22 March 2020 there were 493 reported incidents of self-harm amongst girls under the age of 18 years old reported in MHSDS by the secondary care mental health services. For the period 23 March 2020 to 30 November 2020, there were 399 incidents. These numbers are based on the data submitted by the secondary care mental health services to MHSDS and include only incidents of self-harm in the mental health hospitals. The numbers include November provisional data and are likely to be an undercount of the true activity. This is the latest data available to NHS Digital.

For suicide, the Office for National Statistics reports that there were 63 suicide registrations relating to girls aged 10-19 years old in 2019 (49 registrations between Jan-Sept 2019). Provisional information for January to September 2020 (Jan-Sep) shows that there were 24 suicide registrations relating to girls aged 10-19 years old. All deaths caused by suicide in England are investigated by coroners. Given the length of time it takes to hold an inquest, most deaths are registered around five to six months after they occurred. The number of suicides registered in 2020 should be interpreted with caution due to the pandemic causing further delays on the coroner's service resulting in further delays to inquests.

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the reported level of (1) extreme anxiety, (2) self-harm, and (3) suicide, amongst young and adolescent boys since 23 March 2020; and what were the reported such levels from 23 March 2019 to 22 March 2020. [[HL12047](#)]

Lord Bethell: Between 23 March 2019 and 22 March 2020, there were 34,754 boys reported in the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) under 18 years old who were referred to secondary mental health services with a primary reason for referral of anxiety. For the period 23 March 2020 to 30 November 2020, 20,842 boys were referred.

The MHSDS shows that between 23 March 2019 and 22 March 2020 there were 122 incidents of self-harm reported by boys under the age of 18 years old, and between 23 March 2020 and 30 November 2020, there were 82 incidents of self-harm. These numbers are based on the data submitted by the secondary care mental health services to MHSDS and include only incidents of self-harm in the mental health hospitals. The numbers include November provisional data and are likely to be an undercount of the true activity. This is the latest data available to NHS Digital.

For suicide, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that there were 123 suicide registrations relating to boys aged 10-19 years old in 2019 (92 registrations between January and September 2019). Provisional information for January to September 2020 shows that there were 80 suicide registrations relating to boys aged 10-19 years old. All deaths caused by suicide in England are investigated by coroners. Given the length of time it takes to hold an inquest, most deaths are registered around five to six months after they occurred. The number of suicides registered in 2020 should be interpreted with caution due to the pandemic causing further delays on the coroner's service resulting in further delays to inquests.

Motorways: Accidents

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many fatal accidents per kilometre there have been on (1) smart motorways, and (2) regular motorways, in each of the last two years. [[HL12283](#)]

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a review on how to improve the safety of smart motorways. [[HL12284](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The most recent data on fatalities published is for 2017 and 2018. For smart motorways (this includes All Lane Running, Dynamic Hard Shoulder and Controlled Motorways), there were 8 fatalities in 2017 and 19 in 2018. This is compared with 83 fatalities on Conventional Motorways in 2017 and 67 in 2018. While this metric for fatalities gives us an understanding about safety on different road types, it does not consider the volume of traffic on these roads and how intensely they are used. The fatal casualty rate, which are fatalities per hundred million vehicle miles travelled, accounts for the volume of traffic that roads carry.

The most recent data in the table below shows that fatal casualty rates on smart motorways are lower than on conventional motorways:

| <i>Motorway type</i> | <i>Fatal casualty rates per hundred million vehicle miles</i> |
|-----------------------|---|
| Controlled Motorways | 0.07 per hundred million vehicle miles |
| Dynamic Hard Shoulder | 0.07 per hundred million vehicle miles |

| <i>Motorway type</i> | <i>Fatal casualty rates per hundred million vehicle miles</i> |
|------------------------|---|
| All Lane Running | 0.11 per hundred million vehicle miles |
| Conventional Motorways | 0.16 per hundred million vehicle miles |

Fatal casualty rates per hundred million vehicle miles, 2015-2018.

Following concerns about smart motorway safety the Secretary of State asked the department to review the evidence and, if needed, bring forward recommendations. The conclusions were published in March 2020. Overall what the evidence in the *Smart Motorway Safety Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan* shows is that in most ways, smart motorways are as safe as, or safer than, the conventional ones. To ensure that smart motorways are as safe as they can be, alongside the safety evidence stocktake, we published an 18-point Action Plan.

Highways England is implementing the Action Plan in full and has already completed work, including the provision of 10 additional emergency areas on the M25 and making all emergency areas more visible by introducing a bright orange surface and better, more frequent signs.

Nabiximols: Multiple Sclerosis

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made about the barriers to prescribing Sativex to treat spasticity in people with multiple sclerosis; and what plans they have to work with NHS England and organisations such as the MS Society to address any such barriers. [HL12144]

Lord Bethell: The Department has made no recent assessment. However, Departmental officials regularly engage with stakeholders and organisations such as the MS Society, to discuss a range of issues, including concerns relating to access to treatments.

National Police Chiefs' Council

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Police Chiefs' Council has any legal authority to issue guidance on the interpretation of the law. [HL11962]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The NPCC enables operationally independent and locally accountable Chief Constables to co-ordinate the work of the police in order to protect the public.

This can include providing guidance to forces on new and amended legislation. The NPCC's governance structure agreement does not supersede or vary the legal requirements of the office of constable and it is

recognised that a Chief Constables remains operationally independent.

Neonicotinoids

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further (1) to the objections of the Wildlife Trust, and (2) to the statements from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization, about the reported harmful effects of the pesticide neonicotinoid thiamethoxam, what plans they have reverse their decision to allow the use of products containing that pesticide. [HL11993]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government continues to support the existing restrictions on neonicotinoids. The Government has always been clear that it can consider applications for emergency authorisations, as defined by the legislation. An emergency authorisation will only be granted where the relevant statutory requirements are met. These are that use of the pesticide is necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means, that use is limited and controlled and that there are special circumstances. If these requirements are met, the Government considers whether the benefits of use outweigh any risks to people or to the environment.

After careful consideration of all the issues, the Government has decided to grant an application for emergency authorisation to allow use of Cruiser SB (containing the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam) for the treatment of sugar beet seed in 2021. The authorisation has been issued for the 2021 sugar beet crop only. Use of Cruiser SB or a similar product in any subsequent years would require the submission of a further application. If any further applications are made in the future, they will be fully assessed against the regulatory framework for emergency authorisations.

Sugar beet is a non-flowering crop and the risks to bees from the sugar beet crop itself were assessed to be acceptable. Risks to bees were identified arising from soil residues taken up by flowering weeds or following crops. Mitigation measures were therefore built into the requirements of the emergency authorisation. These included a reduced application rate, effective control of weeds and minimum periods set between the planting of treated sugar beet and a subsequent flowering crop. For most crops this period was set at 22 months but a longer period of 32 months was chosen for oilseed rape as it is particularly attractive to bees.

Under EU legislation Member States may grant emergency authorisations in exceptional circumstances. The UK's approach to the use of emergency authorisations has not changed as a result of the UK's exit from the EU. Ten EU countries including Belgium, Denmark and Spain have granted emergency authorisations for neonicotinoid seed treatments since 2018.

Offences against Children

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the response by different faith groups in England and Wales to historic cases of child abuse. [HL11997]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In 2015, the Government set up the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The Inquiry operates independently of Government and decides for itself what it investigates and how. As part of its work programme, the Inquiry held three investigations into child sexual abuse in religious institutions:

The Inquiry held an investigation into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Anglican Church in England and the Church in Wales. The investigation considered the adequacy of the Past Cases Review of the Church of England and the Historic Cases Review of the Church in Wales. It considered two case studies: The Diocese of Chichester, where there have been multiple allegations of sexual abuse, and numerous investigations and reviews; and the case of Peter Ball, formerly Bishop of Lewes and subsequently Bishop of Gloucester. This investigation is now complete and a report setting out the Inquiry's findings was published in October 2020, and can be found here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/anglican-church>.

Separately, the Inquiry investigated the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The Inquiry examined the English Benedictine Congregation and the Archdiocese of Birmingham, which have been the subject of numerous allegations of child sexual abuse. This investigation is now complete and a report with the Inquiry's findings and recommendations was published in November 2020, and can be found here: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/roman-catholic-church>.

More recently, the Inquiry investigated the current child protection policies, practices and procedures in religious institutions that have a significant presence in England and Wales, including non-conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The public hearing into this investigation concluded in August 2020. An investigation report will be published in summer 2021, and more details can be found here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation/child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings>.

Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Germany about the future of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular the replacement of Valentin Inzko. [HL11981]

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) France, (2) Italy, and (3) the United States, about the future of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular the replacement of Valentin Inzko. [HL11982]

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the governments of Germany and Russia have bilaterally agreed to replace the current High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021 with a German candidate. [HL11983]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Office of the High Representative continues to have an important role to play in ensuring a stable future for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has the United Kingdom's full support. We have been approached by international partner governments, including Germany, about the possible replacement of Valentin Inzko as High Representative. We are in contact with France, Germany, Italy, and the United States on this matter. Our shared priority is the success of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all its citizens. Any change of High Representative would be subject to a formal appointment process and would ultimately be the decision of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). As Russia is also a PIC member, they would be part of any process. It would be inappropriate to speculate about discussions between Germany and Russia on this subject.

Outdoor Education: Finance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional support to outdoor education centres. [HL11557]

Baroness Berridge: Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods across the UK, support businesses, and public services. The Government has spent over £280 billion to do so.

This includes small business grants, the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more. The measures introduced have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

Further measures have been announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that build on the significant support already available as well as set out how current support will evolve and adapt. These include the extension of the CJRS until the end of April 2021, the extension of the deadline for applications for the Bounce Back Loan scheme and other loan schemes until 31 March 2021, and increased support for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants.

Furthermore, businesses in England that are forced to close due to national or local restrictions will be able to claim up to £3,000 per month. Local authorities in England will also receive one-off funding of £1.1 billion to support businesses more broadly over the coming months as a key part of local economies.

Further support for businesses was announced on 5 January 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/46-billion-in-new-lockdown-grants-to-support-businesses-and-protect-jobs>.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, businesses, business representative organisations, and the financial services sector to monitor the implementation of current support and understand whether there is additional need. Businesses can also access tailored advice through the Business Support Helpline (FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098), via the Business Support website at: www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline or through their local Growth Hubs in England.

Palestinians: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Amnesty International on 6 January that "the Israeli government must stop ignoring its international obligations as an occupying power and immediately act to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines are equally and fairly provided to Palestinians living under its occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip"; and what steps they are taking in response to that statement. [HL12016]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has the duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, including in relation to combating the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics, in the OPTs. We also recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17). We welcome the steps that the parties

have taken so far to coordinate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and encourage further dialogue in this regard. The UK regularly engages with both the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority and will continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Police and Crime Commissioners: Reviews

Asked by Lord Wasserman

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 29 October (HL9388), when they plan to publish the report of part one of the internal review of the Police and Crime Commissioner model. [HL12080]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Review of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners was an internal Review which reported to the Home Secretary in October 2020. The Review's final set of recommendations will be announced in due course.

Prisoners' Transfers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate that transfers between prisons will resume, in particular transfers from closed to open prison conditions. [HL11991]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: In March 2020 temporary restrictions were put in place to minimise movements between jails. As at 12th January 2021 inter-prison transfers (including transfers from closed to open prisons) have not been stopped entirely as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and we continue safely to undertake inter-prison transfers, where required. Transfers between prisons, particularly progressive transfers to open and resettlement prisons, are necessary in order to ensure that space remains within local/reception prisons to accept new receptions from court and to ensure prisoners are held in prisons providing an appropriate level of security.

In order to control the transmission of the virus, prisoners who are transferred to another prison are quarantined upon arrival in order to manage any risks they might bring and protect the rest of a prison's population. As of 14th January 2021, we are also testing all new arrivals and transfers twice in the first 6 days in 109 prisons across the estate. We continue to explore testing technologies and opportunities in this area. Any prisoners with positive results or symptomatic prisoners are not transferred. This approach ensures that any infection that occurs amongst the arriving cohort is limited only to those with whom they have arrived.

Whilst transfers into the majority of prisons have not ceased, specific prisons may have temporarily to pause their transfers in/out in the event of a declared outbreak. The timeframes associated with this pause, as well as the recovery measures required, are monitored nationally by

HMPPS and taken in close consultation with Public Health England.

Qatar: Military Bases

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on their relations with the government of Qatar of the presence of a Turkish military base in Qatar; and whether UK armed forces undertake any activity with the Turkish military stationed in Qatar. [HL12113]

Baroness Goldie: The UK and Qatar share an enduring defence partnership, most notably through a joint Typhoon squadron. The UK and Turkey also have a longstanding and strong bilateral defence relationship. We look forward to continued collaboration with all our friends in the Gulf to strengthen our shared security interests. UK Armed Forces do not undertake activity with the Turkish military stationed in Qatar.

Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide financial support to tenants who have accrued rent arrears as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12120]

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support which is available to tenants, and we continue to closely monitor the impacts of Covid-19 upon renters.

Notably, we have increased the local housing allowance rate to the 30th percentile. The increased LHA rates are expected to provide 1.5 million claimants with around £600 per year of housing support more than they would otherwise have received. This measure maintains that significant increase for all rates, by protecting the rates at the current levels in cash terms in 2021/22, even in areas where the 30th percentile of local rents has gone down. This continued investment in the LHA will support claimants in the private rented sector to manage housing costs. We also increased Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by up to £1,040 for the year. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has offered support for business to pay staff salaries, enabling people to continue to pay their rent and has been extended until April 2021.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. As announced at the spending round for 2020/21, there is already £180 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for Local Authorities to distribute for supporting renters with housing costs in the private and social rented sectors. For 2021-22 the Government will make available £140 million in DHP funding, which takes account of the increased LHA rates. These interventions offer a more appropriate and sustainable form of support for vulnerable renters.

The recently published EHS Household Resilience Study found that 93 per cent of private renters are up to date on their rent. This indicates our package of support is working, and has prevented widespread arrears.

Service Industries: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to formulate a strategy for trade in services with the EU at a (1) bilateral, and (2) multilateral, level. [HL12031]

Lord Callanan: Through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK and EU have agreed provisions on trade in services in line with our respective FTAs with Japan, but with some additional benefits for both sides. We have secured commitments in line with our objectives as set out in the UK Approach Document, meaning the agreement will promote cross border trade in services by providing service suppliers and investors with transparency and certainty about future trade with the EU at the multilateral level. More broadly, the UK is working at multilateral forums to encourage greater services trade liberalisation.

The agreement additionally includes provisions that will enable many UK businesses to continue to operate across borders without the need to establish in the EU and will afford them the clarity and transparency they need to navigate diverse Member State regimes at a bilateral level.

Skiing: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the status of negotiations between the UK and European Alpine Nations to allow the qualifications of UK ski instructors to be granted recognition in EU member states. [HL11946]

Lord Callanan: The UK and EU have now agreed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which came into force on 31st December 2020. As part of the TCA, the UK and EU have agreed a framework under which both parties may agree arrangements on the recognition of professional qualifications (such as mutual recognition agreements) covering the UK and all 27 EU Member States. The first step towards such an arrangement is for professional bodies or authorities to submit a joint recommendation to the UK-EU Partnership Council. Once an arrangement is adopted under the TCA, UK professionals will be able to use the terms outlined in the arrangement to secure recognition of their professional qualifications, helping them to provide services within EU Member States.

In due course, professionals will be able to take advantage of any profession-specific EU-wide arrangements agreed under the TCA framework. Until this point, UK-qualified professionals who wish to supply

services in the EU should seek recognition of their qualifications according to the local laws and regulations of the relevant EU Member State. It is up to appropriate local regulators within alpine nations to determine whether UK-qualified professionals are permitted to practise in their territories.

Slavery

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to ask British embassies to designate an official with special responsibility for modern slavery, focussing on supply chains for exports to the UK and the operations of UK companies overseas. [HL11972]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Many British Embassies and High Commissions already have a focus on modern slavery including supply chain aspects where appropriate. This Government is committed to eliminating modern slavery from our communities and the global economy, and in 2019 appointed the UK's first International Modern Slavery and Migration Envoy to help drive forwards our efforts in partnership with other Governments and multilateral organisations. Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires businesses to report on how they are tackling modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. Section 54 was designed to empower consumers, investors, civil society and others to scrutinise the action that businesses are taking to identify and address modern slavery in their supply chains.

The Government has committed to strengthening the legislation. Our response to the transparency in supply chains consultation, published on 22 September 2020, announced an ambitious package of changes to Section 54, including introducing specific reporting topics and requiring statements to be published by a single reporting deadline on a central Government-run registry, to enable the Government and others to continuously monitor compliance. In addition, the Government announced in the week of 11 January that it will introduce financial penalties for organisations that do not comply with the reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act. These measures require primary legislation and will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

Sugar Beet: Neonicotinoids

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the process of approving the use of neonicotinoid pesticides for sugar beet seed included assessments of the (1) general human health, (2) obesity, and (3) dietary, impacts of the crop on which they were proposed to be used; and, if so, what were the conclusions of these assessments. [HL11958]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The process for considering emergency authorisation for a pesticide is derived from the legislation. This process was followed

for the application to use the neonicotinoid seed treatment Cruiser SB on sugar beet in 2021. This included an assessment of the risks to people and to the environment that may result from use of the product. This assessment, which considers risks to people from pesticide residues associated with eating treated crops, did not identify any concerns about risks to human health. The assessment did not extend to consideration of the impacts of the crop, for example on obesity.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the decision to approve a neonicotinoid pesticide for use on sugar beet seed on (1) the population numbers and population health of bees and other pollinators, (2) soil health and loss, (3) other insects, (4) fish and other water-dwelling species, and (5) other species of animals. [HL11959]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The process for considering emergency authorisation for a pesticide is derived from the legislation and includes consideration of potential risks to people and to the environment. This process was followed for application to use the neonicotinoid seed treatment Cruiser SB on sugar beet in 2021.

The assessment of risks included consideration of risks to bees, other insects, soil organisms, fish, aquatic invertebrates, birds and mammals. Risks to bees were identified arising from soil residues taken up by flowering weeds or following crops. Mitigation measures were therefore built into the requirements of the emergency authorisation. These included a reduced application rate, effective control of weeds and minimum periods set between the planting of treated sugar beet and a subsequent flowering crop. For most crops this period was set at 22 months but a longer period of 32 months was chosen for oilseed rape as it is particularly attractive to bees.

Teachers: Training

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of new religious teachers across different faith groups in England and Wales being assessed and trained through internal monitoring; and whether they consider this self-regulation adequate. [HL11998]

Baroness Berridge: Providing the best possible initial teacher training (ITT) is at the heart of the government's drive to improve teaching standards. In order to be awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) for all subjects and phases, including Religious Education, trainees must demonstrate that they have met the Teachers' Standards (2011), which include a requirement that they demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge, and do not undermine fundamental British values, such as tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

It is for accredited ITT providers who deliver teacher training to use their professional judgement to design and deliver the courses, but they must ensure that the content, structure, and assessment of programmes are designed to enable trainee teachers to meet all the Teachers' Standards for QTS across the age range of training. This includes Religious Education. The mandatory ITT criteria sets out the requirements that ITT providers must adhere to in order to remain compliant, this can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria/initial-teacher-training-itt-criteria-and-supporting-advice#c21-programmes>.

Accredited ITT providers have full discretion in assessing trainee ability to meet the Teachers' Standards and recommending QTS. ITT providers must ensure that no trainee teacher is recommended for the award of QTS until they have met all the standards. Furthermore, Ofsted is responsible for testing the quality of teacher training and currently 100% of ITT providers are rated good or outstanding.

In addition, the performance of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) is assessed frequently throughout their induction period. The Appropriate Body (AB) has the main quality assurance role within the induction process and makes the final decision as to whether an NQT continues to meet the Teachers' Standards (based on the headteacher / principal's recommendation). Further information about ABs and the induction period for NQTs is set out at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923070/Statutory_Induction_Guidance_2019.pdf.

Third Sector

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the establishment of the Civil Society Forum, as provided for in the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. [HL11980]

Lord True: The Government is considering how to take forward obligations and commitments under the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Announcements will be made in the usual way.

Tigray: Refugees

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to end the forced repatriation of refugees to Eritrea from refugee camps in Tigray; and what assessment they have made of (1) reports of armed attacks on those refugee camps; and (2) of the humanitarian needs of the refugees in those camps. [HL11957]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned at reports that Eritrean troops have entered Ethiopian refugee camps in Tigray and forced a number of refugees

to return to Eritrea. Due to the lack of access to northern refugee camps in Tigray for humanitarian agencies, including the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), it has not yet been possible to fully corroborate these reports. We have however, 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.

The UK continues to call for sustained, free and unfettered humanitarian access across Tigray, so that the UNHCR can uphold its mandate towards refugees. It is the responsibility of the host state to ensure refugees are protected and are not subjected to forcible return.

Torture

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance, published in March 2011, has been updated since its publication; if not, whether any equivalent guidance has replaced it; and if so, what plans they have to place a copy of any such (1) updated, or (2) new, guidance in the Library of the House. [HL12007]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government unreservedly condemns the use of torture. We work closely with international partners to eradicate this abhorrent practice. The UK does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture for any purpose.

The UK takes all allegations and concerns about torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment very seriously. The Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance of 2011 sets out the process for FCDO staff and other staff working in Her Majesty's diplomatic missions and offices for reporting information about torture and mistreatment. There are no immediate plans to update the guidance.

Training: Unemployed People

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of funding for education and skills provision to help unemployed people; and what recent discussions they have had, if any, about that funding. [HL12070]

Baroness Berridge: The department wants to ensure that a wide range of opportunities are available to people of all ages. Anyone who becomes unemployed for whatever reason can access a range of provision to meet their future skills needs, and funding for this will depend on age and prior attainment.

Adult skills are key in supporting the economy and tackling disadvantage and so we are continuing to invest

in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34 billion in the 2020/21 academic year). The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to Level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning and training up to Level 2 for unemployed people aged 19 and over.

In July, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a £500 million package of support to ensure young people can access the training, and develop the skills they will need, to go on to high-quality, secure, and fulfilling employment including: incentive payments for employers to take on apprentices; tripling the number of traineeships; and an additional £17 million in the 2020/21 financial year to support an increase in the number of sector-based work academy programme placements. This additional funding will enable unemployed individuals acquire the skills needed for local jobs.

Starting this year, the government is investing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) in the National Skills Fund. This is a significant investment and has the potential to deliver new opportunities to generations of adults who may have been previously left behind.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £375 million for the National Skills Fund at the Spending Review in November 2020. This includes £95 million funding for a new Level 3 adult offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over who is looking to achieve their first full Level 3, which is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or two full A levels, will be able to access a fully funded course which will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market. Currently, adults between the ages of 19 to 23 are eligible for full funding for their first full Level 3. This offer will ensure that adults aged 24 and over are now able to access their first full, fully funded, Level 3 qualification.

We have also introduced the Skills Bootcamps, which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Skills Bootcamps have the potential to transform the skills landscape for adults and employers.

The Skills Bootcamps are open to all adults aged 19 or over, who are either in work or recently unemployed. Further to this, we have now opened an Invitation to Tender to extend Skills Bootcamps to more areas, and to cover not only digital skills but also technical skills training including engineering and construction. This will enable us to assist employers across England to fill their in-demand vacancies and we anticipate training upwards of 25,000 individuals.

The government plans to consult on the National Skills Fund in spring 2021 to ensure that we develop a fund that helps adults learn valuable skills and prepares them for the economy of the future.

Also, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has announced a lifelong loan entitlement. This will make it easier for all adults to study more flexibly, allowing them to space out their studies across their lifetimes, transfer credits between colleges and universities, and enable more part-time study.

Transport for the North: Finance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have cut funding entirely for the smart ticketing project from Transport for the North's budget for the next financial year; and what plans they have to reinstate funding for this project in future years. [[HL12236](#)]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have cut Transport for the North's core budget for the next financial year by 40 per cent; and what assessment they have made of the impact of this cut on their levelling-up agenda. [[HL12237](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is committed to levelling up every part of this country, including the North. This is reflected in the recent Spending Review, which included funding for key transport infrastructure projects and programmes in the North. The most recent allocation of core funding to Transport for the North will enable the organisation to continue to play a valuable role in delivering its statutory functions of developing a transport strategy for the region and helping the Department with prioritisation and bringing strength of partnership among members to speak to the Government with one voice. The Department will continue to work with TfN to achieve our shared ambition of world-class transport infrastructure in the region.

TfN was allocated up to £150 million at the 2015 Spending Review to support its Integrated and Smart Travel programme, with this multi-year funding allocation expiring at the end of the current financial year. TfN has utilised around £24 million to enable the roll-out of smart ticketing across the north. We are now considering how best to deliver the rollout of smart ticketing to improve passenger services across the region. Transport funding for future years will be a matter for the next Spending Review.

Turkey: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that EDO MBM Technology Ltd supplied Hornet bomb-racks and fuel pumps for the Bayraktar TB2 drones used by the government of

Turkey in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; and if so, what action they have taken in response to such reports. [HL11932]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We consider all our export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. The UK complies with the OSCE arms embargo relating to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is considered as part of our export licensing process, and HMG has not issued licences contrary to the arms embargo.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to investigate reports that the government of Turkey has used drones against Turkish citizens in 11 regions of that country since 2016; and what representations they have made to the government of Turkey to request an explanation for the deaths of Zehra Berkel, Hebun Mele Xelil and Amina Waysi in June 2020. [HL11933]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly discuss with the Turkish Government the need to respect human rights and avoid civilian casualties during military activities within Turkey. Regarding reports of Turkish military operations causing civilian casualties in Kobane in Syria, where the three named individuals died in June 2020, we expect all sides to the Syrian conflict to respect their obligations towards civilians under international humanitarian law. We will continue to engage with Turkey on this important issue.

UK Trade with EU: Regulation

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the administrative burden on trade with the EU; and what options there could be to reduce that burden through a 'one-in, two-out' rule. [HL12032]

Lord Callanan: Our trade deal with the EU includes wide-ranging provisions that seek to facilitate trade by avoiding unnecessary regulatory barriers. It provides an overarching framework for cooperation between the UK and EU on the regulatory matters affecting trade, as appropriate for two independent partners, and enables both sides to reduce costs in the longer term.

We continue to strive to ensure that the UK's regulatory system is world-leading and achieves the right balance between supporting excellent business practices and stimulating innovation, investment and trade while protecting workers, consumers, and the environment.

United Kingdom

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord True on 19 November 2020 (HL Deb,

cols 1535–9), whether they are now in a position to publish the Dunlop Review into UK Government Union capability. [HL11936]

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the principal measures they have taken to strengthen the union between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. [HL11937]

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the principal measures they have taken to strengthen the Union between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. [HL11938]

Lord True: The Government is committed to protecting and promoting the combined strengths of our Union, building on 300 years of partnership. As part of this, we work closely with the devolved administrations on a variety of different policy agendas, including the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the review of intergovernmental relations.

Additionally, we are undertaking a review into Union connectivity to improve links between our four nations, and to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects.

It is our intention to publish Lord Dunlop's review of Union Capability alongside the completion of the review into intergovernmental relations, to provide as full a picture as possible. We are already in the process of implementing Lord Dunlop's recommendations and will provide a full update when the review is published.

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the potential impact of the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on the processing of Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa applications; and what steps they are taking to address any such impact. [HL11949]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Hong Kong BN(O) Visa route launches from 31 January 2021.

The majority of the case working for the BN(O) Visa route can be completed remotely. A limited number of case workers will need to attend a physical office location and will do so in accordance with Public Health England guidance on social distancing.

We are also working closely with the commercial partner operating our Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Hong Kong regarding overseas applicants should they need to attend an appointment. Social distancing and sanitisation protocols are in place which are aligned with local regulations, and currently the VAC is operating at normal capacity.

Visas: Performing Arts

Asked by **Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the EU during their negotiations relating to the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement about visa arrangements for (1) UK performing artists touring the EU, and (2) performing artists from the EU touring the UK. [HL12092]

Baroness Barran: I refer the Noble Baroness to the Secretary of State's answer to Written Question 135862 on 14th January.

Visas: Skilled Workers

Asked by **Lord Green of Deddington**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish statistics about the operation of the new points-based immigration system under which employers could apply from 1 December 2020 to sponsor skilled workers; and which data (1) have been collected, and (2) they intend to publish. [HL11928]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data relating to the new points-based immigration system will be incorporated in the tables published quarterly as part of the Immigration Statistics, which provide statistics on visa applications and outcomes by nationality.

As a National Statistics output, data published by the Home Office is reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of users of the statistics.

Warren Medical

Asked by **Lord Campbell-Savours**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) discussions they have had, or (2) approaches were made to, or by, Warren Medical Limited about the provision of services and supplies related to COVID-19. [HL11971]

Lord Bethell: The Department has not had any discussions or approaches from Warren Medical Limited about the provision of services and supplies related to COVID-19.

Waste Disposal: Sri Lanka

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Sri Lanka about the 21 waste containers that were returned from that country to the UK in September 2020. [HL12006]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Environment Agency (EA), as the waste shipments regulator for England, is proactively engaging with the authorities in Sri Lanka about containers of waste illegally

exported to Sri Lanka in 2017 and is leading the response on this matter.

The containers were found by Sri Lankan authorities to contain illegal materials, described as mattresses and carpets, which had been exported for recycling. The 21 containers queried arrived back in England on Wednesday 28 October 2020 and are part of a shipment totalling 263 containers which are being returned. The Environment Agency estimate that by February 2021, 133 containers will have been returned to England in total. The Environment Agency will continue to work with the Sri Lankan authorities to expedite the return of the remaining waste.

Environment Agency enforcement officers are working to confirm the types of waste shipped, who exported it and the producer of the waste. Those responsible could face a custodial sentence of up to two years, an unlimited fine, and the recovery of money and assets gained through the course of their criminal activity. Despite media reports suggesting that medical waste was illegally shipped from England to Sri Lanka, the EA has not received any indication or evidence from the Sri Lankan authorities to corroborate those reports.

Yemen: Famine

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the Executive Director of UNICEF on 10 December 2020 at the Averting famine in Yemen: What can we do now and in 2021 event in New York; and what plans they have to coordinate international action for (1) disease prevention, (2) child nutrition, and (3) peace building in Yemen. [HL11934]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is extremely concerned about increased levels of food insecurity and risk of famine in Yemen with 7 million people, including 2 million children, requiring treatment for acute malnutrition. We are playing a leading role in combating hunger in Yemen by committing £214 million this financial year (2020/21), £200m of which has already been disbursed.

Our support will provide over 600,000 medical consultations, train 1,500 healthcare workers to work safely in a COVID-19 environment and enable nearly 600 health centres to continue providing existing health services. This financial year (2020/21), UK aid to UNICEF has already helped to screen 450,000 children for malnutrition and enrolled over 25,000 children on Severe and Acute Malnutrition treatment programmes.

The UK will continue to urge the international community to step up, including by urgently disbursing humanitarian funding. As penholder at the UN Security Council we are leading efforts to encourage all parties to the conflict to engage in new peace talks led by UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

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