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Tuesday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 26 January 2021

Independent Review of Prevent

[HLWS733]

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

The Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 committed the Government to making arrangements for an independent review and report on Prevent, the Government Strategy for supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent is one of the four strands of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST, and is therefore a critical part of our approach to reducing the risk we face from terrorism.

Following an open competition to appoint a new Independent Reviewer of Prevent, I am appointing William Shawcross to be the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent. Mr Shawcross brings with him the necessary skills, experience and independence to carry out this Review and provide recommendations to further develop our approach to supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism in the future.

The appointment of Mr Shawcross demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the Government's strategy for supporting vulnerable people to prevent them from being drawn into terrorism is as effective as possible in the future.

The Terms of Reference for the Review will be published shortly once Mr Shawcross has had an opportunity to review them in full and any amendments he might want to make, taking into account any views which have been shared with the Review team on the previous Terms of Reference. These will outline the timescales for completing the Review and ensure this important work fulfils the Government's objective of diverting vulnerable people away from terrorism.

Medicinal Cannabis from The Netherlands

[HLWS731]

Lord Bethell: My friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care) (Jo Churchill), has made the following statement:

I would like to update the House on progress made by the Department of Health and Social Care towards ensuring patients can continue to access Bedrocan cannabis oils from the Netherlands.

The UK has left the EU, and the transition period after Brexit came to an end on 31 December 2020. From 1 January 2021, prescriptions issued in the UK can no longer be lawfully dispensed in an EU Member State.

Dutch law does not permit the export of finished Bedrocan oils from the Netherlands. Prior to 31 December, Bedrocan oils were supplied in the Netherlands against UK prescriptions through the proxy of a specialist importer. This was allowed whilst UK prescriptions were recognised in the Netherlands.

Bedrocan cannabis flowers produced in the Netherlands, and other unlicensed cannabis-based medicines imported from other countries, can continue to be supplied to the UK.

The Government has worked quickly with the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport to resolve the issue. I am delighted to announce that the Dutch Government has agreed to the continued access to the medicine for existing UK patients until 1 July 2021.

This news will bring enormous relief to the families who depend on these medicines and I am hugely grateful to the Dutch Government for working with us closely and quickly on this.

The Department have communicated this to patient groups, clinicians and the supply chain to ensure immediate action is taken to resume supply of these products and that no patient faces a break in their treatment.

The Department are also working in earnest to rapidly explore options for a more permanent solution for supply of these products, and will engage patient representatives and the supply chain.

Official Development Assistance: Government Priorities

[HLWS732]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

As agreed with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the last Spending Review, I have completed the cross-government review of how Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be allocated against the government's priorities for 2021. This statement sets out the process and conclusion of the review, which has ensured that UK ODA is focused on our strategic priorities, spent where it will have the maximum impact, has greater coherence and delivers most value for money.

The UK is facing the worst economic contraction in over 300 years, and a budget deficit of close to £400 billion. At 19% of GDP this is around double that of the last financial crisis. As announced last year, given the impact of this global pandemic on the economy and, as a result, the public finances, we will move to a target of spending 0.5% of GNI as ODA in 2021.

This is a temporary measure and we will return to 0.7% when the fiscal situation allows.

We remain a world leading donor, and based on current GNI forecasts will spend over £10bn of ODA in 2021.

At the same time, we will ensure the maximum impact from our aid budget by changing the way we allocate ODA to support a more integrated approach. This will allow us to drive greater impact from our ODA spending.

This review has agreed ODA allocations for all government departments, sharpening our focus on the core priorities I set out to Parliament in November in the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction: climate and biodiversity; Covid and global health security; girls' education; science and research; defending open societies and resolving conflict; humanitarian assistance; and promoting trade.

This settlement gives us the best possible launch pad to champion our international priorities for the coming year, as we commence our G7 Presidency and look ahead to hosting COP26. It maintains the Prime Minister's promise to double UK international climate finance to £11.6bn over the next five years. It sustains our commitment to the world's poorest people, advances our strategic interests overseas, and delivers on the Prime Minister's ambition to bring greater coherence and strategic oversight to the UK aid budget. The government will drive forward that agenda in 2021 through clear ministerial accountability and oversight for all our development spend. Looking further ahead, I will lead a cross-departmental review on a new development strategy to ensure close alignment of

UK aid with the objectives to be set out in the Integrated Review.

Departmental ODA allocations, 2021/22

| <i>Department</i> | <i>21/22 Allocation (£m)</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| FCDO | 8115 |
| BEIS | 706 |
| CSSF | 337 |
| DCMS | 6 |
| Defra | 92 |
| DHSC | 207 |
| HMRC | 4 |
| HMT | 3 |
| Home Office | 470 |
| ONS | 3 |
| Other [1] | 42 |

[1] Includes DfE, DWP, MOD and Barnett given to the devolved administrations as a result of UK Government spend on ODA. These budgets include fixed ODA eligible costs.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 26 January 2021

Afghanistan: Interpreters

Asked by **Baroness Coussins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the International Relations and Defence Committee The UK and Afghanistan, published on 13 January (HL Paper 208), and the recommendation that "all Afghan interpreters who worked for the UK military, including those now resident in third countries, [should be]...able to access the provisions of the ex-gratia scheme", whether they plan to consider applications for relocation to the UK from former interpreters in third countries; and if not, why not. [HL12200]

Baroness Goldie: The ex-gratia scheme and intimidation policy currently available for Afghan locally engaged staff (LES), along with the Relocations and Assistance Scheme to be introduced later this year, require applicants to be in Afghanistan where they are likely to face the greatest risk. The Government keeps the Immigration Rules under regular review, and officials from the Ministry of Defence continue to work with the Home Office to consider options to support those under threat. We will always consider exceptionally compelling and compassionate circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Agriculture

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Farming for Change—Mapping a route to 2030, published on 7 January. [HL12053]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra has not yet assessed the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission's report in detail. However, we will certainly digest it fully in due course and consider the impact on our work of its findings and recommendations.

Our future policy will help farmers continue to provide a supply of healthy, home-grown produce to high environmental and animal welfare standards. Furthermore, our plans for future farming must tackle climate change. This is one of the most urgent challenges facing the world. So, as we design our future agricultural policy, we can deliver the pace of change on land management for environmental benefits that the EU has never managed to achieve. Our farmers and land managers will play a crucial role in the national effort to reach Net Zero and our policies will help them do that.

Domestically, reaching our Net Zero target is one of this Government's top priorities. We know that reaching Net Zero will be a challenge, requiring action across the economy. This will mean changes to the way land is

managed to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. We will support the sector to make these changes through the schemes set out in this plan. Simultaneously, we need to protect and increase our carbon stores, increasing afforestation and peat restoration rates across England, whilst supporting the adaptiveness and resilience of these ecosystems to risks which may arise under a changing climate. All three components of our new Environmental Land Management scheme will help deliver on this.

Our Environmental Land Management scheme is the cornerstone of our new agricultural policy. It is intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy. Farmers and land managers will be paid to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions.

The Government is committed to taking action to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its impact. Defra is looking at ways to reduce agricultural emissions controlled directly within the farm boundary, considering a broad range of measures including improvements in on-farm efficiency. Improvements in agricultural practice mean that since 1990 we are producing a kilo of pork with 37% less emissions. Efficiency gains in dairy farming mean that we are now producing 9% more milk than we were in 2000 with 23% fewer cows. The Government recognises the importance of reducing emissions further in these sectors.

Agriculture: Subsidies

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that farmers continue to receive financial support following the UK's departure from the EU. [HL12067]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In 2019, the Government made a manifesto commitment to maintain the current annual budget to farmers. This was honoured in the 2021/22 Spending Review.

The commitment is being achieved through a combination of Exchequer funding and remaining EU funding. We have adopted a consistent approach across the UK, topping up EU receipts with Exchequer funding to the level of the manifesto commitment. This ensures that the manifesto commitment is met in each nation.

Buses: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they (1) have provided to date, and (2) plan to provide in the future, to companies providing coach services to ensure that those companies can remain in business to provide essential services once schools return to normal patterns of attendance; and what assessment they have made of the impact that the

restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic have had on the ability of coach companies to invest in low- or zero-emission vehicles. [HL12375]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Since the start of the pandemic, the Government has announced a range of measures available to support UK businesses, including coach operators, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

On 5 January, the Chancellor announced a further £500 million of Additional Restrictions Grant funding for businesses that are not legally required to close, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to the national lockdown. Coach companies could be eligible for this package and are encouraged to contact their local authorities for more information.

Since September 2020, the Department for Education has provided more than £97 million for local transport authorities to procure additional, dedicated school and college transport capacity, including coaches. The Government has announced allocations for the first Spring half term, and these allocations will remain in place, with service levels adjusted based on local need. The Department for Education is talking to Local Transport Authorities about funding requirements for the rest of the Spring term, helping to inform future decisions on allocations.

The Government understands that the challenges created by the pandemic will have limited operators' ability to invest in zero emission vehicles. The Government will continue to work closely with representatives from the coach sector to respond to ongoing issues caused by Covid-19 and, in the long-term, build towards a green recovery.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 10 December 2020 (HL10811) and further to their cross-Government review into the allocation of UK Official Development Assistance, what proportion of the £821 million provided to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund in Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, will be allocated (1) to the women, peace, and conflict agenda, and (2) to preventing sexual violence in conflict. [HL12056]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary is currently in the process of concluding the cross-Government review which will agree Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations for all government departments. The process will drive coherence across the entire UK ODA budget and ensure the UK acts as a force for good across the globe. The Foreign Secretary will communicate the outcome shortly. Following this, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund will seek cross-ministerial approval of its allocations for Financial Year 2021/22.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of extending eligibility for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to those who began employment after 31 October 2020. [HL12079]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: For all eligibility decisions under the CJRS, the Government must balance the need to support as many jobs as possible with the need to protect the scheme from fraud.

Under the CJRS extension, an employer can claim for employees who were employed and on their PAYE payroll on 30 October 2020. The employer must have made a PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) submission to HMRC between 20 March 2020 and 30 October 2020, notifying a payment of earnings for that employee. The use of RTI allows HMRC to verify claims in the most efficient and timely way, ensuring payments can be made quickly while reducing the risk of fraud. Without the use of RTI returns it would be difficult to verify claims without significant additional checks, which would delay payment for genuine claims.

The 30 October 2020 cut-off date allowed as many people as possible to be included by going right up to the day before the announcement, while balancing the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public. Extending the cut-off date further would have significantly increased the risk of abuse because claims could not be confidently verified against the risk of fraud by using the data after this point.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people aged (1) below 50, (2) 50 to 59, (3) 60 to 69, (4) 70 to 79, and (5) over 80, years, had died as a result of COVID-19 as of 31 December 2020; and how many in each age group had a serious underlying health condition. [HL12082]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

19 January 2021

Dear Lord West,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many people aged (1) below 50, (2) 50 to 59, (3) 60 to 69, (4) 70 to 79, and (5) over 80 years, have died as a result of COVID-19 as of 31 December 2020; and how many in each age group had a serious underlying health condition (HL12082).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales. As part of the 'Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales' publication[1], we produce the

number of deaths involving COVID-19 by age group. Table 1 below shows the number of deaths due to COVID-19 registered in England and Wales between 28 December 2019 and 1 January 2021, the relevant period used in our regular mortality reports, for the age bands below 50, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 years and over.

The mortality statistics produced by the ONS are based on the information recorded when a death is certified and registered. A doctor will only record a health condition on the death certificate if it was in the sequence of events leading to death, or was a contributory factor in the death; the death certificate does not list all health conditions the person suffered from. Therefore, we can say in how many deaths a particular condition was involved (i.e. mentioned on the death certificate) but not how many deaths in total were of individuals suffering from such conditions. Similarly, where several conditions are mentioned on the death certificate, we cannot necessarily say whether each one was ‘serious’ in itself. For example, a chronic condition such as diabetes might have contributed to the death in combination with COVID-19, but be unlikely to have caused death on its own.

Information on deaths involving COVID-19 and pre-existing health conditions was published in July for the period 1 March to 30 June 2020 [2]. Table 2 shows the number of deaths involving COVID-19 occurring in England and Wales between 1 March and 30 June 2020, registered up to 4 July 2020, for the age bands below 50, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 years and over, divided into those did or did not have one or more pre-existing conditions mentioned on the death certificate. The analysis of pre-existing conditions in the deaths involving COVID-19 is planned to be updated in the next six weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1. Deaths due to COVID-19 registered between 28 December 2019 and 1 January 2021, England and Wales [3]. [4]. [5]. [6]

| Age band | Deaths |
|-------------------|--------|
| Below 50 years | 1,499 |
| 50 to 59 years | 3,470 |
| 60 to 69 years | 7,837 |
| 70 to 79 years | 18,699 |
| 80 years and over | 49,325 |

Source: ONS

Table 2. Deaths involving COVID-19 by whether a pre-existing condition was mentioned on the death certificate, deaths occurring 1 March to 30 June 2020, England and Wales [7]. [8]. [9]. [10]

| Age band | One or more pre-existing condition | No pre-existing condition |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Below 50 years | 807 | 192 |
| 50 to 59 years | 1,950 | 350 |
| 60 to 69 years | 4,333 | 523 |
| 70 to 79 years | 10,394 | 926 |
| 80 years and over | 28,375 | 2,485 |

Source: ONS

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>.

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvin gcovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurringinjune2020>.

[3] Includes deaths registered between 28 December 2019 and 1 January 2021. These figures represent death registrations, there can be a delay between the date a death occurred and the date a death was registered. More information can be found in our impact of registration delays release.

[4] Does not include deaths where age is either missing or not yet fully coded.

[5] Does not include deaths of those resident outside England and Wales or those records where the place of residence is either missing or not yet fully coded.

[6] All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.

[7] Includes deaths occurring between 1 March and 30 June 2020, registered up to 4 July 2020.

[8] Based on all deaths involving COVID-19 (ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2) not only deaths ‘due to’ COVID-19 (i.e. where COVID-19 was the underlying cause of death).

[9] Includes deaths of non-residents.

[10] All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Bethell on 6 January (HL9878, HL9881, HL9883, HL9957), what reasonable worst-case planning scenario estimates were applied to the forecast modelling used to inform the decision to place England under national restrictions in (1) March 2020, (2) November 2020 and (3) January 2021; and to what extent the new COVID-19 variant has altered the assumptions underpinning the January restrictions. [HL12011]

Lord True: The Reasonable Worst Case Scenario is an operational contingency planning tool. The Government has used a broad range of health, social and economic evidence to inform decision making, including modelled projections. The evidence used to introduce measures on 5 January 2021 included amended assumptions based on the increased transmissibility of the B.1.1.7 variant.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional economic support to areas affected by local restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12069]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Since March the Government's priority has been to save lives and protect jobs, businesses, and livelihoods. The Government has supported people and businesses via an unprecedented package of financial support worth more than £280 billion.

As of 5 January, England entered a national lockdown in order to manage a new variant of the virus. Under these England-wide restrictions, businesses can continue to apply for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which has been extended until the end of April 2021 and has helped to pay the wages of people in 9.9 million jobs across the UK. Support continues also to be available for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which will cover 80% of trading profits and is open until the end of April 2021. So far SEISS has seen 2.7 million self-employed workers make claims under the scheme totalling £13.7bn.

Businesses needing access to liquidity can also apply for guaranteed loans through various loan schemes, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, until the end of March 2021. Over 1.4 million small and medium sized companies have received government-backed loans, worth over £68 billion.

With the new restrictions, the Chancellor announced that an additional one-off grant worth up to £9,000 will be offered to businesses in retail, hospitality and leisure facing forced closure in England to help them through to spring. This is alongside the existing Local Restriction Support Grant (closed) which will continue to offer businesses support of up to £3000 for each month they closed.

England's Local authorities and devolved administrations will also receive a £594 million top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) which has already provided local authorities with £1.1 billion throughout the Autumn. This ensures that local authorities can provide discretionary support to businesses not eligible for existing grants, but which may still be affected by the restrictions. Business grant policy remains a fully devolved area with Devolved Administrations receiving their share of this funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way.

This support comes on top of billions of pounds' worth of Rate Reliefs, tax deferrals, and other labour market schemes.

Food: Production

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to maintain British food production standards in trade agreements. [HL12066]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has been clear that in all of our trade negotiations we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

Legal protections for our standards are in place. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 retains standards on environmental protection, animal welfare, animal and plant health and food safety. This includes the prohibition on the use of artificial growth hormones in both domestic production and imported meat products and that no products, other than potable water, are approved to decontaminate poultry carcasses.

The Government has recently taken steps to give Parliament a greater role in scrutinising trade agreements. In the Agriculture Act 2020, the Government established a duty for the Secretary of State to report to Parliament on whether, or to what extent, measures in new Free Trade Agreements, relating to trade in agricultural goods, are consistent with maintaining UK levels of statutory protection in relation to human, animal or plant life or health, animal welfare and the environment.

In July we established the Trade and Agriculture Commission, an independent board set up to advise and inform the Government's trade policies on environmental and animal welfare standards in food production. We have since moved to put it on a statutory footing in the Trade Bill and the Commission will directly feed into the Agriculture Act reporting process.

Fuel Poverty

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to eradicate fuel poverty; and if so, how. [HL12049]

Lord Callanan: We see improving the energy efficiency of homes as the best long term solution to tackling fuel poverty, enabling warmer homes with reduced energy bills. The fuel poverty target is therefore to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030. There are interim milestones for the target of a minimum Band E rating by 2020 and Band D by 2025. Good progress is being made and in 2018, our most recent statistics indicated there were around 900,000 fewer fuel poor households living in an E, F or G rated property compared to 2010. An updated Fuel Poverty Strategy for England will be published in due course.

Halifax Bank of Scotland: Fraud

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government, how many (1) bank directors, (2) insolvency practitioners, (3) estate agents, (4) lawyers, and (5) accountants, have been prosecuted since the publication of the report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Fair Business Banking Project Lord Turnbull report, published on 22 June 2018. [HL12174]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: The Crown Prosecution Service ('CPS') do not have a mechanism for recording the profession of defendants and so are unable to provide the data requested.

The CPS continue to play an important role in prosecuting professionals, whether they be professionals who have used their position to commit crimes or whether they have enabled others to commit crimes. This includes bank directors, insolvency practitioners, estate agents, lawyers, and accountants.

It is important that alongside prosecuting professional individuals, prosecutors should have the right tools to pursue and prosecute corporate bodies. In November last year, this government announced the Law Commission Project on Corporate Criminal Liability, which will be conducted over a 12-month period with a view to setting out potential options for reform.

The above answer represents the position for England and Wales only, and not for Scotland, for which the data, if available, would be held by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

Income Tax: Self-employed

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that self-employed individuals do not overpay income tax. [HL12076]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Self-employed individuals determine the amount of tax due for the previous tax year by submitting their Self-Assessment (SA) tax return.

The amount due to be paid by 31 January is the tax due per the return less any payments already made for that tax year plus the first payment on account (POA) of the individual's tax bill for the current year. Each POA is half of the previous year's tax bill.

The POAs due for the 20/21 tax year will be based on the liability for the 2019/20 tax year, a year largely unaffected by COVID, but individuals can apply to reduce those payments on account if they think they are too high based on their current circumstances. If they wish to do so, they can apply to HMRC by using form SA303. This can be done online through the Government Gateway or by post.

Internet: Children

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to develop an internet service provider children protection policy; and what plans they have to require British telecommunications companies to demonstrate that they are taking steps to block child pornography wherever they operate or invest. [HL12217]

Baroness Barran: The government has no plans to develop a specific internet service provider child protection policy.

Tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse is a priority for the new online safety regulatory framework. All companies in scope will need to ensure that illegal content is removed expeditiously and that the risk of it appearing is minimised through effective systems.

Internet service providers will not be in scope of the duty of care. This is because they do not directly host user generated content or provide search engine services. It would not be proportionate to impose duties on such companies as they do not control if, or how, content is hosted or promoted. Subjecting them to new duties could incentivise broad blocking or removal of websites or apps, which would pose significant risks to freedom of expression and users' ability to access services. However, they will have duties with regard to enforcement action and Ofcom will be able to require these services, where appropriate, to cooperate with business disruption measures.

Furthermore, the government will produce voluntary best practice guidance for infrastructure service providers, setting out where their actions can help identify and prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse. This guidance will be separate from the online harms regime.

Pornography is a legal activity amongst consenting adults. Children cannot consent to sexual activity under UK law, and "child pornography" is an inappropriate description of illegal sexual abuse. The terms used in the UK are indecent imagery of children (IIOC) or child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

Local Government: Elections

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that any elections scheduled for May can take place; and what steps they are taking to ensure that any such elections can take place in line with the restrictions to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12063]

Asked by Lord Wasserman

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to postpone the elections of Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales set for 6 May as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and if they have

such plans, when they expect those elections will take place. [HL12081]

Lord True: Primary legislation states that the elections will go ahead in May 2021.

We continue to work closely with the electoral and public health bodies to resolve challenges and ensure everyone will be able to cast their vote safely and securely - and in a way of their choosing.

The Government is also bringing forward additional measures to extend the ability to appoint a proxy, so that those that are affected by Covid-19 in the days before the poll are still able to make their voice heard.

Guidance will be published in good time ahead of the polls and this matter will be kept under review. The House will be kept updated.

Military Operations: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated level of annual carbon emissions (1) from military sources in the UK, and (2) by UK military activities outside the UK. [HL12102]

Baroness Goldie: Ministry of Defence carbon emissions from fuel combustion (estate and military equipment), purchased electricity and domestic business travel are reported in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts. For 2019-20 the total reported emissions were 2,609,000 tCO₂e. Separate figures for UK and overseas are not available.

Musicians: Visas

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of visa arrangements with the EU for UK musicians. [HL12311]

Baroness Barran: The UK and EU have unilaterally decided not to impose visas on short-stay visitors. For short stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period, UK nationals will not need a visa when travelling to and within the Schengen Area to undertake a limited range of activities, such as tourism, or attending business meetings, or cultural and sports events. However, Member States can require a visa for what they regard as "paid activity".

Therefore, UK cultural professionals, including musicians, seeking to tour within the EU will be required to check domestic immigration and visitor rules for each Member State in which they intend to tour. Although some Member States may allow touring without a visa or work permit, others will require musicians and other creative professionals to obtain a visa or work permit, in the same way that they are required for other international artists.

We recognise that this means there will be some additional processes for those in cultural and creative

industries working across the EU. However this does not mean our sectors will not be able to work in the EU nor that our position has changed on being as welcoming as ever to talented EU artists and musicians wishing to perform in the UK.

We are delivering an extensive programme of engagement with the industry to assess impacts and support these sectors in understanding new requirements. The Secretary of State had a very productive discussion with representatives from across the creative and cultural sectors on the issue on Wednesday 20th January. We have also published guidance online, signposting to official information provided by EU countries about their business travel routes, which is regularly updated.

We will also look at whether we can work with our partners in EU Member States to find ways to make life easier for those working in the creative industries in our respective countries.

Ports: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of EU officials at Northern Ireland ports; and what agreement they reached with the EU about the (1) status, (2) powers, and (3) purpose, of those officials. [HL12043]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: A small number of EU officials are present at Northern Ireland ports, in line with the arrangements provided for under Article 12 of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Union representatives have a right to supervise the enforcement of the Northern Ireland Protocol, as opposed to physically conducting the checks.

Article 12(2) of the Protocol establishes that EU officials have the right to be present during activities of the authorities of the United Kingdom, limited to the implementation and application of provisions of Union law under the terms of the Protocol, and activities related to the implementation and application of Article 5 of the Protocol.

Article 12(2) also includes that the United Kingdom shall provide, upon request, all relevant information relating to such activities, and that Union representatives may request UK authorities to carry out control measures in individual cases for duly stated reasons.

Decision No 6/2020 of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee on arrangements under Article 12(2) of the Protocol establishes the details of these arrangements. These arrangements do not provide for the EU to establish a mission or embassy in Northern Ireland.

Remote Education

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential benefits of online learning; and what plans they have to incorporate any

such benefits into education provision when schools reopen. [HL12061]

Baroness Berridge: Technology in education has been essential for continuing to teach remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent school and college closures. In the long term, it also has the potential to support teacher workload reductions, flexible working, cost savings, inclusive teaching practice and improved pupil outcomes.

A number of programmes which have been in place across the COVID-19 outbreak are providing valuable intelligence as to the most impactful uses of online learning.

The EdTech Demonstrator programme, which supports schools and colleges to use technology to strengthen remote education arrangements and secure a longer-term strategy, will provide an important evaluation on the extent to which this sector-led approach can impact on the positive use of technology and help other institutions address a broad range of challenges they face both now and in the future.

The department's digital platforms offer allows schools to provide remote online teaching, as well as develop approaches for the longer term.

In addition, Ofsted conducted monitoring visits to schools in the Autumn Term, looking at remote education practice, and publishing a guide to what works well:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-short-guide-to-what-works-well-in-remote-education>.

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have provided to schools for the development of online learning. [HL12071]

Baroness Berridge: The government has made a wide range of resources available to support schools and colleges to provide high quality remote education and to meet the expectations we have set:

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

The Get Help with Remote Education page on gov.uk provides a one stop shop for teachers and leaders, signposting the support package available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>. This includes helping schools and colleges to access technology that supports remote education, as well as peer to peer training and guidance on how to use technology effectively. It also includes practical tools, a good practice guide and school-led webinars to support effective delivery of the curriculum. Information is available on issues such as safeguarding, statutory duties and expectations, supporting pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and recovery and catch up to stop pupils and students falling behind.

The government is investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care,

including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people. This includes over 870,000 laptops and tablets that were delivered to schools, trusts and local authorities by 25 January.

Support is also available for schools to get set up on Google or Microsoft platforms. These platforms bring together the school community, pool resources and give pupils the opportunity to work with their peers remotely. Since April, 2.4 million accounts have been set up.

The department has partnered with the UK's leading mobile network operators, such as EE, Three, O2 and Vodafone, to provide free data to disadvantaged families, which will support access to education resources, including Oak National Academy, and other websites. Families will benefit from this additional data until July 2021. Schools will be able to request free mobile data uplifts via the Get Help with Technology service.

We have also already provided over 54,000 4G wireless routers, with free data for the academic year, and continue to provide 4G wireless routers where children need to access remote education.

In addition, we have invested £1.5 million of additional funding to expand the EdTech Demonstrator programme, which supports schools and colleges to use technology to strengthen remote education arrangements and secure a longer-term strategy. The expansion will ensure that up to 4,000 schools and colleges will receive bespoke advice and training by the end of March.

Finally, the department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20, and then for the 2020-21 academic year, to provide video lessons in a broad range of subjects for Reception up to Year 11. Specialist content for pupils with SEND is also available.

Remote Education: Complaints

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many complaints Ofsted have received about the quality of online learning provided by individual schools. [HL12072]

Baroness Berridge: This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of vaccinating teachers and support staff in schools that remain open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. [HL12073]

Baroness Berridge: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the government on which

vaccine/s the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered them. JCVI advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems, and as the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age. This prioritisation captures almost all preventable deaths from COVID-19.

In the next phase of the vaccine rollout, JCVI have asked that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other government departments. The department is working with the DHSC and Public Health England to ensure that the education and childcare workforce is considered for prioritisation in the roll out of the vaccine.

Sharing Economy: Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to strengthen the legal employment rights of gig economy workers. [[HL12078](#)]

Lord Callanan: Gig economy workers' employment rights are determined by their employment status - employee, worker or self-employed.

We want to make it easier for individuals and businesses to understand which employment rights apply to them. The Government is currently considering options to improve clarity around employment status.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for prioritising the digitalisation of small and medium enterprises to support the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL12064](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises the importance of digitalisation amongst small and medium enterprises, and has a number of programmes which support this. Within BEIS, the Small Business Leadership Programme and Peer-to-Peer networks promote the acquisition of digital skills, whilst the Business Basics programme has provided valuable insights and evidence as to both the practical barriers and opportunities for small and medium enterprises in the adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies. The Made Smarter pilot scheme in the North West has supported manufacturing companies to adopt new Industry 4.0 technologies, both through matched grant funding and independent, expert advice.

Further initiatives focussed on digitalisation are led or supported by other government departments. These include Digital Boost, a platform which matches organisations with digital experts offering free advice,

supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced £20m in July 2020 to help small and medium-sized businesses acquire new technology and seek advice on digital adoption in order to continue or diversify their business activities in light of the pandemic. This is provided through grants of between £1000 and £5000, and is fully funded by the Government with no obligation for businesses themselves to contribute financially.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help small businesses manage debt; and what plans they have to introduce employee shared ownership schemes to assist companies to address COVID-19 related debt. [[HL12077](#)]

Lord Callanan: We recognise that a diverse range of businesses have taken out Bounce Back Loans. No repayments are due during the first 12 months of the loan term, giving businesses the space they need to get through this difficult period without needing to worry about repaying these loans in the coming months.

Our 'Pay as you Grow' options will allow individual businesses to tailor their repayments to their individual circumstances, to help them repay their loans.

In addition, lenders may offer a term extension to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) borrowers in difficulty, as a forbearance tool, up to a maximum of 10 years, if the lender judges that it would help the borrower to repay their loan.

Social Security Benefits: Disability

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many disabled benefits claimants were sanctioned in (1) 2019, and (2) 2020; how those figure compare to the number of non-disabled such claimants who were sanctioned; how many of those sanctions were appealed and upheld; and what steps they have taken to ensure that disabled people claiming benefits are not discriminated against. [[HL12359](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested for Universal Credit is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Statistics are available on the number of self-identified disabled people who have received an adverse sanction decision whilst in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance and these are published by decision type online.

To ensure our approach to sanctions is fair those who are not expected to look for work, those with severe health conditions are not in scope of sanctions. For those who we do expect to look for work, conditionality requirements are tailored to the claimant's circumstances so they are reasonable, achievable and are agreed between

the claimant and their Work Coach. Should there be a doubt, the Decision Maker will take into account all the claimant's individual circumstances, such as health conditions, and any evidence of good reason they have provided, before deciding whether a sanction is warranted. Claimants have the right to a Mandatory Reconsideration and appeal should they wish to dispute the decision.

Stena Line: Irish Sea

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mitigate any economic impact resulting from Stena Line's cancellation of Irish Sea sailings. [HL12247]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department is aware of the sharp drop in ferry passengers resulting from the Covid-19 lockdowns. Currently, there are no plans in place to respond to Stena Line's cancellation of Irish Sea sailings. Generally, ferry operators adjust their schedules in response to demand and Stena Line has acted accordingly in this case. The demand is being kept under review and we expect the sailing to be reinstated when demand increases again.

Transport: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the levels of (1) personal, and (2) commercial, vehicle transportation on the roads following the COVID-19 pandemic; and if so, (a) to what level they plan to, and (b) how they intend to, reduce such activity. [HL12285]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In response to lockdown measures implemented by the Government, demand for all modes of transport, including road usage, has fallen. My Department regularly publishes statistics on this subject, which are available on the gov.uk website ("Transport use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic").

Transport will play a key role in recovery from Covid-19, and there is opportunity to build upon some of the behavioural changes which have been evident, such as an increase in active travel. In addition, my Department remains committed to the achievement of longer-term strategic objectives, publishing three Priority Outcomes as part of Spending Review 2020. One of our Priority Outcomes is to tackle climate change and improve air quality through the decarbonisation of transport. Cars and vans alone accounted for a fifth of the UK's total domestic greenhouse gas emissions in 2018.

We are continuing to assess what needs to be done to decarbonise our transport system, of which road transport represents one of the highest emitting elements. Road transport will continue to play a key role in allowing

people and goods to move efficiently around the country, but to support the Government's aim to build back better we have already announced significant measures relating to road transport. These include:

- seeking to reduce the use of petrol and diesel vehicles on our roads as part of our commitment to reducing carbon emissions in line with the Government's Net Zero ambitions and to support the end in sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. DfT is investing £1.9 billion through the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles for electric vehicle charging infrastructure and grants for zero and ultra-low emission vehicles.
- consulting on a date for phasing out the sale of new diesel heavy goods vehicles (HGVs.) We will invest £20 million next year in freight trials to pioneer hydrogen and other zero emission lorries, to support industry to develop cost-effective, zero-emission HGVs in the UK.

Further details of these plans for decarbonising cars and freight will form part of Department's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, to be published later this year. The plan will set out in detail what Government, business and society will need to do to put us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net-zero emissions by 2050.

We are also seeking to develop measures to encourage changes in the way we travel following the end of Covid restrictions, such as through increasing levels of walking and cycling and ensuring a reliable and safe public transport network. This includes:

- Spending £300 million over the next financial year to drive forward transformation of bus services, together with £120 million for Zero Emission Buses.
- Implementing the England's first-ever long-term National Bus Strategy, to be launched in the coming months. The strategy will seek to support the bus sector in the provision of the right accessible services for people and communities, in ways that meet their needs and provide positive encouragement to use the bus instead of the car.
- £257 million announced at the recent Spending Review to support the Prime Minister's cycling and walking plan, including behavioural change measures and investing in cycling & walking infrastructure.

Universal Credit

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they conduct A/B tests on applicants for, and recipients of, Universal Credit; and, if so, (1) for how long they have been doing so, (2) how many tests have been conducted, and (3) for what purpose each test has been carried out. [HL12109]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As part of the continuous development and improvement of the Universal Credit service, the Department has conducted and completed two

sets of A/B tests since December 2019. These tests are robust and effective analytical tools which offer a high degree of confidence in the statistical validity of results gathered to evaluate the impact of changes that are being made to the Universal Credit service.

The first set of tests were used to analyse and validate the usage of two-factor authentication for our claimants. The second set of tests were used to measure the benefit of introducing the Confirm Your Identity service on to the Universal Credit system.

War Memorials: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the (1) restoration, and (2) conservation, of war memorials. [[HL12303](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Government supports the restoration and conservation of war memorials through the Memorial Grant Scheme which makes grants towards the VAT incurred by charities and faith groups in the construction, repair and maintenance of public memorial structures, including war memorials. The scheme has a fixed budget of £0.5m per year for this spending period.

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