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

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 28 January 2021

## Accredited Financial Investigation Powers: Consultation

[HLWS740]

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

I intend to lay a statutory instrument this year which will grant Accredited Financial Investigator powers to an additional five agencies. This will bring the total number of agencies with access to these powers to 36 in addition to all police forces and local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Accredited Financial Investigator powers grant civilians working for that agency access to certain Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 powers, which assist in the effective recovery of proceeds of a crime that falls under that agency's jurisdiction. Accredited Financial Investigators have the ability to use financial intelligence for more complex financial investigations and are able to contribute to the recovery of the proceeds of crime.

The following organisations have sought access to Accredited Financial Investigator powers: the Service Police, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Information Commissioner's Office, the Department for the Economy Northern Ireland and the London Fire Brigade. I have assessed the value of extending the powers to each of these agencies—in particular whether effective criminal justice outcomes could be reached in their jurisdictions without access to these powers—and I have concluded that we should seek to grant the powers to all five. However, I intend to seek the views of the wider public as to whether these organisations should be granted these powers.

Currently, the previously mentioned agencies either rely on other agencies designated with financial investigation powers—such as the National Crime Agency or police forces—or have no access to recover proceeds of crime within their jurisdiction. Granting these organisations access to the powers will improve the law enforcement outcomes that they can deliver. The Home Office committed to grant these powers to additional organisations in the Asset Recovery Action Plan, published in 2019.

As such, I intend to publish a consultation for seven weeks from 28<sup>th</sup> January. This consultation will seek to establish the views from the public on whether or not these organisations should be granted the financial investigator powers.

I will arrange for a copy of the consultation document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## Conflict, Stability and Security Fund Allocations 2020-21

[HLWS737]

**Lord True:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt MP) has today made the following written statement:

I wish to update the House on the progress of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) for the Financial Year 2019/20, as well as to announce the initial regional and thematic allocations for this Financial Year, 2020/21.

The CSSF is a cross-government fund which uses both Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA resources to deliver against both national security and UK Aid objectives, through security, defence, peacekeeping, peace-building and stability activity. In 2019/20, the CSSF spent £1,234.3 million against a cross-government allocation of £1,266.2 million (97.5%). A further breakdown of spend against regional and thematic allocation, by department and by discretionary and non-discretionary spend is included in the CSSF's Annual Report for 2019/20, published today.

The report outlines the impact that the Fund has had, and demonstrates how the Fund is contributing to the delivery of national security and UK Aid Objectives. The report also highlights ways in which the Fund has made further improvements to programme management processes including how it monitors and measures results.

A copy of this document will be placed in the libraries of both Houses and has been published on GOV.UK.

### FY 2020/21 Allocations (millions)

Allocation	Non-ODA	ODA	Total
Middle East North Africa	£20.00	£163.13	£183.13
South Asia	£9.43	£93.64	£103.07
Africa (sub-Saharan)	£33.60	£65.17	£98.77
Overseas Territories	£54.35	£4.65	£59.00
Eastern Europe, Central Asia	£25.69	£55.59	£81.28
Western Balkans	£7.50	£72.50	£80.00
Americas	£0.38	£18.25	£18.63
Asia Pacific	£0.75	£15.00	£15.75

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Non-ODA</i>	<i>ODA</i>	<i>Total</i>
Turkey	-	£2.00	£2.00
REGIONAL TOTAL	£151.70	£489.93	£641.63
Migration	-	£7.50	£7.50
Counter Extremism	£14.93	£26.08	£41.00
Multilateral Strategy	£4.50	£28.50	£33.00
National Security	£2.50	-	£2.50
Communications Team			
Serious and Organised	£10.50	£11.70	£22.20
Crime			
Cyber	£0.50	£12.00	£12.50
Gender and Human Rights	-	£4.90	£4.90
THEMATIC TOTAL	£32.93	£90.68	£123.60
Peacekeeping	£306.10	£81.99	£388.09
MOD DMAP	£50.00	-	£50.00
MOD Afghan Security	£100.00	-	£100.00
MOD UNFICYP	£18.10	-	£18.10
MOD UN Ops Africa	£21.40	-	£21.40
Non-Discretionary TOTAL	£495.60	£81.99	£577.59
Corporate Delivery Support	-	£23.23	£23.23
& Other (this includes			
Stabilisation Unit, Joint			
Funds Unit and pilot			
activities)			
TOTAL CSSF	£680.22	£685.83	£1,366

The Statement includes the following attached material:

CSSF: Annual Report 2019/20 [FCDO0044 CSSF Report 2019-20 v4.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-01-28/HLWS737/>

## Covid-19: House Party Fines and Domestic Enforcement Measures

[HLWS742]

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

On 28 September, The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force. These regulations mean that self-isolation is a legal requirement for individuals who have been notified by one of the bodies specified in the regulations (in practice, mainly NHS Test and Trace) that they have tested positive for Covid-19 or are a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Non-adherence to these regulations can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) ranging from £1,000 to £10,000. Failure to pay the FPN can result in criminal proceedings and conviction.

Ensuring that infected individuals and their close contacts self-isolate is one of the most powerful tools for controlling transmission of Covid-19. Increased compliance with self-isolation will reduce transmission of the virus, preventing family and friends from contracting coronavirus, and protecting the NHS.

The Government expects individuals to comply when they are required to self-isolate. Where there are reports of suspected breaches, the police approach to engage, explain and encourage compliance is the right one. But, on occasion, this approach needs to be backed-up with enforcement against those who flout the rules and put others at risk.

We have been working closely with colleagues in National Police Chiefs' Council to ensure that the information we share with them supports effective enforcement where that is necessary.

In order to issue a fixed-penalty notice, the police need to be satisfied that they are engaging with the right person, that the person is aware of their duty to self-isolate and that the person has indeed breached that legal requirement.

NHS Test and Trace currently shares the following information with the police:

- First and last name of individual.
- home address and telephone number.
- period of self-isolation.
- date notification to self-isolate was received.

Following consultation with the police it has become clear that further information is necessary to strengthen the effectiveness of the enforcement regime around self-isolation.

Following a report of suspected non-compliance, and following checks by NHS test and trace to confirm the individual is under the legal duty to self-isolate, NHS Test and Trace will henceforth share the following additional

information with police on a case by case basis, as necessary:

- Details of how the individual was notified by Test and Trace, including address, telephone number and email address where relevant.
- Date of birth.
- Whether the individual is a positive case or a close contact.
- A copy of the notification issued by Test and Trace, where possible.
- whether the individual is taking part in coronavirus related research (and is therefore exempt from the legal duty to self-isolate).

These changes will support the police in taking enforcement action when that is appropriate. In particular, it will enable them to share a copy of the notification to self-isolate if an individual says they did not receive it.

It will also enable the police to gather relevant evidence should criminal proceedings ensue in the event that an FPN is issued and not paid. In such cases, it is important for the police to know, and where appropriate evidence, the precise circumstances around each individual breach and how the duty to self-isolate arose. Information on whether individuals are under a duty to self-isolate due to having tested positive or as a result of being a close contact of someone who has tested positive (including in the copy of the notification) will only be shared and will only be used where necessary for “the purpose of carrying out a function under regulation 10, 12 or 13 [functions regarding enforcement, issuing FPNs and bringing proceedings] or otherwise or the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of offences under these Regulations”. These changes will help improve the effectiveness of police action against reported breaches of self-isolation.

As announced last week by the Home Secretary, regulations will also increase fixed penalty notices for those caught attending illegal gatherings in private dwellings and student accommodation (such as house parties) - of more than 15 people from £200 to £800 in England. Fixed penalty notices for such offences will double for each successive offence up to a maximum of £6400. This will provide the police with the enhanced powers they need to tackle egregious breaches of the law. We have been committed from the beginning of this pandemic to following the science, and the science is clear that larger gatherings of people in indoor spaces present a significant risk of transmission and spread of the virus.

The necessary amendments to The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 and the introduction of an enhanced FPN for indoor gatherings over 15 people will be laid before parliament, and will come into force, on 29 January 2021.

## DCMS: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS738]

**Baroness Barran:** My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, has made the following Statement:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has sought in its Supplementary Supply Estimate 2020-21 the resources, capital and cash it requires to operate for this financial year.

The funds associated with this Estimate will not be released until the Supply and Appropriation Bill achieves Royal Assent in early March. The Department has therefore sought a contingencies fund advance which will be repaid once Royal Assent has been obtained.

Parliamentary approval for resources of £1,668,432,000, capital of £520,836,000 and cash of £57,000,000 has been sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2,246,268,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

## Double Taxation Convention: United Kingdom and Germany

[HLWS741]

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

A Protocol to the Double Taxation Convention with Germany and a Joint Declaration were signed on 12 January. The Protocol will give effect to certain OECD/G20 base erosion and profit shifting recommendations that protect tax treaties against avoidance activities, ensuring that the UK's double taxation agreement with Germany meets the minimum OECD/G20 recommended standards. The text of the Protocol and Joint Declaration are available on HM Revenue and Customs' pages of the GOV.UK website and will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. The text of the Protocol will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.

## NHS England and NHS Improvement: Annual Assessment 2019-20

[HLWS739]

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

Today, I am laying before Parliament my annual assessment of the NHS Commissioning Board (known as NHS England) for 2019-20.

Covid-19 has presented an unprecedented challenge, the scale of which the NHS has not seen in its 72-year history. I would like to begin by giving my utmost thanks and appreciation to all colleagues throughout the NHS for their dedication and hard work responding to the virus.

My assessment of NHS England and NHS Improvement's (NHSE/I) performance for 2019-20 reflects the impact these challenges have had on the health service and differentiates between performance before the pandemic took hold and the subsequent impact managing the virus has had on delivery. To this end, I have defined performance pre-Covid-19 as the period April 2019 to end January 2020. Evidence from this period has been used to make a reasonable assessment of where performance would have been had Covid-19 not happened.

2019-20 was a transitional year for the NHS, that saw NHSE/I embed the first phase of delivery against the NHS Long Term Plan. NHSE/I has worked closely with local health systems to develop robust, system and local-level implementation plans. In 2020-21 these plans will need to be revised to reflect possible new and longer-term demands caused by Covid-19 and to account for the Government's 2019 manifesto commitments. To ensure these plans are workable NHSE/I must ensure disciplined financial management across all organisations. I am therefore pleased to see most NHS providers reporting a year-end position that is equal to or better than their agreed control totals.

To ensure performance targets are appropriate and help improve clinical quality and outcomes, NHSE/I has field tested proposals in urgent and emergency care, routine elective care, cancer and adult and children's mental health as part of the clinically led Review of NHS Access Standards. The impact of Covid-19 has delayed the final evaluation report and I expect NHSE/I to continue to work with wider Government and local NHS organisations to produce evidence-based approaches. An increase in demand for services in 2019-20 pre-pandemic has meant that performance targets on NHS Constitutional standards were not on track to be met by the end of the year. Between April 2019 and January 2020, demand for urgent investigation of possible cancer and emergency admissions via A&E increased by 8% and 3.5% respectively, compared to the same period last year, making it harder for the NHS to treat patients within the agreed targets. Key to managing demand in the system is ensuring a steady flow of patients through to the point at which they can be safely discharged. Despite great efforts in both health and social care, the average Delayed Transfer of Care (DTC) figure of 4,000 or fewer delays remains challenging and the trajectory up until January 2020 was 5128 leaving a cumulative target of 1182 beds to be delivered.

Another key element of the NHS Long Term Plan was publication in June 2019 of NHSE/I's Interim People plan

that was reinforced in August 2020 with the 'We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/21 – action for us all'. The publication of the overarching NHS People Plan will need to account for new workforce demands and costs due to the pandemic as shortages remain a critical risk to service recovery. It is also critically important that we have rigorous plans in place to deliver the additional 50,000 nurse places that the Government promised to deliver in this Parliament. I am also grateful that NHSE/I has taken the lead in supporting members of our workforce who are most vulnerable and provided an enhanced staff health and wellbeing offer, including targeted support for our BAME colleagues and, where possible, offering opportunities for flexible and remote working.

I am pleased to see NHSE/I support the Government's health and social care pledges set out in the 2019 manifesto. Great progress has been made on capital in 2019-20, which was underpinned by the Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP), published in September 2019. The Government is committed to building 40 new hospitals, and the NHS has already made significant progress in developing these plans to deliver world-class care in world-class facilities. Similarly, the NHS has pressed ahead with delivering the 20 hospital upgrades announced by the Prime Minister in August 2019. I am assured NHSE/I has committed to work with the Government to improve public confidence in hospital food and commend them for supporting the commitment to abolish hospital parking fees for those patients and families in greatest need.

Looking forward, I am pleased to see NHSE/I use evidence from responding to Covid-19 to reduce barriers and improve the way services are delivered. The pandemic has also brought to light the burden placed on the NHS by the interoperability of systems and the need for more effective information sharing between care settings and organisations, as well as between professionals and the public, to enhance health outcomes and quality of care. I am therefore eager to see the implementation of the technology standards set out in the Future of Healthcare to better integrate information flows.

The NHS remains this country's most valued public service, an institution that is there for every family, everywhere, at the best of times and at the worst. In light of Covid-19, the Government wants to continue to ensure that the NHS has the space, certainty and funds to deliver a transformative plan that will ensure patients benefit from a ground-breaking health service into the next decade.

We will continue to work closely with NHSE/I to help them deliver this ambition, address the challenges that lie ahead and provide a sustainable and efficient health service with quality, transparency and safety at its heart.

Copies of my annual assessment and NHSE/I's annual report will be available from the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office.



## Written Answers

Thursday, 28 January 2021

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of more virulent strains of Covid-19 appearing in Kent, South Africa and Brazil, what plans they have to purchase additional supplies of the Oxford/Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines. [[HL12182](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government has secured access to 367 million vaccine doses through agreements with seven separate vaccine developers. This includes 157 million doses of the Oxford University/AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech, and Moderna vaccines.

The Government continues to monitor the landscape of Covid-19 vaccine development, both here in the UK and internationally, and will keep the situation under review.

### Data Protection: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage data sharing during the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL12141](#)]

**Lord True:** The National Data Strategy published in September 2020 sets out the Government's commitment to transform the way data is collected, managed, used and shared in government. Current initiatives to improve data sharing during the Covid-19 pandemic include:

- Tackling legal barriers through promoting the data sharing provisions in the Digital Economy Act 2017 to speed up and simplify data sharing across government and supporting public bodies who would like to introduce new data sharing regulations in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Setting and driving the adoption of data standards to improve the consistency, integrity and interoperability of government data.
- Improving the quality of government data through the work of the Data Quality Hub, such as the recently published Data Quality Framework.
- Working with ONS to identify data sets to be shared across government to enable a better understanding of Covid-19 in the UK.
- Improving data leadership in government to drive strategy by establishing a Chief Digital and Data Office.

### Donald Trump

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister last spoke to President Trump. [[HL12159](#)]

**Lord True:** The Prime Minister last spoke to the President of the United States on 7 October 2020 to wish him a speedy recovery from Covid-19.

### Driving: Diabetes

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the UK's departure from the EU, what plans they have to amend regulations concerning diabetic motorists. [[HL12449](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Secretary of State for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Driving and Diabetes provides advice on the medical standards in regard to diabetes and safe driving. There are no current plans to change the medical standards for driving with diabetes which would require a change to regulations.

### Elections: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation they have undertaken in relation to holding local and other elections in England on 6 May with bodies representing (1) schools, (2) school staff, and (3) parents; and what representations they have received from such bodies. [[HL12150](#)]

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for schools that would be used as polling stations in elections on 6 May for (1) the number of days they would need to close for extra cleaning and other management arrangements (a) before, and (b) following, polling day, and (2) the costs of such cleaning and management arrangements. [[HL12151](#)]

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proportion of the people who volunteer on a regular basis to staff polling stations and count votes at elections who will not be available to do so on 6 May as a result of (1) having contracted Covid-19, (2) self-isolating, (3) working at home, (4) being unwilling for other perceived safety reasons, and (5) other reasons; and what assessment they have made of the ability of local authorities (a) to recruit other people, and (b) provide them with the necessary training, to support such polling stations. [[HL12152](#)]

**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. We are also working to ensure that disruption to children's education is kept to an

absolute minimum. Schools and local authorities should consider relevant public health advice.

We are providing for voters to be able to appoint a proxy at short notice if they need to isolate shortly before or on the day of the polls. Guidance will be published in good time ahead of the polls and this matter will be kept under review.

### **Energy: Buildings**

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Committee on Climate Change The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero, published on 9 December 2020, what plans they have to set a legally binding target to upgrade all buildings to EPC Band C by 2035. [[HL12148](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government remains committed to the ambition set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, that as many homes as possible are improved to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable.

We believe this still represents good value for money, and we are focussed on introducing a range of policies and proposals that deliver it. In 2020, alongside a significant package of public funding for building retrofit, we have:

- Consulted on strengthening minimum energy performance standards for the domestic Private Rented Sector to at least EPC C by 2028;
- Consulted on setting requirements for mortgage lenders to help homeowners improve the energy performance of the homes they lend to;
- Committed to consult on energy performance requirements under the Decent Homes Standard for social housing; and
- Committed to consult in 2021 on regulatory measures for owner occupier homes.

The Heat and Building Strategy will set out further details on the actions we will take to reduce emissions from buildings.

### **Energy: Housing**

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what consideration they have given to the recommendations of the report by Policy Exchange Efficient Energy Policy: How to encourage improvements in domestic energy efficiency, published on 2 March 2016, and in particular the recommendation that Stamp Duty Land Tax should be linked to the energy performance of a dwelling. [[HL12149](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) is kept under review, but the Government does not currently have any plans to link SDLT on properties with their relative

energy efficiency, as suggested in the report by Policy Exchange.

The Government acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve the energy performance of owner-occupied homes. As such, we are currently consulting on how mortgage lenders can help householders in England and Wales to improve the energy performance of their homes. We have committed to consult in 2021 on regulatory measures for owner occupiers and will consider a range of options as part of that consultation.

### **Energy: 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 the energy sector in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. [[HL12135](#)]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The Department for International Trade (DIT) team in Iraq continues to assess the ongoing opportunities in the energy sector in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and help British companies access applicable opportunities.

Companies in the Oil & Gas sectors are making particular progress in the KRI and we would recommend that any prospective market entrant should seek advice from the DIT team in the country about how to mitigate risks. Companies should also bear in mind that, as per the Prime Minister's announcement of 12th December 2020, the Government is phasing out direct support to the fossil fuels sector as the UK transitions toward a low-carbon economy.

### **Energy: Social Rented Housing**

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Committee on Climate Change The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero, published on 9 December 2020, what plans they have to ensure that all social homes achieve EPC band C by 2028. [[HL12147](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government remains committed to the ambition set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, that as many homes as possible are improved to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable.

At the Summer Economic Update, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer provided up to £50m for a UK-wide Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator, to support jobs, improve energy efficiency and reduce bills for social tenants whilst demonstrating the benefits of the Whole House Retrofit approach to reduce costs overall. At the recent spending review the chancellor announced £60 million in 2021/22 for the SHDF in England.



The Government has also recently published the Social Housing White Paper where we committed to review the Decent Homes Standard to consider how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes.

### **Ethiopia: Armed Conflict**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that three senior members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, including the former Ethiopian Foreign Minister, have been killed by the Ethiopian military on 13 January; and what representations they have made to the government of Ethiopia about those deaths. [[HL12132](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of reports that senior members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, including the former Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin (who served as Foreign Minister 1991 to 2010), were killed on 13 January by Ethiopian Security Forces. Our Embassy in Addis Ababa continues to try and corroborate and verify reporting from the Tigray region but significant barriers remain, such as continued insecurity and limitations on communications in the region.

We have consistently 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. We have been clear that perpetrators of those incidents that are proven must be held to account, whoever they may be. We will continue to make these points in upcoming conversations with the Government of Ethiopia.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that eye witness statements are taken from refugees from Tigray about reports of war crimes and crimes against humanity in that region; how they intend to preserve any such evidence; and what plans they have to put judicial mechanisms in place to bring those responsible to justice. [[HL12133](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Access to Tigray for Human Rights and humanitarian staff remains limited. We support the call made by the UN High Commission for Refugees for independent human rights monitors to be given access to Tigray to verify allegations that have been made against all parties to the conflict, and to help ensure accountability. We will continue to make this point in upcoming conversations with the Government of Ethiopia. We are also calling for unimpeded access for humanitarian organisations to reach those most directly affected by the fighting.

### **Free School Meals: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which companies have contracts to supply free school meals during the Covid-19 pandemic; and what is the total value of those contracts. [[HL12183](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Schools are free to decide the best approach for their free school meal pupils. They can provide lunch parcels, locally arranged vouchers, or they can use the national voucher scheme which re-opened on 18 January 2021.

School catering contracts are agreed locally, either by the school, the academy trust or the local authority. The department does not hold a contract with any provider to provide free school meals or lunch parcels to children. We do not hold information on the total value of these contracts.

Schools will be able to claim £3.50 per eligible pupil per week when providing lunch parcels or meals, which is in addition to their existing free school meal funding, taking the amount available for a lunch parcel to around £15. If schools need to purchase vouchers locally, they can claim up to £15 per eligible child per week from the department, and all valid claims will be paid in full. We will publish further details shortly.

The contract with Edenred for the National Voucher Scheme will cover voucher provision between week commencing 18 January and February half-term. Schools are able to place orders for supermarket gift cards on behalf of parents and carers worth up to £15 a week per eligible child. If using the national voucher scheme, costs will be covered centrally by the department.

### **General Anti-abuse Rule Advisory Panel: Public Appointments**

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce legislation under which partners of law and accounting firms judged by the courts to have sold unlawful tax avoidance schemes would not be permitted to become members of the General Anti-Abuse Rule Panel and advise HM Revenues and Customs. [[HL12176](#)]

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the (1) fees, and (2) costs, which have been paid to each member of the General Anti-Abuse Rule (GAAR) Panel. [[HL12177](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The General Anti-Abuse Rule (GAAR) Advisory Panel is an independent body led by a Chair, appointed through an open recruitment process in line with Cabinet Office guidance. Members of the panel are appointed by the Commissioners of HM Revenue and

Customs (HMRC), advised by the Chair of the panel. There are no plans to introduce new legislation.

The Chair and other panel members do not receive remuneration, but HMRC reimburse expenses reasonably incurred by them in carrying out their duties. It is not possible for HMRC to provide details of expenses reimbursed to each member of the panel due to HMRC's duty of confidentiality.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Committee on Climate Change Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, published on 19 May 2019, what steps they are taking to ensure that their commitment for net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050 is "comprehensive, achieved without use of international credits" and covers international aviation and shipping. [HL12146]

**Lord Callanan:** In 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to legislate to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. International aviation and shipping emissions are included within the scope of the 2050 net zero target, which was set on a whole economy basis. We fully intend to meet our net zero target through cutting our domestic carbon emissions.

International credits can play an important role in cost-effective global emissions reduction, while creating development co-benefits. We retain our ability to use international credits if necessary, to achieve our commitments as we have said previously when setting Carbon Budgets and legislating for net zero. However, our intention is to meet our Nationally Determined Contribution and net zero commitment through domestic action.

Ahead of COP26, we will set out ambitious plans across key sectors of the economy to meet our carbon budgets and net zero. We have already published the Energy White Paper and the first phase of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, and will publish the Heat and Building Strategy in due course. We will also publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy.

## Hong Kong: Politics and Government

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have taken any urgent action in the UN Human Rights Council in response to reports of the government of China's treatment of pro-democracy leaders in Hong Kong; and if so, whether any such action includes (1) resolutions, or (2) emergency sessions. [HL12162]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK continues to work with international partners, including at the United

Nations, to raise our deep concern about the situation in Hong Kong. On 9 January, the Foreign Secretary released a statement with his Australian, Canadian and US counterparts underscoring our serious concern at the arrest of 55 politicians and activists.

At the UN, on 6 October, alongside Germany we brought together a total of 39 countries to express grave concern at the situation in Xinjiang and Hong Kong in a joint statement at the General Assembly Third Committee.

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister has spoken to the Prime Minister of New Zealand about New Zealand's decision not to join the statement by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada and the UK, and the United States Secretary of State on arrests in Hong Kong issued on 9 January 2020; and whether any ministerial discussions have taken place with the government of New Zealand about such arrests. [HL12164]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Prime Minister and his New Zealand counterpart, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, last spoke on 10 December 2020, when they discussed a range of foreign policy matters, including Hong Kong. On 9 January, the Foreign Secretary and his New Zealand counterpart, Nanaia Mahuta, discussed developments on arrests in Hong Kong. We will continue to work closely with international partners to call on China to live up to its obligations and responsibilities as a leading member of the international community.

## Insolvency

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much unsecured creditors have been unable to recover from the bankruptcy of their corporate customers in each of the last five years. [HL12173]

**Lord Callanan:** This information is not collated and held centrally. Information on individual corporate insolvencies at Companies House contains reports filed by the appointed insolvency office holder which will detail the amounts owed to different types of creditors, including unsecured creditors, and any payments made to those creditors from the realisation of assets during the course of the insolvency process.

## Israel: Textbooks

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that material is being included in textbooks for school children in Israel which incites hatred and violence towards Palestinians. [HL12020]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to

violence, including the use of racist, hateful or anti-Palestinian language and any comments that could stir up hatred and prejudice. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for a peace.

### **Leah Sharibu**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the government of Nigeria about the condition and wellbeing of Leah Sharibu. [HL12130]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government condemns the appalling abduction of the Dapchi school girls in 2018 and the ongoing captivity of Leah Sharibu by Islamic State West Africa (ISWA). We remain deeply concerned for the welfare of Leah and all those held by terrorist groups in Nigeria. Following the attack, the then Foreign Secretary spoke to the Nigerian Vice President to express condolences and discuss UK assistance. We have repeatedly called for the release of all those abducted by Boko Haram and ISWA, including Leah Sharibu, and remain committed to supporting the Nigerian Government to secure their release. The Nigerian Government has provided assurances that they are doing all they can to secure the release of Leah and all other abductees held by terrorist groups in Nigeria. President Buhari issued a statement in February 2020, reiterating his Government's commitment to securing the release of all children and captives of terrorists and to bringing Leah home safely. We will continue to engage with the Nigerian Government in support of urgent action to secure the return of Leah Sharibu and all abductees. The Government is committed to helping Nigeria tackle the threat posed by the terrorist groups in North East Nigeria. We are providing a comprehensive package of humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to Nigeria to help tackle the threat and support affected communities.

### **Plastics: Waste**

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on (1) the quality of water, (2) human health, and (3) the soil condition, of the countries receiving plastic waste exported from the UK. [HL12175]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** While waste is a commodity, and there is a legitimate global market for secondary materials, it must be and is subject to strict controls. There is a system of international rules on waste shipments that must be followed when exporting waste. UK legislation requires that those involved in the shipment of waste take all necessary steps to ensure waste

is managed in an environmentally sound manner throughout its shipment and at the waste management facility in the country of destination. Any operators found to be illegally exporting waste can face severe sanctions - from financial penalties to imprisonment for a period of up to two years.

The UK Government has conducted no assessment of the impact of UK plastic waste exports. The Government has, however, funded programmes, active in several countries that import plastic waste from the UK, which are working to address the sources of ocean plastic pollution.

Working with the World Economic Forum, the UK has supported the development of National Plastic Action Partnerships (NPAPs) in Ghana and Indonesia, with a third having launched in Vietnam in December 2020, to help create circular plastic economies. In Vietnam this platform aims to help dramatically reduce its flow of plastic waste into the ocean and eliminate single-use plastics from coastal tourist destinations and marine protected areas. We aim to support 25 NPAPs by 2025.

The Commonwealth Litter Programme brings together scientists, policy makers and communities around the world to identify actions which can be taken to stop plastic entering the marine environment, collect beach litter and measure marine microplastics, and raise awareness of what individuals and society can do to protect our marine habitats and wildlife. Having so far worked in Belize, South Africa, the Pacific, and India since its launch in 2018, the Programme is currently expanding in the South Asian region.

Finally, having signed a UK 'Plastics Pact' in 2018, the UK is now funding the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to support Commonwealth countries to develop their own Plastics Pacts. WRAP is working to develop a network of Plastics Pacts around the world to a support broader transition to a Plastic Circular Economy.

### **Pre-school Education: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that staff working in early years settings are vaccinated against Covid-19. [HL12187]

**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.

### Schools: Coronavirus

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to mitigate the transmission of Covid-19 in (a) primary, and (b) secondary, schools, (2) to ensure such schools are Covid-19 secure, and (3) to expedite the safe re-opening of such schools. [HL12161]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department has worked closely with other government departments throughout its response to the Covid-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), as well as stakeholders across the sector, to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to develop comprehensive guidance based on a PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

The system of control measures as outlined in our guidance has been developed with PHE, with whom we continue to work closely to ensure that these measures are based on the latest medical and scientific advice: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/952443/210114\\_School\\_national\\_restrictions\\_guidance\\_FINAL\\_14012021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952443/210114_School_national_restrictions_guidance_FINAL_14012021.pdf).

When implemented in line with a thorough risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer system for staff and pupils where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced. For example, this includes important measures such as, but not limited to, minimising contact with individuals who are not well, maintaining social distancing wherever possible, regularly cleaning hands and introducing enhanced cleaning measures, as well as the use of personal protective equipment where recommended. All elements of the system of controls are essential in effectively minimising risks. Schools must cover them all, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. PHE advises that the implementation of the system of controls based on a thorough risk assessment is a sufficient and appropriate way to reduce risk in schools.

Limiting attendance does not suggest that schools and colleges have become significantly less safe for young people. Instead, limiting attendance is about supporting the reduction of the overall number of social contacts in our communities. We have resisted restrictions on attendance at schools since the first lockdown but, in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible.

We know that receiving face to face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. We will continue to review the restrictions on schools, colleges and universities and will ensure that children and young people return to face to face education as soon as possible.

### Seafood: British Overseas Territories

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the departure of the UK from the EU, what assessment they have made of the impact on exports to the EU of (1) fish from St Helena, (2) crayfish from Tristan da Cunha, and (3) squid and meat from the Falkland Islands. [HL12156]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government is fully committed to supporting the Overseas Territories. The impact of the UK's departure from the EU is different for each territory, including the introduction of tariff on exports from the Overseas Territories. Fish exports from St. Helena are not significantly impacted. Tristan da Cunha does not export crayfish to the EU, and exports of rock lobster are currently not subject to tariffs. Exports from the Falkland Islands to the EU are now subject to tariffs. We will continue to work with the Overseas Territories to take the necessary steps in mitigating the impact of the UK's departure from the EU.

### Social Mobility

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Social Mobility Commission *Changing gears: understanding downward social mobility*, published in November 2020; and what plans they have to address the Commission's finding that one in five people move into a lower occupational group than their parents. [HL12186]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government welcomes the Social Mobility Commission's recent report, 'Changing gears: understanding downward social mobility'. Spreading opportunity is a top priority right across the Department for Education, every child should have the same opportunity to express their talents and make the most of their lives.

The report highlights the key role education plays in securing social mobility. The government's approach to social mobility has been to increase opportunity and support higher standards for all pupils. That ambition has underpinned all the department's reforms to education since 2010, which have demonstrated that it is possible to achieve the highest standards for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. A world-class education system that works for everyone is the surest way to spread opportunity across the country. That is why we are investing over £7 billion more in our schools by the 2022/2023 financial year. This means schools around the



country can continue to raise standards to give all children the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Moreover, pupil premium funding, worth around £2.4 billion annually, continues to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils.

Alongside apprenticeships, traineeships, and T levels, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, recently announced the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which aims to ensure that people across the country can access the education and training they need to succeed throughout their lives. As part of the landmark Lifetime Skills Guarantee the Prime Minister also announced a series of Skills Bootcamps and a lifelong loan entitlement for adult learners. The Skills Bootcamps give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. The Lifelong loan entitlement 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.

The Social Mobility Commission will be moving to the Cabinet Office from 1 April 2021. The government has always recognised that socio-economic equality goes beyond one department; we want the levelling up agenda to be a cross-government commitment. Anchoring the Social Mobility Commission to a team at the heart of Government re-affirms this commitment.

## Tax Avoidance

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Supreme Court judgment in *Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (Appellant) v Pendragon plc and others (Respondents)* [2015] UKSC 37, whether they have (1) investigated, (2) fined, or (3) prosecuted, KPMG for designing and marketing the tax avoidance scheme. [HL12178]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** HMRC cannot comment on individual cases, but will investigate any allegations of wrongdoing brought to their attention.

The Government and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are determined to continue to tackle promoters and enablers of tax avoidance schemes. In March 2020, HMRC published on GOV.UK their strategy for tackling promoters of tax avoidance schemes. The strategy sets out HMRC's work to date and outlines how HMRC will continue to take robust actions against promoters and enablers of tax avoidance.

HMRC publish the standards they expect agents to adhere to and monitor these standards. HMRC have several powers to address poor agent practice in instances where the standard for agents is breached.

## Teachers: Training

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement made by the Department for Education on 2 January about the review of the Initial Teacher Training market, what plans they have, as part of that review (1) to ensure an increased supply of new teachers rather than displacement of trainee teachers between providers, and (2) to mitigate any risk of (a) complexity, and (b) disincentives, in the market. [HL12083]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department knows that high quality teaching is the most important in-school factor in improving outcomes for all children, particularly those from a disadvantaged background. Providing the best possible initial teacher training (ITT) is at the heart of the government's drive to improve teaching standards.

On 2 January 2021, we announced that we would be resuming our review of the ITT market, to support it to work more efficiently and effectively, making the process of becoming a teacher less complicated and burdensome. The review will aim to make well informed, evidence-based recommendations on how to ensure all trainees are receiving consistent, high quality training, in line with the ITT Core Content Framework. Any reforms must maintain sufficient capacity to deliver enough qualified teachers, whilst being accessible to candidates and of benefit to all schools.

The Chair and a small expert group, with the support of Department officials, are conducting early work to better understand these issues and the direction of the work. We are confident that the expert group covers a range of expertise and perspectives (Higher Education Institute-led, large and small School Centred Initial Teacher Training providers, national provider of ITT, and both school and ITT curriculum expertise), which will be essential in ensuring the review maintains market capacity and reflects an understanding of high-quality ITT. Additionally, they are holding discussions with sector representatives including the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers and the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, with broader engagement planned from late spring.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with sector representatives (1) prior to, and (2) regarding, the announcement of the review of the Initial Teacher Training market and the creation of a new Institute of Teaching on 2 January; and what steps they are taking to ensure that new provision will exceed the Ofsted judgements on the quality of existing Institute of Technical Education providers. [HL12084]

**Baroness Berridge:** On 2 January 2021, the Department announced we were resuming our review of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) market to identify improvements that reduce costs for providers and exploring how we can encourage high quality providers – including high-performing multi academy trusts – to extend their reach, deliver at scale and do more to support the wider system. We started work on this in early 2020 with a series of workshops with ITT sector representatives to understand the current market better. This work was paused so that government, and the ITT sector, could focus on the challenges caused by the Covid-19 outbreak.

We are now resuming the ITT review, building on the opportunities afforded by our Teacher Development reforms, including the ITT Core Content Framework. The department will work with the sector as the review progresses. We expect further engagement to take place in the late spring, and the review to conclude in the summer.

Officials had informed ITT sector representative organisations, the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers and the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, that the recommencement of the ITT review and the creation of the Institute for Teaching would be announced. The Chair of the ITT review has substantive discussions with the leadership of these organisations planned in the coming weeks.

The department has held a range of policy development conversations on the proposal for an Institute of Teaching with academics, teacher development providers, representative organisations and teaching unions. The department intends to run a robust procurement exercise to identify a strong organisation or organisations to establish the Institute of Teaching. The successful bidders will need to demonstrate an exceptional track record in delivery of teacher training and development. The new organisation will also be subject to a range of quality assurance measures during its set-up phase to ensure its delivery will be the highest quality.

### **Tunisia: Overseas Aid**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the security issues in Tunisia, and (2) of the impact of that situation on (1) UK citizens resident there, and (2) the political stability of that country. [[HL12169](#)]

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to offer bi-lateral (1) financial, and (2) advisory, assistance to Tunisia during 2021. [[HL12170](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Tunisia continues to face security challenges, including from instability in Libya. The UK has a strong partnership with Tunisia on security issues. This has helped strengthen our response to the shared challenges of terrorism and extremism, reducing the threat to British nationals and Tunisians alike. The UK also works closely with Tunisia to support economic and

political reform, strengthening Tunisia's democratic institutions, and helping build the country's resilience.

### **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, how they define unfettered market access for goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. [[HL12153](#)]

**Lord True:** I refer the noble Lady to the answer given to [PQHL11816](#).

As set out on gov.uk, and in the Government's December Command Paper, our unfettered access policy will mean that Northern Ireland businesses can continue to move their goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, and place them on the whole UK market, without new barriers being put in place. That is given full effect through our phased approach. In the first phase, which has been operating since 1 January, goods moving directly from Northern Ireland directly to Great Britain will benefit from unfettered access. There will be no new checks or controls on those movements. And even where goods move indirectly via Ireland, there will be no tariffs on those movements. This will be followed up with a second phase over the course of 2021 which will focus the benefits of unfettered access specifically on genuine Northern Ireland businesses. Alongside that, the UK Internal Market Act 2020 ensures that those businesses will continue to place those goods on the GB market.

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) technology failures, (2) issues with the infrastructure at ports of exit from Great Britain, and (3) the number of veterinarians available, on the timeliness of goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. [[HL12165](#)]

**Lord True:** As outlined in my answer on 14 January, the UK will continue to work with supermarkets and retailers. We have a dedicated group of officials working on this. We are seeking new end-to-end digital systems that will enable goods to be moved in accordance with the protocol in the most streamlined way, and this will be backed by a major injection of UK government funding as part of a broader support package.

### **UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Parliamentary Scrutiny**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enable further Parliamentary scrutiny of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement [[HL12163](#)]

**Lord True:** The Government is committed to facilitating appropriate parliamentary oversight of the UK's relationship with the EU and is carefully considering appropriate scrutiny processes.



The House of Lords scrutinised the TCA further in an extensive debate on 8 January, and Ministers will continue to engage with the appropriate Select Committees in the coming weeks.

### **Ventilation: Coronavirus**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 4 November 2020 (HL9402), and the identification of

new variants of Covid-19, what plans they have to update their guidance for the ventilation of (1) existing, and (2) new, buildings. [[HL12137](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Health and Safety Executive's guidance outlines control measures that should protect against virus transmission and these remain unchanged. Ensuring good ventilation, staying at home, working from home where you can, social distancing, hand washing and cleaning surfaces are all measures that will reduce infection risk.

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