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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....4

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 3 February 2021

Census 2021: England and Wales

[HLWS752]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith MP), has today made the following written statement:

The census for England and Wales is scheduled to take place on 21 March 2021. The census is delivered for the UK Government and the Welsh Government by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), based on its recommendations published in the December 2018 White Paper ‘Help Shape Our Future’ [CM 9745].

The information the census provides on the population, their characteristics, education, religion, ethnicity, working life and health, ensures that decisions made by national and local government, community groups, charities and business, are based on the best information possible. This enables a wide range of services and future planning to better serve communities and individuals across England and Wales.

This will be a digital-first census answered primarily online. The ONS has a target for online completion of 75 per cent. People will be encouraged to respond online if they can on their mobile phones, laptops, PCs or tablets. Help will be available for those who need assistance and members of the public who prefer to complete a paper form will be able to do so.

In the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the safety of the public and the census field force is of the utmost importance to the Government and the ONS. The ONS has designed Census 2021 to be simple, straightforward and safe to complete, to ensure that everyone can be safely counted. Its assessment is that Census 2021 can be carried out safely and securely with the flexibility built into their operation to respond to any changes in risk levels or guidance. The main census field operation will begin only after Census Day. Field staff will never enter people's houses; they will be supplied with PPE, will always be socially distanced and will work in line with all government guidance.

The ONS has already launched its schools campaign; its national media campaign will be launched in the coming weeks telling people that Census 2021 is coming and the benefits of the census. On 22 January, the ONS published a statement on the importance of going ahead with the Census in March 2021 and how they plan to do this safely for the public and census staff. This statement is available on the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/census2021andcoronavirus>.

Census plans have often had to anticipate and respond to events; for example, twenty years ago the census was delivered effectively during the foot and mouth crisis.

Other countries have been able to carry out their census activities during the pandemic, for example, the USA. The ONS have learnt valuable lessons from these experiences.

Following the ONS's advice, the Government is confident that Census 2021 will be successful and provide a wealth of data reflecting the society we live in today, enabling national and local government, community groups, charities and businesses to better serve communities and individuals across England and Wales.

The census in Northern Ireland will take place at the same time as England and Wales; the census in Scotland will take place in March 2022 following the decision taken by the Scottish Government last year.

Correction to Statement HLWS743 – UK Trade Update

[HLWS750]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liz Truss MP) has today made the following statement:

Today, the Government submitted its notification of intent to begin the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) accession process.

This notification of intent comes shortly after the UK celebrates one year since leaving the EU and becoming an independent trading nation.

It is our first step in accession to CPTPP which is part of a big strategic move that aims to deepen the UK's access to fast-growing markets and major economies of the future, including Mexico, Malaysia and Vietnam, for the benefit of UK business.

Joining the £9 trillion free trade area will cut tariffs for vital UK industries like food and drink and cars and create new opportunities for future industries like tech and services, ultimately supporting and creating high-value jobs across the United Kingdom and helping the country build back better from Covid.

Unlike EU membership, joining does not require the UK to cede control over our laws, borders, or money.

The UK would be the first country to take forward accession negotiations since the agreement was formed in 2018, putting us at the front of the queue to become the next full member. A number of other **economies** have also expressed an interest in joining, including Thailand, Taiwan, **Colombia** and South Korea.

Joining is a critical part of the government's wider trade strategy, which aims to deepen links with some of the fastest growing parts of the world, partnering with countries who believe in free and fair trade.

CPTPP is one of the most important free trade areas in the world, accounting for 13% of global GDP in 2019. CPTPP GDP would rise to 16% if the UK were to join.

CPTPP removes tariffs on 95% of goods traded between members and reduces other barriers to trade across four continents. CPTPP countries accounted for £111 billion worth of UK trade in 2019 and the 2016-2019 annual growth in UK trade with CPTPP member countries was 8% a year. Joining now opens the way to further increase trade with these economies, enabling the UK to build back better by bringing more opportunities for our businesses and supporting jobs for our people.

Benefits that membership will bring for businesses include:

- Modern digital trade rules that allow data to flow freely between members, remove unnecessary barriers for businesses, and protect commercial source code and encryption.
- Eliminating tariffs quicker on UK exports including whisky (down from 165% to 0% in Malaysia) and cars (reducing to 0% in Canada by 2022, two years earlier than through the UK-Canada trade deal).
- Rules of Origin that allow content from any country within CPTPP to count as ‘originating’. For example, this would mean that cars made in the UK could use more Japanese-originating car parts, such as batteries.
- Easier travel for businesspeople between CPTPP countries, such as the potential for faster and cheaper visas.

As well as removing trade barriers, CPTPP helps businesses trade easily across borders and keep supply chains open and predictable. Joining CPTPP will help us diversify our supply chains, which could help make us more resilient in an adverse environment such as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Joining CPTPP also creates an opportunity to help level-up the UK. UK regions and nations exported between £1bn and £3.7bn worth of goods to CPTPP countries last year, including £2.4billion worth of exports from Scotland, £2billion from the North West, and £3.1billion from the East Midlands.

CPTPP membership is a key part of the Government’s plan to position the UK at the centre of a network of modern free trade deals that support jobs and drive economic growth at home, while also positioning us as a champion of free trade and reform of the rules-based system abroad.

CPTPP sets modern rules in areas of increasing importance for UK industry and business. This includes strategically important sectors such as digital, financial, professional and business services. Digitally delivered services from the UK to CPTPP members, for example, already hit £18.7billion in 2019, joining now creates an opportunity to unleash forward leaning parts of our economy like this.

Furthermore, membership puts the UK in a prime position to help reshape these global rules in UK strengths like digital and data, and in services.

It would help to secure our future place in the world as a leader in a network of countries committed to free trade and send a powerful signal to the rest of the world that as an independent trading nation the UK will champion free trade, fight protectionism and remove barriers to trade at every opportunity. In doing so, we aim to turn the UK, a newly independent trading nation, into a global hub for businesses and investors wanting to trade with the rest of the world.

Over the last two years, we have engaged with all 11 member countries at both ministerial and official level to discuss UK accession to CPTPP. All CPTPP members have welcomed the UK’s interest in accession.

As part of one of the largest consultation exercises run by the UK Government in 2018, we sought views on potential UK accession to CPTPP and are using these responses to inform our preparations. We are continuing to engage business, civil society, and trade unions on an ongoing basis where they can outline their priorities.

As we have committed, the UK will publish its negotiation objectives, scoping analysis, and consultation response for public and parliamentary scrutiny, and when we are ready to begin formal negotiations.

We will only accede to CPTPP on terms compatible with the UK’s broader interests and domestic priorities.

The Government has been clear that the NHS and the price it pays for drugs is not for sale in any trade negotiations – including CPTPP – and that it will not sign trade deals that compromise the UK’s high environmental protections, animal welfare and food standards.

Non-domestic Rates: Billing Authorities

[HLWS753]

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

Local Government is responsible for the administration of non-domestic rates in England. As part of this function, billing authorities will shortly begin preparing to issue annual rates bills to businesses. Nevertheless, as authorities will be aware, my right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will make the Budget Statement on 3 March 2021. The Budget will set out the next phase of the Government’s plans to tackle the virus, protect jobs and support business. Billing authorities in England should therefore consider issuing business rates bills after the Chancellor has set out his plan at the Budget.

The Government recognises the crucial work local authorities continue to do to support the pandemic response; by their taking this action, it believes it is in the

public interest to avoid any potential confusion for businesses and to avoid the cost of having to re-bill businesses in light of any measures that may be included in the Budget.

Subsidy Control: Designing a New Approach for the UK

[HLWS751]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Kwasi Kwarteng has today made the following statement:

The Government is today publishing a consultation on “Subsidy control – Designing a new approach for the UK”. The consultation period will last for 8 weeks.

Now that we have left the European Union (EU), the UK has the freedom to design our own subsidy control regime that is tailored to the UK’s national interests. The new system, which will be the long-term replacement for the EU’s prescriptive State aid regime, will be designed to be more flexible, agile and tailored to support business growth and innovation as well as maintain a competitive market economy and protect the UK internal market. It will better enable the Government to deliver on key priorities such as levelling up economic growth in the regions, tackling climate change, as well as supporting our economic recovery as we build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Unlike the EU’s State aid rules, which were designed for the particular circumstances of the EU, our own bespoke regime should work for the specific needs of the UK economy whilst also meeting our international commitments. Under the proposed UK system, local authorities, public bodies and the devolved administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast will be empowered to design taxpayer subsidies by following a set of UK-wide principles. These principles will ensure subsidies are designed to deliver strong benefits and good value for money for the UK taxpayer, while being awarded in a timely and effective way.

This consultation invites views from businesses, civil society, think tanks, academics, public authorities, and the devolved administrations to ensure our new approach works for the UK economy and supports businesses and jobs in every part of the country. The Government is seeking views on any additions to the subsidy control principles that will underpin the regime, the appropriate role for an independent body within the new system and how best to ensure that subsidies deliver strong benefits, whilst minimising the risk from potentially harmful and distortive subsidies.

Subject to the outcomes of this consultation, the Government will bring forward primary legislation to establish in domestic law a system of subsidy control that works throughout the UK.

I will place copies of the Consultation in the Libraries of the House, and it can also be found on Gov.uk.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 3 February 2021

Africa: African Union

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of the African Union in Africa. [HL12357]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Partnering with African countries and institutions is at the heart of the Government's approach to Africa. The UK-AU Strategic Partnership, signed in February 2019, is testament to this. I underlined the importance of the UK-AU partnership when I met Chairperson Faki at the Ghanaian Presidential inauguration earlier this month. The AU is increasingly assertive and important on global issues of importance to Africa and the UK including climate change, health, trade and COVID recovery. The AU's 54 UN votes and three non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council also give it influence in multilateral fora.

The UK strongly supports the role of the AU and its sub-regional organisations. The UK's strategic approach to Africa is closely aligned with the AU's 'Agenda 2063' that sets out the framework and objectives for the AU's work. This includes leading on the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), leading mediation efforts in Sudan and supporting security in the Sahel. The AU is a champion of continental trade, as shown by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which began trading on 1 January 2021. The AU and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have led the continent's response to Covid-19. We are supporting this effort through the provision of technical advice (Public Health England) and up to £20m. The AU is also a continental leader on climate change. We want to bolster this leadership through the UK-AU Green Recovery Action Plan, signed in November 2019 by the AU Commission and UK COP26 Ambassador for Africa, Sir Nicholas Kay.

Apprentices: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Aberdare*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of apprentices in England leaving apprenticeships early during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of (1) furlough, and (2) redundancy, broken down by industry sector. [HL12327]

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

We have introduced flexibilities to enable furloughed apprentices to continue with their apprenticeship training and undertake end-point assessments wherever possible.

We have also taken significant steps to support apprentices who suffer redundancy.

We launched the Redundancy Support Service for Apprentices which provides clear, accessible advice and guidance to individuals, as well as a vacancy sharing scheme to help apprentices find new opportunities with employers. Over 1,200 employers have submitted opportunities to the vacancy sharing service for redundant apprentices. We have also amended legislation to enable more apprentices to complete their apprenticeship in the event of redundancy.

Where it is not possible and practicable for the apprentice to continue training, a break in learning can be used to allow the apprentice to return to learning at a future date. Our guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response>.

The department does not collect data on furloughed and redundant apprentices by industry sector.

From 30 July 2020, employers have been able to record on the apprenticeship service if an apprenticeship has ended due to a redundancy. Our collected data on 1 December 2020 shows that 1,360 apprenticeships have ended due to redundancy since August 2020. This figure does not include all apprenticeship redundancies as not all non-levy employers are currently using the service. Further breakdown of data can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>.

Apprentices: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide practical support for employers to ensure racial and ethnic diversity amongst their Higher Level apprentices. [HL12390]

Baroness Berridge: Apprenticeships benefit people of all ages and backgrounds, and we want to ensure that more people from underrepresented backgrounds can undertake them, particularly those that offer higher wage returns and progression opportunities. We are pleased to have seen positive outcomes in the representation of people from a BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) background in apprenticeships, with a particular increase in the proportion of higher-level apprenticeship starts. In the 2019/20 academic year, 15.5% of higher apprenticeship starts were by those from BAME backgrounds, compared to 12.1% in the 2014/15 academic year.

We have worked with some of the country's most influential employers through our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network to promote best practice in recruiting and supporting apprentices from diverse backgrounds. We are building on this work to ensure that we continue to see improved representation of BAME people starting apprenticeships, especially in sectors that carry historic under-representation. We will work closely

with these sectors to understand why this is the case, and to co-develop targeted solutions. We will also be working extensively with employers, with a particular focus on SMEs, to understand what barriers they face in taking on apprentices and how they can support apprentices from different backgrounds.

Asylum: Hong Kong

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum applications made by Hong Kong residents were (1) accepted, and (2) rejected, in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, and (c) 2021 to date. [[HL12398](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Data on the number of asylum applications and initial decisions on applications are published in table Asy_D01 and Asy_D02 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets, Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which include a breakdown for year and nationality.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data include up to September 2020.

Table showing the initial decisions on Hong Kong asylum applications for 2019 and 2020 (Jan-Sep).

Year	2019	2020 (Jan-Sep)
Granted Asylum	0	1
Refused	2	0

Notes:

- i) Includes main applicants only.
- ii) Initial decisions are based on date of decision and do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. For example, a decision in 2019 may relate to an application made in 2018.
- iii) The published data relate to nationality, rather than country of residence. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

Immigration Statistics will be updated on February 25th which will include data for 2020 Q4; further future releases will include data for quarters of 2021.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. immigration - Research and statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Asylum and Resettlement Datasets [Copy of asylum-summary-sep-2020-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-21/HL12398>

Aviation: Climate Change

Asked by *Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the International Civil Aviation Organisation about the inclusion of indirect non-CO2 climate impacts of aviation, such as climate forcing caused by condensation trails, in the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation. [[HL12531](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Currently, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) only applies to CO2 emissions. Due to the uncertainties surrounding aviation's non-CO2 climate impacts, ICAO does not include these in its climate policies.

The UK continues to negotiate in ICAO for increased environmental ambition and supports continued work on aviation's non-CO2 climate impacts and possible mitigation measures, taking into account their trade-offs with CO2. As a UN specialised agency, ICAO's policies are the result of extensive technical work and negotiation between its Contracting States.

Asked by *Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what analysis they have carried out into the trade-off between additional CO2 emissions generated by rerouting aircraft for contrail prevention and the climate mitigation benefits of condensation trail prevention. [[HL12533](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Alongside "Aviation 2050 – The Future of UK Aviation: A Consultation", the Government published a short paper commissioned from Professor David Lee of Manchester Metropolitan University entitled "The current state of scientific understanding of the non-CO2 effects of aviation on climate".

This paper makes clear that contrail avoidance through rerouting would require accurate meteorological prediction of potential contrail-forming areas and an agreed metric by which to ascertain that the flight's total climate impact was being reduced. Neither of these are available today but the Government continues to follow developments closely.

The Government has not commissioned any further analysis into the climate trade-offs associated with rerouting aircraft for contrail prevention, though we continue to keep the issue under close review and in this vein I refer the Noble Lord to the answer I gave on 22 December 2020 to Question UIN HL11424.

Aviation: Volcanoes

Asked by *Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what lessons they have learned from the aftermath of the explosion of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland on 14 April 2010 and the consequent ash cloud, in particular in relation to aviation; and what measures they have put in place in response to the impact of that eruption. [HL12528]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The UK is prepared to deal with a significant Icelandic volcanic eruption. Since 2010, the Department for Transport, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), NATS and industry have developed a bespoke response guidance, which is regularly exercised and updated. In addition, new radar and monitoring equipment has been established in Iceland; the Met Office has enhanced its ash-modelling capability; and revised operating procedures for aircraft flight in ash-contaminated airspace have been agreed.

Bail: Reform

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 14 January (HLWS704), when their proposed reforms to the pre-charge bail process will be implemented. [HL12305]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government will be legislating to bring in pre-charge bail reforms at the earliest opportunity.

During the passage of any relevant legislation through both Houses, the Home Office will continue to work closely with the policing sector and those involved in the pre-charge bail process to ensure that any new measures can be understood and adopted, and that sufficient time is given for implementation.

Bankruptcy: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to create databases setting out the number of (a) personal, and (b) corporate, bankruptcies caused by the impact of COVID-19; and (2) to publish these numbers at monthly intervals. [HL12388]

Lord Callanan: Whilst some of this information is already collected, such as the causes of personal insolvency and some corporate insolvencies that are dealt with by the Official Receiver, these only represent a small fraction of the total number of corporate and personal insolvency cases and would not therefore be representative.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU Defence Policy

Asked by *Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the annual cost of the UK's participation in the EU-led military mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; and how that participation was funded. [HL12647]

Baroness Goldie: The UK's participation in the EU-led military mission, Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended on 31 December 2020. The UK's participation in that mission had been funded by the Cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

In financial year 2019-20 the cost of UK participation in Operation Althea was £1,439,092.98.

Brain: Tumours

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to meet any funding shortfall as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on charitable donations for research projects into brain tumours. [HL12351]

Lord Callanan: The Government demonstrated its ambitions for research, committing £14.6 billion to R&D next year. This funding will support the life sciences sector within which Medical Research Charities operate alongside other research areas including brain tumours. BEIS and DHSC regularly discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on charity-funded research with the Association of Medical Research Charities and we are continuing to engage with them.

British Virgin Islands: Politics and Government

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the announcement of an independent inquiry into the governance of the British Virgin Islands, what plans they have (1) to support the expansion of its terms of reference to include, and (2) to support any consideration of, the Islands' role in global tax avoidance and money laundering as part of the inquiry. [HL12387]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Commission of Inquiry was established by the Governor of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) to investigate specific allegations where such an investigation would be in the interests of public welfare in the BVI. The Governor set the Terms of Reference as:

- to establish whether there is information that corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty in relation to officials, whether statutory, elected or public may have taken place in recent years;
- if there is such information, to consider the conditions which allowed that corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty to take place and whether they may still exist;
- if appropriate, to make independent recommendations with a view to improving the standards of governance, to give the people of the Virgin Islands confidence that government is working in a fair, transparent and proper manner;
- if appropriate, to make independent recommendations with a view to improving the operation of the agencies of law enforcement and justice;
- should the Commissioner at any time consider that a change to these terms of reference would be beneficial to public welfare in achieving the objectives of the Inquiry, to inform the then Governor of the Virgin Islands at the first opportunity; and
- to prepare and submit a written report to the then Governor of the Virgin Islands within six (6) months from the commencement of the Inquiry, making all such recommendations as seem fit provided that the Governor may extend the period for submission of the report to a period no longer than 9 months from the date of the Inquiry.

It will be for the Commissioner, Sir Gary Hickinbottom, to determine how best to carry out these Terms.

Bus Services: Concessions

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to include a review of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme in their forthcoming National Bus Strategy; and what steps they will take to ensure that the Scheme is fair (1) to operators, and (2) to local authorities. [[HL12695](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government remains committed to the Concessionary Travel System and the National Bus Strategy we are developing. The strategy will be launched in the coming weeks and will include an approach to thinking about how the scheme will best serve users in the future. We will continue to work closely with Local Authorities and bus operators as further details are developed and once the Strategy is published.

Carillion: Insolvency

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what fees have been paid to PriceWaterhouseCoopers for acting as special managers assisting the official receiver in relation to the liquidation of Carillion. [[HL12384](#)]

Lord Callanan: The remuneration paid to PriceWaterhouseCoopers as special managers assisting the Official Receiver in the Carillion liquidations is £59,593,062 (net of VAT) for the period from 15 January 2018 to 21 January 2021.

Children's Social Care Independent Review

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria were used in the appointment of the chair of the review of children's social care, announced on 15 January. [[HL12393](#)]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the chair of the review of children's social care, announced on 15 January, was appointed; what is the duration of this appointment; and what is the total budget allocated to the review. [[HL12394](#)]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) organisations, and (2) individuals, were (a) invited to, and (b) attended, the launch of the review of children's social care on 15 January. [[HL12395](#)]

Baroness Berridge: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, asked Josh MacAlister to lead the independent review of children's social care based on his understanding of the challenges facing the system and his experience of implementing innovative solutions. It is common practice for independent reviewers to be directly appointed based on their expertise.

The department will set out the expected timescales for the review in due course. As part of business planning and setting budgets for the financial year 2021/2022, the department will work with the lead reviewer to ensure there are sufficient resources available to undertake the review.

The event to launch the review was attended by over 50 people from over 25 organisations, as well as Josh MacAlister, the reviewer, and my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education. These organisations are: Action for Children, Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board, Association of Directors of Children's Service, Barnardo's, Become, BBC, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, Cardiff University, Care Leaver Covenant Board, Chair of Child Safeguarding Panel, Office of the Children's Commissioner, Children's Society, Coram, Council for Disabled Children, Daily Telegraph, Department for Education, Early Intervention Foundation, Family Justice Observatory, Family Rights Group, Financial Times, ITV, LEAP Academy, Local Government Association, National Children's Bureau, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Ofsted, Social Work England, What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, Sky News and Social Work England. A number of

individuals who were invited to and attended the event have lived experience of children's social care. Representatives from other organisations were invited but did not attend. These are: Youth Endowment Fund, Kent University, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Reach Academy.

China: Uighurs

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the US Secretary of State's description on 19 January of the government of China's treatment of Uighurs as a genocide. [HL12343]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will work closely with the incoming US administration to tackle the gross human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang, and continue to lead international condemnation of these violations. On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a robust package of measures to ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang. However, it is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court.

Community Transport

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make (1) regulatory, or (2) licensing, changes to improve the viability of community transport. [HL12696]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government believes that community transport operators provide vital services that encourage growth and reduce isolation by linking people with their communities, helping take them to shops, work, school, and medical appointments. The Department appreciates and supports the continued efforts to provide these vital services, especially during such unprecedented times.

The Government recognises this vital work and has provided £30 million of funding to improve current services and restore lost services affected by Covid-19.

We committed to pay existing Bus Service Operator Grant funding at pre-Covid level to services run under section 19 and section 22 permits even though not all services may run during the outbreak.

The Government is set to publish its National Bus Strategy. The Strategy will focus on the needs of passengers so that more people have access to bus services that meet their needs. The Government recognises the importance of good transport links for the sustainability and independence of communities, particularly in rural areas, and the Strategy will set out how national and local government, and the private sector will come together to support this.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities and the community transport sector when lockdown measures start to be lifted to understand what issues and risks are raised, and how these could be addressed.

Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that employees in the UK have the same standard of legal protection as employees in the EU. [HL12392]

Lord Callanan: We made sure workers' rights were protected as the U.K. left the EU and are committed to protecting and enhancing workers' rights going forward. As an independent, sovereign nation we are now ideally placed to capitalise on the wealth of opportunities available to us. We want to go further than ever before to uphold workers' rights, support UK businesses and ultimately boost productivity in the UK.

Our high standards have never been dependent on EU membership, and the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation agreement recognises the importance of these employment standards, whilst retaining flexibility for us to tailor our approach to what works for the UK and maintaining our strong levels of protection.

Coronavirus: Children

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children experiencing long-term effects of COVID-19. [HL12735]

Lord Bethell: On 21 January 2021, the Office for National Statistics published data which estimated that, in the week commencing 27 December 2020, there were 301,000 people in England, including children, who were showing post COVID-19 symptoms which had persisted for between five and 12 weeks.

The same data showed that 22.1% of all people testing positive for COVID-19 experienced symptoms for a period of five weeks or longer. For children aged between two and 11 years old, the proportion was lower at 12.9% and 14.5% amongst children aged between 12 and 16 years old.

Coronavirus: Hospital Beds

Asked by Lord Robathan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Bethell on 1 December (HL Deb, cols 717–21), how many beds are currently occupied in each of the NHS Nightingale Hospitals. [HL11371]

Lord Bethell: Nightingale hospitals are activated based on local clinical decisions in response to patient demand. The National Health Service will flex Nightingale

capacity to address demand as has been done throughout the pandemic. As at week commencing 18 January 2021, the NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter is providing inpatient services to COVID-19 patients from 48 beds. The NHS Nightingale Hospital North West and the NHS Nightingale Hospital London are providing ‘step-down’ care to non-covid-19 patients and provide 36 and 64 beds respectively. Other Nightingale sites at Harrogate and Bristol are supporting NHS elective and diagnostic services but are not providing inpatient services.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total number of (1) Oxford/AstraZeneca, and (2) Pfizer/BioNTech, COVID-19 vaccine vials allocated to the UK held in stock in each month in (a) 2019, and (b) 2020. [HL12335]

Lord Callanan: We have been monitoring the requirements across the supply chain from supplier through to patient for some time. There are clear supply chain plans in place for both the supply and onward deployment of all vaccine candidates. This includes materials, manufacturing, transportation, storage and distribution.

Vaccines and vials are a precious resource in very high demand across the world and therefore for security reasons it is not possible to provide detail about the size of our supplies and exact detail about future deliveries. It should be noted that the UK has a sufficient number of glass vials available, due to orders already placed.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the details of the contract they have with AstraZeneca for the supply of 30 million COVID-19 vaccine doses and vials; if so, (a) when, and (b) how; and if not, why not. [HL12339]

Lord Callanan: Contracts between the Government and companies developing and producing COVID-19 vaccines will be published in due course.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the details of their contracts with (1) Pfizer/BioNTech for the supply of 30 million mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, (2) Janssen for the supply of 30 million doses of the AD26COV25 vaccine, (3) GSK Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses of the proton adjuvanted vaccine, (4) Novavax for 60 million doses of the NVXCOV2373 vaccines, and (5) Valneva for 60 million doses of the VLA2001 vaccine; if so, (a) when, and (b) how; and if not, why not. [HL12340]

Lord Callanan: Contracts between the Government and companies developing and producing COVID-19 vaccines will be published in due course.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered (1) to mass-vaccination hubs, (2) to GP surgeries, and (3) to community pharmacies. [HL12379]

Lord Callanan: The UK COVID-19 Vaccines Delivery Plan sets out how the Government will work with the NHS, devolved administrations, local councils, and the Armed Forces to deliver the largest vaccination programme in British history.

As of 3 February, over ten million people across the UK have been vaccinated with the first dose of the vaccine. We continue to work to meet our target of vaccinating all four priority groups, as advised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, by 15 February 2021.

Vaccines are a precious resource in very high demand across the world; therefore, for security reasons it is not possible to provide detail about the size of our supplies and exact detail about deliveries.

Counter-terrorism and MI5

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the responsibilities are of (1) MI5, and (2) Counter Terrorism Policing, in relation to the surveillance and monitoring of political campaigns and campaigners. [HL12506]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All MI5 activity is conducted in relation to its statutory functions as set out in Section 1 of the Security Service Act 1989.

The Director General MI5 has a statutory responsibility to ensure that MI5 remains apolitical, the government of the day cannot instruct MI5 to perform any task for party political reasons. MI5 only investigates those individuals it considers may be a threat.

Similarly, CT policing's remit is to protect the UK from terrorism and associated threats such as espionage. Responsibility for public-order policing – including in relation to protest groups and the facilitation of lawful protest – sits with individual forces, supported by the National Police Coordination Centre.

Customs: Recruitment

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many new customs agents have been recruited to staff the UK's borders in the light of the UK's departure from the EU; and what is their eventual target for the recruitment of such agents. [HL12513]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Since 2018-19, Border Force has been building its staffing to meet the requirements of exiting the European Union and the end of the transition period.

By the end of the transition period, over 1,350 permanent staff were in post. Whilst recruitment and training continues, Border Force is also using contingency resources to provide additional short-term coverage where required.

Border Force anticipates requiring a total of 2,000 additional operational staff by July 2021, when full customs import controls are implemented on movements of goods from the EU to Great Britain but continues to keep the position under review based on operational requirements.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to launch an inquiry into whether there is any correlation between employment practices at Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency offices in Swansea and the number of employees in those offices who have contracted COVID-19. [[HL12669](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The safety of staff is the top priority for the Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Extensive safety measures have been put in place across the DVLA's sites, in accordance with all relevant Welsh government advice. These include reconfiguring all sites, dividing floors into zones with no mixing of staff between zones, enhanced cleaning, social distancing, and the leasing of an additional building space, which is now in use.

The DVLA has implemented all recommendations from the local environmental health team and Public Health Wales and continues to work closely with these partners.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Remote Working

Asked by Baroness Wheatcroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the policy on working from home which is applied at the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency office in Cardiff. [[HL12688](#)]

Asked by Baroness Wheatcroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the staff at the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency office in Cardiff have been required to attend the office during the period when Public Health England COVID-19 guidance has been to work from home where possible. [[HL12689](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Since the start of the pandemic, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has put in place a range of measures to minimise the number of people working in its offices in the Swansea campus at any one time.

Around 2,000 of the DVLA's over 6,000 staff are currently working from home, the majority of whom have done so since the first lockdown in March 2020. Staff in operational roles that cannot be carried out from home are on site, with around 2,000 on the campus at any one time, as the DVLA operates shifts and many staff work part time.

Elections: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of local authorities (1) to support the administration of elections scheduled to take place during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) to enable the provision of staff to administer such elections on 6 May. [[HL12344](#)]

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.

Eurostar: Subsidies

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the outcome of their discussions with the government of France about the financial support required by Eurostar whilst restrictions to address the COVID-19 pandemic are in place. [[HL12670](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Ministers and officials, working with other Government Departments, have engaged extensively with Eurostar since March 2020 in relation to their financial situation.

Commercially sensitive discussions are ongoing with both Eurostar and the French Government to consider all commercial financing options available to the company, which include drawing on existing support schemes where eligible and appropriate. As these discussions are ongoing, it would not be appropriate to say any more at this stage.

Extinction Rebellion

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Extinction Rebellion is categorised as a Left, Anarchist and Single-Issue Terrorism organisation. [[HL12509](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: HMG do not currently categorise Extinction Rebellion as a terrorist organisation.

Frontline

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much funding the charity Frontline received from the Department for Education in each of the last five financial years. [HL12396]

Baroness Berridge: The charity, Frontline, received funding from the department to deliver the Frontline programme, which trains graduates to become social workers, and the Firstline programme, which supports the development of social worker managers. In the last 5 financial years, they received the below amounts (rounded):

- £16 million in 2020/21 (year to December).
- £20 million in 2019/20.
- £15 million in 2018/19.
- £13 million in 2017/18.
- £8 million in 2016/17.

Ghana: Elections

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the validity of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Ghana in December 2020. [HL12358]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK welcomes the peaceful conduct of the Presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana on 7 December 2020. Ghana continues to provide regional leadership in upholding strong democratic traditions. Alongside other international observers, the British High Commission in Accra deployed observation teams across the country and noted that the vote was calm and orderly. We are aware of reports that the opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), has contested the results of the election. As with all democracies, any candidates or parties seeking to challenge the result should do so peacefully through the correct legal channels.

On 8 January 2021, the Minister for Africa attended the inauguration of President Nana Akufo-Addo. The Minister had the opportunity to meet with the President to underline the UK's enthusiasm to continue our strong partnership, built on our Commonwealth ties, shared values, our people-to-people links and a common interest in promoting stability, democracy and prosperity in West Africa.

Government Equalities Office: Equality Hub

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the relationship between the Government Equalities Office and the Equality Hub. [HL12812]

Baroness Berridge: The new Equality Hub, in the Cabinet Office, brings together the Disability Unit, Government Equalities Office, Race Disparity Unit and, from 1 April, the sponsorship of, and secretariat to, the Social Mobility Commission. The Government Equalities Office's remit related to gender equality, LGBT rights and the overall framework of equality legislation for Great Britain. The Equality Hub reports to Ministers who have other portfolios outside of the Cabinet Office, led by the Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss.

The Equality Hub has a key role in driving Government priorities on equality and opportunity. The Hub has a particular focus on improving the quality of evidence and data about disparities and the types of barriers different people face, ensuring that fairness is at the heart of everything we do.

Key to this is looking beyond a focus solely on statutory protected characteristics to ensure we understand how different issues interact, including in socio-economic and geographic inequality. In this way, the Equality Hub is key to driving progress on the Government's commitment to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all.

Infectious Diseases

Asked by Lord Grade of Yarmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for a single holistic infections strategy that addresses antimicrobial resistance, sepsis, future infections threats, and pandemic preparedness. [HL9916]

Lord Bethell: The Government has assessed the case for a single holistic infections strategy and agrees with the need to closely align work on antimicrobial resistance, sepsis, future infections threats and pandemic preparedness. This has culminated in the publication of Public Health England's PHE Infectious Diseases Strategy 2020-2025: Addressing urgent threats in the 21st century outlining priorities to reduce the risk of and burden from all infectious diseases including resistant infections, infections that can lead to sepsis, endemic infections, vaccine-preventable infections, and infections of pandemic potential, and bringing them together as a single strategic framework. A copy of the Strategy is attached.

While the Infectious Diseases Strategy does not address sepsis strategy directly, it is critical that our work on sepsis and anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is closely aligned. Sepsis forms an important part of NHS England and NHS Improvement's AMR programme, which will

continue to drive improvement in the prevention and management of infection and optimal antibiotic use.

Land Drainage: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Carrington

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the replacement of field drains will qualify for support under the new Environmental Land Management schemes. [HL12341]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We are working with stakeholders and end users to determine the specific land management actions that will be paid for under the Environmental Land Management scheme. We will set out more details on this later this year. 'The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024' set out examples of the types of actions that we envisage paying for under the scheme.

Libya: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the evacuation of foreign military forces from Libya began on 23 January, as scheduled in the ceasefire agreement of 23 October 2020; and if they have made no such assessment, what assessment they have made of how this process of evacuation may begin. [HL12350]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK fully supports the ceasefire brokered by the UN in October 2020, has consistently called for its implementation, and is closely monitoring the situation. The UK, jointly with partners, recently urged Libyan political leaders to take all necessary measures to accelerate the implementation of the ceasefire, prioritising the opening of the Coastal Road between Abu Grein and Sirte. The UK continues to press all external actors to withdraw their foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya, as required by the ceasefire agreement and to abide by the UN arms embargo. There is no military solution to the challenges that Libya faces.

Malawi: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political situation in Malawi. [HL12356]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is encouraged by the political situation in Malawi. Malawians can be rightly proud of their commitment to resolving political differences through their country's democratic institutions and processes, including in the aftermath of the contested 2019 Presidential elections, which resulted in fresh elections in June 2020. When the Minister for Africa visited Malawi in October 2020, he had the opportunity to congratulate President Chakwera and Vice President Chilima on Malawi's peaceful

transition of power, and to explore areas where the UK can support the government's planned reform agenda, including on anti-corruption, long-term economic development and supporting the poorest.

The UK and Malawi share an historically close relationship, with strong people-to-people links. We have a long-standing development relationship with Malawi, and a warm and encouraging partnership on areas of mutual interest. As a long term friend of Malawi, we look forward to working with President Chakwera's Government to tackle the issues that matter to all Malawians.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 22 January (HL12046), what assessment they have made of the reasons for the "poor diagnosis recording in the Mental Health Services Data Set" on incidence of anorexia nervosa among young and adolescent girls under the age of 18 years old; and what steps they are taking to address any such poor diagnosis recording. [HL12584]

Lord Bethell: Diagnosis recording within the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) is not mandatory and not all providers submit this information. The recording of diagnoses within the MHSDS is entered using clinical coding which some providers may be unable to do for various reasons. Additionally, a diagnosis may not be confirmed immediately for some patients. There are also other data quality issues around non-completion. Month on month reporting by providers can also be irregular. We are working with NHS Digital, providers and partner organisations to address these issues.

Mental Health: Children and Young People

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 22 January (HL12047), whether they collect data on the level of self-harm amongst young and adolescent boys outside of mental health hospitals; if so, what was the such level since 23 March 2020; and if not, why not. [HL12586]

Lord Bethell: NHS Digital separately collects data though hospital episode statistics on the number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances due to intentional self-harm and the number of finished admission episodes with a secondary diagnosis of intentional self-harm for male patients under the age of 18 years old. Between 23 March 2020 and 30 November 2020 there were 4,011 A&E attendances due to intentional self-harm for male patients under the age of 18 years old and 2,022 finished admission episodes with a secondary diagnosis of intentional self-harm for male

patients under the age of 18 years old. This information only represents activity serious enough to require hospital treatment.

Minimum Wage

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of workers are paid less than the statutory minimum wage. [HL12383]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to ensuring employers correctly pay the National Minimum Wage (NMW). We have more than doubled the budget for the NMW enforcement and compliance, rising to £27.5 million for 20/21, up from £13.2 million in 2015/16. In 2019/20, HM Revenue & Customs identified £20.8 million in arrears for over 263,000 workers and issued just under 1,000 penalties totalling £18.5 million to non-compliant employers.

The ONS' Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides our primary estimate of the proportion of workers who are paid below the statutory minimum wage. The Low Pay Commission (LPC) published estimates in their 2020 report, which found that 347,000 workers (or 1.4% of all jobs) were underpaid the relevant minimum wage in April 2020. This excludes individuals who were furloughed, as they would not have been working at that time. The LPC figure follows our 2019 estimate, where underpayment was estimated to be approximately 408,000, equivalent to 1.4% of all jobs.

We will publish further information on minimum wage underpayment in due course, in our annual enforcement report.

Mortgages: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on securing mortgages for those who have accessed their COVID-19 support schemes. [HL12391]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The pricing and availability of mortgage loans remain a bespoke commercial decision for mortgage lenders and the Government does not seek to intervene. Although the Treasury sets the legal framework for the regulation of financial services, it does not have investigative or prosecuting powers of its own and is not able to intervene in individual cases.

It remains important that lenders are able to carry out the proper checks to ensure that mortgage applicants are not lent to in an unaffordable way, especially if for example a borrower's income has changed as a result of Coronavirus.

Motorways: Safety

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the safety of smart motorways. [HL12671]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 25 January 2021, the Secretary of State held a meeting with Highways England to discuss progress on the *Smart Motorway Safety Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan*. He has asked for a report setting out progress in delivering the 18-point Action Plan and identifying actions that can be delivered early by 12 March 2021, so any accelerated works can be rapidly put in place.

North Africa: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any of the (1) financial, and (2) advisory, aid assistance they give to (a) Morocco, (b) Algeria, and (c) Tunisia, is targeted at youth unemployment. [HL12372]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK does not provide budget support to Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia, but it does provide some Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding through trusted implementing partners. Much of this assistance is focussed on improving the economic conditions for job creation in the region, through facilitating greater exporting and inward investment (Tunisia), supporting public administration and state owned enterprise reform (Tunisia) and improving financial regulation and infrastructure (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) to increase access to finance for micro, small and medium enterprises.

In recent years the UK has also supported the formulation of Algeria's Vision 2035 for a prosperous economy and technical advice on aspects of Morocco's business environment. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact is currently undertaking a review of UK government work pertaining to youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa region, which is due to be published later in 2021.

Pensions: Tax Allowances

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals who are enrolled on an approved pension scheme do not receive tax relief on their contributions. [HL12385]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC estimates that 1.3m individuals earning below the personal allowance in 2017-18 made workplace pension contributions via Real Time Information (RTI) using relief at source arrangements. The personal allowance in 2017-18 was £11,500.

HMRC's Survey of Personal Income (SPI) and administrative data was used to produce the estimates. The 2017-18 SPI data (published in March 2020) is the latest year available.

Postal Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the performance of Royal Mail in providing a universal postal service during the COVID-19 pandemic; how many instances they have recorded of a failure to provide such a service in specific areas; and (1) where, and (2) when, any such failures have occurred. [HL12345]

Lord Callanan: Royal Mail, a private company, has well-established contingency plans to mitigate disruption to postal services which are overseen by Ofcom, the independent regulator responsible for monitoring the delivery of the universal postal service.

In its statement of 14 January 2021, Ofcom recognises that the pandemic is an emergency under its regulatory framework and that it is continuing to monitor Royal Mail's performance carefully, remaining in close contact with the company to ensure it is providing the best service it can to customers. The full statement is available on Ofcom's website.

Railways: Freight

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) electrification, (2) junction improvements, (3) improved signalling, and (4) new terminal facilities, for rail freight networks are assessed through (a) the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, or (b) the Governance for Railway Investment Projects scheme and its successor; and if so, how, in each case, they are assessed as priorities by comparison with improvements directed at passenger services. [HL12346]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) is the Government's primary mechanism for progressing and funding enhancements for both passenger and freight services in England and Wales.

Investment in electrification, junctions and signalling improvements require the development of a business case and are assessed for contribution to the Government's objectives as well as their affordability, value for money and their deliverability. Each scheme is assessed on its own merits.

By contrast, investments in new freight terminal and interchange facilities are wholly led by the private sector, responding to commercial demands. Freight Operating Companies work closely with the infrastructure manager, Network Rail, to secure appropriate connections onto the railway network and paths for services to operate.

Sexual Offences

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the change in rates of sexual abuse by women reported to police, and (2) the impact of reports of sexual abuse committed by transgender women in contributing to any such change; and what plans they have, if any, to undertake further research into these issues. [HL12365]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Information on trends in sexual offences recorded by the police is routinely published by the Office for National Statistics. The most recent publication, Crime in England and Wales: Year ending June 2020, is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2020>.

Figures for the year ending December 2020 are due to be published on the 3 February. Information on sexual abuse committed by transgender women is not held centrally.

We know that sexual abuse disproportionately affects women and girls. We are currently running a Call for Evidence which is available on GOV.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-against-women-and-girls-vawg-call-for-evidence>) and will help inform our forthcoming Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, due for publication this Spring.

Terrorism

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the definition of Left, Anarchist and Single-Issue Terrorism, as referred to on the MI5 website. [HL12507]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our definition of terrorism is set out in section one of the Terrorism Act 2000. It defines terrorism as: the use or threat of action; which is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation, or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and which is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

The action used or threatened must involve serious violence against a person, serious damage to property, endangering a person's life, creating a serious risk to public health or safety, or the intention to interfere with or seriously disrupt an electronic system. This definition is threat agnostic and kept under regular review to ensure it remains fit for purpose, including by the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.

It is a matter for the intelligence agencies and police to determine how the definition is applied in counter-terrorism investigations.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement from the UNHCR on 19 January concerning the impact of the conflict in Tigray on Eritrean refugee camps in the region. [HL12328]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We note the statement from the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on 19 January, and welcome the news that they have regained access to the Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps in Tigray. It is clear that the conflict in Tigray has had significant consequences and has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, internally and externally, as well as adversely impacting upon those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance. We have raised our concerns with Ministers in both the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments, making clear the overriding need to protect civilians and adhere to international law and international human rights law.

UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are working hard to deliver support in challenging circumstances, including shelter, water and healthcare. We continue to work with the UN to promote and monitor access and the delivery of humanitarian support to all those who need it, including to civilians in contested areas. The UK continues to press, at the highest levels, for sustained, free and unfettered humanitarian access across Tigray, so that the UNHCR can uphold its mandate towards refugees.

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the damage to cultural monuments and artefacts caused by the conflict in Tigray; and whether they intend to ask UNESCO for its response to any such assessment. [HL12329]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by further reports from Tigray of attacks on places of worship as well as damage to cultural monuments and artefacts. An ongoing lack of access to the Tigray region means that it remains difficult to confirm these reports. We will continue to work with partners to seek further information. We continue to urge all parties to allow unfettered humanitarian access, a point the Foreign Secretary discussed with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit on 22 January.

Tunisia: Politics and Government

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political situation in Tunisia. [HL12355]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Ten years after the fall of President Ben Ali, Tunisia continues to consolidate its transition to democracy. The UK works closely with Tunisia to support political and economic reform, bolster

democratic institutions, and build the country's resilience, as part of a broad and growing partnership.

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current (1) political, and (2) security, situation in Tunisia. [HL12362]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Ten years after the fall of President Ben Ali, Tunisia continues to consolidate its transition to democracy. The UK works closely with Tunisia to support political and economic reform, bolster democratic institutions, and build the country's resilience. The UK also has a strong partnership with Tunisia on security issues, which has helped strengthen our response to the shared challenges of terrorism and extremism, and to work together to address the conflict in Libya.

Uganda: Development Aid

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when their High Commissioner to Uganda last met (1) Bobi Wine, and (2) President Museveni; what assessment they have made of continuing to provide any Overseas Development Assistance to Uganda; and what plans they have to make representations to the government of Uganda about (a) the release from house arrest of Bobi Wine, and (b) ending any harassment of opposition parties. [HL12333]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following the arrest of Robert Kyagulanyi on 18 November 2020 which sparked violent protests in Uganda, the Minister for Africa spoke to the Ugandan Foreign Minister, Sam Kutesa, on 26 November 2020 and raised the UK's concerns about the violence that took place. The Minister for Africa sought reassurances that Ugandan security forces would show restraint and raised the importance of the rights of Ugandans to freely express their views. Ahead of the elections, the Minister for Africa spoke to Foreign Minister Kutesa again on 12 January 2021 and expressed the importance of independent observation of the elections on 14 January.

Following the elections on 14 January 2021, the Minister for Africa set out in a statement our concerns on 17 January 2021 about the overall political climate surrounding the elections and has urged the Government of Uganda to meet its international human rights commitments. The treatment of Robert Kyagulanyi has been unacceptable and the Minister for Africa expressed his concerns about this in a tweet on 19 January 2021. The Minister for Africa welcomes the High Court of Uganda's decision of 25 January 2021 that the detention of Robert Kyagulanyi was unconstitutional and that these restrictions have been lifted. The British High Commission Kampala pressed the Ugandan authorities to end these unacceptable restrictions on his liberty. As a long-standing partner to Uganda, and a steadfast advocate for Ugandan democracy, the United Kingdom will continue to follow post-election developments closely.

Uganda: Elections

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Minister for Africa on 16 January about the presidential elections in Uganda, what practical assistance they are offering to ensure that concerns about the political climate and the electoral process in Uganda are investigated and resolved appropriately; and what representations they have made to the government of Uganda about the need for that government to meet its international human rights commitments. [[HL12364](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our High Commission in Kampala has been consulting with the diplomatic community, civil society actors, other international observers, and the Government of Uganda, to ensure we have a comprehensive and accurate picture of the elections. We deployed 51 Election Observers across Uganda on election day, covering over 120 polling stations. Following analysis from the observer missions, we have raised our concerns with the appropriate authorities. Through our lobbying, including at senior levels of government and through our public messaging, we continue to urge the Government of Uganda to respond to any concerns raised and to meet their international human rights commitments. The treatment of opposition figures post-election, including Robert Kyagulanyi, has been unacceptable and the Minister for Africa expressed his concerns about this in his tweet on 19 January. The Minister for Africa welcomes the High Court of Uganda's decision of 25 January that the detention of Robert Kyagulanyi was unconstitutional and unlawful and that these restrictions are now lifted. This is a positive step towards removing the restrictions on political freedoms of Kyagulanyi and the UK will continue to raise these issues with the Government of Uganda.

Universal Credit: Young People

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Learning and Work Institute Unleashing talent: Levelling up opportunity for young people, published in December 2020; and what plans they have to create a youth allowance within Universal Credit. [[HL12389](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Thank you for highlighting the report by the Learning and Work Institute Unleashing Talent.

While there are currently no plans to create a youth allowance within Universal Credit, as part of the Plan for Jobs, DWP is providing a range of support for young people, in collaboration with the Department for Education, schools and other partners. This will mean whatever their needs young people can find the right

support, education or training that can lead to sustained employment.

Our package of support and opportunities includes the Youth Offer, Kickstart and the wider options for claimants of all ages, most recently Restart - support for those most at risk of longer term unemployment, the Flexible Support Fund, an expanded Sector-based Work Academy Programme and the Job Finding Support service.

Taken together, this package will help to ensure that we can get Britain back into work quickly and harness the power of young people to help the economy to recover.

USA: Ansar Allah

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prioritise seeking the reversal of the designation of the Houthi movement as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation by the government of the United States in their discussions with the new government of that country. [[HL12360](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We share the concerns raised by the UN and NGOs about the impact of designation on what is already the world's worst humanitarian crisis. We have already engaged with the US to urge them to ensure that the vital humanitarian response, including food supplies, are not disrupted and aim to raise this urgently with the new administration.

Vaccination: Research

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will list all projects funded by UK Research and Innovation to support research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals; and, in each case, what is (1) the level of funding, and (2) the project timetable. [[HL12366](#)]

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which scientific advisory committees made the evaluations of which projects UK Research and Innovation should fund to support research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals; and who are the members of each such committee. [[HL12367](#)]

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances they have received that the research supported by UK Research and Innovation on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals is adequate to support advice on responses for all blood cancers; and whether they have consulted Blood Cancer UK on this matter. [[HL12369](#)]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government which research projects UK Research and Innovation are funding into vaccine responses for (1) individuals with inflammatory disorders, (2) high risk cancer patient groups, (3) patients with severe kidney and liver disease, and (4) other immune-suppressed individuals. [HL12371]

Lord Callanan: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is funding research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals as part of its support for the OCTAVE study in the National Core Studies (NCS) Immunity Programme. The NCS was established in October 2020, guided by an Oversight Committee, chaired by Sir Patrick Vallance (Government Chief Scientific Adviser), to increase research scale and ultimately maintain resilience against Covid-19.

The NCS Oversight Committee members are:

- Professor Sir John Bell (Regius Chair of Medicine, University of Oxford)
- Sir Jeremy Farrar (Director, Wellcome Trust)
- Professor Sir Mike Ferguson (Regius Professor of Life Sciences, University of Dundee)
- Professor Dame Anne Johnson (Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, UCL)
- Sir Harpal Kumar (President, GRAIL Europe)
- Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser (CEO, UKRI)
- Dr Lynda Stuart (Lead COVID-19 Discovery and Translational Vaccine Response Team, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
- Professor Chris Whitty (Chief Medical Officer and Head of the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR))

Plus, representatives of the Devolved Administrations, NIHR and Health and Safety Executive.

Further expert insights are provided by an international panel comprising Peggy Hamburg (Chair of the Board of the American Association for the Advancement of Science), Gagandeep Kang (Professor, Division of Gastrointestinal Sciences, Christian Medical College Vellore) and Gabriel Leung (Dean of Medicine, Hong Kong University).

The OCTAVE study, led by Professor Iain McInnes, University of Glasgow, has a budget of c. £2.3 million, is designed to deliver in twelve months, and is supporting research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals, including those with inflammatory disorders, high risk cancer patient groups, and patients with severe kidney and liver disease. Cancer patient groups include chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, myeloma, acute leukaemia, and bone marrow transplants. In addition, there are proposals on vaccine responses in high-risk clinical groups under consideration by UKRI's Medical Research Council (MRC) as part of the UKRI COVID-19 Agile call, including in haematological cancers. These submissions will be reviewed by the

MRC's Agile Panel, which draws on members of the MRC's Research Boards and Panels, and if supported will be coordinated with the OCTAVE study.

The Government Office for Science, acting as the NCS secretariat, establishes the formal links between the NCS and the policymakers and delivery partners in government (including No 10, Cabinet Office, Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England and devolved equivalents, and the Joint Biosecurity Centre), ensuring that study outputs support informed policy and operational responses.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) intend to allocate, or (2) would consider allocating on the basis of scientific advice, further funding to UK Research and Innovation to support research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals. [HL12368]

Lord Callanan: The Department's R&D settlement has increased to £11.1 billion for 2021/22. This includes an ambitious three year settlement for core research funding for National Academies and UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) core research budgets. In line with the Haldane Principles, UKRI will determine how funding will be allocated across research councils.

Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus will be fully operational for the manufacture of vaccines. [HL12336]

Lord Callanan: The Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) should be partially open in summer 2021, with the facility fully operational in 2022. The VMIC is working towards having fill-finish capability by the end of 2021. The objective remains to accelerate the readiness of the VMIC by a year and we are on track to achieve this.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their investment in the rapid deployment facility for COVID-19, announced on 17 May 2020, has been allocated; and whether the facility is operational. [HL12337]

Lord Callanan: The £38 million investment announced on 17 May 2020 has since been revised because it was superseded following supply agreements with vaccine candidates. Therefore, the costs were limited to the equipment and the knowledge transfer. The Government has committed £8.75 million towards the rapid deployment facility which is now operational and manufacturing the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated vaccine production manufacturing capacity of the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. [HL12338]

Lord Callanan: The estimated vaccine production manufacturing capacity of the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre will be up to 70 million doses of vaccine within six months, once it has opened.

Visas: Dependants

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals have been granted an Adult Dependent Relative visa since 2016; and how many of those Adult Dependent Relative visas were granted through appeal. [HL12278]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The entry clearance data which is published and available can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets>.

(Select Entry Clearance visas granted outside the UK).

Providing the complete information requested would exceed the word limit for responses to written parliamentary questions and for further info see below.

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service data relating to appeal outcomes is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020>.

The data required for this question in terms of how many were granted through appeal cannot be produced through normal data cycles and would involve manual reconciliation.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....	1	Frontline.....	11
Census 2021: England and Wales	1	Ghana: Elections.....	11
Correction to Statement HLWS743 – UK Trade Update	1	Government Equalities Office: Equality Hub....	11
Non-domestic Rates: Billing Authorities	2	Infectious Diseases	11
Subsidy Control: Designing a New Approach for the UK	3	Land Drainage: Repairs and Maintenance.....	12
Written Answers.....	4	Libya: Peace Negotiations	12
Africa: African Union.....	4	Malawi: Politics and Government	12
Apprentices: Coronavirus.....	4	Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	12
Apprentices: Ethnic Groups	4	Mental Health: Children and Young People.....	12
Asylum: Hong Kong.....	5	Minimum Wage.....	13
Aviation: Climate Change	5	Mortgages: Coronavirus	13
Aviation: Volcanoes	6	Motorways: Safety.....	13
Bail: Reform	6	North Africa: Overseas Aid.....	13
Bankruptcy: Coronavirus.....	6	Pensions: Tax Allowances.....	13
Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU Defence Policy.....	6	Postal Services: Coronavirus	14
Brain: Tumours.....	6	Railways: Freight.....	14
British Virgin Islands: Politics and Government..	6	Sexual Offences.....	14
Bus Services: Concessions	7	Terrorism	14
Carillion: Insolvency	7	Tigray: Armed Conflict	15
Children’s Social Care Independent Review.....	7	Tunisia: Politics and Government	15
China: Uighurs	8	Uganda: Development Aid	15
Community Transport	8	Uganda: Elections.....	16
Conditions of Employment.....	8	Universal Credit: Young People.....	16
Coronavirus: Children	8	USA: Ansar Allah.....	16
Coronavirus: Hospital Beds.....	8	Vaccination: Research	16
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....	9	Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre	17
Counter-terrorism and MI5.....	9	Visas: Dependants	18
Customs: Recruitment	9		
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Coronavirus	10		
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Remote Working.....	10		
Elections: Coronavirus	10		
Eurostar: Subsidies	10		
Extinction Rebellion.....	10		