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**Monday
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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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<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

Monday, 8 February 2021

Deletion of PNC Records: Response and Recovery

[HLWS767]

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:

Further to my statement to the House on the 18 January, this is an update on the work being carried out to recover the records deleted from the Police National Computer (PNC) in error.

The Home Office is taking forward a 4-phase plan to respond to the incident and recover the data:

- Phase 1 has been completed and involved using code to identify and extract the complete list of what had been deleted;
- Phase 2 has also been completed and involved analysis to establish an accurate list of the affected systems and records for each force;
- Phase 3 is ongoing involves recovering the data from the PNC and the IDENT1 (Fingerprint) and National DNA systems;
- Phase 4 will involve work to ensure we are deleting any data that should have been deleted as usual when this incident first began.

Phases 1 and 2 of the work found that a total of 209,550 offence records have been wrongly deleted, which are associated to 112,697 persons' records. Of these 15,089 individuals have had their data deleted in totality. Our analysis has identified that only 195 full fingerprint records were deleted, with all these records relating to cases over 10-years old. We have also confirmed that no records of convictions have been deleted. Our analysis shows that 99.5% of the deleted records were created prior to 2011.

Phase 3 is now well under way and technicians are confident that all the data which has been deleted can be restored. Work to recover that data is moving forward as quickly as is possible, but it is vital that the data is restored safely to protect the integrity of the data. Our current assessment suggests that the work will take approximately 12 more weeks to complete, though clearly, we will accelerate this if we possibly can.

While the data is incomplete, there is the possibility that law enforcement partners will not have access to records and information that could help progress their inquiries and investigations.

Outlined below are details of such mitigation activities:

First, they can search the Police National Database (PND). This is a national intelligence database that holds records of arrests of individuals and contains information

that will allow law enforcement partners to judge whether there is biometric information or other key evidence missing from the affected systems. If missing data records are identified, then the investigating officers can request copies of biometric samples and arrest records from the owning organisations.

Second, forces have a wide variety of local systems in place to log calls and to maintain custody records. These are frequently used as the primary system into which information is entered, before it is then integrated into PNC for national use.

Third, the police can also continue to search other relevant national databases, such as the violent offender and sex offender register.

Fourth, where an individual is suspected of a crime and the PNC confirms the existence of a duplicate set of fingerprints then officers can request the set of prints from the force who retain a hard copy.

Fifth, if the police have enough evidence and they believe that the DNA of a suspect is required but cannot find any records on the PNC or other systems, they can arrest suspects and collect their DNA in line with their powers.

Sixth, the Home Office, and our suppliers, have worked to make the incorrectly deleted DNA profiles available to policing whilst the full capability is restored. In order to deliver this mitigation, we have restored the DNA database backups to a temporary, secure location. We have made this data accessible to forces and national agencies this week and setup a business process has been created to enable matching in support of ongoing investigations. During this period all audit and legislative requirements will be met.

Finally, the Home Secretary and I have commissioned an external review led by Lord Hogan-Howe to ensure the necessary lessons are learned to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The review is expected to report by the middle of March. After the review has concluded and been considered by the Home Secretary, a summary will be placed in the Library of the House.

We will provide a further update to the House in due course.

Free Schools and School Rebuilding Programme

[HLWS764]

Baroness Berridge: My Right Honourable Friend The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb) has made the following ministerial statement:

I am confirming details of the first 50 schools to benefit from the new school rebuilding programme announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020, as well as details of a further 21 new free schools.

As part of the Government's plan to drive growth beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to

investing in infrastructure, skills and innovation. Investing in our school buildings is vital to deliver the world-class education needed to get the country back on its feet.

As set out at the recent Spending Review, we are delivering on our promises by launching a ten-year rebuilding programme, with a commitment to 500 school rebuilding projects over the next decade. This will replace many poor condition and ageing school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs, transforming education for thousands of pupils.

The ten-year school rebuilding programme demonstrates our continued commitment to investing in the school estate and providing a long-term pipeline of projects for the construction sector as we build back better.

The Department for Education will build on its existing construction expertise with a continued focus on innovative modern methods of construction to support more highly skilled jobs and improved productivity. Our market leading frameworks, including a new construction framework later this year, will continue to provide opportunities across the industry and enable small and medium-sized enterprises to benefit from the opportunities that a decade-long pipeline will bring. The construction projects procured through these frameworks will support jobs and create apprenticeships and T-Level placements across England.

The first 50 schools to benefit from this programme have been prioritised based on condition need and will be supported by over £1 billion in capital funding. These first projects include primary and secondary schools as well as a sixth form college and special and alternative provision settings.

This also represents a substantial investment in schools in the midlands and north of England, with thirty-eight out of fifty projects located in these regions. We expect construction on the first sites to begin from autumn 2021.

The ten-year programme will continue to target school buildings in the worst condition across England and we will set out further plans shortly.

Alongside the rebuilding programme, the Government has committed £1.8 billion in 2021-22 for maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate.

Thousands more children across the country are also set to benefit from a new free school opening in their local area in the years to come, as I have approved 21 successful new free schools, providing over 15,500 new school places once open. In addition, I have approved in principle a further 8 schools, subject to meeting certain conditions.

These schools will help level up opportunity across the country by providing high quality school places in the areas where they are most needed. Ten of the 21 free schools approved will open in some of the most deprived areas – including three in Opportunity Areas, where the Department works to remove barriers that could stop young people from achieving their potential.

These new schools reflect the Government's continued commitment to the free school programme. 249 free schools have now been approved to open in the coming years, spreading the benefits of the free schools programme to even more areas of the country and joining the 558 free schools already open.

We are also investing £10.1 million of funding in schools across England, to allow them to open their existing school sports and swimming facilities outside of the school day.

Funding will be distributed via Sport England's network of county level Active Partnerships. Schools will have the opportunity to bid for this funding in the Summer term.

Further details, including lists of the school rebuilding projects and successful free school applicants, have been published on GOV.UK. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

HMRC Powers and Safeguards

[HLWS763]

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

On 22 July 2019, I announced a comprehensive package of measures that HMRC were taking to maintain and develop public trust in their operations (HCWS1785). Today, HMRC have published a major part of this package; a report on their evaluation of the implementation of powers introduced since 2012: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-hmrCs-implementation-of-powers-obligations-and-safeguards>. I asked HMRC to engage with stakeholders, including taxpayers and their representatives, and I am very grateful, in particular, to the 16 external stakeholder organisations that have offered constructive challenge to HMRC throughout the evaluation.

Alongside changes that HMRC are already introducing, the evaluation has highlighted further opportunities for improvements that will build and maintain public trust in the tax system. HMRC are making a number of commitments as a result of the evaluation. These include commitments to improve communications with taxpayers about powers, obligations and compliance enquiries; to update and clarify guidance on taxpayers' rights and obligations; to increase awareness of HMRC's internal decision-making and governance processes; and to make further improvements to taxpayers' customer experience. The commitments are designed to ensure that HMRC consistently meet the high standards that taxpayers expect, including those who do not have a tax agent, and especially where people may need extra support.

All but one of the measures that I announced in my July 2019 statement have now been delivered by HMRC. They have created the new Professional Standards Committee, published responses to the 2019 and 2020 Adjudicator's reports and published new principles regarding help for taxpayers who may need extra support.

HMRC have also expanded the range of data published regularly to include new data that will help taxpayers to understand how HMRC approach compliance work and how they use relevant powers, and to assess the effectiveness of HMRC's safeguards for taxpayers.

On the final measure I announced in my July 2019 statement, HMRC continue to take forward a range of actions to improve taxpayer experience. They have reviewed and improved over six hundred of HMRC's most commonly used letters and factsheets, simplifying the language used. They have put processes in place to keep letters under review, and to respond where further areas for improvement are identified. Last year HMRC also set up a new Extra Support Team to improve their identification of, and assistance to, taxpayers who may need additional help during compliance checks. HMRC have already responded to over 1,000 referrals and provided training to nearly 12,000 caseworkers.

HMRC have also made substantial progress in other areas. In particular, they are continuing to strengthen the guidance available to taxpayers to help them understand better the compliance check process, in order to reduce any stress involved and to build greater confidence and trust in HMRC. In December, HMRC launched a series of bite-size YouTube videos on key aspects of this process, and they are also trialling a new introductory pack which taxpayers will receive when a compliance check is opened.

HMRC's programme of work on powers and safeguards is an important contribution towards the vision that the Government set out in July 2020 for a trusted and modern tax administration system. HMRC will implement the commitments in this report and continue to work with taxpayers, tax agents and their representatives, to maintain and develop public trust in their operations.

Local Elections

[HLWS766]

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

I am updating Parliament on the Government's plans to proceed with the local elections on 6 May 2021 and the statutory instruments I am laying today on nominations.

Safe and secure elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. The Government has long been clear that there should be a very high bar for delay, but it was responsible to keep the situation under review in order to take into account the views of the electoral community and of public health experts. Having considered these views, the Government confirmed on Friday 5 February 2021 that the range of polls scheduled for 6 May 2021, including council and mayoral elections in England, and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, will go ahead as planned. It is important that we give this certainty to the electoral sector and political parties.

The Government has also published a Delivery Plan setting out how the polls will be delivered in a Covid-secure and effective way. It sets out how these polls will proceed, from announcement to results, and then covers the four major areas that we are addressing: public health and social distancing; nominations and campaigning; voting; and the delivery of elections. The Government is providing a package of measures to support statutorily independent Returning Officers to deliver these elections successfully and with the right precautions in place. Those measures include changes to proxy voting rules so that those affected by COVID-19 can still vote; and the provision of indemnity to Returning Officers for COVID-19 risks in respect of these elections.

There will be an estimated £92 million of government grant funding that will be provided to local authorities for the elections; of this, £31 million is an uplift to directly address costs associated with making the elections COVID-19 secure.

I am today providing further detail of the measures the Government intends to take to change temporarily the nominations process, in light of the exceptional circumstances. For potential candidates standing for elected office in the council, mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections, we are introducing measures to reduce the travel and contact involved in completing their nomination form.

The Government has listened to the views of the electoral sector, candidates and political parties that the need to collect a high number of signatures for nomination as a candidate in some types of poll was encouraging an unhelpful and unnecessary amount of interaction, as well as complexity for candidates. While it is essential that candidates in a poll can demonstrate a clear amount of local support, we must balance the importance of democracy with the need to protect people in these unique circumstances. In reaching a decision about the approach to nominations we have consulted with the Parliamentary Parties Panel and considered other cross-party representations.

These statutory instruments, one affirmative and one negative, will therefore make changes to the nomination process to reduce the number of signatures that candidates are required to collect for almost all types of poll due to be held on 6 May, including council elections, mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections. These provisions are time-limited; the elections next May (2022) will automatically revert to the standard rules.

I intend to publish further guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties later this month. The Government will be engaging with Parliamentary Parties Panel on the new guidance and on campaigning provisions, to ensure the views of political parties are taken into account.

The associated documents have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Plan for Jobs Update

[HLWS768]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My Right Honourable Friend, The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey MP) has made the following Written Statement.

Our Plan for Jobs is an ambitious programme of job creation and support to help people of all ages move into work or gain the skills that will open up job opportunities. I would like to update the House on two of the schemes: SWAPs – our Sector-based Work Academy Programme and our new Job Finding Support service, which went live across Great Britain on 11th January.

SWAPs is helping people in England and Scotland to upskill, retrain and pivot towards surging sectors, including construction, infrastructure and social care to meet local labour markets and employer demand. SWAPs is not currently offered in Wales as there is a similar programme provided by the Welsh Government. Today I am pleased to inform the House that we are increasing the number of placements on the scheme to 80,000 for the upcoming financial year. This builds on the more than 40,000 starts we have already seen since last April.

I am very excited about this expansion of SWAPs – it will mean work coaches can help many more people open the door to jobs they may not have previously considered and move back into work with new skills, work experience and a guaranteed interview for a job. They will join those who have already started roles through SWAPs, including in care worker jobs with Derby City Council, security roles with the Mercury Group and GMS Group in Birmingham, and banking jobs with Barclays and the Wise Group in Kilmarnock.

These are just a few examples of how SWAPs is helping people gain the right skills and experience to support them into work following the impact of the pandemic and into the jobs employers and the country needs as we look to secure our national economic recovery.

Job Finding Support also launched last month and has made rapid progress to help people quickly bounce back into work. The new digital support service is in operation across Great Britain and we expect this vital service to help up to 160,000 people over the course of the next 12 months.

This new light-touch support, provided entirely online, is helping those who have become unemployed and claimed benefits within the past 13 weeks. Many of them will have worked in continuous employment for several years and will not have recent experience of applying for jobs, so Job Finding Support aims to address any skill gaps and help people move rapidly back into work.

Participants receive a minimum of four hours flexible, personalised support, including a mock interview, and at least one digital online group session aiming to help identify their transferable skills and provide sector-specific job advice. Participants will also be helped to fine

tune their CV and a Job Finding Action Plan tailored to their needs. Those who fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria will be referred by Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches, on a voluntary basis.

Our Plan for Jobs is a plan for everyone; creating the opportunity to level up the nation, the opportunity for hope, and the opportunity to build back better.

Public Service Pensions Consultation

[HLWS762]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The government published a consultation document (CP 253, HCWS380) in July 2020 outlining proposals regarding public service pensions. I have today laid in Parliament the government's response to the consultation: 'Public service pension schemes: changes to the transitional arrangements to the 2015 schemes. Government response to consultation' (CP 373).

The main public service pension schemes were reformed in 2015 to make them fairer – especially for lower earners – and more affordable for the taxpayer. Public service pensions continue to be among the best in the workplace, providing a generous level of pension provision for public servants. Following negotiations with trade unions and other member representative bodies, the government agreed that those closer to retirement should be either fully or partially protected from the changes and allowed to remain in their legacy schemes, known as 'transitional protection'. In December 2018 this transitional protection was found by the Court of Appeal to discriminate unlawfully against younger judges and firefighters who were members of the legacy schemes before 1 April 2012 but did not benefit from transitional protection. The reformed schemes themselves are not discriminatory. As set out in the July 2019 written statement (HCWS1725), the government accepted that the ruling reads across to other public service pension schemes, affecting around 3 million public servants.

In July 2020 I launched a consultation, seeking views on proposals to address this. More than 3,000 responses to the consultation were received, and the Treasury also conducted engagement sessions with a wide range of stakeholders. I am grateful for the many responses to the consultation we received from public servants, employers, administrators, financial advisers, trade unions and member representative bodies. They were insightful and crucial for further developing the government's proposals, understanding the impacts of the proposals, and coming to informed decisions.

Having considered the responses to the consultation, the government is today announcing that it will implement the deferred choice underpin (DCU). This will give eligible scheme members a choice at the point their pension becomes payable, whether they wish to receive benefits from their legacy scheme or benefits equivalent to those that would have been available under their

reformed schemes in relation to their service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. In the meantime, eligible members will be deemed to have been members of their legacy schemes for any period of service between those dates.

In implementing the DCU, rather than an immediate choice exercise, we have recognised that members will have more certainty around their personal circumstances at the point they need to make their choice. This approach considerably reduces the need for members to make assumptions around their future career, their retirement, health and dependants, which would increase the risk of members, particularly younger members, making an incorrect decision. I strongly believe that the DCU is the correct approach given its key advantage of providing members with greater certainty about their choice of pension benefits.

I am also confirming that the legacy schemes will close on 31 March 2022. From 1 April 2022, all those who remain in service will do so as members of the reformed schemes that were introduced in 2015. Benefits built up in the legacy schemes will be protected.

The reasons for closing the legacy schemes and moving to the reformed schemes are as valid now as they were when the reforms were introduced: the schemes should continue to provide guaranteed pension benefits to public servants, but do so on a fairer basis, and in a way that ensures that they are affordable and sustainable into the future. Public service pensions continue to reward public servants generously for their dedicated service.

The government will bring forward new primary legislation, when parliamentary time allows, to provide requisite powers to deliver these changes to public service pension schemes.

Cost control mechanism and 2020 valuations update

Alongside the launch of the consultation in July 2020, I announced that the pause to the cost control mechanism – which was introduced as a consequence of the uncertainty regarding the value of schemes to members resulting from the court judgments – would be lifted, and the cost control element of the 2016 valuations process completed. I also announced that the Government Actuary (GA) would proceed with the review to assess whether the mechanism is operating as intended.

As I previously set out, the increased value of schemes to members as a result of the McCloud remedy will be taken into account in the completion of the 2016 valuations. Given that this will lead to higher costs than would otherwise have been expected, early estimates indicate that some schemes could breach the ceiling. If normal statutory procedure were followed, any ceiling breaches would lead to a reduction in member benefits in order to bring costs back to target. The GA review is ongoing, and I have decided that it would be inappropriate to reduce member benefits based on a mechanism that may not be working as intended.

This means any ceiling breaches that do occur during the completion of the 2016 valuations will therefore not

be implemented, and benefit levels will not be reduced. However, I have also decided that should any floor breaches occur, they will be honoured, and member benefits increased in order to bring costs back to target. These decisions apply only to the cost control element of the 2016 valuations. Future cost control policy for future valuations will be set out once the GA's review of the mechanism has concluded and any recommendations have been fully considered by the government.

Changes in the employer contribution rates resulting from the 2020 valuations process were due to be implemented from April 2023 for the majority of unfunded public service pension schemes. These valuations have already begun, and require intensive work across schemes, departments and the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) over several years.

Due to interactions with wider pension policies, in particular the implementation of the McCloud remedy reforms, completion of the 2016 valuation process and the review of the cost control mechanism, work would need to be undertaken in unprecedentedly short timescales to amend employer contribution rates in April 2023.

Any changes to employer contribution rates resulting from the 2020 valuations will therefore be delayed from April 2023 to April 2024. This is an exceptional but necessary decision taken in light of the wider public service pensions landscape.

Today's announcements set out the steps the government will take to ensure that members of public service pension schemes are treated equally – taking an approach which is fair for members as well as other taxpayers.

Copies of the government's response document to the consultation (CP 373) are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office, and it is published on gov.uk.

UK Terrorism Threat Level

[HLWS765]

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

On Thursday 4 February, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) lowered the UK national terrorism threat level from *SEVERE* to *SUBSTANTIAL*. This means that a terrorist attack is still likely.

The decision to change the UK terrorism threat level is taken by JTAC independently of Ministers. JTAC keep the threat level under constant review and conduct a formal review every six months. This is a systematic, comprehensive and rigorous process, based on the very latest intelligence and analysis of internal and external factors which drive the threat.

The decision to lower the threat level from *SEVERE* to *SUBSTANTIAL* is due to the significant reduction in the momentum of attacks in Europe since those seen between September and November 2020. However, the UK

national threat level is kept under constant review and is subject to change at any time.

Terrorism remains one of the most direct and immediate risks to our National Security. *SUBSTANTIAL* continues to indicate a high level of threat; and an attack on the UK is still likely. The public should continue to remain vigilant and report any concerns to the Police.

The Government, Police and intelligence agencies continue to work tirelessly to address the threat posed by terrorism in all its forms and the threat level remains under constant review.

Van Benefit and Car and Van Fuel Benefit Order 2021

[HLWS761]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Kemi Badenoch) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The van benefit charge and fuel benefit charges for cars and vans will be uprated by the Consumer Price Index from 6 April 2021. The uprate will take effect as follows:

- Van Benefit Charge will uprate from £3,490 to £3,500
- Car Fuel Benefit Charge multiplier will uprate from £24,500 to £24,600
- Van Fuel Benefit Charge will uprate from £666 to £669

This measure is being announced outside of the normal fiscal process to ensure employers and HMRC are given enough time to prepare for the uprate, ahead of the 2021-22 tax year.

The Government will lay the statutory instrument to uprate these charges before the House on 9 March 2021. A tax information and impact note (TIIN) will be published at Budget 2021 and will be available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/tax-information-and-impact-notes-tiins.

Written Answers

Monday, 8 February 2021

Agriculture: Scotland

Asked by *The Duke of Montrose*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total funding package they are providing to support Scottish agriculture in the 2021/22 financial year; and which historic funding streams any such funding is intended to replace. [HL12526]

Asked by *The Duke of Montrose*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what engagement they have undertaken with the Scottish Government about the total financial package they expect to provide to support Scottish agriculture beyond the 2021/22 financial year. [HL12527]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The 2020 Spending Review allocated £570 million to the Scottish Government for farm support. This settlement ensures that, together with remaining receipts under Pillar 2 of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, Scotland's farm support budget for 2021-22 is the same as in 2019. This delivers on the government's commitment to maintain the current annual budget for UK farmers during this parliament. It is for the Scottish Government to determine how to allocate this funding to farmers, land managers and the rural economy.

Ahmed Erekat

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights to the Minister of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, sent on 19 January, regarding the withholding of the body of Ahmed Erekat, what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the release of Ahmed Erekat's body; and what plans they have (1) to seek assurances from that government about, and (2) to monitor, a criminal investigation into the killing of Ahmed Erekat. [HL12562]

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights to the Minister of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, sent on 19 January, regarding the withholding of the body of Ahmed Erekat, what representations they have made to the government of Israel about (1) ending its policy of withholding Palestinians' bodies, and (2) returning the bodies of all Palestinians to their families. [HL12566]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the case of Ahmed Erekat, and reports of a High Court petition for

the release of Mr Erekat's body. We understand the Israeli security cabinet have ruled that it would not allow the return of bodies of Palestinians held by Israeli Security Forces (ISF). While we have not raised the case, we will continue to monitor the situation. The UK position is clear: we urge all sides to treat the dead with respect and urge Israel to return any bodies they are holding. We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether use of live fire had been appropriate.

Aircraft Carriers

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 25 January (HL12034), how many aircraft carriers they plan to deploy in cases of a national emergency after 2023. [HL12684]

Baroness Goldie: The number of carriers deployed in response to a national emergency will very much depend on the situation at the time. The level of response would be determined by an operational assessment. The QEC long-term carrier policy and reason for bringing two carriers into service is to ensure that there will always be at least one carrier available, either at sea or in port, at very high readiness to deploy.

Animal Welfare

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to bring forward legislation to increase penalties for animal cruelty. [HL12514]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government remains committed to animal welfare and fully supports increasing the maximum custodial sentences for animal cruelty offences from six months to five years. This will enable courts to take a firmer approach to cases such as dog fighting, abuse of puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Chris Loder MP on 5 February and Committee stage took place on 3 February. The Government will continue to support it as it makes its way through Parliament.

Animals: UK Trade with EU

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any hauliers carrying live exports of animals have been held up at the UK borders as a result of the UK's departure from the EU; and what welfare provisions they have put in place to protect any such live exports. [HL12512]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has not been advised of livestock or horses being held up at the UK border.

For an export consignment of live animals to be approved a completed contingency plan must be submitted by the haulier to APHA. These plans include the details of welfare provisions that have been put in place by the individual transporter.

There have been no 'Journey Logs for Exports' approved since the UK's departure from the EU.

Armed Forces: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are required to give a 15 day period of advance notice of their intention to move armed forces personnel and military equipment from Great Britain to Northern Ireland under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; if so, (1) to whom they give notice, (2) whether such personnel and equipment can be refused entry, and (3) what emergency procedures can be implemented if any notice period cannot be adhered to; and whether any such requirement applies to all (a) British Army, (b) Royal Navy, and (c) Royal Air force, deployments. [HL12789]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a NATO 302 form must be completed before they can move armed forces personnel and military equipment from Great Britain to Northern Ireland under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and if so, why. [HL12791]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether military equipment being moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland is required to undergo inspection under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and if so, where any such inspections will take place. [HL12793]

Baroness Goldie: The Protocol is clear that it respects the essential state functions and territorial integrity of the UK. It therefore places no restrictions on military movements between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

A NATO 302 Form is not needed under the Northern Ireland Protocol to move Armed Forces personnel or military equipment between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Asylum: Military Bases

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to protect the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers housed in the disused army barracks in (1) Penally, and (2) Kent; what particular provisions are in

place for torture survivors; and how they are managing any COVID-19 outbreaks on both sites. [HL12518]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Protecting the health and safety of asylum seekers during the coronavirus pandemic has been our priority and to test our effectiveness we have reviewed the sites we use for coronavirus regulation and guidance compliance.

This is augmented by a range of additional safety measures including increased cleaning of surfaces, availability of hand sanitisers, a track and trace system and communications with residents around COVID-19 control measures.

We work closely with our accommodation providers to ensure that all asylum seekers in supported accommodation are aware of, and have access to, Migrant Help's helpline. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if service users need help, advice or guidance; including signposting to relevant mental and medical health services. Asylum seekers also have the same access to coronavirus testing as the rest of the general population.

Asylum seekers at the barracks must self-isolate if they test positive or have been exposed to someone who has. We are working closely with the local health authority; Public Health England and Public Health Wales; and additional support staff, as well as on site medical staff, are on-site to ensure that all individuals who have to self-isolate can do so and are following all medical advice.

Additionally, regular welfare checks are conducted on service users, including behavioural monitoring of those who show signs of vulnerability, and where appropriate safeguarding referrals are made to relevant bodies.

Furthermore, as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring the support for potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery, individuals with a positive reasonable grounds decision who have consented to Victim Care Contract (VCC) support – who are also asylum seekers in asylum support accommodation – will receive essential support services from a VCC support worker, who can provide specialist support and advocacy services to assist victims to rebuild their lives.

Aviation: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include indirect non-CO2 climate impacts of aviation, such as climate forcing caused by condensation trails, in the UK's Emissions Trading Scheme. [HL12532]

Lord Callanan: The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) currently captures CO₂ emissions on domestic UK flights, flights from the UK to the EEA and flights between the UK and Gibraltar. We recognise that there is a case for expanding carbon pricing, especially given that the UK ETS will be the world's first Net Zero carbon cap and trade market, a crucial step towards achieving the UK's target for net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Government continues to support work on aviation's non-CO₂ emissions, and possible mitigation measures, taking into account their trade-offs with CO₂ and the importance of ensuring that the sector's total climate impact would be reduced. The Government keeps non-CO₂ emissions under review and reassesses the UK's policy position as more evidence becomes available.

Borders: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they did not close the UK's borders in March 2020 to address the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of the impact of not closing the borders on the spread of COVID-19 in the UK. [HL12433]

Lord Greenhalgh: HMG decisions throughout the pandemic have been guided by the science, including with measures taken at the border over the last year. We are now in a completely different position to where we were at the start of the pandemic in terms of our awareness of the disease and of the new variants identified across the globe, such as in Brazil and South Africa.

Any decisions on borders must also consider the need to keep vital supply routes open, especially freight traffic across the Short Straights and to the Republic of Ireland via the UK Land Bridge.

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a negative result to a COVID-19 lateral flow test undertaken by the NHS presented to Border Force is sufficient evidence that the bearer is (1) not infected, and (2) eligible to travel. [HL12760]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has always been clear that NHS Test and Trace tests should not be used for the purposes of international travel. This is to safeguard testing capacity.

NHS Test and Trace tests may not be used for the Test to Release for International Travel scheme. Travellers must use a test from a private testing provider on the gov.uk private providers list. NHS Test and Trace is not on this list, and for this reason, does not meet the minimum standards required to legally release a traveller from self-isolation upon providing a negative result.

NHS Test and Trace does not provide a result notification in a format that would be acceptable to meet the new pre-departure testing requirements, and as such, will not be accepted for travel to England.

Lateral Flow Tests may meet the minimum standards of more than 80% sensitivity and more than 97% specificity for the pre-departure testing regime, depending on the individual test product. The test must be provided by a testing provider which can meet these minimum standards, as well as the standards regarding the result notification requirements.

Bridges: Demolition

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Highways England's plans to use emergency powers to infill or demolish unused bridges without (1) seeking planning permission, or (2) providing information about an urgent need to take action. [HL12929]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Highways England has no plans to use emergency powers on Historical Railways Estate structures, which it maintains on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, across England, Scotland and Wales. To maintain the safety of both the communities living close to them and the drivers who use the roads that cross them, Highways England is planning to infill 115 bridges and remove 15 structures over the next five years. Most of the bridges earmarked for infilling are over 100 years old and were never designed to carry the weight of modern traffic.

Highways England's planned infilling is the safest and most appropriate option and will maintain access across the structures, and its works are in accordance with The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, to keep the public safe. Highways England has contacted all local authorities affected to advise them of its plans. In addition, it has arranged for seven structures to be transferred to local authorities which aspire to use them for cycle routes.

Cabotage: Exemptions

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to negotiate with the EU an exemption from cabotage rules for the movement of goods, including those subject to an ATA carnet, on the basis of the goods (1) not being sold, and (2) the rules also affecting EEA performing arts companies coming to the UK. [HL12767]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the EU allows UK hauliers to undertake up to 2 additional laden journeys within the EU after a laden international journey from the UK, with a maximum of 1 cabotage movement outside Ireland. These rules will also apply to specialist hauliers, such as hauliers who carry equipment for musicians and other performers.

Our assessment is that the TCA will allow the vast majority of haulage operations that were being undertaken by UK hauliers before the end of the transition period. However, UK operators will not be allowed to undertake more than 2 movements within the EU before returning to the UK. This limitation also applies to movements of goods covered by an ATA carnet. This issue was discussed in detail as part of negotiations, but the EU was unwilling to agree more flexible arrangements.

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with the road haulage industry and is working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to support the creative industries sector.

Carillion: Insolvency

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Carillion's financial liabilities, including retentions, to its supply chain and other creditors at the time of its collapse; and when they plan to make the final figures for such liabilities available. [HL12461]

Lord Callanan: The Official Receiver, liquidator of the Carillion group companies, confirms that the total liabilities of the group recorded at the time of the winding-up order in January 2018 was £5.9 billion, of which £1.7 billion was due to trade creditors. No separate figure for retentions is available. Claims from creditors totalling some £7 billion have been received but some debts are due on a joint and several basis and recorded in more than one liquidation.

The Official Receiver first reported information relating to liabilities to the companies' creditors in 2018, as required under the provisions of the Insolvency Act 1986, and has provided further updates to the creditors in the course of the liquidation. Further reports will be issued in the event of any significant developments in the liquidation.

Census: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Adonis

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) assessment they have made of, and (2) discussions they have had with the Office for National Statistics about, the reasons behind the decision to carry out the census for England and Wales on 21 March while the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. [HL12462]

Asked by Lord Adonis

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Office for National Statistics about ensuring the accuracy of the census for England and Wales, due to be held on 21 March, in the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12463]

Asked by Lord Adonis

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the number of people who, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will not be resident at their normal addresses on 21 March when the census for England and Wales is carried out; and what discussions they have had with the Office for National Statistics about mitigating any such impact. [HL12464]

Asked by Lord Adonis

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the accuracy of the census for England and Wales due to take place on 21 March. [HL12465]

Asked by Lord Adonis

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation the UK Statistics Authority undertook before the decision was made to proceed with the census in England and Wales on 21 March during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of the responses to any such consultation. [HL12466]

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

Professor Sir Ian Diamond|National Statistician

The Rt Hon. the Lord Adonis

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

02 February 2021

Dear Lord Adonis,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Questions relating to Census 2021 in England and Wales and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Your questions asked about the reasons behind the decision to carry out the census for England and Wales on 21 March while the pandemic is ongoing (HL12462); ensuring the accuracy of the census in the light of the impact of the pandemic (HL12463); the impact of the number of people who, due to the pandemic, will not be resident at their normal addresses on 21 March, and mitigating any such impact (HL12464); the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the accuracy of the census (HL12465); and what consultation the UK Statistics Authority undertook before the decision was made to proceed with the census in England and Wales on 21 March during the COVID-19 pandemic (HL12466).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is working to deliver a successful census in England and Wales in March 2021. Since the start of the pandemic, the ONS has updated the operational design to build in safety and flexibility to allow for continued success. The ONS has also continued to adapt its plans as the course of the pandemic has changed. Additional assurance has been carried out in the form of regular readiness assessments. The last assessment was in December and the ONS's operational readiness was externally assured by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. These assessments have been shared with UK Government.

Following the announcement of national lockdowns in England and Wales in December 2020, the ONS again assessed its readiness to deliver a successful census safely and securely. A statement was published by the ONS on

22 January setting out why it is important to conduct the census in 2021 and how the ONS is ensuring everyone can be safely counted in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.[1] Again, the ONS's assessment was discussed with the UK Government at this stage. The Government's position on continuing with the census in March 2021 is set out in a written statement of 3 February.[2]

The quality of census outputs relies on optimising response rates, which is at the heart of the design and collection operation. The ONS has designed Census 2021 to be simple, straightforward and safe to complete. This will be a digital-first census and the ONS will be encouraging people to respond online if they can on their mobile phones, laptops, PCs or tablets, with a comprehensive range of support for those who are not able to complete the census online. The main census field operation will begin only after Census Day (21 March); the primary role of field officers is to give help and encouragement to those who have not yet filled in their census questionnaire online or on paper, and to direct them to the support services they need. Census 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. They will be operating in the same way as a postal or food delivery visit.

Every census uses proven statistical methodologies to ensure the best possible estimates as a standard approach. The ONS will build upon our Census Coverage Survey approach,[3] with increased use of administrative and survey data to maximise data quality.

The ONS published its Statistical design for the 2021 Census in October 2020[4]; this sets out its end-to-end statistical design to ensure that census results are of high quality and are fit for purpose. This document takes into account the impact of the coronavirus, both on the operational plans for the census and in other ways.[5] The ONS continues to work with a wide range of users of census statistics to ensure census outputs meet their needs. It ran a series of webinars at the end of last year as part of its ongoing engagement activity, to update users on its current plans, and will be running further output engagement later this year.

The ONS has been examining closely the impact of the pandemic on how people will respond to the census, including for people who may be resident in different locations as a result. Clear guidance is being prepared and tested about how people should complete the census if the pandemic has affected their circumstances. This includes students for whom we will provide guidance as to where they should be counted. The ONS will publish this revised guidance when the testing and development has been concluded. In quality assuring the census results, the ONS will be comparing the census data with a wide range of other sources to check that the estimates are as accurate as possible.

The ONS engages with stakeholders and data users on an ongoing basis. The pandemic has impacted its ability to carry out some of our planned stakeholder engagement

activities, but the ONS has expanded its use of innovative methods of digital communication to engage stakeholders. This has been very effective and attendance at virtual meetings with stakeholders has been much higher than might have been expected in face-to-face meetings, and much more frequent engagement has been possible. The virtual engagement has continued during the current national lockdowns and will continue.

The ONS engages with local authorities and community groups representing those people who may face barriers to completing the census. It engages with local authorities through regular newsletters and a series of workshops held online through 2020 on different aspects of the census operation. It has also established a Local Authority Quality Assurance Working Group with 17 local authorities. It engages with community groups and leaders at a national and local level, with a particular focus on communities that face barriers to completing the census for cultural, motivational, understanding and other reasons. The ONS works with representatives of other sectors (central government, health, business and academia), through Census Advisory Groups and e-mail updates, to ensure they are consulted on the census and their views considered in its design and delivery.

The ONS also held a programme of eight census webinars to showcase our plans for design and quality assurance, through November and December 2020. The series included a high-level introductory overview as well as 'In Focus' sessions that outlined specific aspects in more detail, including maximising response, quality assurance and census outputs. These webinars, each of which were attended by around 90 people, provided stakeholders and users the opportunity to ask questions (including on the impact of the pandemic), give feedback and influence our future engagement activities to meet their needs.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

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

[2] <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-02-03/hcws755>

[3] Information on how the Census Coverage Survey worked in 2011 can be found in chapter 4 of the 2011 Census General Report: https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/2011census/howourcensusworks/howdidwedoin2011/2011censusgeneralreport/2011censusgeneralreportforenglandandwaleschapter4_tcm77-384967.pdf (pdf)

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/censusdesign/statisticaldesignforcensus2021englandandwales>

[5] The operational planning response to the pandemic is covered in more detail in an article published at the same time: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprog>

[ramme/censusdesign/operationalplanningresponsetothecoronaviruscovid19forcensus2021englandandwales](#)

China: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what dates meetings between the Treasury and any representative of the government of China have taken place since January 2020; who participated in those meetings; and what agreements have been made between the government of China - including Chinese State Owned Enterprises - and the UK in that period. [[HL12468](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury ministers and officials meet regularly with representative of the government of China in the course of international business, on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

Agreements between the Treasury and the Chinese government are usually made at the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD). Given an EFD has not occurred in the period from January 2020, no agreements have been made between the Treasury and the Chinese government during this period.

Climate Change

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to urge G7 countries (1) to spread awareness of, and (2) to increase technical assistance regarding, new ways of addressing climate change, including trade in environmental goods and investment in green technologies. [[HL12553](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: On 17 January, the Prime Minister launched the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021. We are in consultation with our G7 partners on plans for coordinating our objectives and work on climate change issues. We are committed to placing climate and nature at the heart of the multilateral agenda, and plan to mainstream climate and environmental policy across the G7. This will include supporting the transition to a low carbon economy through increased investment and cooperation in green technologies; as well as looking at ways to enhance and promote sustainable trade as we seek to join forces to protect the planet. The UK has itself taken an important first step towards more sustainable trade by lowering tariffs on environmental goods under the UK Global Tariff. The Foreign Secretary regularly speaks with G7 countries as part of his overall engagement on climate issues, including most recently Japan and the US.

Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by Oxfam The Inequality Virus, published on 25 January, what assessment they have made of the

implications for UK public policy of the finding that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to increase economic inequality in almost every country. [[HL12471](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The impacts of COVID-19 are widespread and severe and are deepening inequalities. COVID-19 is likely to have resulted in over 140 million additional people living in extreme poverty in 2020 - around 2% of the global population - and many more will have temporarily fallen below the poverty line.

The UK is at the forefront of the international response, committing up to £1.3 billion of new ODA funding to counter the health, economic, and humanitarian impacts of COVID-19, including mobilising COVAX to provide vaccines to low and middle-income countries. We have reprogrammed over 300 existing programmes to respond to the challenges created by COVID-19 and supported the multilateral development banks to make over \$200 billion available to developing countries.

We will use our G7 and COP26 Presidencies this year to drive a green, fair and inclusive economic recovery and help countries to build back better from COVID-19.

Coronavirus: Hotels

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what care the NHS provides to patients discharged from hospitals to hotels whilst recovering from COVID-19; and how many NHS staff are providing that support. [[HL12569](#)]

Lord Bethell: Any person transferring to a hotel from a hospital will do so under the normal discharge planning processes. As part of those processes a care and support plan is put in place and this will vary by individual.

The care and support provided to individuals in a hotel can be provided through a combination of unpaid and paid carers, Care Quality Commission registered domiciliary care providers, virtual ward approaches, or utilising capacity of providers on the NHS Shared Business Services Patient Discharge Service Framework.

National Health Service staffing arrangements are the responsibility of local NHS organisations and the numbers of staff working in hotels will be determined by local need and therefore is not held centrally.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 21 January (HL11869), with which companies they have entered into any contracts relating to the production of COVID-19 vaccines; and what plans they have to make the terms of those contracts available to the public. [[HL12477](#)]

Lord Callanan: The UK Government has secured early access to 457 million vaccines doses through agreements

with eight separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with BioNTech/Pfizer, University of Oxford/AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline/Sanofi Pasteur, Novavax, Janssen, Valneva, Moderna and CureVac.

In addition to the above, we have also funded fill and finish capability through a contract with Wockhardt in Wrexham, North Wales, as well as the expansion of the Valneva factory in Livingston, Scotland.

Courts: Closures

Asked by Baroness Rawlings

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) County Courts, (2) Family Courts, (3) magistrates' courts, and (4) youth courts, have been closed since 2015; and for each such closure, how many (a) have been sold, and (b) stand empty. [HL12539]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The table below provides the status of all courts closed since 2015, shown by the shown by the jurisdictions as requested.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Jurisdiction Closed</i>	<i>Date of Closure</i>	<i>Disposal Status</i>
<i>2015</i>			
Chesterfield County Court	County	31/10/2015	Disposed
Harrogate County Court	County/Family	30/09/2015	Disposed
Hereford County Court	County/Family	31/12/2015	Disposed
<i>2016</i>			
Accrington County Court	County	31/03/2016	Disposed
Accrington Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/03/2016	Disposed
Aldershot & Farnham County Court	County/Family	31/01/2016	Disposed
Aylesbury Magistrates and County Court	Combined	30/09/2016	Building retained as Aylesbury Crown Court
Barnstaple Magistrates' and County Court (Crown part only)	Crown part only	30/06/2016	Building retained as Barnstaple Magistrates, County and Family Court
Brecon Law Courts	Combined	30/09/2016	Disposed
Bridgend Law Courts	Combined	29/07/2016	Disposed
Burton upon	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed

Trent Magistrates' Court			
Bury St Edmunds Crown & Magistrates' Court	Combined	07/10/2016	Disposed
Buxton Magistrates' & County Court	Combined	30/06/2016	Disposed
Caerphilly Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/05/2016	Disposed
Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall)	Combined	27/05/2016	Disposed
Consett Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	29/07/2016	Disposed
Corby Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	01/07/2016	Disposed
Dartford Magistrates' Court	Magistrate/Family	03/05/2016	Disposed
Dolgellau Crown & Magistrates' Court	Combined	25/08/2016	Disposed
Doncaster County Court	County/Family	03/05/2016	Disposed
Dorchester Crown Court (Weymouth & Dorchester Combined)	Combined	30/09/2016	Disposed
Fareham Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed
Feltham Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed
Gloucester Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	09/12/2016	Disposed
Grantham Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/06/2016	Disposed
Greenwich Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	27/05/2016	Disposed
Halifax County Court	County	02/12/2016	Disposed
Halifax Magistrates' Court (Calderdale)	Magistrate/Family	30/09/2016	Disposed
Hammersmith	County part only	24/06/2016	Disposed

Magistrates' and County Court (County Court Only)					Court				
Hinckley Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/07/2016	Disposed		Solihull Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/03/2016	Disposed	
Kettering Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/06/2016	Disposed		St Helens Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	24/06/2016	Building retained as St Helens County and Family Court	
King's Lynn County Court	County	30/09/2016	Disposed		Stroud Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed	
Lowestoft Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed		Swansea Crown Court (Guildhall)	Crown	27/05/2016	Disposed	
Macclesfield County Court	County	29/07/2016	Disposed		Tameside Magistrates' & County Court (County Part Only)	County part only	30/06/2016	Building retained as Tameside Magistrates' Court	
Macclesfield Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed		Trafford Magistrates' Court & Altrincham County Court	Combined	30/06/2016	Disposed	
Morpeth & Berwick County Court	County	30/05/2016	Disposed		Tunbridge Wells County Court	County/Family	09/12/2016	Disposed	
Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court	Combined	29/07/2016	Disposed		Wakefield & Pontefract Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	26/09/2016	Disposed	
Oldham Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed		Waltham Forest Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/03/2016	Disposed	
Ormskirk Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	28/06/2016	Disposed		Warrington Combined Court (County Part Only)	County part only	30/09/2016	Building retained as Warrington Crown Court	
Pontypridd Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	29/07/2016	Disposed		West Berkshire Magistrates' Court (Newbury)	Magistrate	24/06/2016	Disposed	
Prestatyn Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	15/08/2016	Building retained as Prestatyn Justice Centre		Weymouth & Dorchester Combined Court (Westwey House)	Combined	25/04/2016	Disposed	
Rhyl County Court	County	04/11/2016	Disposed		Worksop Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/03/2016	Disposed	
Richmond Upon Thames Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	18/03/2016	Disposed		Yate Magistrates' Court (North Avon)	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed	
Rotherham Magistrates' & County Court	Combined	30/09/2016	Disposed		Yeovil County Court	County	25/11/2016	Disposed	
Sandwell Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed						
Shrewsbury Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/03/2016	Building retained as Shrewsbury Crown Court						
Skegness Magistrates'	Magistrate	30/09/2016	Disposed						

Name	Jurisdiction Closed	Date of Closure	Disposal Status				
				County Court			
2017				Redhill Magistrates' & Reigate County Court	Combined	31/03/2017	Disposed
Bicester Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	19/05/2017	Disposed	Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	13/01/2017	Disposed
Bolton Combined Court Centre (County Part Only)	County part only	09/06/2017	Building retained as Bolton Law Courts	Scunthorpe Magistrates' & County Court	Combined	13/01/2017	Awaiting disposal
Bolton Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/11/2017	Disposed	St Albans Crown & County Court (County Part Only)	County part only	28/07/2017	Building retained as St Albans Crown Court
Bournemouth Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	27/01/2017	Disposed	Stafford Magistrates' Court	Magistrate/Family	28/04/2017	Disposed
Bow County Court	County/Family	30/06/2017	Disposed	Telford County Court	County/Family	29/09/2017	Currently being used as a temporary Nightingale Court
Bury Magistrates' & County Court	Combined	09/06/2017	Disposed	Torquay Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	01/09/2017	Awaiting disposal
Caernarfon Civil and Family Court	County/Family	18/08/2017	Disposed	Tottenham Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	10/02/2017	Disposed
Chichester Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	02/06/2017	Awaiting disposal	Warrington Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	13/01/2017	Disposed
Dover Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	26/05/2017	Disposed	Watford Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	28/07/2017	Disposed
Eastbourne Magistrates' & County Court	Magistrates/Family	29/09/2017	Disposed	Woolwich County Court	County/Family	30/06/2017	Disposed
Hammersmith Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/12/2017	Disposed				
Hartlepool Magistrates' & County Court	Combined/Family	30/01/2017	Awaiting disposal	<i>Name</i>	<i>Jurisdiction Closed</i>	<i>Date of Closure</i>	<i>Disposal Status</i>
Holyhead Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	28/04/2017	Disposed	2018			
Kendal Magistrates' & County Court	Combined	30/06/2017	Disposed	Birmingham Magistrates' Youth Court	Magistrate/Youth	31/01/2018	Disposed
Kettering County Court	County	07/07/2017	Disposed	Chichester Combined Court	Combined	28/12/2018	Awaiting disposal
Lambeth County Court	County/Family	22/12/2017	Disposed	Chippenham Magistrates' & Civil Court	Combined/Family	27/07/2018	Disposed
Lancaster County Court	County/Family	01/12/2017	Disposed	Maidenhead Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/12/2018	Awaiting disposal
Llangefni Civil and Family Court	County/Family	18/08/2017	Disposed	Sunderland County Court	County/Family	07/09/2018	Awaiting disposal
Oldham	County/Family	14/07/2017	Disposed				

<i>Name</i>	<i>Jurisdiction Closed</i>	<i>Date of Closure</i>	<i>Disposal Status</i>
<i>2019</i>			
Banbury Magistrates' and County Court	Combined	31/03/2019	Disposed
Blackfriars Crown Court	Crown	20/12/2019	Disposed
Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	31/01/2020	Disposed
Chorley Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	29/03/2019	Awaiting disposal
Colchester County Court	County/Family	30/04/2019	Disposed
Fleetwood Magistrates' Court (currently sitting as a Family Hearing Centre)	Magistrate/Family	26/04/2019	Currently being used as a temporary Nightingale Court
Harlow Magistrates' Court	Magistrate	30/04/2019	Awaiting disposal
Northallerton Magistrates' Court	Magistrate/Family	30/04/2019	Disposed
Shrewsbury Crown Court	Crown	08/03/2019	Disposed
Southend County Court	County/Family	06/09/2019	Disposed

Disposed = The property has either been sold, or our tenancy has ended. The property is no longer part of the HMCTS estate.

Awaiting disposal = The property is closed and disposal is pending.

Ensuring that we can operate safely during the Covid-19 pandemic is our top priority. We have put in place measures in our court rooms so that they can hold Covid-19 secure trials, moved to virtual hearings where possible and opened additional court rooms in Nightingale courts as part of a package to increase available capacity.

We have now opened Nightingale courts at 21 locations, including the use of former court buildings, bringing the total number of temporary court rooms set up nationwide to 40. These additional temporary courtrooms have allowed us to increase capacity, particularly for jury

trials, in locations where there is an operational requirement and hold additional hearings within a safe environment.

Courts: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 23 December 2020 (HL11500), how they assess the (1) effectiveness, and (2) value for money, of Nightingale courts; and on what basis the decision was taken in December 2020 to open nine more Nightingale courts. [[HL12554](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Nightingale courts provide much needed additional capacity for face-to-face hearings in a Covid-safe environment and contribute greatly for our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of our recovery plans, we are working towards establishing a total of 60 additional court rooms through Nightingale courts by the end of March 2021.

When considering Nightingale courts, we assess where the need is greatest and look for suitable venues based on hearing capacity, whether building alterations are required, safety and security and length of hire. We consider the cost of provision, using public buildings where these are available and suitable, and each venue is assessed for value for money before final decisions are made.

Cases are listed in Nightingale courts in the same way as our permanent estate, and at similar utilisation rates.

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 23 December 2020 (HL11501), what is the parent court for each Nightingale court; and what was (1) the number of days sat in each parent court from 1 January 2019 to the date on which its Nightingale court opened, and (2) the number of days sat in each parent court from the date on which its Nightingale court opened. [[HL12555](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We have now opened Nightingale courts at 21 locations bringing the total number of temporary court rooms set up nationwide to 40. These additional temporary courtrooms have allowed us to increase capacity, particularly for jury trials, in locations where there is an operational requirement and hold additional hearings within a safe environment.

A list of Nightingale parent courts and the number of days sat in each parent court is provided in the table below using the latest available validated data.

Table showing data on sitting days covering the period 1 January 2019 to 30 November 2020

<i>Parent Court(s)</i>	<i>Associated Nightingale Court</i>	<i>Nightingale Court Open Date</i>	<i>Sitting Day¹ Total in Parent Court Only before Nightingale Court (Jan 2019 - Nightingale Court Open Date)</i>	<i>Sitting Day¹ Total in Parent Court Only after Nightingale Court (Nightingale Court Open Date - Nov 2020)</i>
Worthing Magistrates' and County Court	East Pallant House	20/07/2020	1743	421
Southwark Crown Court	Prospero House	03/08/2020	3540	628
Swansea Crown Court (St Helen's)	Swansea Civic Centre	17/08/2020	1308	214
Telford Justice Centre ²	Former County Court at Telford	17/08/2020	1967	315
Teesside Combined Court	Middlesbrough Town Hall	18/08/2020	5275	817
Blackpool County Court	Former Magistrates court Fleetwood	24/08/2020	1027	92
Blackpool Magistrates' Court	Former Magistrates court Fleetwood	24/08/2020	1748	253
East London Family Court	102 Petty France	24/08/2020	3732	614
Leeds Combined Court	Cloth Hall Court	28/08/2020	8991	1130
Luton Crown Court	Knights' chamber and visitor centre Peterborough Cathedral	28/08/2020	1435	280
York County Court	York, Hilton hotel	28/09/2020	1736	195
Manchester Crown Court (Crown Square)	The Lowry theatre, Salford	28/09/2020	3927	357
Manchester Crown Court (Minshull street)	The Lowry theatre, Salford	28/09/2020	2691	235
Manchester tribunal ³	The Lowry theatre, Salford	28/09/2020	5299	443
Teesside Combined Court (Middlesbrough County Court)	Middlesbrough, Jury's Inn hotel	28/09/2020	5559	521
Chester Crown Court	Chester, Chester Town Hall	19/10/2020	1465	116
Bristol Crown Court	Bristol Law Society	19/10/2020	2881	145
Bristol Civil Justice Centre	Bristol Law Society	19/10/2020	5782	361
Queen Elizabeth II Law Courts	Liverpool, St Georges Hall	26/10/2020	8317	548
Winchester Combined Court	Winchester Guild Hall	26.10.20	1975	124

1. If a courtroom has been used at all on a given day, we count that as 1 'day sat'

2. Includes Telford Justice Centre Annex

3. Manchester Tribunals: Includes Alexandra House – Manchester Tribunal and Piccadilly Exchange – Manchester Tribunal

Data and management information can change over time and are not subject to the same level of checks as official statistics. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to

inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and is the best data that is available.

Ensuring that we can operate safely during the Covid-19 pandemic is our top priority. We have put in place measures in our court rooms so that they can hold Covid-19 secure trials, moved to virtual hearings where possible and opened additional court rooms in Nightingale courts as part of a package to increase available capacity.

Customs: Kent

Asked by *Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide facilities for drivers delayed awaiting customs proceedings in Kent. [HL12582]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Currently traffic is flowing well through the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. However, should there be significant delays, the Department of Transport has included the provision of adequate and Covid-secure welfare in our plans for the lorry holding sites at Ashford-Sevington and Manston Airfield. Our sites include catering, medical and sanitation facilities for HGV drivers to use. If required, these facilities can be adjusted to respond to different levels of congestion.

The Kent Resilience Forum (which includes Kent County Council, Kent Police and other organisations working in Kent) has a driver welfare plan that will provide reasonable and proportionate distribution of welfare to both passenger and freight traffic during significant congestion. It covers the deployment of food, water, medicine, warmth and sanitation.

Customs: Recruitment

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that their target of employing the additional customs agents required for the UK's departure from the EU has not been met, what plans they have to increase the level of such agents. [HL12535]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government does not have a target for numbers of customs agents. Readiness in the sector relates to the capacity to make declarations, rather than numbers of staff employed. This is because the sector is varied and made up of a number of different business models including specific customs brokers, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators; all of which will require different numbers of staff to complete declarations and to provide their services.

Many in the sector have innovated and brought in significant IT solutions to automate processes which have reduced the numbers of staff they require.

The Government has helped them to do this by making over £80 million of support available, including flexible grants that can be used for IT and training as well as recruitment, depending on the needs of the business. There is also support for intermediaries available through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS).

The sector has scaled up significantly, and the Government continues to monitor progress closely and engage with the sector to understand the support it needs.

Developing Countries: Charities

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to fund local charities in (1) developing, and (2) conflict, countries. [HL12502]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO is committed to working in partnership with a diverse range of civil society organisations and recognises the unique role of in-country local organisations. A key aim of our funding for civil society is to support the capacity of local civil society organisations (in developing and conflict countries) so they can become strong, self-reliant and powerful development actors.

In addition to funding provided to local organisations through our country programmes, our 10-year partnership with Comic Relief focusses on building the capacity and sustainability of local charities in Ghana, Zambia and Malawi. Local charities based in country are also eligible for funding for project activities through UK Aid Direct.

Developing Countries: Climate Change

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with trade unions in the global south on addressing climate change ahead of COP26. [HL12542]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to delivering an ambitious and inclusive COP26. We know that approaching our Presidency in a fair, inclusive and balanced way will lead to the most sustainable outcomes.

We will champion inclusivity throughout our COP Presidency and use our position as Presidency to empower and amplify the voices of those whose views are often most marginalised, addressing their needs and priorities in the run up to, and at the COP itself.

We are working with a diverse group of Friends of COP, leading figures from around the world who are sharing their expertise in support of a successful summit. This includes Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. We are also engaging regularly with the UNFCCC constituency focal points, which include the Trade Union non-governmental organisations.

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are discussing climate and environment issues with any less economically developed country with the aim of increasing any such country's investment in clean energy and green technologies. [HL12551]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We cannot meet Sustainable Development Goal 7 or the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement without a clean energy transition that leaves no-one behind. As COP26 President, the UK has made clean energy transition one of the five thematic campaigns underpinning COP26. We want to ensure that developing countries are able to access the investment and assistance they need to transition to clean power, which will be crucial in helping those countries achieve more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions. The COP26 Energy Transition Council is facilitating dialogue between countries seeking energy transition support and the major international actors offering that support, to find and implement solutions more rapidly.

The doubling of the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) to £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26 includes up to £1 billion for developing and testing new technology in areas such as energy storage, renewable energy, low carbon and electric transport, and industrial decarbonisation. This funding for innovation is targeted at driving forward the clean energy transition in developing countries, by creating and demonstrating new technologies and business models to deploy them.

As part of a wider ICF energy portfolio, FCDO is also investing £38 million in the Climate Compatible Growth (CCG) research programme to support developing countries to accelerate their transition to green energy while growing their economies. CCG will provide data, tools and evidence to inform country policies and investments in clean energy and transport infrastructure, helping to ensure that developing countries adopt a growth path that is sustainable for decades to come.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken since November 2020 to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for those living in the global south. [HL12540]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. The UK has committed £548 million to the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC), which is the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. Through match funding, this commitment encouraged other donors to commit \$1 billion by the end of 2020, and will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 countries.

The UK is also working closely with international partners such as Gavi, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and UNICEF to support COVAX's preparations for vaccine rollout in countries in the global south. We welcome COVAX's recent agreement for up to 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine candidate, set to begin by the end of February.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty rates in the global south. [HL12543]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: COVID-19 is likely to have resulted in over 140 million additional people living in extreme poverty - around 2% of the global population - and many more will have temporarily fallen below the poverty line. This is a seven-year reversal in progress to reduce poverty.

But the UK is at the forefront of the international response, committing up to £1.3 billion of new ODA to counter the health, economic, and humanitarian impacts of COVID-19, including mobilising COVAX to provide vaccines to low- and middle-income countries. We have also reprogrammed over 300 existing programmes to respond to the challenges created by COVID-19, and are supporting the multilateral development banks to make over £200 billion of financing available to developing countries. The UK is also playing a key role in setting the agenda for a longer-term recovery through our Presidency of the G7 in 2021.

Developing Countries: Malnutrition

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact of the end of their funding under the Nutrition for Growth Summit 2013 commitments on malnutrition in the global south. [HL12544]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has been the largest nutrition donor globally over the past few years. The UK has invested £3.7 billion in tackling malnutrition since the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2013. From 2015-2020, 55.1 million young children, women and adolescent girls have been reached through our nutrition programmes.

The Department is undertaking a rigorous internal prioritisation process following the spending review announcement. We will update on the implications of this for any new nutrition commitment in due course.

Developing Countries: Oil

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) are providing, or (2) intend to provide, technical assistance to any oil-rich less economically developed country in order for any such country to develop its non-oil private sector. [HL12552]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We cannot meet Sustainable Development Goal 7 or the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement without a clean energy transition that leaves no-one behind. It is vital that oil-rich

developing countries are able to make the clean energy transition and the UK Government is helping them to achieve that.

FCDO funds a portfolio of programmes supporting investment climate reform, which is one of the biggest barriers to business growth and job creation in developing countries. The Manufacturing Africa (MA) programme aims to increase foreign direct investment into manufacturing in a range of African countries, including countries with proven oil reserves such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. Over the next decade, the programme will help create an estimated 90,000 jobs and generate £1.2bn of additional foreign direct investment.

The Cities and Infrastructure for Growth (CIG) programme is supporting national and city governments, including in Uganda, to identify, develop and unlock finance for infrastructure projects that are key to enhance urban productivity and remove critical constraints to businesses growth and competitiveness. Examples include supporting the prioritisation, design and development of infrastructure projects in Kampala, including the Kampala Industrial Park.

In Nigeria, the UK is supporting the Nigerian government's Solar Power Naija scheme which aims to achieve 5m new off-grid solar energy connections by 2023 and develop Nigeria's manufacturing capacity.

Development Aid

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with the EU on shared global development priorities. [HL12545]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will continue to cooperate closely with all our allies and partners, including the EU and its Member States in areas of shared interest, including on our many shared global development priorities. For example, we will work closely with the EU to deliver our G7 Presidency priorities on development and for COP26. Since the UK's exit from the EU in February 2020, we have already worked together with the EU successfully to support COVAX and the GAVI replenishment. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes provisions for cooperation on global issues such as peace and security, climate change and sustainable development and for coordination in multilateral fora. It includes provisions covering cooperation on health security and on science and research through our association with Horizon Europe. The Withdrawal Agreement provides for continuing UK contributions to EU development programmes as part of the wider financial settlement.

Election Offences: Leaflets

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation to prevent political parties

and election candidates from issuing leaflets that pretend to be documents from official sources. [HL12524]

Lord True: Electoral law already provides that printed election literature by parties and candidates in a regulated election period must include an imprint. The Government will be extending this provision to digital materials, following recent consultations.

More broadly, free speech in a democracy often results in robust and lively debate. Critical comment, however presented, is an important check and balance on proposals by governments and municipal administrations to increase taxes on the people.

When the content and context of political argument is contested, the best remedy is further debate in an independent free press, rather than state vetting and censorship of political comment. We should then trust the people to make their own judgements on the merits of the case at the ballot box.

Elections: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the costs related to holding the elections on 6 May, including the additional costs of measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic, will be refunded to local authorities. [HL12489]

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they have provided (1) to local authorities, and (2) to returning officers, about the provision of polling stations at the elections on 6 May in polling districts where the usual polling stations cannot be used and where there are no available alternatives. [HL12490]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for using postal votes only for the elections due to take place on 6 May. [HL12522]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for deferring the elections due to take place on 6 May until later in the year. [HL12523]

Lord True: Democracy should not be cancelled because of covid. The Government has confirmed that the set of local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for May will go ahead, and made a firm commitment that the Government will support the sector to deliver them.

The Government has published a clear Delivery Plan for the May elections, setting out how the Government will support local elections teams to deliver effective polls that are covid-secure for voters and staff.

Further guidance for all those involved in the elections will be available in due course and well in advance of the polls.

To support the smooth running of the Police and Crime Commissioner and local elections, there will be an estimated £92 million of government funding that will be provided to Returning Officers and local authorities for the elections. Of this, £31 million is an uplift to address costs associated with making the polls covid-secure.

Entertainers: Visas

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the haulage and cabotage rules in the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement do not prevent multi-country touring for musicians and other performers. [HL12771]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the EU allows UK hauliers to undertake up to 2 additional laden journeys within the EU after a laden international journey from the UK, with a maximum of 1 cabotage movement outside Ireland. These rules will also apply to specialist hauliers, such as hauliers who carry equipment for musicians and other performers.

Our assessment is that the TCA ensures that more than 95% of all haulage journeys will continue as they did before the end of the transition period. However, UK operators undertaking more than 2 additional movements will not be covered by the TCA.

Market access arrangements for hauliers transporting equipment for cultural events was discussed regularly during negotiations between the UK and the EU, and the UK put forward proposals for an exemption for specialist hauliers carrying out tours for cultural events, but the EU did not agree to our asks.

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with the road haulage industry and is working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to support the creative industries sector.

Exports: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of export levies resulting from the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the number of job losses in the UK. [HL12558]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Trade and Cooperation agreement is unprecedented as the EU's first trade agreement based on 100% tariff liberalisation. The Agreement ensures there will be no tariffs or quotas on trade between the UK and EU, where goods meet the relevant rules of origin. For goods that do not meet requirements of the rules of origin, depending on the

goods' circumstances, businesses may be able to use existing special customs procedures in place to ease trade between the UK and EU. Businesses will be able to continue to trade smoothly with the EU and explore further opportunities as the UK is now able to strike trade deals with other partners around the world. From financial services through to automotive manufacturing, the deal protects high quality jobs and investment right across the UK.

The Agreement delivers on the Government's promise to take the UK out of the EU's customs territory. This means that there will be new customs processes on goods exported from Great Britain into the EU and vice versa. The deal seeks to reduce the costs of these new processes for traders by supporting efficient customs arrangements covering all trade in goods, while ensuring that customs authorities remain able to protect their regulatory, security and financial interests. Both sides have committed to clear documentation efficiently, maintain transparency, and simplify customs procedures wherever possible.

The Government is committed to supporting businesses to adjust to new trading rules with the EU. Border controls will be brought in stages between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2021 and the Government will continue to provide clear guidance on the actions businesses are required to take by engaging with them and running webinars to support their readiness.

Fish: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the fishers on the distant fishing fleet are eligible for the financial support for fishing businesses that export to the EU, announced on 19 January. [HL12511]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The £23 million announced for the fishing industry will provide financial support towards verifiable losses incurred by seafood exporting businesses that are registered in the UK. We will assist such businesses with losses that occur during movement of live and fresh seafood goods from the UK to the EU due to events outside their control. Fishers on the distant fishing fleet who meet the scheme conditions may be eligible for funding. Each application will be individually reviewed and assessed against the scheme criteria.

Fisheries

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the distant fishing fleet can continue to operate. [HL12510]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Fisheries Framework Agreements secured with Norway and the Faroe Islands provide for annual negotiations on fishing opportunities and access. The UK's bilateral negotiations for fishing opportunities in 2021 with the Faroes Islands have

commenced, whilst we expect bilateral negotiations with Norway to begin imminently.

The UK's overriding priority in these negotiations is to agree the right deal, which is balanced in the best interests of the entire British fishing industry.

Ahead of the conclusion of those annual negotiations, the UK's distant water fleet already has access to Norwegian waters to fish in the waters around Svalbard, by separate arrangement with the Norwegian authorities. The details of these opportunities were published on 14 January in the Secretary of State determination of fishing opportunities for British fishing boats covering the period to 31 March 2021.

Gambling: Excise Duties

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to undertake the five-year review of remote gaming duty set out in the 2014 HMRC draft note on Remote Gambling Taxation Reform. [HL12484]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has no current plans to publish a review or evaluation document on remote gaming duty.

The reference in the 2014 HMRC draft note relates to the internal monitoring and evaluation process, which is standard practice across all taxes. The benefits, revenue effects and administration of remote gambling taxation are subject to constant evaluation.

Gambling: Females

Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the levels of problem gambling among women. [HL12756]

Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

To ask Her Majesty's Government what concerns relating to problem gambling and women they intend to address in their Review of the Gambling Act 2005. [HL12758]

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the level of gambling by women. [HL12795]

Baroness Barran: The Gambling Commission is continuing to monitor gambling behaviour during the Covid-19 period. Survey data published by the Commission in January indicated that 87% of women gamblers have gambled the same amount or less during the pandemic than they had previously. The Commission recently wrote to operators to remind them of its guidance

issued in May 2020, which requires them to increase protections for those who may be at heightened risk of gambling harm. That guidance directed operators to monitor customer behaviour more closely to identify signs of potential harm, and banned mechanisms by which customers could cancel requests to withdraw money from their account.

The Gambling Commission also conducts a quarterly telephone survey of gambling behaviours which collects data about problem gambling prevalence. The most recent wave of that survey was carried out in September, and aggregated results for the year to September 2020 estimated the problem gambling rate amongst women to be 0.3%. This is higher than the rate estimated for the year to September 2019 (0.1%), but lower than the rate estimated for the year to March 2020 (0.4%). Caution should be used when interpreting these figures due to the low numbers of respondents involved. Much of the data for the year to September 2020 was collected prior to the Covid-19 period, and problem gambling is measured using questions which ask about past year experiences and behaviours, so it is not possible to accurately assess the relative impact of the pandemic on fluctuations in currently available data. The Commission will publish the next wave of telephone survey data later this month, which will give figures for the year to December 2020.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8th December with the publication of a call for evidence. The Review will be wide-ranging and evidence-led, and aims to make sure we have the right balance for regulation and appropriate protections for all vulnerable people.

Gambling: Tax Avoidance

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of corporation tax that has been avoided by online gambling companies which operate in the UK since the introduction of the Remote Gaming Duty in 2014. [HL12485]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Remote Gaming Duty is a point of consumption tax on gaming providers' profits from remote gaming. There will be a liability if there is a UK person playing, regardless of where in the world the gaming provider is located. This is not linked to the Corporation Tax position.

A company is liable for UK Corporation Tax on its worldwide income and gains if it is resident in the UK for tax purposes. A non-UK tax resident company may still be liable for UK Corporation Tax if it is trading in the UK through a UK permanent establishment, such as a branch or agency. In this case the non-UK resident company would be liable for UK tax on the worldwide income and gains related to that permanent establishment.

HMRC does not generally estimate speculative amounts that could be payable if offshore companies decided to become UK tax resident.

Gambling: Video Games

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 22 January (HL11976), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, whether (1) secondary, or (2) primary, legislation would be required to bring loot boxes within scope of gambling regulation by defining their contents as money or money's worth. [HL12486]

Baroness Barran: For the purposes of the Gambling Act 2005 gaming is defined in section 6(1) as playing a game of chance for a prize, which is defined in section 6(5) as being money or money's worth. Section 6(6) of the Act allows the Secretary of State to make regulations clarifying what constitutes a game of chance for the purposes of the Act, but it does not include a provision for the Secretary of State to amend section 6(5).

The government is reviewing the evidence received through our bespoke Call for Evidence on whether loot boxes present a risk of harm to consumers, and if so, the extent and nature of those harms. The evidence we received will help us both identify the issues at play and ensure that any policy changes effectively address them. As we are still considering the evidence submitted, it is too early to know whether any changes might be needed and therefore we cannot specify how we could implement any changes should they be required. The government will set out its next steps on loot boxes, including whether or not primary or secondary legislation is needed, in the coming months.

Gaza: Hospitals

Asked by *Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 19 January (HL11788), whether they consider the reported bombing of a paediatric hospital in Gaza on 26 December 2020 to be part of government of Israel's "legitimate right to self-defence"; if so, how; and what assessment they have made of what constitutes legitimate self-defence for those living in territory occupied by that government. [HL12564]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to stress the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and to conduct prompt transparent investigations into any claims of IDF misconduct. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue with the IDF on 20 January and will continue to follow the IDF internal investigation. The UK is clear that it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. Any attacks targeted against civilians are unlawful and unjustifiable.

Ghana: Politics and Government

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current (1) political, and (2) economic, situation in Ghana. [HL12520]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government 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. We are aware that the National Democratic Congress 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, where he met with the President and underlined the Government's enthusiasm to continue our strong partnership, including opportunities for mutual prosperity.

While Ghana has seen rapid economic growth in the past decade, the pandemic has slowed progress significantly. The Government is working with the Government of Ghana to minimise the impact on Ghanaian businesses. The UK and Ghana have also reached consensus on the main elements of a trade agreement. Negotiations are progressing at official level, and with willingness on both sides, the agreement can be finalised and brought into force quickly.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Bromford

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the current cost of the tunnel proposal at Bromford on HS2 Phase One; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the Transport and Works Act 1992 Order procedure used for its construction on the time it will take to introduce HS2 Phase One services. [HL12882]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The proposed tunnel extension at Bromford is estimated to result in a net saving of £70 million (base date 2018) compared to the original surface route. HS2 Ltd plans for finalising the Transport and Works Act Order are proceeding to schedule and the consent procedure is not expected to have any adverse impact on the introduction of HS2 Phase One services.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Wendover

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 18 December (HL11112), why a tunnel cannot be granted at Wendover for HS2 using a Transport and Works Act 1992 Order; and what are the criteria for deciding

whether to propose a Transport and Works Act 1992 Order. [HL12881]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As I made clear in my answer of 18 December, a Transport and Works Act Order could, in principle, be used to secure the powers for a tunnel at Wendover. However, there are no plans to change the consented scheme at Wendover and this means that no new powers are being sought there. The criteria for deciding whether to seek new powers for an adjusted scheme at Wendover have always been, and remain, rooted in an assessment of the pros and cons of the proposal being put forward, particularly in regard to feasibility, value for money and schedule impact.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Databases

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 4 January (HL11555), (1) how much funding has been made available from the budget of the Reform Programme, and (2) how much money has been allocated from Administrative Data Research UK, for implementing the recommendations of the report by Dr Natalie Byrom Making the most of HMCTS data: HMCTS' full response and update to Dr Byrom's recommendations, published on 9 October 2020. [HL12556]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Dr Byrom's report makes a number of important recommendations which HMCTS is in the process of implementing. Because HMCTS's response to the recommendations is integrated into the wider work on reviewing data use and management, spending is included in departmental and programme budgets. As such, it is not possible to disaggregate work on the recommendations from other work on data. In addition to spending from these departmental and programme budgets, HMCTS has allocated £4.92m of reform funding specifically to implementing our Data Strategy in 2020/2021. HMCTS budgets for future years have not yet been set.

ADR UK awarded MoJ a grant of £2.89m over three years for the data-linking programme Data First to facilitate and promote research in the area of justice. This work was commissioned for overall strategic aims of ADR UK and Data First and not specifically to address the recommendations from the Byrom report.

Hong Kong: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks made by Anthony Blinken, the nominee for Secretary of State of the United States of America, on 19 January that the USA should "take in some of those fleeing Hong Kong, fleeing the repression, for standing up for their

democratic rights"; and what plans they have to coordinate an international strategy in support of the people of Hong Kong. [HL12467]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is in close touch with all our international partners, including the US, on developments in Hong Kong. We will continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners, as befits our historic commitment to the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations.

The UK has taken a number of measures in response to the introduction of the National Security Law. These include a new immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders BN(O)s, suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the European Parliament's (1) adoption of an urgent resolution on 'the crackdown on the democratic opposition in Hong Kong', and (2) call for sanctions to be imposed on senior officials from Hong Kong and China under the EU human rights global sanction regime. [HL12469]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The European Parliament passed a resolution on 21 January on the mass arrests earlier that month. On 6 January, the Foreign Secretary issued a statement on those arrests, condemning the mass arrest of politicians and activists in Hong Kong as a grievous attack on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms as protected under the Joint Declaration.

We will continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners as befits our historic commitment to the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

The UK is no longer part of the EU and has developed an independent sanctions regime. We will not speculate on who may be designated under the UK sanctions regime in the future.

The UK has taken a number of measures already in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders - BN(O)s, suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

Honours

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 19 January (HL11722), which data they hold on nominations for honours; what plans they have to publish those data;

whether they intend to record the number of nominations (1) received, and (2) awarded, broken down by region or nation in the UK, in future; and if not, why not. [[HL12475](#)]

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 19 January (HL11724), how many honours, broken down by each award level, were received in each region or nation in the UK; and what percentage of the population of each such region or nation that number represents. [[HL12476](#)]

Lord True: Nominations, which are made by members of the public, come directly to the Cabinet Office. Alongside this, organisations, charities and businesses make nominations directly to other government

departments and to the Devolved Administrations. Therefore, a complete record of all honours nominations submitted is not held by the Cabinet Office. There are no plans to publish data on nominations.

Statistical information held in relation to the regional breakdown of recipients at all levels on the New Year Honours List 2021 can be found below by region and level. Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal point.

Data is collected using the county the recipient gives as their correspondence address (usually their home address rather than their places of origin) and is aggregated into regional figures. This data relates only to the main Prime Minister's List and does not include data from the Defence List or the Overseas and International List, which are not administered by the Cabinet Office.

Percentage of NY21 recipients living in each region by level

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of BEM recipients in NY21 List</i>	<i>% of NY21 BEM recipients living in each region</i>	<i>Number of MBE recipients in NY21 List</i>	<i>% of NY21 MBE recipients living in each region</i>	<i>Number of OBE recipients in NY21 List</i>	<i>% of NY21 OBE recipients living in each region</i>	<i>Number of CBE and higher recipients in NY21 List</i>	<i>% of NY21 CBE and Higher recipients living in each region</i>	<i>Total recipients on NY21 List in each region</i>	<i>% of the total NY21 list living in each region</i>
East	37	9.3	53	11.1	24	9.6	7	6	121	9.8
East Midlands	24	6	15	3.2	8	3.2	3	2.6	50	4
London	41	10.3	91	19.1	59	23.6	39	33.6	230	18.6
North East	5	1.3	14	2.9	9	3.6	4	3.4	32	2.6
Northern Ireland	38	9.6	28	5.9	8	3.2	7	6	81	6.5
North West	32	8.1	37	7.8	21	8.4	8	6.9	98	7.9
Scotland	44	11.1	35	7.4	18	7.2	12	10.3	109	8.8
South East	47	11.8	65	13.7	49	19.6	19	16.4	180	14.5
South West	29	7.3	43	9	12	4.8	6	5.2	90	7.3
Wales	28	7.1	23	4.8	10	4	1	0.9	62	5
West Midlands	34	8.6	39	8.2	14	5.6	4	3.4	91	7.3
Yorkshire & Humberside	38	9.6	31	6.5	16	6.4	4	3.4	89	7.2
Living Abroad	0	0	2	0.4	2	0.8	2	1.7	6	0.5
Total	397	100	476	100	250	100	116	100	1,239	

Immigration

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 January (HL11926), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, how many non-visa nationals whose permission to be in the UK expired, and for

whom there was no record of departure, there were in each of the past five years. [[HL12493](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not currently hold any existing assured data relating to the cohort of non-visa national visitors whose permission to be in the UK has expired and there is no record of departure.

To attempt to answer the question from data we hold would require significant technical, analytical and

assurance work to establish the accuracy of any data for this cohort held within the immigration system.

However, the Home Office publishes statistics relating to departures by visa holders as part of its annual Exit Checks report. Fifth report on statistics relating to exit checks - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) The report includes the percentage of non-EEA visa holders whose leave expired with no initially identified departure in time, including both people for whom there was no record of departure and people with a confirmed late departure. It is important to note that individuals with no departure recorded were not necessarily non-compliant.

Insolvency

Asked by Baroness Morgan of Cotes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cumulative impact on business (1) lending, and (2) cashflow, of the extension of secondary preferential creditor status to HMRC in the context of (a) the changes to the insolvency regime brought in by the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020, (b) the increase of the maximum value of the prescribed part to £800,000 on 6 April 2020, and (c) the value of taxes deferred under the VAT deferral scheme. [HL12529]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The recent reforms to HMRC's creditor status for certain debts ensures that when a business enters insolvency, more of the taxes paid in good faith by its employees and customers, but held temporarily by the business, go to fund public services as intended, rather than be distributed to other creditors.

This measure is not expected to have a significant impact on the lending market or wider economy. The change is forecast to raise up to £255 million a year. To put this into perspective, bank lending to small and medium-sized businesses alone was £57 billion in 2019.

In 2020/21 this change is expected to raise an additional £40 million for the Exchequer. With regards to cash flow, the Government deferred an estimated £30 billion of VAT due during 2019/20 that can be paid off by instalments, interest-free, via the VAT New Payment Scheme as announced in the Winter Economy Plan.

At the same time, via changes to the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act, there has been a moratorium on winding-up petitions by creditors, including HMRC. The changes to the Insolvency Act to increase the cap on the prescribed part is an overdue reform to bring it in line with inflation and has no detrimental effect on any of the other measures mentioned here.

The numerous support measures taken by the Government were put in place to prevent the failure or closure of viable businesses. The scale of these support measures far outweighs the recoveries that the Government would receive via HMRC's preferential claims in insolvency.

Asked by Baroness Morgan of Cotes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the impact of the extension of secondary preferential creditor on levels of (1) business insolvencies, (2) job losses, and (3) the value of economic growth and taxes foregone, in 12 months' time. [HL12530]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government undertook careful work to assess the impact of the measures ahead of announcement and implementation. As with all tax policy changes, the Government published this assessment in a tax information and impact note which can be found on GOV.UK. [1]

The policy will be monitored through continuing communications with affected taxpayer groups and insolvency practitioners.

[1]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-protect-tax-in-insolvency-cases>

Iran: Nuclear Fuels

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for stability in the Middle East of the government of Iran's intention (1) to enrich uranium up to 20 per cent purity, and (2) to produce uranium metal. [HL12482]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Iran's commencement of uranium enrichment up to 20% at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant has no credible civil justification and carries very significant proliferation-related risks. Iran also has no credible civilian use for uranium metal, which could provide knowledge gains applicable to a weapons programme. As recently published in a joint statement, the E3 has expressed its deep concern at these steps which are further Iranian violations of its JCPoA commitments. We strongly urge Iran to halt these activities and return to compliance with its nuclear commitments without delay. Regional stability and security would be deeply undermined if Iran was ever to achieve a nuclear weapons capability.

Iran: Nuclear Power

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) the government of Israel, (2) the government of the United Arab Emirates, and (3) the government of Bahrain, about their inclusion in any discussions regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. [HL12483]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome and support President-elect Biden's commitment to return to the JCPoA, and to strengthen and extend it. We have always been clear that any sustainable solution will need to address a range of issues, in particular Iran's nuclear

programme but also regional security concerns. We have continued a regular dialogue with the Governments of Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain (amongst others) regarding the JCPoA, and are committed to engaging all regional partners in any future negotiations on regional security.

Jerusalem: Walls and Fences

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel has approved a project to build new sections of a wall to the north and east of Aizarya. [HL12563]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to raise our concerns about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with the Israeli authorities. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians.

Kenya: Somalia

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the maritime border dispute between Kenya and Somalia. [HL12519]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) will hear the case of the maritime boundary dispute between Somalia and Kenya in March 2021; subject to the ICJ's timelines it is possible that there will be a ruling around six months later. It would be inappropriate to pre-empt the ICJ's ruling. Recognising their shared interests in regional security and stability, the UK continues to encourage dialogue and co-operation between Kenya and Somalia on all areas of their bilateral relationship.

Motor Vehicles: Registration

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 19 January (HL12090), how many drivers in vehicles with non-UK number plates were identified as committing a speeding offence in the 2019/20 financial year; and how many of those drivers were fined. [HL12415]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued for speed limit offences. These data can be found in the 'Police Powers and Procedures, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales>

Information on the nationality of number plates connected to speeding offences is not collected or held by the Home Office.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Police Powers England and Wales [police-powers-procedures-mar20-hosb3120 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-21/HL12415>

Musicians: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of precedents for reciprocal arrangements for touring musicians in existing trade agreements, and in the EU–Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement in particular. [HL12702]

Baroness Barran: Through the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK and the EU agreed to a list of 11 activities that can be carried out by short-term business visitors without the need for a work permit, on a reciprocal basis in most Member States – subject to any reservations taken. This list of permitted activities is based on the best precedent established in the EU's Free Trade Agreements with Canada and Japan. It includes, among other activities, permissions for after-sales, translation and market research services. The EU–Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement does not include any facilitations for touring musicians.

The UK pushed for the list of permitted activities to be expanded to capture the work done by musicians, artists and entertainers, and their accompanying staff. This was a straightforward solution for our creative industries which would have benefited all sides. Regrettably, the EU rejected these proposals.

Musicians: Work Permits

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Barran on 19 January (HL Deb, col 1085), on what date their proposals for enabling musicians to travel and perform in the EU without work permits was rejected; and what explanation they were given for this rejection. [HL12699]

Baroness Barran: During negotiations with the EU, the UK repeatedly pushed to capture the work done by musicians, artists and entertainers, and their accompanying staff, through the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors. This would have allowed musicians and support staff to travel and perform in the UK and the EU more easily, without needing work-permits.

The UK made an offer to the EU which reflected the input of experts from the music sector. This was a

straightforward solution for our creative industries which would have benefited all sides.

The EU turned down our proposals on the basis that musicians were providing a service which they viewed as necessitating a work permit and/or visa.

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Barran on 19 January (HL Deb, col 1085), whether their proposals for enabling musicians to travel and perform in the EU without work permits included musicians being considered Short-Term Business Visitors; and, if so, what assessment they have made of whether this would remove the requirement for work permits. [[HL12700](#)]

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the EU's definition of Short-Term Business Visitor allows for the selling of services, including by musicians, to the general public during such visits. [[HL12701](#)]

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether UK musicians require a work permit to undertake unpaid performances in the EU. [[HL12703](#)]

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by the Minister of State for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on 19 January (HC Deb, col 773), when they will publish guidance on the criteria that each EU Member State has for allowing UK performers and artists to work there. [[HL12704](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes a list of 11 activities that can be carried out by short-term business visitors without a work permit, on a reciprocal basis in most Member States, subject to any reservations taken.

During negotiations with the EU, the UK proposed expanding this list of activities for Short Term Business Visitors to cover musicians and their accompanying staff. This would have enabled musicians and other creative professionals to travel and perform in the UK and the EU without needing work-permits. Regrettably, these proposals were rejected by the EU.

Due to the UK's inclusion on the EU Schengen visa-waiver list, certain activities should be permitted, visa-free, across the whole Schengen Area for up to 90 days in a 180-day period. Member States may require a visa and/or a work permit for what they regard as "paid activity". Some Member States do allow additional permitted activities, without the need for a visa or work permit, as part of their domestic immigration regimes. Therefore, UK cultural professionals, including musicians, seeking to perform within the EU will be

required to check domestic immigration and visitor rules for each Member State in which they intend to perform.

We have published guidance on GOV.UK, signposting to official information provided by EU countries about their business travel routes, which is regularly updated. We are also undertaking an extensive programme of engagement with the sectors to help them understand these new requirements.

Myanmar: Human Rights

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce sanctions on members of the Burmese military linked to human rights abuses and the recent coup d'état in Myanmar. [[HL12908](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns the state of emergency imposed by the Myanmar military on 1 February, and the unlawful detention of civil society representatives and democratically elected politicians, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.

The UK has already imposed targeted sanctions on 16 individuals responsible for human rights violations in Myanmar. We played a leading role in securing sanctions on 14 individuals whilst we were in the EU. These have all been transitioned into UK law. In July 2020, we sanctioned the Commander-in-Chief and his Deputy, in our first tranche of sanctions under the Global Human Rights Sanctions regime. We have now sanctioned all six individuals named in the UN Fact Finding Mission Report. We are working closely with international partners to consider next steps with the aim of ensuring that the democratic wishes of Myanmar's people are respected and prisoners are released. The UK will consider all the tools at its disposal.

Myanmar: Humanitarian Aid

*Asked by **Baroness Cox***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to provide humanitarian support for people who have been internally displaced from Shan State in Myanmar due to the expansion of coal-mining operations by the Myanmar Army and Ngwe Yi Pale. [[HL12706](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is aware of the recent displacements caused by the expansion of the coal-mining operations in Shan State, and mounted a response through its partners within the first week. Initially, 82 houses were destroyed, resulting in 3,891 people being displaced. UK humanitarian assistance targeted and is reaching 2,325 of those displaced with emergency food and medical support. Since 22 January, there are 1,073 people who remain displaced, with the rest now staying with host families or returning to Ngwe Yi Pale.

Myanmar: Politics and Government

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the coup d'état which took place in Myanmar on 1 February, and (2) its potential impact on (a) the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, and (b) the process of democratisation in that country. [HL12907]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns the military coup in Myanmar and the detention of civil society and members of the elected government, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. These latest events are an attempt by the military to obstruct democracy and are a significant setback to the democratic reform process. The November 2020 election result must be respected.

The UK is concerned about the risk of violence targeted at ethnic minorities across the country. The UK is closely monitoring the situation and working with our partners to ensure lifesaving humanitarian assistance continues, including for religious and ethnic minorities.

Neonicotinoids

Asked by **Lord Randall of Uxbridge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 14 January (HL Deb, cols 874–7), what plans they have to publish (1) the full application made by the National Farmers' Union in 2020 for an emergency authorisation of the use of the neonicotinoid product 'Cruiser SB' to treat sugar beet in 2021, and (2) any advice they received from the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides and Natural England in regard to that application. [HL12536]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The process for considering an emergency authorisation for a pesticide is set out in the legislation and includes consideration of potential risks to people and to the environment. The process was followed for this application and the Secretary of State decided that the criteria for an emergency authorisation have been met in this case. His decision was informed by assessments and advice from the Health and Safety Executive, the Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) and Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser. Natural England is sighted on emergency authorisation applications. No advice was requested or received on this application.

The information contained in applications made for emergency authorisations is not normally published. The ECP publishes the minutes of its discussions, and its advice on the Cruiser SB application is contained in the minutes from the 24 November 2020 meeting (attached to this answer and also available online at the following link):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946083/ecp-201124-fullminutes.pdf.

Non-domestic Rates

Asked by **Baroness Thornhill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the transitional relief arrangements established for the 2017 business rates revaluation will be amended for the coming rate year in order for businesses who have not yet received the full benefits of the reduction in their rateable value at the 2017 revaluation to see their rates bills fall. [HL12561]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has no immediate plans to change transitional relief arrangements. Transitional relief must strike a balance between supporting businesses with both rising and falling bills as a result of the revaluation.

Businesses in downwards transitional arrangements will still have their bills reduced next year at the capped rate in the normal way.

The fundamental review of business rates will consider all parts of the business rates system, including reliefs.

Ofcom: Public Appointments

Asked by **Lord Smith of Finsbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to seek an assurance from appointees for the Chair of Ofcom that they are committed to the future of public service broadcasting in the UK; and if so, how they intend to seek such an assurance. [HL12855]

Baroness Barran: The government is supportive of a modern system of public service broadcasting that remains relevant and continues to meet the needs of UK audiences in the future.

The Chair of Ofcom is appointed by the DCMS Secretary of State following a fair and open competition and is assisted in this by an Advisory Assessment Panel. The preferred candidate will be required to attend a pre-appointment hearing with the DCMS Select Committee, following which a report will be published. Both the Advisory Assessment Panel and the DCMS Select Committee will have an opportunity to assess candidates against the published criteria for the role.

Overseas Aid: Diplomatic Service

Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether diplomatic posts overseas are able to apply to provide funding for (1) local charities and (2) NGOs; and whether there is a maximum time limit on any such funding. [HL12593]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: FCDO has run competitive funding schemes through its UK Aid Match and UK Aid Direct programmes since 2013 and 2015 respectively that civil society organisations have been able to apply for. Future funding levels for these are dependent on the outcome of the current spending review process. Similarly, Diplomatic Posts overseas are also in the process of business planning and through that process will make decisions about whether to allocate funding to local charities or NGOs.

Overseas Companies: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address the issues being encountered by those companies being advised by the Department for International Trade to register within the EU Single Market to overcome the challenges they have encountered since the UK's departure from the EU. [HL12534]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: This advice is not Government policy. The Cabinet Office has issued clear guidance, available at gov.uk/transition, which we encourage all businesses to follow.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) supports companies with queries relating to our departure from the EU Single Market via our dedicated enquiry service.

Police: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether police officers will be prioritised for COVID-19 vaccinations. [HL12450]

Lord Greenhalgh: For the first phase of the vaccine rollout, the Government is prioritising the elderly and clinically vulnerable, alongside the front-line healthcare workers who are directly treating and caring for them. Those over 50, and all adults in an exposure risk group, will then also be eligible for vaccination in the early phase of the programme. This already includes many police officers and police staff.

The Government recognise the vital work of the police and we continue to reemphasise that in discussions on the next phase of the vaccine prioritisation.

Port Infrastructure Fund

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 20 January (HL11829), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, whether they have (1) received any further requests for funding from Port of Dover authorities, and (2) had any discussions with those authorities about increasing funding to provide capacity for increased border checks; and if any such requests for funding

have been refused, what were the reasons for refusal. [HL12537]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 5 January (HL11614), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what were the criteria for funding bids to the Port Infrastructure Fund from (1) ports, and (2) airports. [HL12538]

Lord True: The Port of Dover has not formally requested additional funding in response to their provisional allocation. We have stated, more generally and to all ports, that there is no more funding available through the Port Infrastructure Fund.

The criteria for awarding grants were set out in the PIF Prospectus, which provided a guide to support Ports to apply for the PIF which opened for applications on 2 October 2020 and closed on 30 October 2020. We will place a copy in the library of the House, as well as publishing it online. Given the level of oversubscription, Government has had to apply the criteria strictly, in particular that works be required as a result of the introduction of the Border Operating Model.

Ports: Customs Officers

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on ports, how many customs officers are employed at each such port in the UK; how many vacancies there are for such posts; what assessment they have made of the number of such officers required to address such an impact; and what steps they are taking to meet any shortfall in the number of customs officers required. [HL12231]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Border Force are responsible for customs controls at the UK border, and for the resources necessary to meet those responsibilities. HMRC are responsible for customs matters inland, and for overall revenue and customs policy. Border Force undertook a large scale recruitment and training exercise in order to be able to respond flexibly to requirements at the border after transition. The latest published staffing and finance figures for Border Force can be found in the Home Office Annual Report for 2019-2020.

The Government is monitoring freight flow across UK ports through the Border Operations Centre in the Cabinet Office and freight levels have been increasing over recent weeks.

Ports: Wales

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to compensate (1) Holyhead Port, (2) Pembroke Dock, and (3) Fishguard Port, for any local

economic decline because of a reduction in ferry crossings due to the UK's departure from the EU. [HL12607]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement delivers for the whole of the United Kingdom and provides for streamlined customs arrangements to support the smooth flow of goods at the border. We will continue to work closely with traders to ensure that exporters understand the requirements they need to meet to continue trading with the EU. There is a period of adjustment for some businesses and whilst that occurs this may account for any initial reductions to freight flows on these and other UK routes, already affected by Covid19 restrictions. There are no plans for compensation for any ports as a result of this.

Welsh ports, and Holyhead in particular, will continue to be critical routes to and from the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe irrespective of direct links for haulage between Ireland and France. The land bridge route has significant advantages for hauliers over maritime routes and the Government is confident that Welsh ports will continue to thrive as we build on the opportunities provided by being an independent trading nation.

Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prioritise early years staff for vaccinations against COVID-19. [HL12577]

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. 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 for Education is working with DHSC and Public Health England to ensure that the education and childcare workforce is considered for prioritisation in the roll-out of the vaccine.

Pre-school Education: Finance

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the gap between funding rates and delivery costs for early years providers. [HL12574]

Baroness Berridge: The government continues to support families with their childcare costs. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced at the Spending Review a further £44 million investment in the 2021/22 financial year for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers.

In the 2021/22 financial year, we will increase the hourly funding rates for all local authorities by 8p an hour for the entitlement for 2 year olds and, for the vast majority of areas, by 6p an hour for the entitlement for 3 year olds and 4 year olds. This will pay for a rate increase that is higher than the costs nurseries may face from the uplift to the national living wage in April 2021.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, early years settings also have access to a range of business support packages including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Attendance at childcare has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, but we saw attendance rise over the autumn term.

The Department for Education carries out its own regular research on the cost of delivering childcare. The 2019 provider finances report is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-finances-survey-of-childcare-and-ey-providers-2019>.

The provider finances report includes data on the following:

- total cost and total income of delivering childcare
- variation in unit costs (an approximate measure of the average cost per child per hour for all children in the setting) and staff hourly pay
- patterns in parent-paid hourly fees and additional charges for parents

The 2019 survey of childcare and early years providers also includes information on the costs of providing childcare:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-providers-survey-2019>.

Prisoners: Females

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the briefing by Women in Prison, A national plan for tackling coronavirus in prisons, published on 21 January, what plans they have (1) to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on female prisoners, and (2) to improve the rehabilitation of women who have been in prison. [HL12505]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We have taken quick and decisive action, backed by Public Health England and Wales, to limit the spread of the virus across all prison establishments, including the women's estate. This has included restricting regimes, minimising inter-prison transfers and compartmentalising prisons into different units to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. A comprehensive regular testing

regime of both staff and prisoners is in place and is key in helping to prevent the spread of the virus. Our evidence gathering indicates these measures have had a positive impact on limiting deaths and the transmission of the virus in prisons. We are now working closely with the NHS to support the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations for eligible groups in custody.

A women's self-harm taskforce has been set up to coordinate and drive forward work aimed at reducing levels of self-harm in the women's estate, which includes the introduction of wellbeing checks for women during COVID-19 restrictions.

A range of other measures have also been put in place across the women's estate to reduce the impact of COVID-19, including:

- every prisoner has received £5 free PIN phone credit per week, which has been doubled recently for those women who need it, in order that they can keep in touch with their support networks on the outside;
- video visits continue to be available to women, and again recently their availability in the women's estate was increased;
- production of materials intended to support wellbeing, including a range of in-cell distraction activities, such as work books, puzzle books and information about relaxation techniques.
- creation of a Wellbeing Plan with input from mental health charity Mind, and prison resident focus groups. This is a resident-owned self-help tool that can be used by residents to reflect on their triggers and coping strategies, as well as actions they could take to improve their mood and look after themselves at difficult times.
- the Covid Special Purpose Licence Temporary Release (SPL ROTL) scheme for women who are pregnant and those who are in Mother & Baby Units, with the most recent release during January.
- prison officers entering the service have been given an additional week's training focused on female-specific issues to provide new officers with better understanding of the distinct needs of women prisoners. As women are a minority in the prison population, tailored training for officers working with this group will ensure they can be more responsive to their needs.

Through the Gate (TTG) providers continue to work to an Exceptional Delivery Model and offer remote phone support to all prisoners in their last 12 weeks of sentence. This includes signposting to relevant Third Sector providers in the community and other Government departments (e.g. completing the Duty to Refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act to Local Authorities and referring to local HPTs if they are without accommodation). TTG staff, community Offender Managers, HPTs and released women have written information about services they can access before, during and after release. Staff can make referrals to third sector services, such as women's centres, as appropriate and women can self-refer if they wish.

To support its COVID-19 response, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPT) to help find accommodation for offenders upon release. These have been very successful in securing improved accommodation outcomes. We are exploring how the regional HPTs might be a feature of the future landscape, ensuring that the specific needs of women are fully considered.

HMPPS has developed a national Accommodation Framework setting out how to work together with partners to ensure that offenders can access and maintain settled accommodation that is safe and appropriate for their needs. This framework contains specific aims in terms of women's access to post release accommodation, including the provision of more places in Approved Premises (Aps) and more appropriate accommodation through the Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS) that are currently run by NACRO.

There are seven APs for women who have high risk complex needs covering England and Wales. We are working to the expand the geographical coverage of the provision and having opened a new women's AP in London during 2020 we expect to open a further one in the South West during 2021.

Prudential Regulation Authority: Financial Services

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to legislate to authorise the Prudential Regulation Authority to carry out stress tests on the adequacy of capital at (1) hedge funds, and (2) private equity firms. [[HL12386](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) was established as the prudential regulator of firms which manage significant risk on their own balance sheet as a core part of their business and regulates and supervises banks, building societies, credit unions, insurers and systemic investment firms in the UK. This does not include any hedge funds or private equity firms, although such businesses may fall into scope of the PRA's regulatory activity to the extent that they are part of wider banking or insurance groups. The Financial Conduct Authority is responsible for the regulation of other financial services firms not supervised by the PRA, including non-systemic investment firms.

The Financial Policy Committee (FPC) acts as the UK's macro-prudential authority, tasked with identifying, monitoring and addressing emerging risks and vulnerabilities across the financial system. In its August 2020 Financial Stability Report, the FPC identified the need for further work domestically and internationally to review the resilience of investors and markets under stress, including leveraged investors. The relevant UK authorities are working with their international partners at the Financial Stability Board (FSB) to assess the role of

leveraged investors in core funding markets, as set out in the FSB's November 2020 Holistic Review of the March Market Turmoil.[1]

These institutional arrangements strike the right balance in securing a resilient and stable financial system and maintaining the UK's position as a leading financial centre for hedge fund and private equity investment - providing high quality jobs and capital investment to support businesses. The Government does not currently have plans to change these arrangements.

[1] <https://www.fsb.org/wp-content/uploads/P171120-2.pdf>

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which their levelling-up agenda will require measures to reduce growth in (1) London, and (2) the South East, alongside measures to increase growth in other areas of the country. [HL12425]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: All regions and nations have an important role to play in the future prosperity of the country. As such, the government is committed to levelling up opportunity across the UK while also enhancing the UK's existing strengths. This is why the Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to London and the South East, for example investing around £1.7 billion in 48 high-value projects through the Housing Infrastructure Fund, building ten new hospitals, and investing over £120 million from the Transforming Cities Fund in cities such as Southampton and Portsmouth. There are 5.9 million workforce jobs in London, and 22,000 civil service roles will be relocated out of London and the South East by 2030, as announced at Budget 2020.

Remote Education: Computers

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many laptops have been delivered to students for the purposes of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; what was the cost of those laptops; and what organisations supplied those laptops. [HL12549]

Baroness Berridge: The Government is investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people.

As of Monday 01 February 2021, over 927,000 laptops and tablets had been delivered to schools, academy trusts and local authorities by the Department to support children to access remote education during the COVID-19 outbreak. Numbers of devices delivered to date by the programme is published regularly at [https://explore-](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data/2021-week-5)

[education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data/2021-week-5](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data/2021-week-5).

For supplying devices to schools, the Department has signed contracts with Computacentre and XMA to supply a variety of device types according to the needs of schools and end users. Unit costs of specific devices distributed by the programme are not published as these are commercially sensitive.

Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021; and what plans they have to introduce similar legislation in relation to retail workers in England. [HL12436]

Lord Greenhalgh: Justice is a devolved matter in Scotland and so the introduction of any new offence in Scotland is a matter for the Scottish Government and Parliament to consider and we will monitor the effects of the new Scottish legislation.

The Government is committed to keeping our retail environments safe by driving down violence and abuse towards shop staff. We are working with retail stakeholders through the National Retail Crime Steering Group to ensure the response to these crimes is as robust as it can be. A wide range of offences already exist which cover assaults against any worker, including shop workers. In all cases, the fact that an offence has been committed against a person serving the public will be considered an aggravating factor for the purpose of passing sentence.

Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Uganda about the detention of Bobi Wine. [HL12521]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following the Presidential election results on 16 January 2021, the Minister for Africa set out in a statement our significant concerns about the overall political climate surrounding the elections and have urged the Government of Uganda to meet its international human rights commitments. The treatment of opposition figures post-election, including Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, is unacceptable and the Minister for Africa expressed these concerns in his tweet on 19 January 2021. HMG welcomes the High Court of Uganda's decision of 25 January that the detention of Kyagulanyi was unconstitutional and unlawful and that these restrictions have been lifted. The British High Commission Kampala pressed the Ugandan authorities to end these unacceptable restrictions on his liberty. Our High Commissioner in

Kampala continues to meet political actors from all parties and met Robert Kyagulanyi on 27 January 2021. They discussed the political situation in Uganda, the restrictions to political freedoms before and after the elections and the concerns raised over electoral processes. The High Commissioner urged all parties to reject violence, engage in peaceful dialogue and follow due process to address any electoral irregularities. 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.

Self-employed: Advisory Services

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide (1) financial advisory, and (2) specific mental health, services to people who are self-employed. [[HL12557](#)]

Lord Callanan: Individuals and businesses can access tailored advice through our Freephone Business Support Helpline, online via the Business Support website or through the network of 38 local Growth Hubs in England. Further initiatives include the BEIS-led Small Business Leadership Programme and Peer-to-Peer networks, to help businesses build resilience and grow.

In summer 2018, the British Business Bank also launched a website that offers independent and impartial information on different finance options for scale-up, high growth and potential high growth businesses. The site features infographics and checklists to help businesses get 'investor ready' as well as articles and guides from finance providers on how smaller businesses can identify and access finance suited to their growth ambitions. At its heart is the Finance Hub's Finance Finder, a simple six-step tool that enables smaller business to explore and identify finance options suited to their needs. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the Finance Hub has been updated to clearly signpost the financial support options available for businesses during this period of economic uncertainty.

The Government also recognises the significant impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on both employers and employees, and their mental wellbeing. In order to highlight available support around mental health, the Government is signposting to resources for businesses and employers, including Mind's website and the Mental Health at Work toolkit, through GOV.UK. We also continue to work with the Thriving at Work Leadership Council to encourage employers to sign up to the Mental Health at Work (MHAW) commitments and to engage leading Mental Health charities and organisations to better understand issues around SME mental health, financial insecurity for small business owners and the self-employed, and continue to explore what further support may be offered.

We are also taking many steps to protect both jobs and the long-term financial future of businesses during the

current economic emergency. We have introduced an unprecedented and comprehensive package of business support measures to help as many individuals and businesses as possible, which has mitigated some of the worst immediate impacts of COVID-19 on risk factors for poor mental health. This includes measures such as the small business grants, the Coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more. These measures were designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

Further measures were also announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer that build on the significant support already available as well as set out how current support will evolve and adapt. Businesses and individuals can use our checker tool on GOV.UK to quickly and easily determine whether they are eligible for any further financial support at this time.

Shipping: Radio Frequencies

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 15 January (HL11793), what assessment they have made of the resilience of UK merchant ships' ability to receive position, navigation and timing data in the event of a failure of satellite provision. [[HL12745](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Merchant ships' navigation officers, under part of their certificates of competency, are provided adequate practical training both ashore and on board to detect and respond to failures of satellite-based position, navigation and timing provisions.

They are, therefore, equipped to employ alternate methods and equipment, such as visual and radar lines of positions, and celestial navigation techniques for the coastal and oceanic phases of ships' voyages respectively.

Social Media: Racial Harassment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with social media companies about racist abuse of Premier League football players on social media platforms. [[HL12863](#)]

Baroness Barran: Ministers and officials meet regularly with social media companies to discuss online harms. The Culture Secretary and Sports Minister recently led a roundtable discussion with current and former players from the Premier League, English Football League (EFL), Women's Super League (WSL) and Women's Championship, which discussed online racist abuse and players' perspectives on tackling discrimination in the game.

We are clear that the online racist abuse of Premier League football players is unacceptable. We must do all

we can to tackle it. We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse, whether anonymous or not, is addressed. Under a new legal duty of care, companies will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content, including illegal online abuse. All companies will need to take swift and effective action against such content.

Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will also need to undertake regular risk assessments to identify legal but harmful material on their services. These companies will need to set clear terms and conditions which explicitly state what categories of legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently and could face enforcement action if they do not. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, will be ready this year.

Students: Housing

Asked by Baroness Harris of Richmond

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have provided to students who have to continue paying for their university accommodation but cannot live there due to the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12428]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: This has been a very difficult time for students, as it has for everyone, and we encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure they are fair, clear, and have the interests of students at heart.

Since universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and responsible for setting their own rent agreements, the government plays no role in the provision of student residential accommodation. Whether students are entitled to a refund or to an early release from their contract will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between them and their provider.

If students have concerns about their accommodation fees, they should first raise their concerns with their accommodation provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, and their higher education provider is involved in the provision of the accommodation, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

If students think their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/>, <https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain> and <https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>.

More broadly, the government does of course recognise the financial hardship that some students may face in these exceptional circumstances. The Department for

Education has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that higher education providers are able to draw on existing funds, worth around £256 million for academic year 2020/2021, towards hardship support. We are also making available an additional £50 million of hardship funding this financial year. In total we have made £70 million of funding available for student hardship given the £20 million made available to higher education providers in December 2020.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health systems in sub-Saharan Africa since November 2020. [HL12541]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: COVID-19 is resulting in health systems disruptions and reduced demand for health and nutrition services globally, including in Africa. A recent analysis by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) shows that over 40% of those that required health services during the pandemic had either missed or delayed their care, due to fear of contracting COVID-19 or reduced availability of services. Almost half had trouble accessing medicines. The UK's diplomacy, programmes and funding are playing a vital role in mitigating these indirect impacts of the pandemic.

The UK has committed up to £1.3 billion of UK Aid for the international response to the pandemic. This funding supports the direct response to COVID-19 and tackles the broader health, humanitarian, and socio-economic impacts, including ensuring continuity of access to essential health services. The UK has stepped up funding to the World Health Organisation (WHO), contributing £340 million in core voluntary funding over the next four years. This funding is helping to strengthen health systems in vulnerable countries, together with our bilateral health programmes and funding to other partnerships such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and malaria, and Gavi, the vaccine alliance.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of damage and looting as a result of a military offensive by the government of Ethiopia in the diocese of Adigrat in Tigray. [HL12470]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are saddened by further reports from Tigray of attacks on places of worship as well as reports of damage and looting in the diocese of Adigrat. 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.

Trade Agreements: Climate Change

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use free trade agreements as a means of furthering climate change objectives; and what examples they can provide of having done so in recently-concluded trade agreements, including rollover trade agreements. [HL12550]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: In our outline approaches to free trade agreements (FTAs) with the US, New Zealand, and Australia, we have committed to securing provisions that will help trade in low carbon goods and services, supporting innovation in sectors such as offshore wind, smart energy systems, low-carbon advisory services, and energy from waste. Our FTAs will also underpin international cooperation in research and development, and reaffirm the United Kingdom's sovereign right to regulate in pursuit of net zero by 2050.

The recently concluded United Kingdom-EU trade agreement confirms both Parties' commitments to key international climate agreements and includes other important commitments, such as promoting trade-related aspects of climate change policies in international fora. Our continuity FTAs have sought to replicate the effects of the EU's agreements too, including provisions on climate change.

Trade Promotion

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 18 March 2020 (HL2250), whether they will now answer the question put, namely when they intend to publish (1) each of Her Majesty's trade commissioners' latest annual reports setting out the strategy, objectives and overarching priorities for each delegated region, and (2) the budgets supporting the delivery of those objectives. [HL12743]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Individual Regional Trade Plans are not published.

The Department for International Trade's Annual Report and Accounts for 2019-20 ([link](#)) were laid in Parliament on 16 July 2020. Budgets for Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners (HMTCs) are published at a group level and are included in Global Trade and Investment Group Budget (p63, Resource DEL expenditure).

HMTC budgets for 2019-20 were published at a regional level in the National Audit Office report 'Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance: Support for Exports' ([link](#)). The table is replicated attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Overseas Regional Budgets [Overseas Regional Budgets.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-28/HL12743>

Trade Promotion: Public Appointments

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government to list all current appointments to the Trade Envoy Programme, detailing for each individual (1) the date of their appointment, (2) the countries to which they are assigned, and (3) the political party or grouping to which they belong. [HL12500]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: There are currently 30 Trade Envoys. A full list including their date of appointment, assigned markets and political affiliation is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

List of Trade Envoys [Trade Envoy.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-25/HL12500>

Travel Agents: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend COVID-19 financial support to home-based, self-employed travel agents without a rateable property. [HL12560]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods and to support businesses and public services across the UK. The Government has put in place an economic package of support, spending over £280 billion this year to provide this support.

Self-employed individuals may be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. The third taxable grant is now open for applications and is worth 80% of average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profits, and capped at £7,500 in total. There will be a fourth grant covering February 2021 to April 2021. The Government will set out further details, including the level of the fourth grant, in due course.

Individuals and families have also benefited from increased welfare payments, mortgage holidays, and a stay on repossession proceedings.

Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they used to determine which countries should be placed on the list of countries from which they have

banned travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; what plans they have to add further countries to that list; and what steps they are taking to ensure that any arrivals from those countries who cannot be refused entry to the UK quarantine in hotels. [HL12730]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The decision to introduce travel bans is in direct response to new scientific and medical data, which represents an increased risk to UK public health and an increased risk of community transmission of the new COVID-19 variants identified in other countries. These are temporary measures and the government keeps data for countries and territories under constant review.

The Government has made it consistently clear that it will take decisive action to contain the virus, including imposing travel bans if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

The introduction of additional measures including hotel quarantine will be an important measure in the Government's border response. Plans are urgently in development and the Government will set out a detailed implementation plan in due course.

Tree Planting

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) availability, and (2) efficacy, of sustainable alternatives to the plastic tube tree guards that are used for planting young trees. [HL12491]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Plastic tree guards have been used for new woodland creation as they are highly effective in helping the establishment of new trees, which must be protected from deer and rabbits if they are to survive.

There are other options for protecting young trees including biodegradable tree guards, temporary fencing and wildlife management, but currently these options are less effective than plastic tree guards in deterring browsers, particularly Deer.

The forestry sector is carrying out work to develop, and trial more effective biodegradable tree guards and the aim should be to get to a place where these are used as a matter of course - the forthcoming England tree strategy will look at how to support this.

In the meantime, current practice demands that tree guards should be retrieved after they have reached a point where they are redundant. Plans to collect and recycle the tree guards have been introduced by a number of forestry institutions.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the forthcoming England Tree Strategy will include support for rewilding schemes based on natural regeneration in appropriate areas. [HL12492]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Natural regeneration has the potential to be a powerful and cost-effective approach for woodland creation when enabled on appropriate sites, as an alternative to or complementing conventional planting. We will publish more detail on our plans to support natural regeneration and colonisation to help create and expand our woodlands when we launch our England tree strategy in the spring.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Climate Change Committee Sixth Carbon Budget, published on 9 December 2020, what plans they have to plant 440,000 hectares of mixed woodland by 2035. [HL12515]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are considering the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) advice ahead of setting the sixth carbon budget in legislation this summer. It is right that we take time to consider the recommendations carefully and in full. We have committed to increase planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025 – in line with CCC advice. We are also considering whether setting longer-term statutory targets for trees in England would be appropriate. To help meet our commitments we announced a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund to increase planting in England over this parliament and will publish a new England tree strategy in the spring.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a body similar to InterTradeIreland to promote (1) free trade, and (2) business links, between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. [HL12503]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Northern Ireland's place in the UK customs territory is assured and unfettered access for Northern Ireland goods to the rest of the UK market has been protected. We have also protected tariff-free trade within the UK and Northern Ireland's place in the UK VAT area.

The Government has put over £200m into the Trader Support Service, supporting businesses engaged in new processes under the Protocol. Further, the Movement Assistance Scheme provides assistance for traders moving agricultural products, meaning traders will not need to pay certification costs, and the UK Trader Scheme ensures there are no new tariffs for businesses and consumers on internal UK trade. This means that trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland is as streamlined as possible.

The UK Board of Trade champions exports, inward investment and outward direct investment to deliver economic growth and prosperity across the whole of the United Kingdom. The UK Government committed to hosting the Board of Trade in Northern Ireland annually

in the New Decade, New Approach agreement and it will be held in Northern Ireland later this year.

We have also underlined our ongoing support for peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland and we will provide £400m for a New Deal for Northern Ireland - supporting businesses and communities to prosper and thrive from the end of the transition period and beyond.

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Advisory Bodies

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for establishing the domestic advisory group or groups described in Article INST.7 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement [[HL12501](#)]

Lord True: The Government is carefully considering how it provides for the necessary institutions provided for in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Government consults with a wide range of businesses and civil society groups on an ongoing basis, including on the issues covered by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Violent and Sex Offender Register

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to amend Home Office guidance "so that only enrolled deed polls (through the Royal Courts of Justice) are accepted as a proof of name change", as set out in their response, dated 24 November 2020, to the petition Revoke the right of registered sex offenders to change their name by deed poll; and what assessment they have made of the impact the consequent publication of old names, new names and addresses will have on those who (1) have changed their names to avoid danger, and (2) may be in danger as a result of such publication. [[HL12525](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has some of the toughest powers in the world to deal with sex offenders. These include the notification requirements, which require registered sex offenders to notify their personal details, including their name and address, to the police. They must do this annually and whenever their details change. Failure to do so constitutes a breach which is punishable by up to 5 years' imprisonment.

Home Office Ministers have written to the Master of Rolls and the Royal Courts of Justice requesting that a Judicial Working Group should consider criminality in regard to the enrolled deed poll process. Once the Judicial Working Group has completed its work, we will consider

whether it is necessary to amend our existing Home Office guidance to better protect the public.

Should a change be made to the guidance, in the course of making the change we will take careful consideration of any potential impacts, including in relation to the protection of the people who have changed their name to avoid danger.

West Bank: Schools

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the only school in Al-Maleh has been demolished by the government of Israel; and what steps they plan to take to support the educational rights of Palestinian children living in Area C of the West Bank. [[HL12565](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK opposes Israel's proposed demolition of a Palestinian school in Al-Maleh and calls on Israel to reconsider its plans to do so. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised UK concerns about the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, including the potential demolition of schools, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv also raised our concern about the demolition of schools with the Government of Israel on 13 October, alongside European partners. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

Yemen: Ansar Allah

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they intend to have with the government of the United States about the impact on the food and health situation for the people of Yemen of the decision to designate Ansar Allah as a foreign terrorist organisation and a specially designated terrorist entity; and what steps they are taking in response to any such impact. [[HL12516](#)]

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, is not disrupted and will raise this urgently with the new administration. Our priority is to support the UN's peace process and ensure lifesaving humanitarian aid can reach the millions of Yemenis in need.

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