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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....3

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

National Fraud Initiative: Data Matching Purposes and Code of Data Matching Practice

[HLWS771]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary (Julia Lopez MP) has today made the following written statement:

The Cabinet Office is looking to consult on widening the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching powers and updating the NFI Code of Data Matching Practice. The powers are embedded within the Local Audit and Accountability Act, 2014 (the Act). The powers are:

- i) to assist in the prevention and detection of crime (other than fraud);
- ii) to assist in the apprehension and prosecution of offenders;
- iii) to assist in prevention and detection of errors and inaccuracies; and
- iv) to assist in the recovery of debt owing to public bodies.

Currently, the NFI can only match the data it collects for the purposes of detecting and preventing fraud [1]. These proposals focus on increasing NFI's operational efficiency and value for the public sector by widening those purposes. Early estimates suggest that by better utilising data already collected by NFI, supplemented by additional data collection where appropriate, enactment of these powers could deliver early efficiency savings (within the first 3 years) of at least £10 million a year to key public sector organisations. We would expect savings to be far greater over a longer time period. Critically, research shows that there are clearly important wider outcomes for citizens overall; i.e. the data matching powers would help:

- the police solve crimes other than fraud, or find offenders more efficiently than is currently the case;
- local authorities and government departments to reduce debt owed to public bodies while adhering to the Fairness in Debt Management Principles; and
- agencies or departments to reduce any errors that might exist in official data records and thereby helping to deliver more effective services or to ensure citizens receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Operating within a strong governance framework since 1996, the NFI already collects over 8000 datasets, 300 million records of data from over 1300 participant organisations [2]. To date it has already enabled participants to prevent and detect fraud and overpayments across the UK worth £1.9 billion through data matching. The powers were embedded into the Act in 2014 when the NFI transferred to the Cabinet Office and are not part of the current Covid-19 emergency response or legislation.

Our work to date shows that the powers will create longer term efficiency savings that will help public services. This aligns with the Cabinet Office role of creating efficiencies across Government and the Government's manifesto commitment to improve the use of data in the process of Government. We are committed to transparency on these proposals. Work to enact the powers was one of the five key objectives set out in the NFI strategic delivery plan, 2018 to 2022. The results of this consultation will be instrumental in determining the way forward. The consultation documents are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and will be open for responses until 10/03/2021.

[1] Data matching compares data to identify anomalies that might represent a fraud. The NFI is not permitted to identify patterns and trends in an individual's characteristics or behaviour which suggest nothing more than the individual's potential to commit fraud in the future.

[2] The NFI has both mandatory and voluntary participants. Participants include all local authorities, NHS trusts, police authorities, passenger transport executives (PTEs), Fire & Rescue Services and Combined Authorities in the UK. Government departments and private sector organisations can participate on a voluntary basis.

Spaceflight Regulator: Environmental Objectives

[HLWS770]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Rachel Maclean) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I am today publishing the consultation on the Government's environmental objectives which the spaceflight regulator will take into account when exercising its spaceflight functions under the Space Industry Act 2018. We are also consulting on the associated guidance to the regulator on how the Government expects it to interpret these environmental objectives. Responses to the consultation are sought by Wednesday 24 March 2021.

This Government is committed to growing the space sector in the UK and cementing our leading role in this sector by unlocking a new era in commercial spaceflight across the UK. Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global market to 10 per cent by 2030. The UK space sector directly employs 41,900 people and contributes £5.7 billion to UK gross domestic product (GDP). The space sector will need another 30,000 people if it is to achieve its ambition to secure 10% of the world market by 2030. To support this, our spaceflight programme will enable commercial spaceports to be established in the UK that will facilitate a variety of spaceflight activities, including vertical and horizontal satellite launch and sub-orbital spaceflight. Growing the UK's launch capability will help bring new jobs and economic benefits to communities and organisations right across the UK, as well as inspiring the next generation of

space scientists and engineers. Harnessing the opportunities provided by commercial spaceflight will feed into our emerging National Space Strategy, the Government's agenda to level-up the UK, and Global Britain.

Access to space and the use of space-based technology also brings many benefits to the environment, allowing us to, for example, observe weather patterns, monitor climate change, manage natural resources, and monitor for harmful activities such as illegal deforestation, fishing and animal poaching. The UK space sector has an established world-class satellite manufacturing capability and technical expertise, which already makes a significant contribution to global efforts to monitor and understand the Earth's environment. For example, the 2018 British-built satellite Aeolus is used to revolutionise the accuracy of weather forecasting, providing benefits to all citizens on Earth.

The introduction of commercial spaceflight to the UK will have environmental implications at the global, national, regional and local level. The objectives and guidance recognise that to deliver the Government's economic, social and environmental objectives, we need to balance mitigating the potentially negative environmental impacts of spaceflight activities with enhancing the strong contributions commercial spaceflight can make to both the economy and our local and global efforts to monitor the environment.

The Space Industry Act 2018 requires applicants for a spaceport or launch operator licence to submit an assessment of environmental effects (the Assessment) as part of their licence application. The objectives and guidance that Government propose setting explain how the spaceflight regulator will take into account the Assessment when deciding licence applications and setting licence conditions.

We have worked with environmental agencies, public bodies and Government departments to ensure coherence with our national and international policies and obligations.

Our intention is to have these objectives in place by the time the secondary legislation and guidance (on which we consulted on 29 July 2020) comes into force this summer and the regulator begins receiving and assessing applications.

United Kingdom-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement

[HLWS772]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom has secured trade agreements with 64 non-EU countries, with which total United Kingdom trade was worth over £215 billion in 2019. The United Kingdom signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Kenya on the 8th December 2020, our sixth agreement in Africa. This EPA ensures that all companies operating in Kenya,

including British businesses, continue to benefit from duty-free, quota-free access to our market.

I welcome the International Agreement Committee's report and their close interest in this important agreement. HM Government supports effective parliamentary scrutiny of trade agreements and will facilitate a debate in Parliament on this agreement in the weeks ahead. The United Kingdom's overall objective is to secure a regional deal with the whole of the East African Community (EAC). With this aim in mind, we have continued to engage with EAC Partner States, including at the United Kingdom-Africa Investment Summit in January 2020 and since our exit from the EU to discuss this objective.

During our discussions, we put forward a proposal outlining our ambition to negotiate an agreement with the whole of the EAC. The EAC confirmed that some Partner States were not ready to enter into negotiations with the United Kingdom, but they recognised the need to provide stability and certainty for businesses and people involved in trade between the United Kingdom and Kenya. That is why we agreed to negotiate an agreement with Kenya in time for the end of the Transition Period, whilst remaining in dialogue with the EAC throughout the negotiations and ensuring that the agreement contains provisions to enable any state that is a contracting party to the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC to accede to it in the future. During this process, the United Kingdom made clear that the negotiations were open for any other willing EAC Partner State to join. None did.

Whilst the United Kingdom had proposed a 'no deal' Transitional Protection Measure (TPM) to Kenya in 2019, this had only been developed to provide an additional 18 months to conclude trade negotiations with certain partners who faced the imposition of new tariffs in the event of a 'no deal' EU exit. However, as the Withdrawal Agreement reached between the United Kingdom and the EU in October 2019 included an eleven-month 'Transition Period' to December 2020, this gave additional time to conclude outstanding negotiations and the 'no deal' TPM was no longer appropriate. With respect to the EU's Market Access Regulation (MAR), the United Kingdom-Kenya EPA, together with the United Kingdom's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) framework, replicate, in respect of EAC Partner States, the effect of the MAR.

As a result of our work with Kenya, all EAC Partner States continue to benefit from duty-free, quota-free access as they did under the MAR. If we had not reached an EPA with Kenya, they would have been left behind, through no fault of their own – with the rest of the EAC continuing to benefit from the GSP framework. This was unacceptable to HM Government. No changes were made to the tariff schedules set out in the EAC's agreement with the EU, in line with our approach to replicate the existing EU text as far as possible. Our intention is that our EPA is a stepping-stone towards even stronger regional integration in future.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

Affordable Housing: Construction

Asked by *The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether their target for the number of affordable homes that they want to see built is sufficient to meet the demand for such homes. [HL12698]

Lord Greenhalgh: The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that it is for local authorities to identify the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including those who require affordable housing, and reflect this in planning policies.

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and is investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will leverage £38 billion of private finance and provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow.

Antisemitism

Asked by *Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 21 January (HL Deb, cols 95–6GC), whether they will place a copy of his legal opinion commending the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism in the Library of the House. [HL12672]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My noble Friend, Lord Wolfson of Tredegar, is keen to stress that this opinion — which he provided pro bono — is property of the client and legally privileged. However, the client has made the opinion publicly available online at the following link: <https://antisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Opinion-on-the-International-Definition-of-Antisemitism.pdf>.

Asked by *Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of (1) civil servants, (2) legal regulators, including the Solicitors Regulation Authority, and (3) legal trade bodies, including the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, (a) to investigate, and (b) to adjudicate, complaints about antisemitism fairly; and of the effectiveness of those groups' (i) antisemitism procedures, and (ii) handling of accusations of antisemitism. [HL12673]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government regularly engages with legal regulators and representative

bodies to understand the effectiveness of the regulatory system. No specific assessment has been made of the ability of legal regulators or legal trade bodies to investigate or adjudicate complaints about antisemitism fairly, or of the effectiveness of these groups' procedures or handling of accusations of antisemitism.

The legal profession in England and Wales is independent of government and lawyers are regulated by approved regulators. There is an independent oversight regulator, the Legal Services Board, which has a statutory duty to approve the regulatory arrangements of the regulatory bodies covered by the Legal Services Act 2007. This includes conduct rules which set out the conduct and behaviour expected of licensed legal practitioners, which include matters of discrimination relating to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators is a professional organisation representing the interests of alternative dispute resolution practitioners. As a UK registered charity, it is regulated by the Charity Commission.

The Government is clear that all forms of discrimination are unacceptable. The Civil Service Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants. All civil servants are expected to adhere to the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality as set out in legislation. Each Department or Agency has its own complaints procedure.

Building Regulations: Electric Vehicles

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend building regulations to ensure that all new developments are provided with facilities for recharging electric vehicles relating to each new dwelling in the development. [HL12642]

Lord Greenhalgh: The government consulted in 2019 on options to amend the building regulations to require electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings. We will publish a response, which will set out our plans for the new requirements coming into effect.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care home residents in England have died from COVID-19 (1) in hospital, (2) in hospices, and (3) in residential care and nursing homes, in total to date. [HL12649]

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

The Rt Hon. the Lord Hunt of Kings Heath
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Lord Hunt,

04 February 2021

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many care home residents in England have died from COVID-19 (1) in hospital, (2) in hospices, and (3) in residential care and nursing homes, in total to date (HL12649).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes mortality data that are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration. The term 'care home residents' refers to all deaths where either (a) the death occurred in a care home or (b) the death occurred elsewhere but the place of residence of the deceased was recorded as a care home.

Table 1 below shows the number of deaths involving COVID-19 among care home residents by place of death, registered up to the 22nd January 2021 in England. We do not hold any information on the breakdown of residential or nursing homes therefore we have provided the number of care home residents who have died in a care home, which could be either residential or nursing care homes.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Number of deaths involving COVID-19 among care home residents by place of death registered up to 22nd January 2021, England [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Place of death	Number of deaths
Care home	23,324
Hospital	8,012
Hospice	70

Source: ONS

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

[2] Deaths for England exclude non-residents.

[3] The International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).

[4] Deaths "involving COVID-19" includes deaths that had COVID-19 mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, whether as underlying cause or not.

[5] These figures are calculated using the most up-to-date data we have available to get the most accurate estimates.

[6] Based on boundaries as of November 2020.

Children in Care

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children were taken into care because their mother was given a custodial sentence in each of the last five years; and in such cases, how many of those sentences were for (1) less than two months, (2) two months to four months, (3) four months to six months, (4) six months to 12 months, and (5) over 12 months. [HL12629]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The data requested is not something that HMPPS records. In England, the Department for Education is responsible for Child Safeguarding; some children covered by this policy will have a mother in prison. The Welsh Government is responsible for delivery of the service in Wales. Some children affected by parental imprisonment will be supported by Children's Social Care departments in Local Authorities.

In practice, it is Local Authorities overseen by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who are responsible for delivering operational support to families on child safeguarding, including for children affected by parental imprisonment. Individual Local Authorities monitor data on any interventions that have been put in place, including foster care or adoption placements.

The MoJ acknowledges that parental separation due to imprisonment disproportionately affects women. Individual women's prisons collect information on caring responsibilities at the point of reception, but this is not always reliable as some women choose not to disclose their circumstances. Further, the collection does not specify the care arrangement for those children, which is the responsibility of Local Authorities.

Prisons and Local Authorities work in partnership to safeguard children affected by parental imprisonment as appropriate, including through the sharing of data.

Children: Day Care

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 23 December 2020 (HL11511), what plans they have to continue funding childcare at the same level as before the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12188]

Baroness Berridge: We recognise childcare attendance has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, we saw attendance rise over the autumn term from 482,000 on 10 September to 759,000 on 17 December 2020. On 17 December 2020, the government, therefore, announced a return to funding early years settings on the basis on attendance. In line with the existing and unchanged statutory guidance local authorities should ensure that providers are not penalised for short-term absences of children, for example sickness, arriving late or leaving early, or a family emergency through withdrawing funding, but use their discretion where absence is recurring or for extended periods, taking into account the reason for the absence and the impact on the provider. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

We will fund local authorities in the 2021 spring term based on their January 2021 census. If attendance rises

after the census is taken, we will top-up councils to up to 85% of their January 2020 census level, where a local authority can provide evidence for increased attendance during the spring term. This will give local authorities additional financial confidence to pay providers for increasing attendance later in the spring term.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available to those who need it now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of early education and childcare providers who have been unable to access (1) the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and (2) the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. [HL12576]

Baroness Berridge: We do not hold data on the number of early education and childcare providers who have been unable to access the support schemes on offer. However, we do know, from our survey of childcare and early years education providers and COVID-19 (September-October 2020), that 75% of group-based providers and 10% of school-based providers reported having made use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) at any point since it was introduced. We know that the education sector has made 249,000 claims during the 3 Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant periods up to 31 December 2020, out of an eligible population of 114,000, with the average value of claim £2,300. Further information on this survey can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-2>.

We have issued clear guidance on how all early education and childcare providers can access the CJRS and the SEISS.

The early years sector has benefitted from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the summer and autumn terms in 2020, and providers have been able to furlough their staff via the CJRS. As long as the staff meet the other criteria for the scheme, schools and early years providers are able to furlough their staff if they have experienced a drop in either their income from parents or the government. Eligible nurseries can also benefit from a business rates holiday and can access the business loans as set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

An early years provider can access the CJRS to cover up to the proportion of its salary bill which could be considered to have been paid for from that provider's private income. This would typically be income received from 'parent-paid' hours that have not yet returned as a result of COVID-19 and excludes all income from the government's free entitlements. Providers should use the month of February 2020 to represent their usual income,

in calculating the proportion of its salary bill eligible to be covered by the scheme, taking into account parent-paid income that has returned. Providers should adjust these proportions in subsequent furloughing applications if their income from the government's free entitlements changes.

Childminders are eligible to receive support from the SEISS, which has been extended until April 2021.

More information about the CJRS and all other business and self-employed support that is being made available can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-extends-furlough-to-march-and-increases-self-employed-support>.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available to those who need it now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Civil Servants: Complaints

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures are in place for citizens to complain against an individual civil servant in instances where they are believed to have broken the Civil Service Code; and where are complaints published. [HL12674]

Lord True: All civil servants are required to adhere to the Civil Service Code values - integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. If a member of the public wishes to complain about a civil servant, they should in the first instance contact the Department or Agency where the civil servant is employed. Each Department or Agency has its own complaints procedure that can be found on GOV.UK.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the manner in which their complaint was handled, they can request that their Member of Parliament refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to investigate.

Details of complaints investigated by the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman are available in their published reports on their website, or included in the respective department's annual reports.

Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Hendy

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Callanan on 26 January (HL Deb, cols 1509–13), who is being consulted as part of their review of workers' rights; whether the Trades Union Congress and trade unions have been excluded from such consultations, and if so, why; and how that review relates to the Employment Bill referred to in the Queen's Speech. [HL12648]

Lord Callanan: There is no Government plan to reduce workers' rights.

In our manifesto, the Government promised to maintain existing levels of protections for workers provided by our laws and regulations as we left the EU. In any case, our high standards were never dependent on our membership of the EU. The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world and it is well known that in many areas the UK goes further than the EU on worker protections.

We have also committed to enhancing workers' rights now that we have left the EU. We have already set out plans to bring forward legislation which will make workplaces fairer, provide better support for working families and new protections for those in low-paid work.

Our manifesto contains commitments to create a new, single enforcement body for labour market abuses, to give greater protections for workers, as well as plans to encourage greater flexible working.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 26 January (HL12011), what reasonable worst-case planning scenario estimates were applied to the forecast modelling used to inform the decision to place England under national restrictions to address the COVID-19 pandemic on 5 January, including (1) the modelled projections, and (2) the amended assumptions, based on the increased transmissibility of the B.1.1.7 variant of SARS-CoV-2. [HL12617]

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 26 January (HL12011), what were the modelled projections, including the reasonable worst-case planning scenario estimates applied to the forecast modelling, used to inform the decision to place England under national restrictions to address the COVID-19 pandemic in November 2020. [HL12618]

Lord True: Throughout the pandemic, the Government has used a broad range of health, social and economic evidence to inform decision making. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergency (SAGE) is responsible for providing coordinated scientific advice to support decisions made by the Government. The SAGE subgroup, the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), uses estimates across a range of metrics to support this advice, including short term modelling including on cases & hospitalisations. These models include a range of projections based on the observed rates of infection and hospitalisations. The assumptions underpinning these models develop as our understanding of the virus changes.

At the end of October, it was clear that rising infections had the potential to exceed NHS regular and surge capacity within weeks. Case projections showed increases in every region, and that national intervention was therefore necessary.

In December, the SAGE subgroup on New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats (NERVTAG), estimated that the B.1.1.7 variant may be up to 70% more transmissible. This informed the rapid escalation of areas and regions through the tier system in late December and a creation of Tier 4. Further analysis across a number of infection metrics, along with SPI-M modelled projections, helped inform the decision that national restrictions were again required on 5 January.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to rollout the combined Oxford/AstraZeneca Sputnik V vaccine, and on what scale, in the event that tests show that these vaccines can be combined successfully. [HL11456]

Lord Bethell: The science is currently uncertain about whether using a mixed schedule of vaccines could produce an even better immune response; and when a booster dose might be needed. For this reason, we will begin a series of trials to test various combinations of vaccines and to test booster doses. These trials do not currently include the combined Oxford/AstraZeneca Sputnik V vaccine.

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the requirement or otherwise for DBS checks to be made on volunteers to assist with car parking and people movement in any forthcoming programme of mass vaccinations for COVID-19. [HL11754]

Lord Bethell: Non-clinical stewarding roles at vaccination centres will be filled by volunteers allocated through the Royal Voluntary Service, working with the National Health Service. The only role which requires a Disclosure and Barring Service check is a patient transport role.

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have determined that retired (1) nurses, (2) GPs and (3) anaesthetists, are incapable of safely administering COVID-19 vaccinations; and if so, what criteria were used to make any such determination. [HL11755]

Lord Bethell: Retired clinicians can support the National Health Service COVID-19 vaccination team via the Bringing Back Staff programme. A comprehensive training package has been put together by NHS England and NHS Improvement with professional groups and Public Health England. New vaccinators will have

undergone both a comprehensive training programme and competency assessment to ensure they can safely administer vaccines to patients under the clinical supervision of an experienced health care professional.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) rough sleepers, (2) homeless people, and (3) illegal immigrants not registered with a GP, are offered COVID-19 vaccinations. [HL12547]

Lord Bethell: National Health Service regional teams are working with appropriate local systems to reach out to unregistered people so as to ensure that all their health needs are met and that they are offered the COVID-19 vaccine in line with Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's priorities. NHS England and NHS Improvement recently launched a general practitioner (GP) registration campaign alongside the voluntary sector. To support this, NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing materials, such as training for practice staff and access cards which support the message that everyone is entitled to register with a GP and give the NHS England and NHS Improvement Customer Contact Centre number for people to use if they have been refused registration.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to re-prioritise the COVID-19 vaccination schedule to take into account those in vulnerable groups who have already contracted COVID-19 and therefore may have a level of immunity. [HL12571]

Lord Bethell: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised that individuals eligible for vaccination in the first phase of the COVID-19 programme should be offered a vaccine, irrespective of prior infection.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to support, and (2) to expedite, the global rollout of COVID-19 vaccines; and what consideration they have given to donating vaccine doses to countries that are unable to afford them. [HL12734]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are supporting the COVAX Facility as the best mechanism to deliver this, and have committed £548 million to its work, making the UK one of its largest donors. Through match funding, this commitment has encouraged other donors to commit \$1 billion by the end of 2020. Our commitment will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 countries in the global south.

The UK is also working closely with international partners such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and UNICEF to support COVAX's preparations for vaccine rollout in countries in

the global south. We expect deliveries of vaccines to begin by the end of February. It is too early to determine how many doses ordered by the UK will not be needed for domestic use. We are working through multilateral institutions, such as the UN and the G20, and with the WHO and international partners to support vaccine development, manufacturing scale-up, and distribution to meet both domestic and international needs now and in the future.

Diplomatic Service: Staff

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) UK national, and (2) locally engaged, staff are employed in the British embassies in (a) Slovenia, (b) Croatia, (c) Bosnia-Herzegovina, (d) Serbia, (e) Montenegro, (f) North Macedonia, (g) Kosovo, and (h) Albania. [HL12645]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As at 31st December 2020, the FCDO UK based headcount band for each Country requested is set out in the table below.

<i>Country and Embassy (PQ HL12645)</i>	<i>FCDO UK Based staff-Band</i>	<i>FCDO Country Based Staff-Band</i>
a) Slovenia	Fewer than 10	10-19
b) Croatia	Fewer than 10	20-29
c) Bosnia and Herzegovina	Fewer than 10	20-29
d) Serbia	10-19	50-59
e) Montenegro	Fewer than 10	10-19
f) North Macedonia	Fewer than 10	10-19
g) Kosovo	Fewer than 10	30-39
h) Albania	Fewer than 10	20-29

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to change the number of (1) UK national, and (2) locally engaged, staff employed in the British embassies in (a) Slovenia, (b) Croatia, (c) Bosnia-Herzegovina, (d) Serbia, (e) Montenegro, (f) North Macedonia, (g) Kosovo, and (h) Albania. [HL12646]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The future size and shape of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is yet to be established. This, and any prioritisation process, will be determined in coming months through the ongoing organisational design work, and the spending review and the integrated review.

Drinks and Food: Prices

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK-EU Trade and

Cooperation Agreement on the price of food and drink to consumers in the UK. [[HL12677](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We have successfully negotiated a Free Trade Agreement with the EU which means that businesses will be able to continue to trade with the EU with minimal friction of movement for agri-food products. This therefore means that UK consumers will not experience any tariff-based increases to consumer food prices for agri-food imports from the EU which meet the Rules of Origin.

Consumer food prices depend on a range of factors including agri-food import prices, domestic agricultural prices, domestic labour and manufacturing costs, and Sterling exchange rates. While most food industry sectors are accustomed to fluctuations in supply chain costs, these do not necessarily translate into consumer price rises.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision of facilities for recharging batteries of electric vehicles to households which do not have space to charge the vehicle from their own home; and what proportion of households do not have space to charge electric vehicles from their own home. [[HL12640](#)]

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide assistance to households which do not have space for recharging electric vehicles from their own home; and, if so, how they plan to provide such assistance before 2030 (1) for houses where vehicles are parked on the street outside the house, and (2) for flats or apartments where communal parking facilities are not provided within the premises. [[HL12641](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government recognises that not having access to off-street parking can be a significant barrier to motorists making the switch to zero emission vehicles and this is something we have sought to address. Local authorities are able to take advantage of the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), which assists them with the cost of installing chargepoints on residential streets. To date the ORCS has supported over 100 local authorities to fund more than 3,800 chargepoints for residents who do not have off-street parking. The doubling of funding for the ORCS to £20 million announced in May last year by the Transport Secretary will allow local authorities to install up to 7,200 charging devices, making charging at home and overnight easier for those without an off-street parking space.

The Government also committed at Spending Review £90 million to fund local electric vehicle charging infrastructure, to support the roll out of larger, on-street charging schemes and rapid hubs in England. Details of this fund will be announced in due course.

Drivers without off-street parking at home can also take advantage of the Workplace Charging Scheme, which provides Government support of up to £350 towards the cost of installing a charge point socket for staff and fleet use, with a maximum of 40 sockets available per business. To date over 4,000 businesses have used this scheme to install over 12,000 chargepoint sockets. There are a growing number of solutions for drivers without private parking, such as initiatives like Community Charging, where those with personal chargepoints can share access with other residents.

The Government recognises the need to do more to address the challenges in this area and will continue to work with colleagues in Government and across industry to secure improvements for residents. We will continue to support industry and local authorities across the whole of the UK to make the switch to cleaner vehicles. A clear delivery plan will be published in 2021.

Events Industry: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further financial support they intend to provide to the events industry, including support for freelancers within that industry. [[HL12679](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like events.

During this difficult time the Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups, and other government departments to understand the long-term effects of Covid-19 across all key areas of the economy.

We have already announced considerable and unprecedented support for businesses and individuals.

Businesses forced to close can claim grants of up to £3,000 per month (worth over £1 billion per month) through the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). Any business in England forced to close due to national or local restrictions can claim grants, via their local authority, of up to £3,000 per month, per business premises, depending on rateable value.

In addition, on 5th January, the Government announced an extra £4.6 billion to protect jobs and support affected businesses as restrictions get tougher. Businesses forced to close can claim a one-off grant of up to £9,000. This is in addition to the monthly closed grant amounts above. Local authorities (in England) will also be given an additional £500 million discretionary funding to support their local businesses. This builds on the £1.1 billion discretionary funding (worth £20 per head of population) which local authorities in England have already received to support their local economies and help businesses impacted.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been extended until the end of April. This provides a substantial grant for employers to cover 80% of the wages

of their employees. As of 13 December, CJRS has supported 9.9 million jobs at the cost of roughly £46.4bn. In line with the extension to the CJRS, the government recently announced an extension to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) until April 2021. So far SEISS has seen 2.7 million self-employed workers make claims under the scheme totalling £13.7bn. The Government will set out further details, including the level of the fourth grant covering February to April, in due course.

Furthermore, individuals who are furloughed, become unemployed, or anyone who sees a fall in their earnings, may become eligible for support through the welfare system, notably, Universal Credit. We have announced significant temporary extra support worth £7.4bn in 2020-21 for families who rely on the safety net of the welfare system. This includes a £20 per week increase to the 2020-21 UC standard allowance, a suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for self-employed UC claimants, and an increase in UC and Housing Benefit Local Housing Allowance rates so they cover the lowest third of local rents.

Eligible events and businesses may have also benefit from business rates relief, a moratorium on commercial tenant evictions and the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund supporting thousands of cultural organisations including theatres, music venues, comedy clubs and festivals.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support on public services, businesses, individuals and sectors, including the events sector, as we respond to this pandemic. The Budget in March will be an opportunity to take stock of our wider support and set out the next stage of our economic response to the pandemic. But we must recognise that it will not be possible to preserve every job or business indefinitely, nor stand in the way of the economy adapting and people finding new jobs or starting new businesses.

Fisheries: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Krebs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the quantity of "blue" carbon released from English waters as a result of bottom trawling. [HL12659]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government understands that marine carbon stores in sediments can be released due to human activities such as bottom trawling. However, the magnitude and direction of change in these carbon stores following trawling impacts remains uncertain, and it is difficult to quantify accurately based on current knowledge.

We are therefore continuing to gather evidence to improve assessments of impacts to marine carbon stores and fluxes. This builds upon the £10.5 million, six-year Shelf Seas Biogeochemistry research programme (2011-

17), jointly funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and Defra.

Fisheries: Monitoring

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their response to the Remote Electronic Monitoring call for evidence; and what steps they intend to take following this. [HL12680]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra ran a call for evidence between 19 October and 30 November 2020. The responses are currently being analysed and a response will be published in due course.

Fuel Poverty

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 26 January (HL12049), how they define "as far as is reasonably practicable"; and what is their estimate of the number of homes that may be excluded from the fuel poverty target. [HL12638]

Lord Callanan: We see improving the energy efficiency of homes to be the best long term solution to tackling fuel poverty. However, there are limitations as to the energy efficiency measures that can be put in place, including the physical characteristics of the property and the preferences of the householders. For example, some listed buildings cannot make use of certain energy efficiency measures like solid wall insulation. There will also be cases where householders simply do not want energy efficiency measures carried out in their home. These circumstances may mean that it is not reasonably practicable to improve the energy efficiency of the home.

Over time, innovative new energy efficiency measures may help to overcome some of these challenges while also reducing the cost of insulating homes. BEIS is encouraging innovation through funding 'Innovations in the Built Environment', a collection of competitions and projects, many of which encompass energy efficiency. We remain committed to encouraging the wide take up of energy efficiency measures.

Housing: Insulation

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they are providing (1) to owners, and (2) to occupiers, of older terraced houses and similar properties on ways of insulating external walls to modern standards. [HL12643]

Lord Callanan: Access to accurate and up-to-date information tailored to occupants and owners is a key part of improving the energy performance of homes effectively.

The Simple Energy Advice Service (SEA), launched in 2018, is a digital and phonenumber service to provide homeowners, landlords and tenants with impartial and tailored advice on energy efficiency measures. This includes advice on insulating external walls.

At a local level, the Government is also supporting skills development and advice provision through a number of local supply chain demonstration pilots, which are testing new approaches to delivering home energy retrofit in the able-to-pay sector and recognises the importance of locally provided advice.

Inflation

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) quantitative easing, and (2) monetary policy in general, on reaching their inflation target. [HL12661]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Bank of England has statutory responsibilities for monetary policy, including quantitative easing, and financial stability, and operational independence from the Government to carry out those responsibilities.

The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy, so the Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the publication date for the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; and whether publication will occur before 31 May 2021. [HL12683]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Integrated Review will cover all aspects of international and national security policy - defence, diplomacy, development and national resilience. Uniting development and diplomacy in one department brings together Britain's international effort to have even greater impact and influence on the world stage as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The Review will assess what will be needed to deliver our new strategy, in addition to seizing the opportunities offered by the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The publication date will be announced in due course.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 25 January (HL12037), whether the use of "different harmony

guidelines" applies to personnel in squadrons of F35B combat aircraft embarked in carriers. [HL12685]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the Noble Lord to the answer I gave on 25 January 2021 to Question 12037.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL12037 - Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft [HL12037.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-27/HL12685>

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 25 January (HL12036), how many F35B aircraft they will possess by 2026; and whether they will be able to deploy the 35 aircraft that are required for high end operations. [HL12687]

Baroness Goldie: We do not recognise the 35 figure the Noble Lord quotes in any Departmental planning. I refer the Noble Lord to the answer I gave on 25 January to Question HL12036 and the answer I gave on 16 December 2020 to Question HL11192.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL11192 - Joint Strike Fighter [HL11192 - Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft.docx]

HL12036 - Joint Strike Fighter [HL12036 - Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-27/HL12687>

Kenya: Somalia

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether any UK-trained Somali National Army units were involved in clashes on the Kenya-Somalia border between 24 and 26 January. [HL12720]

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether any Kenya Defence Forces personnel assisted the forces loyal to the Jubaland state government that were involved in clashes on the Kenya-Somalia border between 24 and 26 January. [HL12721]

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Kenya about the clashes on the Kenya-Somalia border between 24 and 26 January. [HL12722]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK works closely with both Somalia and Kenya on matters of security and

regional stability. The Secretary of State for Defence visited Kenya and Somalia from 25 to 27 January and urged both countries to focus on their many shared interests in these areas and work together to reduce border tensions.

In response to the reported recent clashes near the Kenya-Somalia border we have also encouraged regional institutions, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to conduct independent fact-finding missions and promote conflict resolution measures. We have no basis on which to believe that UK-trained troops were involved. The UK provides training to Somali National Army units in Somalia's South West State, to support internal stability and counter Al-Shabaab, but not in the state of Jubaland where the clashes were reported.

Legal Profession: Self-employed

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Bar Council Self-Employed Bar Survey, published on 21 January; and what plans they have to provide financial support to self-employed legal professionals. [HL12678]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises that many taxpayers, including from the legal profession, have faced substantial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to supporting them through a comprehensive package of support.

The Government has introduced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which allows eligible self-employed individuals who have been affected by reduced demand or have been unable to trade due to COVID-19, which they believe will lead to a significant reduction in their trading profits, to claim grants. Further details on the SEISS, including the fourth grant, will be announced on 3 March.

In addition, the Government has made available other elements of support. The Universal Credit standard allowance has been temporarily increased for 2020-21 and the Minimum Income Floor relaxed for the duration of the crisis, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

Businesses that are legally required to close due to COVID-19 restrictions may also be eligible for cash grants from the Local Restrictions Support Grant of up to £3,000 per month. In addition, these businesses will benefit from one-off grants of up to £9,000 as announced on 5 January. Businesses which are not eligible for these grants for closed businesses may be able to benefit from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).

Marine Protected Areas: Fisheries

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential use of Remote Electronic Monitoring technology to monitor vessels using (1) bottom trawling, and (2) other fishing practices that may harm marine ecosystems, on England's Marine Protected Areas. [HL12681]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra has not conducted an assessment of this nature. Defra did run a call for evidence to collect a range of evidence on the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring between 19 October and 30 November 2020. The responses are currently being analysed and a response will be published in due course.

Motor Vehicles: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the total number of commercial vehicles which have entered Northern Ireland via its sea ports from Great Britain since 1 January; how many of these vehicles have been subject to inspection under the terms of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and what has been the average time taken for each inspection. [HL12002]

Lord True: Further to the statement I made, and the answer given by my Right Honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy Lancaster, goods are moving effectively between GB and NI and there are no significant queues at NI ports. Freight levels arriving into and leaving Northern Ireland ports are now close to, or at, normal pre-Christmas levels.

The UK Government is working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive on the operationalisation of the requirements of the Protocol.

Musicians: Visas

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish any transcripts of the negotiations between the UK and the EU on reciprocal arrangements for the mobility of musicians. [HL12632]

Lord Callanan: This Government recognises the importance of the UK's thriving cultural industries, and that is why it pushed for ambitious arrangements to make it easier for performers and artists to perform across Europe as part of the negotiations on our future relationship with the EU.

This Government proposed to the EU that musicians, and their technical staff, be added to the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors in the entry and temporary stay chapter of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This would have allowed musicians and their

staff to travel and perform in the EU more easily, without needing work-permits.

As with legal text shared in confidence with trading partners, publishing transcripts of negotiations on trade agreements would not be appropriate as both parties exchanged information in confidence.

Navy: Deployment

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the long separation periods allowed by Royal Navy harmony rules allow greater periods deployed without rotation of personnel. [HL12686]

Baroness Goldie: Royal Navy Harmony rules govern the time personnel spend deployed using the two measurable factors of Separated Service and Minimum Time Ashore. In most cases, the maximum period of Separated Service allowed is 660 days over a rolling three-year period, while Minimum Time Ashore limits the duration of any individual posting to a deployed unit.

The use of three-year rolling Separated Service rather than an annual limit does allow for longer periods deployed. However, career management of individual personnel allows rotation within units and ensures that periods of deployment are alternated with assignments ashore.

Nuclear Submarines

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Goldie on 25 January (HL Deb, col 1377), what discussions there have been as part of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy on separating the capital costs of nuclear deterrent submarine replacements from the defence budget. [HL12682]

Baroness Goldie: There have been no discussions on removing the capital costs of the Dreadnought submarine build programme from the defence budget. The Dreadnought programme is rightly funded as part of the Ministry of Defence's budget, as it has always been.

Nurseries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to private nurseries that are facing financial difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12074]

Baroness Berridge: The early years sector has benefitted from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the Summer and Autumn terms in 2020, and providers have been able to furlough their staff via the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme. As long as the staff meet the other criteria for the scheme, schools

and early years providers are able to furlough their staff if they have experienced a drop in either their income from parents or government. Eligible nurseries can also benefit from a business rates holiday and can access the business loans as set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

On 17 December 2020, the Government announced a return to funding early years settings for the spring term on the basis of attendance, as measured by the January 2021 census. The Early Years census count is still going ahead as expected and the census guidance is unchanged. To support local authorities, we have issued some technical advice on how that guidance can be applied this year.

In summary, children who are ill or self-isolating can be counted, as can those whose parents have temporarily withdrawn their children from open nurseries and childminders out of caution, and so long as the parent/guardian has not altered their parental declaration relating to expected hours with the provider.

Children should not be counted in the census where a setting has closed or restricted attendance, unless as a result of situations as set out in the supporting technical advice eg. staff sickness, COVID-19 isolation, staff shielding.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available to those who need it now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Pre-school Education: Closures

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the early years sector is experiencing market failure. [HL12573]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of early education providers that expect to close permanently within the next six months [HL12575]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many early education providers (1) have closed in the last six months in England, and (2) have closed in the last six months in areas of England with the highest level of income deprivation according to the English Indices of Deprivation. [HL12578]

Baroness Berridge: Ofsted publish data monthly on joiners and leavers in the childcare sector, which we have used as a proxy for providers that may have closed.

Between 30 June 2020 and 31 December 2020, there were a total of 3,202 childcare providers who left the Early Years Register across all provider types. However, this should be considered in conjunction with those who

joined the Early Years Register to understand the net impact on the childcare market. Over the same time period there were a total of 2,340 providers who joined the Early Years Register. This data does not include nursery provision within schools. Further data on leavers and joiners can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joiners-and-leavers-in-the-childcare-sector>.

Of the childcare providers who left the Early Years Register between 30 June 2020 and 31 December 2020, 396 (12%) were located in the most deprived areas. Deprivation quintiles are calculated from the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index rank of the provider's address.

The early years sector has benefitted from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the summer and autumn terms in 2020. As private nurseries typically rely on private income for a significant proportion of their income, they are able to furlough their staff via the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme (CJRS). Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. As long as the staff meet the other criteria for the scheme, private nurseries are able to furlough their staff via the CJRS if they have experienced a drop in their income either from parents or the government. Eligible nurseries can also benefit from a business rates holiday and can access the business loans as set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Childminders are less likely to be employers and therefore are less likely to be eligible for support via the CJRS. Childminders may find the Self Employment Income Support Scheme more relevant. Further information can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>.

There is little evidence of current, actual, failure in the early years market. Whilst we recognise that the early years sector has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, we have not yet seen localised failure of the market at any time in any local authority. Most importantly, we have not seen a significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available to those who need it now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Prison Officers: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of new prison officers being recruited in meeting the needs of (1) inmate security, and (2) prison security. [HL12665]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Prison officers play an essential role in keeping the public safe and protecting those in our care from harm. They contribute to the security of a prison in many ways, from building positive relationships with prisoners, to preventing contraband entering the prison, to supervising daily prisoner activities.

We plan and assess prison regimes and take into account factors such as operational capacity and prison type to ensure there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of prisoners and ensure security. This informs workforce modelling and our ongoing efforts to attract people from diverse backgrounds and with the appropriate skills to work in our establishments.

In recent years, investment into prisons has led to a significant increase in the number of frontline prison officers and further developments in policy have enabled the creation of specialist roles such as prison officer keyworkers to better support the needs of prisoners or dedicated teams of officers recruited to search prisons for contrabands as part of our wider £100m investment in prison security. This investment has also seen the expansion of our counter-corruption teams to address the small minority of prison officers who act outside the law.

It is difficult to assess the long-term impact of recruitment on prison security. Our response to the Covid-19 pandemic has meant operating restricted regimes, with greater control measures being in place. This will be a priority in the future.

Prisoners' Release

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in each of the last five years, how many people who were serving a life sentence and have been released on licence have had their licence conditions suspended before the 10 year anniversary of their release date; and how many such people have been (1) convicted of a further serious offence, (2) convicted of more than one serious offence, and (3) recalled to custody, between the suspension of the licence conditions and the 10 year anniversary of their release date. [HL12630]

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in each of the last five years, how many people who were serving an imprisonment for public protection sentence have had their licence conditions suspended before the 5 year anniversary of their release date; and how many such people have been (1) convicted of a further serious offence, (2) convicted of more than one serious offence, and (3) recalled to custody, between the suspension of the licence conditions and the 10 year anniversary of their release date. [HL12631]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The policy on the suspension of the supervision requirements of the licence for those serving life and Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences was amended in November

2020. The changes made were to ensure consistency and enhance public protection, having regard to the fact that those serving such sentences had committed serious offences – including those serving a mandatory life sentence for murder. The changes to the policy ensure that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, all those serving a life sentence must have spent a period of 10 continuous years on licence in the community before suspension of supervision can be considered. For those subject to IPP, a period of five continuous years is required before suspension of supervision can be considered. Previously, for both life and IPP sentenced offenders, this was either four years or 10 years depending on certain factors relating to the offence and notoriety.

The information needed to provide a comprehensive answer to each question could be acquired only at disproportionate cost as central records are not kept in a way that they can be filtered by the required fields to obtain the information.

The Probation Serious Further Offence (SFO) Review Procedures under Probation Instruction 2018 06 (amended November 2020) requires a rigorous review to be produced in every case where an offender under current statutory probation supervision is charged with a qualifying SFO. The Probation Instruction does allow for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to review cases on a discretionary basis, including where an offender serving an indeterminate sentence has had the supervision requirements of the life licence suspended. I can, however, confirm that the National SFO Team in HMPPS has not been notified of any cases which have resulted in an offender being convicted of a qualifying SFO in the period between the suspension of their supervision and the 10 year point following release for life sentences, or the 5 year point following release for IPP sentences, in any of the past five years.

Prisons: Ministers of Religion

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work in prisons carried out by chaplains of all faith groups. [HL12666]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Chaplains of all faiths and belief systems play a central role in supporting prisoners during the pandemic. They have continued to visit prisoners on a one-to-one basis providing pastoral care, spiritual support and resources for worship. Chaplains see new receptions, visit those in segregation and speak to men and women prior to release. They have also continued to provide one-to-one support including compassionate contact with families.

The hard work and dedication of chaplains was recently reflected in the Butler Trust Awards and is widely acknowledged in the annual reports of Independent Monitoring Boards from across the custodial estate and by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

Public Expenditure

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the sensitivity of public sector borrowing costs to interest rate changes as a result of quantitative easing affecting the maturity of public sector funding; and what plans they have to publish comparative sensitivity data from the time since quantitative easing was first introduced. [HL12660]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As noted in the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR's) November 2020 *Economic and Fiscal Outlook (EFO)*, the Bank of England's quantitative easing programme lowers government borrowing costs but shortens the average maturity of public sector debt and increases exposure to changes in short-term interest rates.

The OBR publish estimates of the sensitivity of debt interest spending to changes in interest rates in their EFO.

We have strong independent economic institutions and a well-established macroeconomic framework that ensures we are well placed to deal with risks to our public finances.

Railways: Electrification

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many miles of railway track have been electrified since 1 January 2015; and what has been the cost per mile of that electrification. [HL12668]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2020, 686 single track miles of railway was electrified in England and Wales. The data on cost per mile for this electrification is held by Network Rail and needs to be verified, which will take some time. The Department will write to the Noble Lady with the cost per mile figure when the verification process has concluded.

Restoring Your Railway Fund

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have established targets for the number of miles of railway line that will be reinstated for passenger use as part of the Restoring Your Railway Fund (1) within five years, and (2) within ten years; and what estimate they have made of the total length of reinstated lines, in miles, that will be achieved in those time periods. [HL12991]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The £500m Restoring Your Railway fund aims to start reopening lines and stations, reconnecting smaller communities, regenerating local economies and improving access to jobs, homes and education. No targets have been established for the number of miles of railway line that will be reinstated for passenger use and no estimate made of the total length of reinstated railway lines.

Russia: Sanctions

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Russia about the detention of Alexei Navalny; what steps they will take in response to that detention; and whether they have considered imposing sanctions against Russian individuals in response. [HL12732]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The United Kingdom is appalled by the politically motivated detention of Alexei Navalny. We continue to call for a full and transparent criminal investigation into Mr Navalny's poisoning, and for his immediate and unconditional release. The Foreign Secretary has also condemned the indiscriminate and arbitrary arrests of peaceful protesters and journalists, and the Russian authorities' unacceptable use of violence against them. We have called on the Russian Government to respect its international commitments and release those detained during peaceful demonstrations.

The UK has galvanised the international community in condemnation of these deplorable detentions. As G7 President, the UK led a G7 Foreign Ministers' statement, issued on 26 January, emphasising our deep concern at these developments, and calling on Russia to adhere to its national and international obligations.

We raise Mr Navalny's case regularly with the Russian Government. On 15 January, immediately prior to his return to Russia, the UK's Ambassador to Moscow raised our concerns with the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Minister responsible for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas also raised Mr Navalny's case with her Russian counterpart in November 2020.

On 15 October 2020 the UK enforced asset freezes and travel bans against six individuals and an entity involved in the poisoning and attempted murder of Mr Navalny under the EU's chemical weapons sanctions regime. These listings include senior representatives of the Russian government and the Director of the FSB. Following the end of the Transition Period, these individuals and entity are now designated under the UK national sanctions regime on Chemical Weapons. We are considering all options for further action. We will continue to work with the OPCW and all of our international partners to uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention and to hold Russia to account.

Small Businesses: Greater London

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of viability of small businesses in London; and what plans they have to provide cash grants to London-based small businesses. [HL12676]

Lord Callanan: The Government engages continually with business groups and local leaders in London to understand the situation faced by businesses as we take action to tackle Covid-19. Small businesses are clearly

vital to the success and draw of London and we are committed to supporting them over the coming months.

More than £1.6bn in grants was paid out to over 111,000 businesses in London in respect of the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund between March and September 2020.

We have also provided additional funding for national and local SME advice and support, with an additional £4m provided to Growth Hubs on top of £2.4m previously announced, this includes the London Growth Hub, which has provided advice on funding and EU Transition to London SMEs.

The Government has offered an unprecedented package of support throughout the pandemic to businesses that have been required by law to close and those which are severely affected by the Covid-19 restrictions.

London business premises that are currently required to be closed may access grants of up to £4,500 per six week period of closure as well as one-off grants of up to £9,000 to help them during this difficult period.

Local Authorities have also been allocated a total of £1.6bn in Additional Restrictions Grant funding which enables them to put in place discretionary support schemes that best suit their local area allowing them to support their wider business community over and above those that are legally required to close.

St Helena: Contracts for Services

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the renewal of the licence for supplying communication services to the government of St Helena, what plans they have for competitive tendering in the process of granting the new licence. [HL12655]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The St Helena Government is responsible for the island's telecommunications policy as this is a devolved matter. Telecommunications on St Helena are currently governed under a 10-year licence issued to a service provider in 2012 which expires on 31 December 2022.

The St Helena Government is responsible for negotiating the new licence and has appointed technical consultants to assist in a review of the new licence and the future procurement exercise. The St Helena Government's tender process for the new licence holder has commenced and the deadline date for proposals is 26 February 2021.

St Helena: Internet

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the extension of the Equiano subsea cable project to St Helena provides (1) a universal, and (2) a cheap, internet connection, in line with the EU's conditions for a grant for the extension. [HL12656]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The St Helena Government was granted funding by the 11th European Development Fund in February 2018 for a sub-marine fibre optic cable to the island and is responsible for managing the project. It signed a contract with Google in December 2019 for the construction of the cable that will branch off the main Equiano cable running between Portugal and South Africa. The St Helena Government owns the branch and is responsible for developing the cable landing station. Its key objective is to ensure all residents on St Helena have access to reliable, high capacity bandwidth at affordable prices and plans to introduce a regulator to enforce Key Performance Indicators which will be provided for in the new telecoms licence that will come into force on 1 January 2023. It is also working towards earth stations, digital businesses and digital nomads being located on the island, and for this additional demand for services to assist in the lowering of prices for residents. The cable, along with the associated high speed internet, is scheduled to be operational in 2022.

Tunnels: West Yorkshire

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their current plans in relation to the Queensbury tunnel. [HL12995]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department agreed in July 2020 to fund two feasibility studies looking at options for the future of the tunnel. The first, led by Highways England, is examining what would need to be done and how much it would cost to return the tunnel to a safe and usable condition. The second, led by the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, is looking at options for greenway routes between Bradford and Halifax, both including and excluding the tunnel, so that

the relative costs and benefits of each can be considered. A steering group comprising the Department for Transport, Highways England, and the relevant local authorities is overseeing the studies, both of which are due to be complete by the spring and will inform any future decision on the future of the tunnel.

World War II: Genocide

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice on teaching the Holocaust they have given to academies and multi-academy trusts that do not follow the national curriculum. [HL12740]

Baroness Berridge: Academies and free schools are required to provide their pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, even whilst they are not required to offer the National Curriculum. Teaching about the Holocaust is an important part of that. The Department supports teaching on the Holocaust in schools through two programmes: the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lesson from Auschwitz and the Continuing Professional Development for teachers' work of University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education. These programmes help teachers to teach the Holocaust and pupils to understand it, and reach all types of schools, and help to develop high quality teaching across the school sector. Ofsted's new inspection framework also places a renewed focus on all schools ensuring pupils receive a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum as exemplified by the National Curriculum.

The Government believes that every young person should learn about the Holocaust and the lessons it teaches us today. Effective teaching about the Holocaust can support pupils to learn about the possible consequences of antisemitism and other forms of extremism and help reduce their spread.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
National Fraud Initiative: Data Matching Purposes and Code of Data Matching Practice.....1	
Spaceflight Regulator: Environmental Objectives1	
United Kingdom-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement2	
Written Answers.....3	
Affordable Housing: Construction3	
Antisemitism3	
Building Regulations: Electric Vehicles.....3	
Care Homes: Coronavirus3	
Children in Care4	
Children: Day Care.....4	
Civil Servants: Complaints.....5	
Conditions of Employment.....5	
Coronavirus: Disease Control.....6	
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....6	
Diplomatic Service: Staff7	
Drinks and Food: Prices7	
Electric Vehicles: Charging Points.....8	
Events Industry: Coronavirus8	
Fisheries: Carbon Emissions9	
Fisheries: Monitoring9	
Fuel Poverty9	
Housing: Insulation9	
Inflation10	
Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review10	
Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft.....10	
Kenya: Somalia10	
Legal Profession: Self-employed11	
Marine Protected Areas: Fisheries.....11	
Motor Vehicles: Northern Ireland11	
Musicians: Visas.....11	
Navy: Deployment.....12	
Nuclear Submarines.....12	
	Nurseries: Coronavirus 12
	Pre-school Education: Closures..... 12
	Prison Officers: Recruitment 13
	Prisoners’ Release..... 13
	Prisons: Ministers of Religion 14
	Public Expenditure 14
	Railways: Electrification 14
	Restoring Your Railway Fund 14
	Russia: Sanctions 15
	Small Businesses: Greater London 15
	St Helena: Contracts for Services 15
	St Helena: Internet 15
	Tunnels: West Yorkshire 16
	World War II: Genocide 16