

**Session 2019-21  
No. 187**



**Thursday  
11 February 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Statements .....1**

**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/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

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

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2021

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at [www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/](http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/)

# Written Statements

Thursday, 11 February 2021

## Intelligence and Security Committees Northern Ireland-related Terrorism Report

[HLWS776]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

On 05 October 2020, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) published their report entitled 'Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism' (NIRT). Our thoughts remain with those who have been impacted by the enduring threat of violence in Northern Ireland, in particular the friends and families of those who have lost their lives.

Today, the Government is publishing its response to this report.

I remain grateful to the Intelligence and Security Committee for its continued independent oversight and scrutiny. I would like to thank the former Committee for their work in the last Parliament, and I look forward to working with the appointed Committee in the future.

Copies of the Government responses have been laid before both Houses:

## Light Dues 2021-22

[HLWS773]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts MP), has made the following Ministerial Statement.

A strong and growing maritime industry is vital to the economy of the United Kingdom and it is critical that we treasure and protect this vital artery if we are to remain a world-leading maritime centre.

The work of the General Lighthouse Authorities, which provide and maintain marine aids to navigation and respond to new wrecks and navigation dangers in some of the busiest waters in the world, is crucial to underpinning that vision whilst maintaining our vigorous safety record and continuously improving safety standards.

Light Dues, which are paid by the shipping industry such that the General Lighthouse Authority's costs are met without the need to call on the UK Exchequer, have reduced by 40 per cent in real terms since 2010.

The unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has, however, added additional operational costs and resulted in a significant reduction in Light Dues income reflecting the major impact it has also had on the industry.

To ensure the General Lighthouse Authorities have the funding they need to complete their vital maritime safety work I have, therefore, made the difficult decision to increase the Light Dues rate by one penny to 38½ pence per net registered tonne for 2021-22.

Light Dues will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the General Lighthouse Authorities are challenged to provide an effective and efficient service which offers value for money to Light Dues payers.

## Normal Minimum Pension Age: Consultation

[HLWS775]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The normal minimum pension age is the minimum age at which most pension savers can access their pensions without incurring an unauthorised payments tax charge (unless they are taking their pension due to ill-health). The normal minimum pension age is currently age 55. This minimum helps to ensure that tax relieved pension savings are used to provide an income, or funds on which an individual can draw, in later life. In 2010 the minimum pension age was increased from age 50 to 55. In 2014, the coalition government announced that the normal minimum pension age would increase from age 55 to 57 in 2028.

Since the normal minimum pension age was introduced, life expectancy at birth for both men and women has continued to increase, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics. It has continued to increase since the announcement in 2014. Increasing the normal minimum pension age reflects increases in longevity and changing expectations of how long we will remain in work and in retirement. Raising the normal minimum pension age to age 57 could encourage individuals to save longer for their retirement, and so help ensure that individuals will have financial security in later life.

The government therefore reconfirms its intention to legislate to increase the normal minimum pension age to age 57 on 6 April 2028 and is today publishing a consultation on how to implement the increase. The consultation is available on:

[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-the-normal-minimum-pension-age-consultation-on-implementation](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-the-normal-minimum-pension-age-consultation-on-implementation).

The increase to age 57 will not apply to those who are members of the firefighters, police and armed forces public service pension schemes. This reflects the unique nature of these occupations. The consultation also sets out the proposed protection regime for some other pension savers. The government does not intend for this increase to apply to individuals who already have unqualified rights to take a pension at an earlier age. Protected pension ages will be specific to an individual as a member of a particular scheme, so protection will not apply to other schemes where there is no existing right held.

People in the UK are living longer, and the proportion of over 50s in the labour force is continuing to increase. The government recognises the importance of supporting over 50s to remain active in the labour market and is committed to supporting them to find and retain

employment. The government is working with employers via the Business Champion for Older Workers to enable over 50s to retain employment and is aiming to provide early and targeted employment and skills support to help individuals move back into work, including into new sectors.

This consultation on implementing the increase in normal minimum pension age will run for 10 weeks.

**Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations:  
External Scrutiny Team Report**

[HLWS774]

**Baroness Goldie:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a report into the condition of the Reserves and delivery of the Future Reserves 2020 programme compiled by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations External Scrutiny Team. I am most grateful to the Team for their work and I will respond to the report shortly.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

EST Report [EST Report 2020.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-02-11/HLWS774/>

## Written Answers

Thursday, 11 February 2021

### Armed Forces: Housing

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the accommodation provided in the UK for members of the British Armed Forces does not have en-suite facilities. [[HL12725](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by the government of the United States to end arms sales to Saudi Arabia; and what plans they have to do the same. [[HL13203](#)]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The US announced it would end support to Saudi-led offensive operations in Yemen, including relevant defence exports. This is entirely a matter for the US Government.

Our position on arms exports to Saudi Arabia – as with all countries – is that such exports require an export licence and that all export licence applications are carefully assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the “Consolidated Criteria”) on a case-by-case basis. A licence would not be granted if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

### Cars: Sales

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to limit the number of petrol and diesel cars sold ahead of the implementation of the 2030 total ban on the sale of such cars. [[HL12765](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan committed Government to work with industry to accelerate the shift to zero emission vehicles, which includes ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030, ten years earlier than planned. We will publish a Green Paper on the options available for UK's post EU emissions regulations in this area, by the spring.

### Conservative Party: Peers

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord True on 27 January (HL Deb, col 1600), what is the statistical basis for the statement that "the Conservative Party has been underrepresented in your Lordships' House". [[HL12711](#)]

**Lord True:** The Conservative voice is under-represented in the Lords and has been for some time. The Conservative Party has been the largest party in the 2010, 2015, 2017 and 2019 general elections. In the 2019 general election, Conservatives won 56 per cent of the seats. Yet the Conservative Party still only has 33 per cent of the seats in the Lords, a figure which has remained substantively unchanged despite that repeated pattern of strong electoral support.

### Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by *Lord Allan of Hallam*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will place in the Library of the House a list of locations of Royal Mail priority postboxes for posting Covid-19 test kits. [[HL11014](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department does not hold the information requested. The Royal Mail publishes information on the locations of its post boxes online or via its app.

### Criminal Records: EU Nationals

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in resolving the issues which caused EU member states to not be notified of criminal convictions in the UK. [[HL12904](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK's Criminal Records Office (ACRO) has worked closely with technical teams in the Home Office who manage the Police National Computer (PNC) to implement a technical fix to ensure the data is shared with affected Member States.

Each affected Member State was informed when the historic data held on the PNC became available. ACRO has now sent the majority of those notifications to Member States.

### Dover Port and Channel Tunnel: Large Goods Vehicles

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the capacity of (1) the port of Dover, and (2) the Channel Tunnel, to process lorries and other commercial vehicles on a peak day; and how they calculated that capacity. [[HL13013](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department for Transport (DfT) has information on the capacity of Dover and Eurotunnel to process lorries and commercial vehicles. However, these estimates are provided by transport operators on a commercially confidential basis. DfT, therefore, does not have permission to share this information.

## Elections: Campaigns

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to raise the spending limits for candidates standing for (1) local authority, (2) mayoral, and (3) Parliamentary, elections in the UK. [[HL12726](#)]

**Lord True:** The Government updated spending limits for candidates standing for local authority elections in England in December 2020.

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statements laid on 3 December 2020 from the [Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution](#), and [Lord True](#), it is the Government's intention to review party and candidate spending limits for all other polls (within the legislative competence of the UK Government) this year.

## Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require all new-build (1) residential, and (2) commercial, developments to have electric vehicle charging points. [[HL12738](#)]

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

## Erasmus+ Programme

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the skills contributed to the UK by academic staff and vocational trainers through the Erasmus+ programme; what plans they have to ensure that the contribution of any such skills is maintained; and what apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities they plan to introduce to replace those previously provided through the Erasmus+ Programme. [[HL12928](#)]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** In considering what elements of the Erasmus+ programme the department would immediately replicate under the Turing Scheme, we prioritised ensuring that as many students, learners, and pupils as possible have access to life-changing mobilities to support them in developing the skills they need to thrive. I am pleased that the government has committed £110 million in funding to support the scheme, which will be used to provide opportunities for students in all parts of the UK. Traineeships for higher and further education students will be funded, supporting students to do work placements around the world.

## Exhaust Emissions: EU Countries

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to adopt the existing EU vehicle fleet targets and regulatory targets for CO2 emissions. [[HL12764](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The EU regulatory regime for vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was retained in UK law following the end of the transition period. Two SIs, the Road Vehicle Carbon Dioxide Emission Performance Standards (Cars and Vans) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 and the New Heavy Duty Vehicles (Carbon Dioxide Emission Performance Standards) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, entered into legal effect at that same point, correcting the EU legislation to work in a UK-only scenario.

## Food: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the 454 chilled items of food withdrawn from sale in Northern Ireland following the UK's departure from the EU can be sold again in stores in Northern Ireland. [[HL12716](#)]

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that food products made in Great Britain, including (1) Fray Bentos steak and kidney pies, and (2) Birds Eye beefburgers, can be brought from Great Britain into Northern Ireland. [[HL12717](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** In December we successfully agreed with the EU a 6-month grace period in which chilled meat products could continue to be sent into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK. We are currently seeking long-term solutions to continue this trade. We also note that the two specific examples given are not prohibited from being moved into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK.

## Forests

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to set a target for the creation of new native woodland; and what steps they are taking (1) to avoid reliance on imported trees, and (2) to manage and increase native woodland while ensuring that such woodland remains in good ecological condition. [[HL12739](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are committed to increasing woodland establishment across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025. To achieve this, we announced a £640m Nature for Climate Fund which will encourage woodland creation of all kinds to achieve this.

To decrease reliance on imported saplings we are boosting domestic tree nursery capacity, including through a joint £2m investment alongside the Scottish and Welsh governments. We will also set out further plans to support domestic nurseries in due course.

To improve biodiversity and resilience, we will increase woodland management. This ensures diversity of trees' ages and species, maximising resilience to climate change, pests and diseases.

## Horticulture: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to remove the ban on the import of soil in potted plants from garden centres in Great Britain to garden centres in Northern Ireland, as required by the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL12715]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Now that the transition period has come to an end, GB is treated as a third country by the EU, which means that the movements of plants and plant products from GB to the EU and NI are subject to the EU's plant health import requirements, including the restrictions on soil and growing media. The new sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements on goods moving from GB to NI were put in place by the UK Government as part of the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, and will uphold the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit.

It is permissible to move plants (potted or otherwise) with growing media attached to them from GB to the EU and NI, as long as that growing media meets the EU's import requirements. Defra has been working closely with trade associations to develop guidance on growing media and how traders can fulfil the EU's requirements. This guidance has been published on the Plant Health Portal.

Provided that plants and growing media meet the EU's import requirements, a phytosanitary certificate will be issued to facilitate movements from GB to NI.

The UK Government is engaged in discussion with the European Commission to seek a lifting of plant health prohibitions, including those on soil and growing media as a commodity. These discussions are ongoing.

## Human Rights: Cambodia

*Asked by Baroness Northover*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what joint work they are undertaking with the EU into the human rights situation in Cambodia; what assessment they have made of the EU's partial withdrawal of trade privileges under the "Anything But Arms" trade arrangements due to human rights abuses and the undermining of democracy in that country; whether they plan to make any similar amendments to their trade arrangements with Cambodia; and if not, why not. [HL12828]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The United Kingdom has concerns about human rights in Cambodia and continues to raise these with the Cambodian government at every opportunity. For example, when explaining the UK's approach on trade preferences to Cambodia, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Cambodia expressed our concerns about the human rights situation to Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister in December 2020.

We continue to monitor the situation in Cambodia and consider if it is appropriate to suspend preferences in line with the provisions of our Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) scheme, taking into account the human rights situation as well as the economic impact of Covid-19 and the impact on vulnerable people, including female garment factory workers.

## Leisure: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to support district councils (1) to provide, and (2) to protect, leisure services during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL12741]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The funding available to support local authorities with leisure provision depends on whether they receive revenue or subsidise their provision and whether they provide it in-house or externally. Leisure facilities may also be eligible for wider government support for businesses. The amount any council receives will depend on their individual circumstances.

If an authority has budgeted to receive income from its leisure centres (whether in-house or externalised) and has irrecoverable transactional income losses which were budgeted for in 2020-21, they may claim support for these losses through the Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation Scheme (which refunds 75% of eligible income loss beyond a 5% threshold). The scheme was recently extended into the first three months of 2021-22.

If an authority subsidises its leisure provision (whether in-house or externalised), they may wish to use part of their allocation of the £4.6 billion of unringfenced funding MHCLG has provided to support councils to meet additional costs as a result of the pandemic to offset these costs, of which Shire District Councils have received £318 million in 2020/2021. Recognising the impacts of Covid-19 on local authorities will continue beyond this financial year, the Department announced £1.55 billion of support for additional costs at the 2020 Spending Review, of which Shire District Councils have been allocated over £102 million. Allocations for this £1.55 billion of support were published on 17 December 2020 and payments are planned to be made in April 2021.

If an external provider delivers leisure services, they may have been eligible for Sport England's National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRFF) to support operators during the current national restrictions, support the reopening and recovery of the public leisure sector and

prevent further closures of outsourced leisure trusts and operators. Applications to the fund have now closed and the results will be known by late February.

### **Life Sciences: National Security**

*Asked by Lord Walney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to incorporate the UK life sciences sector in their Project Defend strategy. [HL12875]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The coronavirus pandemic demonstrated the importance of resilient supply chains to ensure the continued flow of critical goods and to keep global trade moving. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is working to strengthen the UK's wider critical supply chain resilience. This includes diversification to keep supply chains open and promoting international collaboration to reduce incentives for trade restrictions, as well as improving domestic supply chain resilience.

Working closely with our global partners and UK industry, including the life sciences sector, DIT continues to establish greater international cooperation, understand supply chain vulnerabilities, share diagnosis and inform a coordinated response to our shared challenges.

### **Local Government: Loans**

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the procedures whereby local authorities can provide loans to organisations. [HL12724]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Local government loans fall under the Prudential Framework, which governs how authorities borrow and invest. Loans are classed as investments in Government's Statutory Guidance on Local Authority Investments. The guidance, which councils must have regard to, sets out requirements for transparency and how authorities should assess risks before providing loans. Government is currently reviewing all elements of the Prudential Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose, and carefully considering where changes are needed to better constrain risk and support good investment decision-making. Further, recent reforms to the lending terms of the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), designed to prevent authorities investing primarily for yield, also apply to where the authorities are borrowing to lend. In such cases, the authority is required to report the eventual use of the money and restrictions over investing primarily for yield apply.

### **Local Press**

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of local newspapers' (1) importance to local communities and towns, and (2) economic health

and future viability; and what plans they have to provide support to local newspapers. [HL12993]

**Baroness Barran:** The government is committed to supporting local and regional newspapers as vital pillars of communities and local democracy. They play an essential role in holding power to account, keeping the public informed of local issues and providing reliable, high-quality information. They also play a key role in democratic engagement - last year, government-commissioned research into the importance of newspapers to local communities found that changes in news provision and consumption over time had significant effects on participation in local elections in England, underlining the vital importance of a sustainable local news industry to a properly functioning democracy.

However, as the independent Cairncross Review into the future of journalism identified, society is increasingly moving online and local news publishers are facing significant challenges in transitioning to sustainable digital business models. The government agreed with the majority of the Review's recommendations for supporting the sector, and has already taken steps to implement many of them. Most recently, the government response to the CMA market study into online platforms and digital advertising accepted the case for a new pro-competition regime for digital markets. At the heart of this will be a mandatory code of conduct to govern the relationships between dominant firms and those that rely on their services, including news publishers. The code will be a significant intervention in the government's effort to support the sustainability of the news publishing industry, helping to rebalance the relationship between publishers and the online platforms on which they increasingly rely.

In addition, local newspapers have benefited from a number of other recent interventions, including the extension of business rates relief for local newspapers in England for an additional five years; the investment of £2 million in the Future News Fund; and the zero-rating of VAT on e-newspapers. During the pandemic, many newspapers have also benefited from a unique and unprecedented government advertising partnership, designed to deliver important messages to UK citizens. Newspapers received up to £35 million additional government advertising revenue as part of the first phase of our coronavirus communications campaign. The campaign has subsequently been extended with at least 60% funding going to smaller regional and local titles.

We will continue to consider all possible options in the interests of promoting and sustaining high-quality news journalism at a local level.

### **Myanmar: Sanctions**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Burma Campaign's "Dirty List"; and what plans they have to impose sanctions on any firm which supports Myanmar's military. [HL13040]



**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The military's influence is pervasive across Myanmar's economy. Burma Campaign's "Dirty List" is one valuable input into our thinking on the military economy. We are clear that Myanmar needs responsible investors. Her Majesty's Government works closely with UK businesses to ensure that they conduct thorough due diligence to try and avoid exposure to military businesses. Between 2018 and 2020 the UK imposed targeted sanctions on 16 individuals responsible for human rights violations in Myanmar. We played a leading role in securing EU sanctions on 14 individuals. 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 designations 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 ensure a coordinated and impactful response to the coup of 1 February. The UK will consider all the tools at its disposal, including sanctions.

### **Nagorno-Karabakh: Peace Negotiations**

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Coventry***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of ethnic cleansing in the Nagorno-Karabakh region; and what discussions they have had with the government of Azerbaijan about the use of derogatory language that could increase the risk of conflict in that region. [[HL12780](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government is aware of reports of human rights abuses taking place during last year's Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Whilst we have seen no evidence that ethnic cleansing is taking place, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has raised our concerns over allegations of war crimes with the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan and urged that they be thoroughly investigated. We continue to call on all parties to act responsibly and refrain from taking any actions that risk a return to conflict.

### **Neonicotinoids**

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what safeguards they have put in place to ensure that the authorisation for the emergency use of pesticides containing thiamethoxam for use on sugar beet crops will not put pollinators at risk. [[HL12731](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government remains committed to the restrictions put in place in 2018 on the outdoor use of three neonicotinoid pesticides to protect bees and other pollinators. The emergency authorisation that was recently granted for the exceptional use of Cruiser SB (containing the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam)

has been issued with strict conditions attached to ensure that potential risks to pollinators will be minimised. It only allows use on the 2021 sugar beet crop in England, which is a non-flowering crop.

A threshold of predicted disease level must be met before the use of treated seeds is allowed and the application rate of the product will be below the previously authorised commercial rate. Conditions are also imposed on the planting of any flowering crops within 22 months of the sugar beet crop, and no oilseed rape is to be planted within 32 months of the sugar beet crop because of its attractiveness to bees. Additionally, an industry-recommended herbicide programme must be followed to limit flowering weeds in and around any treated sugar beet crops.

Protecting pollinators remains a priority for this Government. The National Pollinator Strategy is a 10-year plan which sets out how Government, conservation groups, farmers, beekeepers and researchers can work together to improve the status of pollinating insect species in England.

### **NHS: George Cross**

*Asked by **Lord Crisp***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to award the George Cross to the National Health Service. [[HL12707](#)]

**Lord True:** The Government appreciates there is a huge appetite across the country to recognise all those on the frontline, particularly the NHS, who have been contributing so much through these extraordinary times.

The Government is carefully considering the appropriate way to remember, reward and recognise those involved in the Covid-19 response. We will ensure that any recognition is both timely and appropriate, and takes into account key workers and volunteers across all critical sectors.

### **Northampton Town Football Club: Northampton Borough Council**

*Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by KPMG Northampton Borough Council: Report in the public interest regarding the Council's loans to Northampton Town Football Club, published on 27 January. [[HL12723](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We are aware of the Public Interest Report concerning Northampton Borough Council and are monitoring the situation. It is for the council to consider and respond to the issues raised in the Report. I understand that they are planning to provide a full response at their Council meeting on 22 February.

## Parole

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their guidance Managing parole-eligible offenders on licence policy framework, published on 11 November 2020, which (1) non-government organisations, and (2) individuals, were consulted prior to their decision to extend the qualifying period for suspension of supervision periods for people serving (a) a life sentence of between four years and 10 years, and (b) an imprisonment for public protection sentence of between four years and five years. [HL12693]

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their guidance Managing parole-eligible offenders on licence policy framework, published on 11 November 2020, how their decision to extend the qualifying periods for the suspension of licence conditions has been communicated to people (1) in custody, and (2) in the community, who are (a) serving a life sentence, and (b) on an imprisonment for public protection sentence. [HL12694]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** For offenders serving an IPP sentence, the policy change did not lead to an extended minimum period for all before suspension of supervision can be considered. In fact, in the new policy, for some IPP cases, the minimum period is less than it was previously.

This policy change represents a clear, fair and consistent position for those subject to indeterminate licences in the community and supports my primary responsibility to protect the public.

The development or amendment of all justice policy frameworks includes significant internal consultation. No non-Government organisations were consulted.

The revised policy framework, 'Managing Parole Eligible Offenders on Licence' was disseminated across HM Prison and Probation Service via internal communications, which included a leaflet for those serving a qualifying sentence; it is also published and available in the public domain. It falls to probation officers in the National Probation Service to discuss any implications of a policy change directly with those affected.

The minimum period of supervision in the previous policy of either four or 10 years, depending on certain factors relating to the offence and notoriety, applied to those offenders serving life and Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. Under the previous policy, anyone serving a life sentence for the murder of an adult or for some other serious offences, had to serve a minimum of four continuous years on licence in the community before becoming eligible for consideration for the supervision requirements in the licence to be suspended. The change in policy brought such individuals into line with all others serving a life sentence, in that

they must now spend 10 continuous years on licence in the community before becoming eligible for supervision to be suspended, unless exceptional circumstances apply. This change was necessary both to enhance public protection and to ensure public confidence with respect to offenders who had committed murder.

## Pensions

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrangements the Pensions Regulator has made with pension schemes with a deficit in excess of £50 million since 2005; with which schemes any such arrangements have been made; and for each such scheme, (1) how the deficit was met, and (2) whether there was any difference in the reported deficit and that which had to be met. [HL12969]

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrangements the Pensions Regulator has made with pension schemes with a deficit in excess of £25 million but less than £50 million since 2005; with which schemes any such arrangements have been made; and for each such scheme, (1) how the deficit was met, and (2) whether there was any difference in the reported deficit and that which had to be met. [HL12970]

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrangements the Pensions Regulator has made with pension schemes with a deficit in excess of £10 million but less than £25 million since 2005; with which schemes any such arrangements have been made; and for each such scheme, (1) how the deficit was met, and (2) whether there was any difference in the reported deficit and that which had to be met. [HL12971]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The information requested on arrangements made by the Pensions Regulator is either not available, or could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

## Pets: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow pets to be moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland without restrictions and in the same way that they can be moved from England to Scotland. [HL12718]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** After the end of the transition period the UK became a third country in relation to the EU Pet Travel Scheme. The rules of this scheme govern non-commercial movements of pets from Great Britain to the EU and from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

In February 2020 we submitted an application to allow the UK to become a Part 1 listed third country under the EU Pet Travel Scheme. This status would mean similar animal health and documentary requirements (compared to before the end of the transition period) for non-commercial pet movements from Great Britain to the EU. On 3 December 2020 the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed of the EU voted in favour of giving the United Kingdom Part 2 listed status under the EU Pet Travel Scheme after the transition period. This listed status has been formally adopted by the EU.

We will continue to press the EU Commission in relation to securing Part 1 listed status, recognising that achieving this would alleviate some of the new requirements for pet owners and assistance dog users travelling to the EU and to Northern Ireland. We are clear that we meet all the animal health requirements for this and we have one of the most rigorous pet checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity.

The Government is also working with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on a long-term solution which respects the rights of assistance dog users and pet owners to travel with the minimum of friction. Guidance on pet travel to Northern Ireland is available on the DAERA's NIDirect website.

Commercial movements of live animals, including dogs, cats and ferrets, which are being moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland for the transference of ownership or sale, are not subject to the EU Pet Travel Scheme but to the 'Balai Directive'. This requires that traders or organisations moving pets in this way must pre-notify and use a specific export health certificate. We are listening to the concerns of stakeholders on this issue and welcome any evidence of disruption that might be caused by these new requirements.

There have been no changes to the rules governing non-commercial pet movements, or the commercial movement of dogs, cats or ferrets, from Northern Ireland into Great Britain.

### **Saudi Arabia: Corporal Punishment**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of people in Saudi Arabia receiving repeated public lashings for asserting their atheism; and whether they consider that such punishments contravene the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. [[HL12752](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK strongly supports the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), which is restricted in Saudi Arabia. Ministers and our Ambassador in Saudi Arabia regularly raise and discuss freedom of religion or belief. Whilst Saudi Arabia ended flogging as a form of corporal punishment in 2020, this change does not apply to some Hudud crimes, for which

the Quran prescribes punishments. The UK will encourage further human rights reform in Saudi Arabia.

On 20 December 2020, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to FoRB by appointing Fiona Bruce, MP for Congleton, as his Special Envoy for FoRB. Mrs Bruce will work with ministers, officials and others to deliver the Government's goal of seeing everyone, everywhere able to have and practise a faith, belief, or not to do so, in accordance with their conscience.

### **Self-employed: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current financial situation of self-employed people whose income in 2018/19 was over £50,000; and what plans they have, if any, to offer financial support to those people during the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL12712](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government recognises that taxpayers have faced immense challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The design of the SEISS, including the £50,000 threshold for average trading profits, means it is targeted at those who most need it and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

However, those with average trading profits above £50,000 may still be eligible for other elements of the substantial financial support provided by the Government. The SEISS continues to be just one element of a package of support for the self-employed which includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

### **Taiwan: Sovereignty**

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise Taiwan as an independent country. [[HL12714](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK's longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. The UK does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan but we do have a strong, unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties. The Taiwan issue is one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, through constructive dialogue.

### **Taxation: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to use information from 2019/20 income tax returns to assess whether people previously disqualified from financial support during the Covid-19 pandemic should now be entitled to such support. [[HL12713](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The practical issues that prevented the Government from being able to include the newly self-employed in 2019-20 in the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), namely that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) do not have access to their self-assessment returns in order to verify their eligibility, still remain.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a substantial package of support for the self-employed. Those ineligible for the SEISS Grant Extension may still be eligible for other elements of the support available. 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.

### **Telecommunications Systems: Mildenhall and Salisbury**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) Ofcom, and (2) Openreach, about the trials in Salisbury and Mildenhall for migrating customers to fibre and withdrawing copper services. [HL13059]

**Baroness Barran:** We are aware of Openreach's plans to modernise its telecoms network to deliver telephone services over Internet Protocol technology and migrate customers from copper to fibre broadband. As part of this, it is undertaking trials in Salisbury and Mildenhall to test approaches to migration. Openreach has consulted on its plans for the trials and has publicly set out timings. In addition, Ofcom has consulted on changes to regulations in these areas to allow the trials to go ahead. Openreach hopes to complete full migrations in these areas by the end of 2022.

DCMS regularly engages with the telecoms industry, Ofcom, and other Government departments to discuss these upgrades, including Openreach's trials. Discussions include the impact these upgrades will have on consumers, business and public services. In addition, DCMS has engaged with other Government departments to ensure they are aware of the trials and relevant local government services are prepared.

### **Travel: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of restrictions to address the Covid-19 pandemic on travel companies' ability to raise revenue as a result of staff being (1) engaged in

processing refunds to customers unable to fulfil booked travel arrangements, and (2) ineligible for the furlough scheme; and what alternative financial support they plan to provide to such companies and the staff of such companies. [HL12737]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government recognises the travel sector has been particularly hard hit by covid-19, and we regularly assess impacts on such tourism businesses and are continuing to engage across Government and with relevant stakeholders.

Travel companies continue to be able to access the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme which has been extended until the end of April. On top of this and our wider economic support package, the Government has provided business rates relief and one-off grants for eligible hospitality and leisure businesses – and we have cut VAT for tourism and hospitality activities from 20% to 5% until the end of March.

### **Travel: Quarantine**

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a requirement for all international travellers to quarantine in hotels upon arrival in the UK. [HL12774]

**Lord Bethell:** Due to the increased risk of new variants entering the United Kingdom, we are introducing Managed Quarantine Facilities for those arriving from high-risk countries in order to safeguard public health and our vaccine programme.

As we have done throughout this global health emergency, we will continue to take all steps necessary to protect the public and help prevent the spread of the virus. We will keep all our measures under constant review.

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

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on Lough Neagh eel fishermen of no longer being able to sell their produce to Great Britain; and what steps they will take to ensure that businesses in Northern Ireland can trade freely with Great Britain. [HL12708]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** European eel is a critically endangered species and, as such, its trade is tightly regulated. As a result of the Northern Ireland protocol, trade in European eel to and from Northern Ireland now falls under the EU's rules. Lough Neagh Fisherman's Co-operative can continue to access the EU market for European eel, which normally accounts for over 80% of their sales. The UK Government has made the scientific case for some continued trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, on the basis that it would not be detrimental to the species as a whole. However, the EU have not accepted this case so, Lough Neagh Fisherman's Co-operative will be unable to trade

European eel with Great Britain during 2021. The Government is seeking independent peer review of the scientific case for ongoing trade and will re-present this case to the EU later in 2021, for further consideration. The Government is also exploring other options to reduce the regulatory requirements for movements from Northern Ireland to Great Britain of the limited goods to which they apply.

### **Woodland Trust: Cybercrime**

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cyber-attack on the Woodland

Trust; and what assistance, if any, they have provided to that charity as a result. [[HL12719](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We are aware of the cyber-attack on the Woodland Trust. The National Cyber Security Centre and National Crime Agency were notified of this incident through Action Fraud. The National Cyber Crime Unit within NCA provided direct liaison with the charity and offered guidance throughout the incident management phase.

The law enforcement response is being led by East Midlands Special Operations Unit with support from Lincolnshire Constabulary.

## Index to Statements and Answers

<b>Written Statements.....1</b>	
Intelligence and Security Committees Northern Ireland-related Terrorism Report.....1	Saudi Arabia: Corporal Punishment ..... 9
Light Dues 2021-22.....1	Self-employed: Coronavirus..... 9
Normal Minimum Pension Age: Consultation .....1	Taiwan: Sovereignty..... 9
Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations: External Scrutiny Team Report.....2	Taxation: Coronavirus ..... 9
<b>Written Answers.....3</b>	Telecommunications Systems: Mildenhall and Salisbury ..... 10
Armed Forces: Housing.....3	Travel: Coronavirus..... 10
Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia.....3	Travel: Quarantine..... 10
Cars: Sales .....3	UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland..... 10
Conservative Party: Peers.....3	Woodland Trust: Cybercrime ..... 11
Coronavirus: Screening .....3	
Criminal Records: EU Nationals .....3	
Dover Port and Channel Tunnel: Large Goods Vehicles .....3	
Elections: Campaigns .....4	
Electric Vehicles: Charging Points.....4	
Erasmus+ Programme .....4	
Exhaust Emissions: EU Countries.....4	
Food: Northern Ireland.....4	
Forests .....4	
Horticulture: Northern Ireland.....5	
Human Rights: Cambodia .....5	
Leisure: Coronavirus .....5	
Life Sciences: National Security .....6	
Local Government: Loans .....6	
Local Press .....6	
Myanmar: Sanctions.....6	
Nagorno-Karabakh: Peace Negotiations .....7	
Neonicotinoids.....7	
NHS: George Cross .....7	
Northampton Town Football Club: Northampton Borough Council .....7	
Parole.....8	
Pensions.....8	
Pets: Northern Ireland.....8	