

**Session 2019-21  
No. 190**



**Wednesday  
24 February 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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<b>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

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# Written Statements

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

## Support for Education Recovery

[HLWS789]

**Baroness Berridge:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The pandemic and associated restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning. To address this challenge, the government has committed to work with parents, teachers and education providers to develop a long-term plan to make sure pupils have the chance to make up their learning over the course of this Parliament. We have also appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on this work and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the pandemic has had on learning.

More immediately, we are putting in place a range of additional measures to help children and young people across England. The package of measures gives early years settings, schools and providers of 16-19 education the tools they need to target support to their students, tailored to the differing impact the pandemic has had on each individual.

New measures include:

A new, one-off £302 million Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, to further support pupils who need it most. The average primary school will receive around £6,000 extra, and the average secondary school around £22,000 extra. This will help schools to bolster summer provision for their students, for example laying on

additional clubs and activities, or for evidence-based approaches for supporting the most disadvantaged pupils from September.

£200 million will fund:

- An expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for primary and secondary schools, to allow more pupils to benefit from the power of regular tutoring, which has been shown to boost catch up learning by much as 3-5 months at a time.
- An extension of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year to support more students in English, maths and other vocational and academic subjects.
- Support for early language development in the early years, supporting a critical stage of child development.

£200 million will be available to secondary schools to deliver face-to-face summer schools. Schools will be able to target provision based on pupils' needs but as evidence suggests that incoming year 7 pupils may be in particular need of support, schools will want to consider their needs in particular. These schools will operate alongside wider summer support funded across the country through our Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

A range of high-quality online resources will be available for all teachers and pupils, starting from the summer term and throughout summer holidays, provided by Oak National Academy, to help give pupils the confidence they are ready for the next academic year.

This £700m package incorporates the £300m announced by the Prime Minister on 27 January and will build on the £1bn support package that was announced in June 2020. This forms part of the wider response to help pupils make up their learning over the course of this Parliament.

## Written Answers

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

### Animals: Tagging

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) non-compliant, and (2) non-DEFRA-approved, animal microchip databases are shut down. [[HL13263](#)]

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to inform cat owners of (1) the need to be aware of (a) non-compliant, and (b) non-DEFRA-approved, microchip databases, and (2) the implications of registering their details on such a database. [[HL13264](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Under the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015, the Defra Secretary of State has powers to ensure database operators meet the requirements under the regulations. The Secretary of State may also authorise in writing "an authorised person", such as a local authority or police constable, to act for the purpose of enforcing these regulations. Defra can therefore work with authorised persons and enforcement agencies, such as Trading Standards, to deal with non-compliant databases.

The Government is committed to improving the welfare of cats and is committed to introducing the compulsory microchipping of cats. Cat owners can ensure that they register with a compliant database by using any of the microchipping databases listed on GOV.UK.

Defra is also conducting a Post Implementation Review of The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 which will consider the operation of the microchip databases.

### Anti-semitism

Asked by *Baroness Deech*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what steps can be taken against members of the House of Lords who express anti-Semitic opinions falling within the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism in the course of their parliamentary duties and activities (1) during, and (2) outside, Parliamentary proceedings. [[HL13242](#)]

**Lord McFall of Alcluth:** The Code of Conduct requires members to treat those with whom they come into contact in the course of their parliamentary duties and activities (including parliamentary proceedings) with respect and courtesy. Behaviour that amounts to bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is a breach of the Code. Under the definitions appended to the Code, harassment is unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of either violating a person's dignity

or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them and is related to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including religion or belief. Anti-Semitic behaviour that amounts to harassment would thus be liable to sanction under the Code.

In relation to parliamentary proceedings, however, the Code of Conduct recognises the constitutional principle of freedom of speech and excludes members' views and opinions from the Commissioner for Standards' remit. It is open to all members to address offensive behaviour or language used in the course of proceedings.

### Apprentices: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase participation rates of people from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities in apprenticeship programmes. [[HL13285](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Apprenticeships benefit people of all ages and backgrounds, and we want to ensure that more people from underrepresented backgrounds can undertake them, particularly those that offer higher wage returns and progression opportunities.

We are pleased to have seen positive outcomes in the representation of people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background in apprenticeships, with a particular increase in the proportion of higher-level apprenticeship starts. In the 2019/20 academic year apprentices from BAME backgrounds accounted for 13.3% starts compared to 12.5% starts in 2018/19. At higher levels, level 4 and above, BAME representation exceeds the national working age population, sitting at 16% for 2019/20 academic year.

During National Apprenticeship Week 2021, we announced the new chair of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network, my hon. Friend, the Member for Great Grimsby, Lia Nici, who will be responsible for setting and shaping the network's objectives, working alongside the department.

The network champions apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers and encourages people from underrepresented groups, including those with disabilities, women and people from BAME backgrounds, to consider apprenticeships. It currently has 88 members including Channel 4, Siemens Plc, Lloyds Banking Group and several NHS Trusts.

We are building on this work to ensure that we continue to see improved representation of people from BAME backgrounds starting apprenticeships, especially in sectors that carry historic under-representation. We will work closely with these sectors to understand why this is the case, and to co-develop targeted solutions. We will also be working extensively with employers, with a particular focus on small to medium sized businesses, to understand what barriers they face in taking on apprentices and how they can support apprentices from different backgrounds.

We will also be working closely with BAME representative groups to further understand how to retain and support progress for people from BAME backgrounds.

To encourage those from underrepresented groups to consider apprenticeships, we are promoting apprenticeships in schools across England through our Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme. This free service provides schools and teachers with resources and interventions to help better educate young people about apprenticeships and traineeships.

### **Armed Forces: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that armed forces personnel receive a COVID-19 vaccine. [HL13239]

**Baroness Goldie:** Defence is working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and other Government Departments to ensure that Armed Forces personnel receive a COVID-19 vaccine at the earliest practical opportunity, in line with the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). Those in healthcare roles and individuals most at risk from complications of COVID-19 are being offered the vaccine first.

### **Asylum: Crime**

*Asked by The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers given leave to remain in the UK over the last five years have committed (1) minor, and (2) serious, offences; and of this number, how many ultimately applied for and received indefinite leave to remain. [HL13280]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Asylum seekers who are granted refugee status or humanitarian protection will usually be granted a period of limited leave (for 5 years) along with any dependants included on the claim. When their leave is due to expire, they must apply for further leave for themselves and any qualifying dependants if they want to remain in the UK.

After 5 years limited leave, an individual becomes eligible to apply for settlement in the UK (which constitutes indefinite leave to remain) but this is a privilege and not an automatic right.

Settlement may be refused where protection is no longer required; or where there is evidence of criminality or concerns about their character, conduct or associations such that they should be denied the benefits of permanent residence in the UK. Those who no longer need protection can return home in safety or apply to stay under other provisions of the Immigration Rules. Those who are still at risk of serious harm in their country are not expected to return there and where appropriate they will be granted limited leave if they do not qualify for settlement.

The available published data on asylum-related grants of settlement (indefinite leave to remain) are published in settlement tables se\_02\_q and se\_02 in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. The published data do not show whether the applicant had previously committed 1) minor, and (2) serious, offences.

To capture the numbers requested would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost. There are no plans to identify these individuals separately within our published statistics.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Settlement Tables [settlement-sep-2020-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-02-10/HL13280>

### **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care home residents tested positive for COVID-19 in each week from 1 April to 1 September. [HL8493]

**Lord Bethell:** This information is not held in the format requested. Data on the total number of positive cases is published in an online only format.

### **Cats: Tagging**

*Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage cat owners (1) to microchip their cats, and (2) to keep registered microchip contact details up to date. [HL13265]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Government is committed to improving the welfare of cats and has a manifesto commitment to introduce compulsory microchipping of cats. Defra launched a consultation in December 2020 on the compulsory microchipping and scanning of cats, and scanning of dogs in England which ended on 17 February. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and we will issue our response to it later this year.

The Government advises owners to follow the statutory welfare code for cats which advises that microchipping a cat gives them the best chance of being identified, and reunited with their owner if injured or lost. The code of practice for the welfare of cats can be found in the attached document.

Cat owners can ensure that they register with a compliant database by using any of the microchipping databases listed on GOV.UK.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Cat Welfare Code [Cat Welfare Code.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-02-10/HL13265>

*Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that local councils scan cats collected as a result of road traffic accidents for microchips. [HL13266]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** It is established good practice for local authorities to scan any cat or dog found on the streets so that the owner can be informed. Cats Protection report that 80% of councils in England routinely scan cats involved in accidents.

Additionally, Highways England has clear guidelines for contractors to follow when they find a deceased cat or dog. This process is designed with owners in mind, giving them the best chance of being informed of the incident to allow closure. The process is laid out in the Network Management Manual and in 2015 the necessary arrangements were made in all Highways England's contracts to collect and identify cats and dogs killed on the strategic road network and to contact their owners.

### China: Uighurs

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the legal opinion by Alison Macdonald QC, Jackie McArthur, Naomi Hart and Lorraine Aboagye on International criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity and genocide against the Uyghur population in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, published on 26 January. [HL13222]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government has taken careful note of the recently published legal opinion by Alison Macdonald QC et al. Our deep concern about the serious and widespread human rights violations in Xinjiang is a matter of record. The UK has led international efforts to hold China to account, and on 12 January the Foreign Secretary announced a package of measures to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about the previous US administration's determination that China has committed genocide in its repression of Uighurs and other minority groups; and what plans they have to make a similar determination. [HL13223]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In a call on 27 January 2021, the Foreign Secretary and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed cooperation to hold China to its international commitments. The government remains gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. We regularly discuss these concerns and related questions of policy with the US. The UK plays a leading role in holding China to account for its human rights

violations in the region, working closely with international partners, including the US.

It is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies. Competent courts include international courts, such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, and national criminal courts that meet international standards of due process.

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which increases in COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations since August have been influenced by (1) the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, (2) the return of schools, colleges and universities in September, and (3) the deteriorating weather conditions and reduced hours of daylight; and what research, if any, they have commissioned into the influence of each of these elements. [HL9776]

**Lord Bethell:** While we have not made a specific assessment of the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, we would not hesitate to act in response to an increase in infections. We worked closely with businesses to ensure they were COVID-19 secure.

Currently, the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector is being explored by the Government through various studies with the Office for National Statistics, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Public Health England.

We have not made an assessment of the specific influence of weather on the transmission of COVID-19. However, as people to spend more time indoors during the winter which increases the time spent in close proximity to others, the risks of has led to an increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK citizens will be given a choice of COVID-19 vaccine. [HL11103]

**Lord Bethell:** Both vaccines give very high protection against severe disease, which is the primary aim of the first phase of the programme, and both vaccines have good safety profiles. The logistical challenges posed by the storage and distribution requirements for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine mean that in some populations, the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is the only vaccine which can be deployed rapidly, and without substantial vaccine wastage. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation does not advise a preference for either vaccine in any specific population. For operational and programmatic reasons, such as to enable more extensive

and timely vaccine coverage, one vaccine may be offered in certain settings in preference over another vaccine.

*Asked by **Baroness Brady***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the number of independent pharmacies that are able to offer COVID-19 vaccination on-site; and what steps they are taking to ensure that such pharmacies (1) receive delivery of, and (2) can administer, COVID-19 vaccinations, promptly. [HL12193]

**Lord Bethell:** Since 14 January 2021, over 100 community pharmacies, including some independent pharmacies, have started to offer the COVID-19 vaccination service, with more pharmacies joining over the coming months.

Community pharmacies in England, who are or will be providing the COVID-19 vaccination service are required to deliver 1,000 vaccines per week and to achieve this they are supported in the form of training, funding for the service and non-monetary support, including delivery of vaccines, consumables, personal protective equipment and other equipment to operate the site.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with all the national pharmacy organisations on plans to ensure that community pharmacies, including independent pharmacies, are used to optimal effect in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, starting with the sites that can do this at scale.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to guarantee that all adults in the UK will be offered a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. [HL12361]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Health Service across the United Kingdom will prioritise giving the first dose of the vaccine to those in the most high-risk groups but everyone will still receive their second dose and this will be within 12 weeks of their first. The second dose completes the course and is important for longer term protection.

When an appointment is booked at a vaccination centre, two appointments will be made at the same time.

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that vulnerable patients who cannot travel to vaccination hubs are vaccinated for COVID-19 in the community. [HL12380]

**Lord Bethell:** Local vaccination services are led by Primary Care Networks and are well placed to support the specific needs of the highest risk individuals. They also coordinate and deliver vaccinations to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site, including visiting care homes, the homes of housebound individuals and other settings to reach the most vulnerable groups.

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources they have provided to local authorities to assist in (1) identifying, (2) finding appropriate local vaccination settings in, and (3) administering COVID-19 vaccinations in, hard to reach communities. [HL12406]

**Lord Bethell:** Local authorities are involved in planning locally and have been working closely with National Health Service regional teams and the national programme in support of the vaccine deployment. Key areas of collaboration include the selection of appropriate vaccination sites, local communications on vaccine messaging and engaging with vulnerable/ hard to reach communities or disproportionately impacted groups.

At a national level, there are a range of platforms in which local government and NHS partners are brought together to discuss this in greater detail, such as the National Vaccine Deployment Steering Group. At the same time, as part of an extensive communications campaign, the Government has brought in local trusted voices to invite an open dialogue and ensure a joined-up approach to encourage uptake by vulnerable people in local communities.

## **Coronavirus: Watton**

*Asked by **Baroness Hayman***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what help and support they are providing to authorities in Norfolk dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak at a meat processing plant in Watton. [HL9839]

**Lord Bethell:** Regional officials worked closely with the local and district authorities, the Director of Public Health for Norfolk and the company in Watton to support the Incident Management Team's (IMT) meetings and facilitate the deployment of mobile testing units (MTU) to enable testing of the workforce to take place.

The outbreak was escalated by the Norfolk local authorities to the Joint Biosecurity Centre Regional Lead for the East of England and to the Escalation and Response Unit.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs set up an animal welfare cell as part of the IMT to mitigate the impact of the public health measures on animal welfare where possible. The factory is being supported to participate in the lateral flow testing scheme. This will allow the company to carrying out routine testing and help reduce the risk of further workforce outbreaks at the factory.

## **Council Tax**

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether current council tax bands in England adequately reflect changes to property prices since 1991. [HL13277]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Council tax bands in England reflect the sale value of properties at 1 April 1991 and provide a proxy for relative ability to pay. This banding system is well understood and provides a stable income stream to local authorities and predictable annual bills for taxpayers.

### Culture Recovery Fund

*Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the national restrictions to address the COVID-19 pandemic introduced in England on 4 January, and the impact on the cultural sector of those restrictions, what plans they have to establish a third round of the Cultural Recovery Fund, and whether they plan to offer more than the £1.57 billion that they announced for that fund on 5 July 2020. [[HL13328](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** DCMS is fully committed to supporting the culture and heritage sectors to survive the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over £1bn of funding has already been allocated across arts, heritage and independent cinemas, and we are working hard to ensure that the £400m of round two funding supports as many culturally significant organisations as possible.

We continue to work closely with our Arms Length Bodies to understand the need in the sector and how best to support them as we transition out of lockdown over the coming months.

### Developing Countries: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from (1) NGOs, and (2) others, about (a) the World Trade Organization's proposed 'Waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19' (IP/C/W/669), and (b) the need of developing countries for immediate access to the COVID-19 vaccines currently available; what assessment they have made of any such representations; and what assessment they have made of (i) the humanitarian needs of people in developing countries, and (ii) the need to avoid new opportunities for the development and spread of COVID-19 mutations. [[HL13272](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, and has committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to ensure COVID-19 vaccine access for low- and middle-income countries. We do not consider waiving intellectual property (IP) rights to be an appropriate course of action in boosting the manufacturing of safe, effective, and quality vaccines. The existing intellectual property framework has mobilised research and development to deliver a host of

new medicines and technologies to detect, treat, and defend against COVID-19.

According to the UN Global Humanitarian Overview, 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021. Humanitarian needs are the largest on record, driven in large part by the direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK is a major humanitarian donor, providing over £2 billion in assistance to humanitarian crises in the last financial year. The emergence of new COVID-19 variants serves as a powerful reminder that viruses mutate by their very nature. As a result, over 4000 SARS-CoV-2 variants have been identified across the globe. The UK's world-leading genomic sequencing continues to monitor these variants as they arise and develop, and we will offer this expertise to identify new variants to countries who do not have the resources to do so.

### Fisheries

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enforce the UK's fishing rights. [[HL13236](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** As an independent coastal state, the UK has full responsibility over how it ensures compliance in its fisheries. All fishing vessels in UK waters are required to fish in accordance with UK laws and the conditions of their licences. As control and enforcement is a devolved matter, Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters.

In England, the Government has undertaken a significant increase in the number of personnel and surveillance assets relating to fisheries protection with a sizeable increase in personnel, an increase in the number of planes available for aerial surveillance and an increase in the level of at-sea surveillance. This strong presence will deter against fisheries infringements, while also enabling our agencies to take robust action where they may occur. In addition, the Joint Maritime Security Centre has been established to enhance joint working between maritime agencies, increase information sharing across Government and maximise benefit from surveillance assets. This enables a more efficient, effective and prioritised maritime patrol enforcement.

### Fisheries: Finance

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the £23 million promised for the fishing industry affected by disruption following the UK's departure from the EU has so far been distributed. [[HL13188](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government has provided up to £23 million to deliver the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme. This will provide financial

support to seafood businesses that have experienced a verifiable loss due to disruption during the movement of goods to the single market. The scheme opened for applications on 9 February and will close on 28 February, after which we will begin communicating the outcome of applications to applicants and processing payments. Data on the amount of funding distributed through this scheme will therefore not be available until mid to late March.

Drawing on the existing £23 million, the Government announced enhanced support on 21 February to provide cash grants for more fishing and shellfish aquaculture businesses affected by a reduction in demand from the hospitality sector in the UK and abroad.

### Hospitals: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to track the number of patients who tested negative for COVID-19 on admission to hospital in England but then contracted COVID-19 whilst in hospital. [HL12653]

**Lord Bethell:** NHS England and NHS Improvement collect and publish data relating to the numbers of patients diagnosed in the community with COVID-19 and subsequently admitted to hospital or admitted to hospital and diagnosed with COVID-19 within eight days of admission. However, due to the incubation period of the virus and local differences in application of testing protocols, it is not possible to definitively determine how many of these patients contracted the virus whilst in hospital.

### Libya: Freezing of Assets

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the dispute between the government of Belgium and the Libyan Investment Authority over access to frozen Libyan assets in Belgium. [HL13254]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011) decided that all Member States shall freeze assets owned or controlled by individuals or entities listed by the Libya Sanctions Committee. The Resolution also expresses the Council's intention to ensure that assets frozen shall at a later stage be made available to and for the benefit of the people of the Libya. UNSCR 1970 sets out exemptions to the asset freeze. All exemption requests require full and careful compliance with relevant processes and procedures outlined in UNSCR 1970.

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Belgium about the treatment of frozen Libyan assets in Belgium. [HL13255]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The treatment of Libyan assets frozen in Belgium is a matter for the Belgian competent authorities within the framework of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. All exemption requests require full and careful compliance with relevant processes and procedures outlined in UNSCR 1970 (2011).

### Mental Health Services: Children

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the current waiting times for NHS child and adolescent mental health services in each region of England. [HL12334]

**Lord Bethell:** The information is not currently held in the format requested. A national access and waiting times standard for children and adolescent people's mental health services has not yet been defined.

### Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Parliamentary Consultants

*Asked by Lord Krebs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government who are the official advisors on (1) the natural environment, and (2) climate change, within the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government. [HL13275]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Government is advised by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) – the independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 – whose role is to advise the UK and devolved Governments, including MHCLG. The Department also seeks the relevant advice from executive non-departmental bodies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency.

### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Location

*Asked by Baroness Deech*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recommendation was made by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation about the location of the proposed National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. [HL13244]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Following an extensive search of central London locations, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation recommended Victoria Tower Gardens as the most fitting site for the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. The Government agreed with the Foundation's recommendation.

### National Skills Fund

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend National Skills Fund allocations beyond July 2021. [HL13282]

**Baroness Berridge:** We are investing £375 million in the financial year 2021-22 for the National Skills Fund, as announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Spending Review in November 2020. This includes £95 million funding for a new level 3 adult offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps.

The new level 3 adult offer will support any adult aged 24 and over who wants to achieve their first full level 3 qualification – equivalent to two A levels, or an advanced technical certificate or diploma – to access around 400 fully funded courses. This offer will be available from April 2021.

Funding for this national offer will be delivered to providers via the Adult Education Budget process. It will be administered through the Education Skills Funding Agency for residents of non-devolved areas, and by Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority for residents in those areas.

Adult funding allocations for the academic year starting August 2021, for providers funded through a grant funding agreement, are expected to be issued by the end of March 2021 and will include the National Skills Fund level 3 adult offer for learners resident in non-devolved areas. For providers who do not receive an up-front allocation funding for April 2021 to July 2021, arrangements about how to access this funding will be included in the 2021-22 funding and performance management rules (when published in the spring).

To access funding from August 2021 onwards, Independent Learning Providers with a contract for service and providers that wish to bid for a contract for service to supplement any grant funding can submit a bid under the Education and Skills Funding Agency tender which was launched on 5 February 2021 and closes on 22 March 2021. It will award Adult Education Budget contracts for services for the delivery of education and training, and will also include the level 3 adult offer, to learners resident in non-devolved areas. The contracts will start on 1 August 2021 and run for the 2021-22 academic year.

We plan to consult on the future of the National Skills Fund in spring 2021 to ensure that the fund helps adults learn valuable skills and prepares them for the economy of the future.

### North Korea: Borders

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that (1) the number of people trying to leave North Korea over the border rivers of Yalu and Tumen has risen since the beginning of January, and (2) many would-be defectors have been shot and killed by border guards. [HL13224]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are not aware of recent specific reports concerning North Koreans attempting to leave the country over the Yalu and Tumen

rivers. We will continue to monitor the situation. We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in North Korea, following a year of lockdown, and continue to call on North Korea to restore international access for humanitarian assistance.

### Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people recorded by HMRC as earning below the Personal Allowance for taxable income who contributed to a workplace pension using 'relief at source' tax relief in all tax years since 2017; and of this number, how many were (1) women, and (2) men. [HL13216]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** HMRC estimate that 1.3m individuals earning below the personal allowance in 2017-18 made workplace pension contributions via Real Time Information (RTI) using relief at source arrangements. About 65% of these individuals are estimated to be female and 35% are estimated to be male.

The personal allowance in 2017-18 was £11,500.

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

As indicated in HMRC's statistics announcement, the 2018-19 Personal Incomes Statistics (Distributional analysis) is expected to be published on 31 March 2021 and the Personal Incomes Statistics (Regional analysis) is expected to be published on 28 April 2021.

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people recorded by HMRC as earning below the Personal Allowance for taxable income who contributed to a workplace pension using 'net pay' tax relief in all tax years since 2017; and of this number, how many were (1) women, and (2) men. [HL13217]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** HMRC estimates that 1.5m individuals earning below the personal allowance in 2017-18 made workplace pension contributions via Real Time Information (RTI) using net pay arrangements. Around 75% of these individuals are estimated to be female and 25% are estimated to be male.

The personal allowance in 2017-18 was £11,500.

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

As indicated in HMRC's statistics announcement, the 2018-19 Personal Incomes Statistics (Distributional analysis) is expected to be published on 31 March 2021 and the Personal Incomes Statistics (Regional analysis) is expected to be published on 28 April 2021.

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the results of their call for evidence on pensions tax relief administration, and in particular those relating to the issue of low earners paying 25 per cent extra for their pension if their employer chooses to use a 'net pay' auto-enrolment pension scheme. [[HL13218](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government recognises the different impacts of the two systems of paying pension tax relief on pension contributions for workers earning below the personal allowance. At Budget 2020, the Government announced it would launch a Call for Evidence on pensions tax relief administration, in line with its manifesto commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of this issue.

This Call for Evidence set out the Government's views on proposals already put forward by stakeholders, invited further proposals, and sought views on the operation of the RAS method.

The Call for Evidence is now closed. The Government is analysing the responses and will respond in due course.

### **Occupied Territories: British Nationals Abroad**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that UK citizens have been accused of involvement in the deaths of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [[HL13287](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government is aware of the high numbers of Palestinians, including children, killed by Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We have urged Israel to ensure that its investigation is swift and comprehensive. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate transparent investigations.

### **Palestinians: Human Rights**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the human rights of Palestinians of the decision by the government of Israel to classify a nature reserve near the Ainun area in Tubas as a military zone. [[HL13288](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the continued expropriation of land by Israel in the West Bank. We regularly call on Israel to halt such counterproductive activity and instead urgently commit to creating a better environment for a just and lasting peace. We continue to call on Israel to improve Palestinians'

route to securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure, including agriculture and farming, in Area C.

### **Police: Cameras**

*Asked by **Lord Browne of Belmont***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the efficacy in aiding police investigations, and (2) the number of successful prosecutions resulting from the use, of body-worn camera footage. [[HL13235](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is committed to empowering police to use new technologies, like body-worn cameras, which equip officers with the tools they need for modern policing. Its deployment is an operational matter for each police force and decisions will be made based on local priorities.

There is no centrally held data on its efficacy in investigations or prosecutions, however the benefits are recognised widely in policing.

### **Police: Coronavirus**

*Asked by **Lord Browne of Belmont***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional support they have provided to frontline police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL13234](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government has been clear that it will provide police forces with the support they need to continue protecting the public and keep communities safe through the coronavirus pandemic.

In October 2020 the Government announced an additional £30m of funding for police forces in England and Wales to step up their enforcement of coronavirus rules.

In addition, we have provided the police the powers and guidance they need to support compliance with covid-19 social distancing and lockdown restrictions. This includes the powers to issue FPNs against offences breaching the Coronavirus regulations

The Home Office continues to work closely with the policing sector to monitor and respond to their needs in these challenging circumstances.

### **Prisons: Visits**

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in the last 12 months to maintain visiting rights for prisoners while there have been restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic; how many visits were permitted for each category of prisoner each month; what estimate they have made of the percentage of all prisoners who have received visitors since March 2020; and whether all prison visitors are required to produce a negative COVID-19 test. [[HL13220](#)]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** In response to COVID-19, the MoJ/HMPs took decisive action to protect staff and prisoners. These changes are set out in 'COVID-19: National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services', available attached and here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>. In line with this framework and public health advice, at different times during the pandemic social face-to-face visits in the adult estate have had to be temporarily suspended (other than on exceptional compassionate grounds which need to be agreed in advance with the prison). Visits to children in the Youth Custody Estate (YCS) have continued. Official/ legal visits have continued, conducted remotely where possible.

Social visits during the pandemic have taken place in line with the National Framework and a regime Exception Delivery Model with additional measures put in place to ensure that they can do so in a COVID-19 secure manner. These have had to include restricting the numbers of visits, length of visits and numbers of visitors in each session. We do not require evidence of a negative test as a pre-cursor to visiting. Decisions as to how visits operate at each establishment within this framework are determined through locally led assessments informed by Public Health advice. Information on how visits operate is set out on each establishment's information page on GOV.UK, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prisons-in-england-and-wales>, and communicated to those wishing to visit as part of the local booking arrangements. In line with the National Framework, arrangements for social visits remain under constant review in light of public health guidance.

Data on the numbers of visits is not collated and held nationally. This information cannot therefore be provided without disproportionate cost.

As part of a wider package of measures to enable those in prison and the YCS to maintain contact with families and significant others throughout the pandemic, we also introduced circa 1,500 additional mobile PIN phones, have provided additional PIN credit and have introduced an emergency secure Video Calling service which to date has supported over 100,000 calls.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PDF [prisons-national-framework.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-02-10/HL13220>

## Private Military and Security Companies

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK citizens are permitted (1) to act as mercenaries, and (2) to train with foreign militaries; and if so, (a) under what legislative or other framework such activity is

permitted, and (b) in what countries they permit such activity. [HL13286]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK government notes Article 47 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, of which the UK is a party, which sets out the definition of a mercenary. There is no licensing system or permission process in UK law for a UK citizen who intends to act as a mercenary to follow. UK law focusses on the activities of UK citizens abroad, which may be prosecuted in the UK where UK law makes such provision. For example, under the International Criminal Courts Acts of 2001, UK courts have jurisdiction to prosecute acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by UK nationals either inside or outside of the United Kingdom, and offences of murder committed outside the jurisdiction may be prosecuted in the UK. Additionally, the direct or indirect provision of armed personnel, where it enables or facilitates the conduct of armed hostilities, may constitute an offence under UK sanctions regimes. This legislation enables the UK to prosecute a UK citizen accused of committing such crimes overseas as a mercenary or whilst working for a private security company.

We draw a clear distinction between mercenaries and private security companies (PSCs). We promote high standards for PSCs internationally through voluntary regulation of the sector and played a leading role in the drafting of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (2010), which sets out principles for security providers, and related standards, governance, and oversight mechanisms, and the launch of its oversight mechanism to monitor compliance with the Code, the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) (2013).

Members of UK Armed Forces regularly undertake training and engage in exercises with a wide range of international partners in that professional capacity, where this best supports the development of UK military capability, contributes to the development of international defence relationships and supports wider government objectives.

## Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Northern Ireland Executive Minister of Finance has asked to roll over unspent resources from the current financial year into the next financial year; and if so, (1) when they received this request, and (2) what, if any, indication the Minister gave of the amount of unspent resources. [HL13256]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** As set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, the Northern Ireland Executive are able to move funding between financial years through Budget Exchange. The total level of 2020-21 underspends will not be known until the end of the financial year and normal practice would be for the NIE to notify HMT of

how it intends to use its budget exchange flexibilities at Supplementary Estimates 2021-22.

However, due to the exceptional circumstances this year, HM Treasury has worked closely with all three devolved administrations to provide additional flexibility. As a result the Northern Ireland Executive can now carry forward into 2021-22 over £300m of Barnett-based funding, as well as any business rates relief repaid, on top of Budget Exchange.

### **Royal Parks: Buildings**

*Asked by Baroness Deech*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy concerning permission for new buildings, not connected with open spaces' or leisure purposes, to be built in Royal Parks. [[HL13243](#)]

**Baroness Barran:** Any decisions concerning permission for new buildings, not connected with open spaces or leisure purposes to be built in the Royal Parks will be made in line with relevant planning legislation and will be the subject of the usual consent procedures.

The Royal Parks are Hyde Park, Green Park, St James's Park, Greenwich Park, Richmond Park, Bushy Park, Regent's Park and Kensington Gardens.

### **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies Who is excluded from the government's Self Employment Income Support Scheme and what could the government do about it?, published on 27 January; and what plans they have to introduce targeted support to freelance workers in the creative industries who do not qualify for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (1) who became self-employed after 2019, and (2) who are on zero-hour contracts. [[HL13281](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has provided and will continue to provide generous support to self-employed people who meet the eligibility criteria.

The Government has recognised taxpayers have faced immense challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has prioritised delivering support to as many people as possible while guarding against the risk of fraud or abuse.

The design of the SEISS, including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

The SEISS is among the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world. The claims window for the third grant closed on 29 January 2021. As of 31

December, it received claims from 1.9 million individuals so far, amounting to £5.4bn.

The fourth grant will cover February to April 2021. The Government will set out further details at the Budget in March.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a substantial 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.

The Government recognises the value of the cultural sector and creative professionals and has announced a £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to protect the cultural sectors through the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, more than £790m of grants and loans have been allocated to over 3,000 cultural organisations in England. Organisations supported include galleries, theatres, museums, orchestras, music venues, comedy clubs and festivals. This funding will help to support jobs and organisations across the country.

### **Small Businesses: Non-domestic Rates**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the rates relief threshold for small businesses. [[HL13284](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has no immediate plans to change the eligibility criteria for Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR).

Properties with a rateable value of £12,000 or less pay no business rates under SBRR. For properties with a rateable value above £12,000 and less than £15,000, SBRR tapers from 100% relief to 0%.

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

### **Students: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) emotional, and (2) social, impact on university students of remote learning; whether they plan to prioritise the return of such students to classrooms or other physical settings within the next six weeks; and if not, why not. [[HL13197](#)]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** Protecting student wellbeing is vital, and we recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why we have asked providers to prioritise student mental health during this period. The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing working group, convened by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has discussed the emotional and social impact of the pandemic on students in detail and has created a resources document for higher education

providers, collating the guidance, tools, and services available to support students' mental health. This information is now being spread through the networks of the working group members, including university and student representatives, to raise awareness of the support available and enable people to seek help. The Minister of State for Universities also established the Higher Education Taskforce on 18 August 2020, which is formed of various sector representatives to work through challenges that students are facing.

Alongside this, the Office for Students (OfS) has been working closely with the government throughout the pandemic to support students – funding mental health support, monitoring quality, and issuing guidance. We have worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, a mental health and wellbeing platform, which has been funded by up to £3 million. We are pleased that they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year, because no student should be left behind at this challenging time.

In the current national lockdown, we have had to take additional steps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, including by significantly reducing the number of students returning to university after the Christmas holidays, and limiting the number of people travelling to and from university facilities. We are now advising providers that they can resume in-person teaching and education for students who are studying practical or practice-based subjects (including creative arts) and who require specialist equipment and facilities from 8 March 2021. Providers should not ask students to return if their course can reasonably be continued online. The government will review, by the end of the Easter holidays, the options for the timing of the return of remaining students. This review will take account of the latest data and will be a key part of the wider roadmap steps.

### **Tigray: Humanitarian Aid**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the President of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society that 80 per cent of Tigray is currently unreachable for aid access and that people are at risk of starvation. [HL13225]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We note recent assessments that there are still significant restrictions to access in Tigray and are concerned about the impact of the conflict on food security and nutrition in the region. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for humanitarian access to Tigray with President Abiy during his recent visit to Ethiopia and pressed for a political dialogue to bring lasting peace to the region. In this context we welcome the recent visits to Ethiopia by senior UN officials and hope that they will deliver a sustained step-change in humanitarian access. The UK is working closely with humanitarian and development agencies, including the Ethiopian Red Cross, to make sure aid

reaches civilians affected by the fighting. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are working hard to deliver support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. The Foreign Secretary visited Gondar, in the neighbouring Amhara region on 22 January and saw first-hand how £11m of UK Aid is supporting the World Food Programme and NGOs to ensure the delivery of aid to those affected by the conflict.

### **Unemployment: Older People**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the unemployment rate of those aged 65 years old and over; and what steps they are taking to reduce that rate. [HL13212]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The employment rate for people aged 65 and over has dropped from 11.6 per cent at the start of the pandemic to 10.9 per cent in November 2020.

To support people aged 65 and over to return to work, the Government's Plan for Jobs provides new funding to ensure more people, get tailored Jobcentre Plus support to help them find work and to build the skills they need to get into work. This includes £895 million to recruit an additional 13,500 Work Coaches which the Department is on track to achieve by March 2021; a £150 million increase in the Flexible Support Fund which will also boost the capacity of the Rapid Response Service to help those facing redundancy move into other jobs; and £10 million for a new online support service that will provide tailored one-to-one job finding support to the recently unemployed.

The Government also aims to triple the number of sector-based work academy programme placements, supporting unemployed claimants of all ages through training and work experience to find a job. We are also investing £238 million into Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) to offer new support to those who have been made unemployed for three months.

To support the long term unemployed, in the Spending Review 2020, Government has also announced the Restart programme that will provide intensive and tailored support to over one million people and help them find work.

The Department also has a network of 50 PLUS Champions throughout all of the 34 Jobcentre Plus districts. These Jobcentre Plus staff work collaboratively with Work Coaches to raise the profile of over 50s claimants, highlighting the benefits of employing them and sharing best practice.

### **Universal Credit**

*Asked by Lord Beecham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain the additional £20 per week to recipients of Universal Credit while the restrictions to

address the COVID-19 pandemic remain in place; and, if they have no such plans, why not. [HL13360]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those facing the most financial disruption as a result of the public health emergency. This measure remains in place until March 2021. As the Government has done throughout this pandemic, it will continue to assess how best to support low-income families, which is why we will look at the economic and health context before making any decisions.

### Woodhouse Colliery

*Asked by Lord Krebs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) sought, or (2) received, advice from the Climate Change Committee before deciding not to refuse planning permission for the proposed coal mine in Cumbria. [HL13273]

*Asked by Lord Krebs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what expert advice on climate change impacts they received before deciding not to refuse planning permission for the proposed coal mine in Cumbria. [HL13274]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** In the decision of 6 January, the Secretary of State decided not to call in the planning application for the proposed West Cumbria Coal mine. In that decision, the Secretary of State carefully considered this case against his published policy on calling in planning applications, as set out in the Written Ministerial

Statement of 26 October 2012. Further representations to MHCLG when received are carefully considered.

### Zimbabwe: Sanctions

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by Maverick Citizen Cartel Power Dynamics in Zimbabwe, published on 9 February, what plans they have to impose further sanctions on ministers and officials in the government of Zimbabwe. [HL13262]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the report on 'Cartel Power Dynamics in Zimbabwe', published on 9 February by South Africa's Maverick Citizen. The UK is deeply worried about the state of the Zimbabwean economy, which continues to face unprecedented challenges largely due to corruption, and poor fiscal policies and economic mismanagement by the Government. The UK remains committed to reducing poverty and helping the people of Zimbabwe secure their constitutional freedoms.

On 1 February, we announced sanctions against four Zimbabwean security sector chiefs responsible for serious human rights violations under President Mnangagwa. These measures will be maintained as long as the situation on the ground justifies them. We will continue to look at how all the tools available to the UK, including the full range of sanctions regimes, can be used to encourage accountability and reform in Zimbabwe. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

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