

**Session 2019-21
No. 195**



**Thursday
4 March 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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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
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Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
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Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Thursday, 4 March 2021

Changes in Immigration Rules

[HLWS815]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Future Borders and Immigration (Kevin Foster) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

We have made a change to the Immigration Rules which will open the new Graduate route to enable international students to remain in the UK to work, or look for work, for two years (three years for doctoral students) after they have completed their studies. The route will open on 1 July 2021. All international students who have successfully completed a degree (or other qualifying course) at undergraduate level or above at a higher education provider with a track record of compliance, and who have valid Student (or Tier 4) permission, will be able to apply. The Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) will close when the Graduate route opens. The introduction of this route, which was announced in September 2019, will significantly improve the UK's offer to international students.

We are making changes to accommodate the launch of the new Graduate route. The first change is to expand the definition of a new entrant to include those switching from the Graduate route. Time spent in the Graduate route will count towards the maximum period of four years for which a person can be considered a new entrant. We are also making a change so those previously on the Student or Graduate routes, who make a short visit to the UK, do not disqualify themselves from being considered a new entrant.

We are also giving effect to some of the recommendations made by the Migration Advisory Committee in its review of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) in September 2020. We are adding eight occupations in the health and care sector as well as modern language teachers to the UK-wide SOL. We are removing chefs from the SOL, although they will continue to be eligible for the Skilled Worker route due to the expanded skills threshold.

In addition, we are accepting the recommendation to add deck hands on large fishing vessels and vent chicken sexers, where those occupations meet experience requirements, to the list of occupations which are eligible for the Skilled Worker route.

We are updating the salary thresholds to include a minimum hourly rate to safeguard against employers who may require employees to work longer hours to make up for the lower rates of pay. We are including a transitional arrangement for those already on the Skilled Worker route

in a job paying less than the minimum (£10.10 per hour) to avoid anyone losing their job as a result of the change.

We are making a change to prevent employers from reducing their Skilled Worker salaries below the level of tradeable points which have been assessed and awarded by the Home Office. If a sponsor wishes to reduce a salary based on a different set of tradeable points, a new application will be required. This ensures the Home Office has assessed and confirmed that the Skilled Worker continues to meet the requirement of the route.

We are expanding the Academic Technology Approval Scheme to include those coming to the UK under a sponsored work route to work in an occupation which includes postgraduate research in an academic environment, in certain sensitive subjects where an individual's knowledge could be used in programmes to develop advanced conventional weapon technology, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), or their means of delivery. This change is designed to protect UK research from exploitation and from inadvertently supporting the proliferation of WMD or advanced conventional weapon technologies.

Some adjustments are being made to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and the EUSS family permit. These will ensure their continued operability and the full implementation of the Citizens' Rights Agreements beyond the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EUSS by those EEA citizens and their family members resident in the UK by the end of the Transition Period. By 31 January 2021, more than 5 million applications to the EUSS had been received and more than 4.5 million grants of status had been issued.

We are making changes to the Global Talent route to enable applicants who have reached the pinnacle of their careers to bypass the endorsement requirement and instead qualify if they have received a prestigious prize. An initial list of prizes have been identified and agreed by the endorsing bodies for the route based on their expert opinion and represent the leading awards in their respective fields.

Applicants meeting this requirement will not be required to apply for endorsement, which should expedite the application process. In all other aspects, the requirements and conditions applying to individuals relying on a prestigious prize will be consistent with those who qualify using an exceptional talent endorsement, including having a three year qualifying period for settlement and identical conditions applied to their permission.

There are currently two separate schemes to assist current and former Locally Employed Staff (LES) in Afghanistan: the Ex-Gratia Scheme (EGS) and the intimidation policy. The existing intimidation policy is available to any current or former Afghan LES who have been employed directly by the UK Government in Afghanistan since 2001, from the first day of their employment, regardless of their role, job or length of service. This is being replaced with the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for current and

former Afghan LES to reflect the changing security situation in Afghanistan and the risk faced by current and former LES there. The EGS will continue to operate without change until the closing date of 30 November 2022 already set out in the Immigration Rules.

The ARAP moves away from the present policy model which is based on the investigation of alleged cases of intimidation and requires discrete evidence, and into an assessment-oriented approach. This will be grounded in a recognition that the situation in Afghanistan has evolved and poses a latent threat to many current and former LES in particular roles. Other assistance, e.g. internal moves in-country and bespoke security advice, will still be available where appropriate and reflects that not all LES are able or willing to relocate.

An amendment is being made to clarify the grounds for refusal policy intention that permission may only be refused or cancelled on the basis of rough sleeping where the person has repeatedly refused offers of support and engaged in persistent anti-social behaviour

Finally, a change is being made to Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) which will allow those on the British National (Overseas) route to apply to vary their conditions to have their no recourse to public funds condition lifted where they are able to demonstrate they are destitute or at imminent risk of destitution.

Covid-19 Update

[HLWS817]

Lord Bethell: My Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment) (Nadhim Zahawi) has made the following written statement:

The lockdown has reduced social contact and, as such, the number of Covid-19 cases, hospital admissions and death rates have reduced significantly but continue to remain high across the country. As of 25 February, the weekly case rate for all ages in England is on average 97.1 per 100,000, and 65.2 per 100,000 for people aged 60 and over. Overall positivity for England is 4.3%, with rates continuing to remain higher than desired across the whole country. These figures remain high indicating that we are not yet ready to ease further restrictions immediately from an epidemiological perspective.

Data indicates that patients in hospital with Covid-19 across England has reduced to 10,765 and mechanical ventilation bed occupancy is 1,658 (as of 1 March). Sadly, between 15 February and 21 February there have been a total of 2,421 COVID 19 related deaths in England, within 28 days of a positive COVID 19 tests. The number of deaths within 28 days of a positive test has fallen and now reflect levels seen at the end of October. The Coronavirus England briefing, 4 March 2021, is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-england-briefing-4-march-2021>

The vaccine rollout continues to be a success for the UK. As of 2 March, over 20.4 million people across the UK have now received their first dose of a COVID vaccine – equal to over a third of the adult population, and over 840,000 people have now received their second dose of a COVID vaccine. Daily updates on vaccines doses are available here:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations>

On 22 February, the Prime Minister announced a four-step roadmap to move England out of the current National Lockdown. The Government will take a cautious approach to easing restrictions which is guided by data. The measures set out for 8 March prioritise the return of face-to-face education in schools and colleges.

The full roadmap publication can be found at the following link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963491/COVID-19_Response_-_Spring_2021.pdf

Progression to the next step of the roadmap will be guided by data, and not dates. There will be at least five weeks between the steps in the roadmap: four weeks for the data to show the impact of the previous easing; and one week's notice for the public and businesses ahead of future changes.

Before taking each step, the Government will review the latest data on the impact of the previous step against four tests.

- i) The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- ii) Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- iii) Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- iv) Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

Healthy Weight Programme

[HLWS816]

Lord Bethell: My Hon. friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care) (Jo Churchill), has made the following statement:

Last year, in response to growing numbers across the country living with excess weight and obesity, the Government published our new strategy, 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives'. Worryingly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, evidence has shown that people with obesity are more likely to be admitted to hospital, to an intensive care unit and, sadly, to die compared to those of a healthy body weight. This is as well as being at a heightened risk of other diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

So, today I am delighted to announce that the Government is committing an additional £100 million over 2021/22 to support people living with obesity, to lose weight and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

More than £70 million will be invested into weight management services available through the NHS and Local Authorities. The funding announced today will mean up to 700,000 adults have access to support that can help them to lose weight, from access to digital apps, weight management groups or individual coaches, to specialist clinical support. This funding will also support GPs and other health professionals to help make weight management an integral part of routine care. It will encourage clinicians to have conversations about weight with their patients and enable them to refer patients to new services.

£30 million will be used to fund a variety of initiatives that will help individuals maintain a healthy weight. This includes providing access to the free NHS 12 week weight loss plan app and continuing the successful Better Health marketing campaign to motivate people to make healthier choices. Some of the funding will go towards improving services and tools to support healthy growth in early years and childhood. This will assist up to 6,000 children, and their families, to grow, develop and maintain a healthier weight whilst providing many more with advice on lifestyle changes to promote a healthy weight.

Evidence suggests that people who have access to structured weight management services are more successful in losing weight than people who try to manage alone. Losing weight reduces the risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some cancers. This funding will support a breadth of new services so that people can find an approach that works for them.

I am also very pleased to announce that Sir Keith Mills, who has pioneered reward programmes through Airmiles and Nectar points, has been appointed to advise on developing a new approach, 'Fit Miles', to supporting people to eat well and move more, using incentives and rewards.

Drawing on a wealth of experience and best practice from around the world, Sir Keith will support the Government to develop and test innovative approaches with public and private partners that use incentives and rewards to help people make healthier choices.

This additional funding will complement other policies announced in last year's obesity strategy that will change the wider environment and empower people to make the healthier choices. From restricting advertisements for food and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar, banning unhealthy promotions, consulting on alcohol calorie labelling, requiring large businesses to provide calorie information- these actions are helping us all make healthier choices.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working closely with NHS England and Improvement and Public

Health England ensure this programme of funding helps those who need it most. This funding will support people across the country achieve a healthier lifestyle. The Department of Health and Social Care will provide further detail on this programme of work in the coming weeks and months.

Home Office Funding: 2020-21

[HLWS813]

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

Net cash requirement for the year exceeds that provided by the Main Estimate, and is within that provided by the Supplementary Estimate. The Supplementary Estimate has not yet received Royal Assent.

The Contingencies Fund advance is required in order to meet commitments until the Supplementary Estimate receives Royal Assent, at which point the Home Office will be able to draw down the cash from the Consolidated Fund in the usual way, to repay the Contingencies Fund advance.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,250,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Home Office. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,250,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Magnox Decommissioning Contract: Holliday Inquiry

[HLWS812]

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

On 27 March 2017, the then Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP informed the House of the defective procurement between 2012 and 2014 of the contract for the clear up of the 12 Magnox sites, of the decision taken to settle with unsuccessful bidders following a successful legal challenge and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's decision to terminate the contract on the grounds that a material change had arisen to the specification on which bidders were invited in 2012 to tender.

The Secretary of State undertook to investigate fully and expose the reasons behind these failures so as to avoid the same mistakes being made in the future. In order to achieve this, he appointed Mr Steve Holliday to chair an independent, non-statutory inquiry. Mr Holliday's report, copies of which have been laid in the House today, delivers on that commitment.

I am grateful to Mr Holliday and his team for the comprehensive and rigorous work of this inquiry, which

is reflected in this report. The team has reviewed tens of thousands of documents to get to the truth, and it is only through this diligence that we can now confidently learn from the mistakes of the past.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is charged with the delivery of a range of challenging, complex and safety-critical activities, across Magnox and the other sites in its estate. Since it was established under the Energy Act 2004, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has driven a significant step-change in the decommissioning of the UK's legacy nuclear sites.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has already acted upon the Inquiry's interim findings that were published in October 2017 and significant improvements have been put in place. This includes strengthening of its commercial and legal capabilities and the introduction, with Government support, of a board-level Programme and Projects Committee. My Department has already taken action to improve its own oversight of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority by strengthening the capacity and capability of the team in BEIS that provides the sponsorship function and also by appointing a Director from UK Government Investments onto the Board as a Government shareholder representative.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will need to continue to develop to become a more efficient, effective and resilient organisation that continues to drive transformation on the ground and to deliver value for money for the taxpayer. I will be looking to the organisation's Chair, Chief Executive and the other Board members to demonstrate that, where they have not already done so, they will respond fully, effectively and in a timely manner to the findings of this report. There are also findings and recommendations for my Department and UK Government Investments as well as for Government more widely which we will consider with great care.

It is my intention that the Government and the NDA will publish formal responses to the Inquiry Chair's recommendations later this year.

State Pension Correction Exercise

[HLWS818]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman MP) has made the following Written Statement:

This statement provides an update to the House on uplifts to State Pension which has been a matter of Parliamentary interest since 2020.

We are committed to making sure that those people found to have been underpaid State Pension receive the money they are rightly entitled to.

We became aware of issues with State Pension underpayments in 2020 and we took immediate action to investigate the extent of the problem. This is an issue that dates back many years across successive Governments.

Rectifying these cases is a priority for the Department and we will do it as quickly as possible.

From August 2020 to January 2021 the Department carried out a number of complex scans of legacy computer systems that analysed many millions of State Pension records. The scans identified cases requiring further investigation.

These cases can be categorised into the following groups:

- People who are married or in a civil partnership who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016 and may be entitled to a Category BL uplift based on their partner's National Insurance contributions.

Following a change in the law in 2008, when their spouse became entitled to a State Pension, some people should have had their basic State Pension automatically reviewed and uplifted. Underpayments occurred in cases when this did not happen.

- People who have been widowed and their State Pension was not uplifted to include amounts they are entitled to inherit from their late husband, wife or civil partner.
- People who have not been paid Category D State Pension uplift as they should have been from age 80.

For each group of individuals affected, DWP IT systems produce an electronic prompt to consider if an individual's State Pension amount should be increased. The prompt requires DWP staff to take further manual action and, in some cases, this did not take place.

Following the scan activity, the Department formally commenced a correction exercise on 11 January 2021, clerically examining each of the cases identified through the scans. We have already reallocated a number of staff onto this work and are exploring urgently what else we can do to speed up the process.

Given the complexity of the work, it can take time to assess the most complex cases. This work involves a thorough examination of the State Pension payments, and consideration of any changes to the individual's circumstances since the original State Pension award was made, to establish if an underpayment has occurred.

Where underpayments are identified, the Department will contact the individual to inform them of the changes to their State Pension amount and of any arrears payment they will receive in accordance with the law.

The Department's current estimate of the total costs of repaying these arrears is £2.7bn. There will also be increased expenditure on corrected live cases of around £90m per year on average in the coming years. This estimate is based on the system scans and analysis of DWP administrative data. As more information becomes available from the correction exercise, we will refine our estimates.

In addition to the formal correction exercise, the Department is continuing to review thoroughly all State Pension records where an individual has contacted the Pension Service.

The Government is fully committed to ensuring that any historical errors, unaddressed by previous Governments, are put right as quickly as possible.

I will update Parliament as the correction exercise progresses.

Trade and Agriculture Commission Report

[HLWS814]

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

Last year, the Government established the independent Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC) to place UK farming at the heart of our trade policy.

Today the Commission publishes its advisory report on trade and agriculture. The report makes recommendations covering:

- The strong action needed to maximise export promotion opportunities for the agri-food sector.
- The UK leadership required at the WTO to change international framework rules on trade and standards, to tackle global issues like climate change and environmental degradation.
- The UK promoting free and fair trade whilst maintaining high standards in areas such as animal welfare, ethical standards, and the environment.
- The UK being particularly supportive of developing countries to access the full benefits of the global trading system.

- Welcoming the statutory Trade and Agriculture Commission to help uphold effective scrutiny of trade deals.

In compiling this advisory report, the Commission sought evidence from trade and agriculture experts from across our four nations, including from local farmers, businesses, the National Farmers' Unions and Parliamentarians.

I am grateful to all those who contributed evidence and expertise during this challenging time. I thank the chair, Tim Smith, and all Commission members for delivering this incisive advisory report and I look forward to carefully considering the recommendations and will respond in due course.

To continue the excellent work that the Commission has started, we are now putting the Commission onto a statutory footing and evolving its role to boost scrutiny of new free trade deals. We will seek to appoint new members in due course.

In addition, last week I launched our Open Doors campaign to help farmers and producers take advantage of the 64 trade deals we have done to date, to sell more around the world including fast-growing markets in the Americas and Asia Pacific.

A copy of the advisory report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and has been published on GOV.UK.

Written Answers

Thursday, 4 March 2021

Armed Forces: Cadets

Asked by **Lord De Mauley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the cadet forces provide opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds following the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL13392]

Baroness Goldie: With around 3,500 individual cadet units across the UK, many in less affluent areas, they reflect the communities in which they are located. The increase in the number of cadet units in schools under the Government's joint Ministry of Defence and Department for Education Cadet Expansion Programme, targeted in less affluent areas, has resulted in more children from disadvantaged backgrounds having access to the benefits of the cadet experience.

All cadets, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, will benefit from the greater opportunities that returning to face-to-face activity offers. Research shows that taking part in the cadet forces develops key attributes in young people. The return to face-to-face activity will also include re-establishing education packages through the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation, vocational qualifications which we know benefit many from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suspension in arms sales to Saudi Arabia for offensive use in Yemen by the government of the United States; and what plans they have to implement a similar suspension in arms sales. [HL13362]

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.

Asked by **Lord Judd**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to stop granting export licences for the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia. [HL13457]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and will continue to assess all export licences in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'). HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria, including if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

In addition, HM Government is able to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require, and this is done in line with the Consolidated Criteria.

Army: Deployment

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the British Army last deployed a largely fully formed and supported division for manoeuvre and deployment training; and when it next plans to conduct an exercise of this scale in order (1) to test the UK's ability and identify any weaknesses, (2) to reassure allies, and (3) to deter potential opponents. [HL13345]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lord to the previous replies given by my noble friend the right hon Earl Howe (Minister of State, Ministry of Defence) to question HL5012 answered on 6 February 2017 and Oral question (volume 794, column 2118) answered on 8 January 2019.

The Army continues to have a sophisticated exercise programme in place to ensure that it is trained and ready to operate at the divisional level. This includes training with Allies and partners. The UK are due to take part in Exercise WARFIGHTER in March 2021, in which HQ 3 (UK) Division will deploy to the US as part of III (US) Corps.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Army: Deployment [Hansard Extracts HL 5012, HL 4220.docx]

Army: Divisional Manoeuvre and Deployment Training [Hansard Extract 8 January 2019.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-02-22/HL13345>

Asthma: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of severe asthma patients who were unaware of their diagnosis receiving a letter stating that they should shield, what steps they are taking to ensure that patients with severe asthma receive their diagnosis. [HL13471]

Lord Bethell: Patients added to the shielding list will be under the care of a clinician for their asthma and therefore aware of their diagnosis.

Patients with severe asthma were identified as being (clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) by two routes. An algorithm was used to identify patients who received high levels of certain asthma medication. Inpatients were also directly added to the CEV list by a clinician in either primary or secondary care following the shielding advice for those with severe respiratory conditions, which was published by the British Thoracic Society in April 2020.

Asthma: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Asthma UK Living in limbo, the scale of unmet need in difficult and severe asthma, published in 2019, which found that four out of five severe asthma patients are not referred to specialists for treatment. [HL13472]

Lord Bethell: The UK Severe Asthma Registry (UKSAR) has gone from having less than 2000 patients registered to over 8000 patients as a result of work on the asthma pathway. Severe asthma services will continue to participate in the NHS England and Improvement Accelerated Access Collaborative programme to deliver the best healthcare to severe asthma patients. The UKSAR is the world's largest national severe asthma registry and provides novel insights across a range of research areas as well as enabling annual reporting on performance outcomes for severe asthma services.

Care Homes: Visits

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will announce a timetable for the re-introduction of close contact care home visits in England. [HL13588]

Lord Bethell: New visiting arrangements will start on 8 March. From then, every care home resident will be able to nominate one named person who can have regular, indoor visits. Those with highest care needs can also nominate an 'essential family carer'.

We will continue to look carefully at the latest data and set out plans for the next phase of visits for people in residential care.

China: Military Equipment

Asked by *Lord Tunnicliffe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) what, items of second-hand Chinese equipment have been purchased by the Ministry of Defence in each year since 2015. [HL13526]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence has not purchased any second-hand Chinese manufactured equipment since 2015.

I refer the noble Lord to the previous replies given by my hon. Friend, Jeremy Quin MP (Minister of State,

Ministry of Defence) to Questions 141933, answered on 27 January 2021, and 134370, answered on 13 January 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

134370 - China; Military Aircraft [134370 - China - Military Aircraft.docx]

141933 - AWACS; Procurement [141933 - AWACS Procurement.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-02-22/HL13526>

Coronavirus: Hotels

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients recovering from Covid-19 have been discharged from hospitals to hotels. [HL12567]

Lord Bethell: This data is not held centrally. NHS England and NHS Improvement will be evaluating the use of this approach over the coming weeks.

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the total cost to date of discharging patients recovering from Covid-19 from hospitals to hotels. [HL12570]

Lord Bethell: This data is not held centrally. NHS England and NHS Improvement will be evaluating the use of this approach over the coming weeks.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allocate frontline funeral workers key worker or equivalent status to enable them access to regular Covid-19 testing. [HL10330]

Lord Bethell: It is for local authorities to decide where to introduce testing in their areas and which cohorts testing will cover, including funeral workers. In addition to local authorities, NHS Test and Trace will also work closely with other Government departments to increase workplace testing for medium and large organisations within their sectors.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include family members of care home residents in Category 6 of their Covid-19 vaccination first phase priority groups. [HL12996]

Lord Bethell: The Government has no current plans to revise the phase one priority groups to include all family members of care home residents. Family members and

other care home visitors will continue to be prioritised following the wider Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advice.

Coronavirus: Ventilation

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have commissioned to determine the potential risks to patients and healthcare workers of (1) short-range, and (2) long-range, aerosol transmission of Covid-19 in health and care premises. [HL13680]

Lord Bethell: The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have jointly commissioned research studies to determine the potential risk to patients and staff from aerosol transmission of Covid-19 and investigate how to mitigate those risks. This includes funding of £433,000 to the AERATOR study at the University of Bristol to investigate aerosolization of Covid-19 and transmission risk at short range from medical procedures.

Additionally, Public Health England have been awarded £337,000 to investigate environmental and airborne transmission routes of Covid-19 including in healthcare settings.

Dementia: Drugs

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported increase in the prescription of anti-psychotic medication in the care of people with dementia. [HL13587]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of antipsychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to have regular conversations with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for any trends.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also disseminated good practices and resources to support the management of Covid-19 for people with dementia through the NHS Futures Collaboration Platform, fortnightly forums and webinars with Dementia Clinical Networks across England.

Dentistry: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what priority have (1) NHS dentists, (2) NHS dental staff, (3) non-NHS dentists, and (4) non-NHS dental staff, been given for access to Covid-19 vaccinations. [HL11918]

Lord Bethell: All frontline health and social care staff, including dentists and dental staff, involved in direct patient care are included in phase one of the Covid-19 vaccine deployment. The definition of health and social care staff covers those delivering National Health Service or privately funded care.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many public charging points for electric vehicles are operational in each region in England; and of these, how many (1) are able to charge all models of electric vehicle licensed for UK roads, (2) are located in motorway service stations, and (3) provide rapid charging to electric vehicles. [HL13364]

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many motorway service stations (1) have, and (2) do not have, electric charging points for electric vehicles in England. [HL13365]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As of March 2020, there are 115 motorway service areas (MSAs) in England. Of these, 112 have at least one electric vehicle (EV) charging device.

The number of public charging devices in each region in England are presented in the table below. Figures are from 4 January 2021.

Region	Total Public Charging Devices	Charge all models of EVs ¹	Rapid charging devices ²
East Midlands	1,090	1,068	261
East of England	1,289	1,229	300
London	6,155	6,090	515
North East	820	812	172
North West	1,410	1,372	323
South East	2,869	2,721	636
South West	1,555	1,499	344
West Midlands	1,215	1,125	352
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,056	1,028	311
England Total	17,459	16,944	3,214

i) Tesla Supercharger devices are not counted as they cannot be used by other makes of EV.

ii) Rapid charging devices are defined as at 43kW and above and include Tesla Supercharger devices, which is consistent with DfT official statistics. All currently operational rapid devices can be used on any vehicle with rapid-charging capability.

The number of public charging devices located at MSAs in each region in England are presented in the table below. Figures are from March 2020.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Located at MSAs excluding Tesla Superchargers</i>	<i>Located at MSAs - Tesla Superchargers only (March</i>
East Midlands	19	0
East of England	17	16
London	8	0
North East	5	0
North West	41	28
South East	55	50
South West	25	16
West Midlands	31	52
Yorkshire and The Humber	14	8
England Total	215	170

EU Countries: Musicians

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with the Vice-President of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations on reports of concerns UK musicians have about touring within the EU. [HL13658]

Baroness Barran: In negotiations with the EU, the UK proposed expanding a list of activities for Short Term Business Visitors to cover musicians, artists and their accompanying staff. This would have enabled musicians, artists and support staff to tour and perform in the EU without needing work-permits. We regret that the EU rejected our proposals, but there is scope to return to this issue in the future should the EU change its mind.

UK performers and artists are of course still able to tour and perform in the EU, and vice versa. However, they will be required to check domestic immigration rules for each Member State in which they intend to tour. This is because, while some Member States may allow paid performances without a visa or work permit, others will require musicians, artists and other creative professionals to obtain a visa or work permit, in the same way that they are required for other international artists.

We understand the concerns of the sector regarding the new arrangements and we are committed to supporting them as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes. The DCMS-led working group on creative and cultural touring, which involves sector representatives and other key government departments, is looking at the issues and options to help the sectors resume touring with ease as soon as it is safe to do so.

Fossil Fuels: Finance

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to continue (1) to provide export finance support to, and (2) to make investments in, overseas fossil fuel projects in states which do not have long-term decarbonisation plans in line with the UN Paris Agreement. [HL13507]

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to approve (1) investments, (2) loans, or (3) loan guarantees, for natural gas projects in states which do not have long-term decarbonisation plans. [HL13508]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: On 12 December 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the British government will no longer provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, apart from a small number of tightly-bound exceptions that are still to be determined. The date of implementation of the new policy will be determined following the consultation that was launched on the same day.

Gambling

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the study in the Nature Human Behaviour journal The association between gambling and financial, social and health outcomes in big financial data, published on 4 February, that an individual is more likely to become a heavy gambler in a period of six months than to go from heavy gambling to abstention; and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of existing gambling treatment programmes. [HL13498]

Lord Bethell: We have made no such assessment. Public Health England is currently undertaking an evidence review on the prevalence, determinants and harms associated with gambling, and the social and economic burden of gambling-related harms. The review is expected to be completed in March 2021.

The NHS Long Term Plan includes a commitment to open 15 specialist problem gambling clinics by 2023/24. As these services expand, NHS England will continue to explore how to make best use of existing treatment models to help problem gamblers.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Wendover

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what independent assessment has been made of the impact of the HS2 Phase One cut-and-cover tunnel design at Wendover on (1) the sustainability of the Weston Turville Site of Special Scientific Interest, (2) the water flow in the

Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, and (3) flood risk to habitations at (a) Stoke Mandeville, and (b) Aylesbury. [[HL13566](#)]

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what independent assessment has been made of the management of the (1) water flow, (2) settlement, and (3) distribution, of the cut-and-cover tunnel on HS2 Phase One at Wendover; and whether construction of the tunnel will require additional land take. [[HL13567](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Thorough assessments of a range of potential impacts from the HS2 Phase One green tunnel at Wendover continue to be made and assured by HS2 Ltd's contractors. These utilise approaches such as numerical groundwater modelling, fluvial modelling and purpose-designed pumping tests in order to provide the most accurate information about water movement in this area and any potential for impact from the construction of the railway.

These assessments, and the ongoing liaison with independent experts from the Environment Agency (with respect to water and flood risks), the Canal and River Trust (with respect to the Grand Union Canal) and Natural England (with respect to Weston Turville Site of Special Scientific Interest), will continue to inform the detailed design of the railway and requirements for monitoring and mitigation. Works involving water courses, groundwater and/or flood risks are then subject to independent approval by the Environment Agency.

There is no further land outside of HS2 Phase One Act limits needed for construction of the Wendover green tunnel.

Liothyronine

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 17 February (HL13177), whether an intervention under the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 has taken place to control the cost of Liothyronine (T3); and if not, why not. [[HL13668](#)]

Lord Bethell: No such intervention has taken place. Several marketing authorisations have been granted for liothyronine since 2016 and the reimbursement price has been reducing as a direct response to more competition in the market.

Meat: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) officials, and (2) ministers, in the Northern Ireland Executive Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs about the recent award of a three-year contract to supply Meat Hygiene Inspectors to assist Official Veterinarians in

Northern Ireland; and what contingency plans they have put in place in the event of a default on this contract. [[HL13495](#)]

Lord Bethell: As part of a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in relation to official controls, the Food Standards Agency has ongoing discussions with DAERA about resourcing at official level.

DAERA have taken forward a recruit-to-train project, recruiting staff as trainee meat inspectors. The agency contract is to secure agency workers to maintain continued delivery of official controls until such time as these trainees become fully qualified.

DAERA have established a group of vets and ex-meat inspectors in the Department who can be called upon to carry out meat inspection duties as a contingency in the event that the current contract is unable to deliver.

NHS: Dental Services

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the report by Healthwatch What people are telling us, published on 9 December 2020, which found that people are struggling to access NHS dentistry, (2) the reported increase in the sale of at-home dental kits by Boots in the last three months of 2020, and (3) British Dental Association analysis that dentists have provided around 19 million fewer treatments in England since March 2020 compared to the same period last year; and what plans they have to address these issues. [[HL13047](#)]

Lord Bethell: No such assessment has been made.

Passenger Ships: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have identified a clear timeline for allowing the cruise industry to restart. [[HL13538](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Prime Minister set out the Roadmap out of lockdown on 22 February which will take place over four steps. The Roadmap includes plans for a successor to the Global Travel Taskforce, which will consider a safe and sustainable return to international travel.

The timelines for international cruise restart will be determined through the Taskforce, which will report on 12 April. The report's recommendations will be aimed at facilitating a return to international travel as soon as is possible, while still managing risk from imported cases and variants of concern. Following that, the Government will determine when international travel should resume, which will be no earlier than 17 May.

We will seek to align domestic cruises with the resumption of wider domestic tourism and indoor hospitality.

Peers: Allowances

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how much was paid to Members of the House of Lords in financial support (excluding travel costs) in each month during 2020. [HL13009]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The total amount of financial support (excluding travel costs) paid to Members of the House of Lords in each month during 2020 was as follows:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Amount £000s</i>
January 2020	2,135
February 2020	1,643
March 2020	1,385
April 2020	80
May 2020	226
June 2020	711
July 2020	539
August 2020	0
September 2020	1,471
October 2020	1,538
November 2020	1,478
December 2020	1,112

Railways: North of England

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the Integrated Rail Plan for the North of England. [HL13416]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department intends to publish the IRP in early 2021.

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have asked Transport for the North to delay the publication of their business case for (1) a high-speed railway route between Hull and Liverpool, or (2) part of that route; and, if so, why. [HL13417]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has asked Transport for the North to submit the Strategic Outline Case for Northern Powerhouse Rail after the Integrated Rail Plan is published. A Strategic Outline Case which is consistent with the Government's policy and funding framework, to be set out in the Integrated Rail Plan, will allow a more rapid alignment around single route options and quicker progress than envisaged in previous plans.

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations about their levelling up agenda. [HL13375]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK Government is committed to levelling up all regions and nations of the UK. We regularly work and engage with representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the devolved administrations on a wide range of topics, including the levelling up agenda.

Regional Planning and Development: Finance

Asked by *Baroness Valentine*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the relationship between (1) the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, (2) the Stronger Towns Fund, and (3) the Levelling Up Fund. [HL13627]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is committed to levelling up opportunities across the UK, which we will deliver by boosting jobs, wages and prospects for all communities so that everybody gets the same access to opportunities in life. The recent Spending Review confirmed investment to support this agenda, including £220m in 21/22 to support local areas across the UK to pilot programmes and prepare for the introduction for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; £621m in 21/22 to regenerate towns through the Towns Fund (which includes both the 'Stronger Towns Fund' and the Future High Streets Fund); and £4.8bn for the UK-wide Levelling Up fund to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities.

Shipping: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Scott of Needham Market*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements, if any, are being made to provide Covid-19 vaccinations to seafarers; and what steps, if any, are being taken to deliver such a vaccination programme through the International Maritime Organization. [HL13501]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: While the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends prioritisation for vaccination rest on medical grounds, rather than occupation alone, the Government is considering the vital role of seafarers in the movement of trade in and out of the UK.

Test and Trace Support Payment

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 19 November

(HL9485), why parents of children who have to self-isolate because of contact with someone outside their household who has tested positive are not eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment when they also have to self-isolate; and whether there are any plans to extend that payment to parents in that situation. [HL11308]

Lord Bethell: The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is for people on low incomes who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS Covid-19 app, either because they have tested positive or because they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive. We have worked closely with local authorities to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme and have listened to feedback from charities and support groups. We are now extending the scheme to the summer and are expanding eligibility to cover parents and guardians who have to take time off work to care for a child who is self-isolating.

Tobacco: Marketing

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prevent tobacco companies using (1) social media influencers, and (2) other media, to promote non-combustible nicotine products. [HL13561]

Lord Bethell: The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 covers the prohibition of tobacco advertising. The advertising of e-cigarettes is covered under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR).

The Department expects social media platforms to comply with the above regulations in the United

Kingdom. The Advertising Standards Authority are responsible for dealing with complaints around tobacco and e-cigarette advertising.

The Department is currently undertaking a post implementation review of TRPR to assess if the regulations have met their objectives. A public consultation is currently open for responses, and provides an opportunity for comments to be made on this legislation.

Trade Bill 2019-21

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) Her Majesty The Queen, (2) His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, or (3) their representatives, relating to their Consent to the Trade Bill; what changes were made to the Bill as a result of any such discussions; and for what purpose were such changes made. [HL13563]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Queen's Consent is required for provisions affecting the Royal Prerogative, as well as the hereditary revenues, the Duchy of Lancaster or the Duchy of Cornwall, and the personal property or personal interests of the Crown.

Foreign affairs including trade have historically been carried out through the Royal Prerogative. Queen's Consent was sought for the provisions of the Trade Bill insofar as they affected the Royal Prerogative.

No changes were made to the Bill as a result of the process of obtaining Queen's consent.

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