

**Session 2019-21
No. 197**



**Tuesday
9 March 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers.....8

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

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

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

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

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

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2021

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

Written Statements

Tuesday, 9 March 2021

Covid-19: Children's Social Care

[HLWS828]

Baroness Berridge: My honourable friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Vicky Ford) has today made the following statement:

Extension of temporary regulations to support children's social care during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government has consistently put protecting the most vulnerable at the forefront of our actions. The duties to our most vulnerable children, which are set out in primary legislation, all remain in place. This statutory framework enables the most effective support and protection to children and their families, by local authorities, local safeguarding partners and other services. However, the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, has required the Government to introduce a number of amendments to secondary legislation to ensure that children and families can be supported in the best way possible despite the restrictions in place across society.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Government introduced a series of temporary changes to the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations to support children's social care services. These changes provided flexibilities to local authorities and other children's social care settings, in the event that services suffered from high levels of staff absence or an increased need for services supporting vulnerable children. We made no amendments to primary legislation, and the vast majority of statutory duties in secondary legislation remained unchanged.

Over the summer we reviewed these flexibilities and decided that only a small number continued to be needed. Following a consultation, a second set of regulations with fewer flexibilities – the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations – came into force in September 2020. These are due to lapse on 31 March 2021.

The extraordinary measures the Government has taken over the last year means that we are now in a much better position to ease the restrictions that everyone has faced in the coming months. However, the challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic remain significant and Government believes that there may be circumstances in which some services continue to face specific and exceptional challenges into Spring/Summer. As more children are seen by schools, and national restrictions ease further and hitherto hidden harms may come to light, we must be prepared for the potential additional demands that may still be placed on services.

We therefore went out to public consultation on 9 February to seek views on whether to extend all the existing flexibilities for a further six months, up to September 2021, and whether to amend arrangements for healthcare assessments in adoption. This statement updates the House on the outcome of that consultation.

The consultation closed on 28 February and a total of 212 responses were received. Officials engaged with stakeholders, including local authorities, charities, children's rights organisations and other government departments and captured the views of children and young people directly.

The majority of respondents agreed with our proposals to extend the existing flexibilities in relation to virtual visits, medical reports (for fostering and adoption) and the minimum frequency of Ofsted inspections of children's social care provision. I am therefore today laying regulations before the House to that effect. This means that:

- General Practitioners and other health professionals will continue to be given more time to provide information to support the process of approving much needed potential adopters and foster carers. This does not remove the requirement for medical reports to be provided before the child is placed with the foster parent or adoptive parent, but allows some flexibility as to when in the process the report is required.

- Social workers will continue to be able to carry out virtual, rather than face-to face visits in some limited circumstances. The regulations and guidance are clear that virtual visits should only happen when face to face visits would be contrary to public health advice, or where face to face visits would otherwise not be reasonably practicable as a result of coronavirus.

- The requirement for a minimum frequency of Ofsted inspections for all children's social care providers will continue to be suspended for six months, until 30 September 2021. Extending the flexibility will enable Ofsted to use their resources under existing inspection powers to carry out inspections to as many providers as possible, prioritised on a risk-assessed basis. It is important to note that extending this flexibility does not prevent Ofsted from inspecting services or change their inspection powers, it only affects the frequency with which they must inspect.

Alongside the regulations, I am today publishing the Government's response to the consultation, setting out more detail on each flexibility, the rationale for our approach and the views received.

As part of the consultation, we also asked for views on two new proposals in relation to adoption: to allow medical reports to be completed by other qualified medical professionals and to remove the requirement for a full medical examination. While a majority agreed with the first proposal, there were a greater number who disagreed with the second proposal, and concerns were raised in relation to safeguarding. This is an area on which the Government places paramount importance and

we therefore want to give this further reflection. We are therefore not proceeding with these additional flexibilities at this time.

Protecting vulnerable children has been at the heart of the Government's response to the virus. These regulations formed part of that response, alongside keeping schools and other settings open for vulnerable children, substantial additional investment in local authority services and additional support direct to children, young people, and their families. The Government is clear that these flexibilities will only remain in place for as long as they are needed and there currently are no plans to extend them beyond 30 September 2021. Their use will continue to be monitored and they will be reviewed in line with the Government roadmap to recovery. Our [guidance](#) sets out clear safeguards about how and when they should be used.

Since the introduction of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 we have kept the flexibilities under constant review. Data for the period from 25 September to 24 November 2020 suggested that over half of local authorities were using both the existing temporary flexibilities (to enable virtual visits and to allow greater time to provide a medical report for a prospective foster carer or adopter). Out of 113 LAs that we had spoken to over 90 LAs had made use of the regulations. The most used related to virtual engagement with children and families – this had often been used alongside face-to-face visits and, in some cases, this has resulted in greater levels of contact between children, young people, parents, and carers – and improved engagement from some young people. We will continue to monitor the usage of the flexibilities through monitoring information collected from the Regional Educational and Care Teams and delivery partners.

Medical Reports

In order to become a foster carer or adoptive parent, one needs to provide a medical report from a General Practitioner. As restrictions are eased and schools return, we expect that there may be more children needing care than is usual, and therefore there will be a higher need for potential adopters and foster carers. Our National Health Service (NHS) continues to face unprecedented challenges during the ongoing pressure from the pandemic. This is unlikely to ease for some time, even when the country enters a period of recovery. Therefore, I am minded to extend the amendments that allow more time for General Practitioners and other health professionals to provide information to support the process of approving much needed potential adopters and foster carers. This does not remove the requirement for medical reports to be provided but moves the time during the process that the report must be provided before the child is placed with the foster parent or adoptive parent.

Virtual Visits

We must be able to keep essential services, such as social worker visits, operating during any local lockdowns, and in cases where households are being required to self-isolate due to a case, or suspected case, of

COVID-19, or contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, in line with medical advice from the NHS test and trace service. The Government recognises that visits by social workers to look after children provide important opportunities to consider children and young people's safety and wellbeing and that virtual visits may not always provide the best conditions. We have been clear in the consultation and in our guidance that visits should happen, whenever possible, face to face. The regulations and guidance explicitly provide that virtual visits should only happen when face to face visits would be contrary to public health advice, or where face to face visits would otherwise not be reasonably practicable as a result of coronavirus.

The Government also recognises the importance of ensuring that social workers are well equipped to use virtual visits effectively. Therefore, I am suggesting that it is appropriate to continue to enable visits in these situations to happen virtually. However, in all other situations I would expect face to face visits to take place.

Ofsted inspections of children's social care providers

The Government and Ofsted are keen that routine inspections of children's social care providers are resumed as soon as it is safe to do so. At present, Ofsted inspection frequency cycles are suspended due to COVID-19, although it is continuing to register social care providers and managers, and to monitor children's homes where there are safeguarding concerns. Therefore, I am minded to extend the suspension of the requirement for a minimum frequency of Ofsted inspections for all children's social care providers to be extended for six months, until 30 September 2021. Extending the flexibility will enable Ofsted to use their resources under existing inspection powers to carry out inspections to as many providers as possible, prioritised on a risk-assessed basis.

It is important to note that extending this flexibility does not prevent Ofsted from inspecting services or change their inspection powers, it only affects the frequency with which they must inspect. During the COVID-19 pandemic Ofsted is aiming to restart graded inspections from April although they will balance this with the nature and extent of any COVID-19 restrictions that might be in place moving into the 2021-22 inspection year.

Throughout this pandemic, social workers, charities, and others working to support our most vulnerable children and families have worked tirelessly to ensure that they continue to receive the support they need. I would like to place on record my personal gratitude, and that of the whole Government, for everything they have done and continue to do. I would also like to acknowledge the extremely difficult circumstances many children and families have faced during this pandemic.

Protecting vulnerable children remains our top priority, as it does for local authorities and children's social care providers across the country. As the country begins to return to a more normal way of life, it is absolutely right that this also applies to children's social care.

Covid-19: Industrial Development Act 1982

[HLWS823]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as coronavirus-related under the Coronavirus Act. This statement fulfils that purpose.

The statement also includes a report of the movement in contingent liability during the quarter. Hon. Members will wish to note that measures such as Local Authority grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and tax measures such as the suspension of Business Rates are not provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and hence are not included below.

This report covers the third quarter of 2020, from 1 July to 30 September 2020, in accordance with the Coronavirus Act. The Written Ministerial Statement covering the second quarter of 2020 was published on 18 January 2021.

Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of assistance designated as Coronavirus related provided in each relevant quarter. In the period from 1 July to 30 September 2020, the following expenditures were incurred:

Actual expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 1 July – 30 September 2020	£647,308,581
---	--------------

All expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 25 March 2020	£694,945,581
---	--------------

Expenditure by Department

Actual expenditure of assistance provided by:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	£694,908,581
---	--------------

Competition Appeal Tribunal	£37,000
-----------------------------	---------

Contingent liability under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 1 July – 30 September 2020	£18,985,945,140
---	-----------------

All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020

£49,442,128,910

National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists

[HLWS824]

Baroness Barran: My Right Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Media and Data, Mr John Whittingdale MP, has made the following Statement:

Today, the government will publish the UK's first National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists. This ambitious document is intended to ensure that journalists operating in the UK can do so free from abuse, violence and threats of harm. This government is committed to a free and open media. In order to protect this, journalists must be free to carry out their vital roles free from threats and violence. Threats to journalists' safety are not just threats to individuals - such threats lead to journalists leaving the profession, and to self-censorship of those that remain. Without action in this area, there will be less challenge to those in power, and weaker democracy. This work is critical in its own right, and it will also serve to support the ongoing work by the Government to tackle intimidation in public life. An update on this is also being published today.

The Plan has been produced by members of the National Committee for Safety of Journalists, established in 2020, chaired by relevant Home Office and DCMS ministers, and comprising representatives of police and prosecutors from across the UK, as well as publishers, broadcasters, groups representing journalists and non governmental organisations.

It focuses on five key areas: increasing our understanding of the problem; enhancing the criminal justice system response in tackling crimes against journalists; supporting journalists and their employers to build the resources they need to protect personal safety; and helping online platforms to tackle the wider issue of online abuse, and improving public recognition of the value of journalists. It makes a range of commitments from government, law enforcement agencies and industry. These include a plan to launch a call for evidence into the scale of the threats facing journalists, the police working with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) to provide training on police operations for journalists and the provision of guidance to help journalists understand the law in this area by the Media Lawyers Association.

The Committee will hold its members to account for the delivery of these commitments while the Action Plan and its impact will be reviewed regularly and updated if and when appropriate.

A copy of the Action Plan will be placed in the House Libraries.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Action Plan [National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-03-09/HLWS824/>

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Home Office Measures

[HLWS826]

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

This Government was elected on a clear manifesto commitment to make our country safer. This means backing our police and preventing and cutting crime.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, introduced today, will do this by: equipping police officers with the powers and tools they need to keep themselves and all of us safe; putting the Police Covenant into law; tackling unauthorised traveller encampments; requiring schools, police, councils and health authorities to work together through Violence Reduction Units to prevent serious crime; and empowering the police by a new court order to target known knife carriers, making it easier for officers to stop and search those convicted of knife crime.

This joint Bill also contains a number of Ministry of Justice-led measures, set out in a written ministerial statement by the Lord Chancellor.

The Home Office-led measures in the Bill will:

- a) Establish a duty on the Home Secretary to publish an annual report on the work undertaken against delivery of the Police Covenant (the response to our consultation was published on 8 September 2020 (HCWS438));
- b) Enable special constables to join the Police Federation of England and Wales;
- c) Amend the definitions of dangerous and careless driving in road traffic legislation so that the skills and training of police officers can be taken into account should there be any subsequent investigations into their actions (the response to our consultation was published on 2 May 2019 (HCWS1536));
- d) Introduce a new duty on specified authorities and bodies delivering public services to collaborate with each other to prevent and reduce serious violence (the response to our consultation was published on 15 July 2019 (HCWS1721));
- e) Place a duty on the relevant chief officer of police, local authority and clinical commissioning group or local health board to undertake a homicide review of the circumstances of the death of a person aged 18 or over which involved an offensive weapon;
- f) Reform pre-charge bail to better protect vulnerable victims and witnesses (the response to our consultation was published on 14 January 2021 (HCWS708));

g) Establish a statutory framework for the extraction of information from digital devices for the purposes of the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of crime, safeguarding purposes and the purposes of investigating deaths;

h) Extend the offence of arranging or facilitating the commission of a child sex offence to cover a wider range of preparatory conduct in respect of sex offences committed against children under 13;

i) Amend the Crime (Overseas Production Orders) Act 2019 to ensure that it operates effectively to give the police and prosecutors the power to obtain faster access to electronic data held overseas;

j) Streamline the police powers to require a convicted person to attend a police station for the purposes of taking their fingerprints, non-intimate samples and photographs;

k) Confer powers on the police to obtain information about the location of human remains where there is no on-going criminal investigation;

l) Strengthen police powers to tackle non-violent protests that have a significant disruptive effect on the public or on access to Parliament;

m) Strengthen police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments, where trespassers cause distress and misery to local communities and businesses (the response to our consultation was being published on 8 March 2021 (HCWS826));

n) Place on a statutory footing the police's powers to charge for the provision of retraining courses for those admitting to low-level driving offences and clarify their powers to charge for the removal of abandoned vehicles or those causing an obstruction;

o) Introduce Serious Violence Reduction Orders to confer on the police new targeted stop and search powers to tackle knife crime offenders (the response to the consultation is being published today – see below);

p) Strengthen the management of sex offenders, including by enabling positive obligations and electronic monitoring requirements to be imposed on those who pose a risk through Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders;

q) Strengthen the management of terrorism risk offenders on licence in the community by introducing new police powers of premises and personal search and an urgent power of arrest, implementing recommendations made by Jonathan Hall QC, following his independent review of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) (HCWS686).

To support the parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, we are publishing on gov.uk the following documents:

- Overarching Impact Assessment covering the Home Office and two Department for Transport measures;
- Impact Assessment on the reforms to pre-charge bail;
- Impact Assessment on the new serious violence duty;
- Delegated Powers memorandum;
- ECHR memorandum; and

- Fact sheets.

Serious Violence Reduction Orders

Today we are also publishing the Government's response to the consultation on Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs) which ran from 14 September to 8 November 2020. We have received responses from the public, police, charities and other organisations and I am grateful to all those who provided responses.

SVROs are being introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. SVROs will help the police to tackle knife crime by giving them additional powers to stop and search adults convicted of knife and offensive weapons offences. The orders, one of the tools that the police will be able to use as part of a wider approach to reducing serious violence and saving young lives, are intended to be a powerful deterrent. They will send a clear signal to offenders that if they persist in carrying knives, that they will be caught. Every offender issued with a SVRO will face an increased likelihood of being stopped by the police and if they continue to carry weapons, they will be sent back to prison or brought before the court, where they can expect to receive an immediate custodial sentence under the existing "two strikes" legislation brought by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015. Targeted use of stop and search, as part of a wider approach to intervene and support offenders, aims to help to safeguard those communities and individuals most at risk. To ensure that SVROs operate as effectively as possible, we will pilot SVROs in one or more police forces before a decision is made on national roll out.

The response to the consultation will be available at gov.uk. A copy will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Ministry of Justice Measures

[HLWS827]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland) has made the following Written Statement:

"This government was elected on a clear manifesto commitment to make our country safer. This means toughening sentences for the worst crimes and bringing offenders to justice swiftly through an efficient court system.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, introduced today, will do this by: introducing tougher sentencing for the worst offenders and ending automatic halfway release from prison for serious crimes; creating robust and effective community sentences; enabling the trialling of secure schools; increasing the use of technology in courts; and improving employment opportunities for ex-offenders. This joint Bill also contains a number of Home Office-led measures, set out in a written statement by the Home Secretary.

The Ministry of Justice-led measures in the Bill will:

- 1) Deliver on commitments made in the Sentencing White Paper, '[A Smarter Approach to Sentencing](#)', announced to the House on [16 September 2020](#), which will reform the sentencing and release framework, so that we have a system that takes account of the true nature of crimes and protects the public from harm.
- 2) Ensure serious criminals spend longer in custody, including: ending the automatic halfway release point from prison for an additional cohort of serious sexual and violent offenders; making a Whole Life Order the starting point for the premeditated murder of a child; instead of a life sentence with the possibility of Parole Board release after the minimum term is served; and preventing the automatic early release of prisoners who become of significant public protection concern while in custody.
- 3) Make community sentences more effective so that they offer an appropriate level of punishment and address the underlying drivers of offending, including: piloting a problem-solving court approach for certain community and suspended sentence orders; improving national consistency for adult Out Of Court Disposals; and extending the use of Electronic Monitoring.
- 4) Reduce the time periods after which some criminal sentences become spent, aiding rehabilitation by helping offenders to move on with their lives.
- 5) Deliver on the government's longstanding commitment to increase the maximum penalties for causing death by dangerous driving and for causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drinks or drugs. It will also introduce a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving.
- 6) Double the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker from 12 months to two years to ensure that the courts have the necessary powers to deal effectively with offenders who use violence against emergency workers.
- 7) Strengthen alternatives to custody for children who have offended which promote rehabilitation, and raise the threshold for custodial remand, while at the same time ensuring that children who commit serious offences and pose a risk to the public receive sentences that reflect the seriousness of their offending.
- 8) Empower future providers of Secure Schools, which represent our vision for the future of youth custody—schools with security, rather than prisons with education: with education, healthcare and purposeful activity at their heart.
- 9) Enable Prisoner Escort and Custody Service officers to manage Video Remand Hearings in police stations to continue to make the best use of technology and improve future efficiency.
- 10) Replace the current emergency provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, which extend the use of video and audio hearings to enable more participants to attend criminal hearings remotely. We will always ensure a full hearing in court will be available when needed in the interests of justice.

11) Introduce measures to facilitate the remote observation of proceedings across the courts and tribunals using video and audio links underpinning the principle of open justice. These measures will also provide the necessary safeguards against the recording or broadcasting of proceedings by participants and observers.

12) Enable British Sign Language interpreters to be present in the jury deliberation room, meaning that profoundly deaf individuals are not prevented from participating in jury service.

13) Extend the scope of positions of trust legislation, which currently covers a number of statutory roles such as teachers and social workers, to include those who knowingly carry out certain activities within religious and sports settings, such as faith leaders or sports coaches.

14) Toughen the law where criminal damage of less than £5,000 is caused to a memorial by increasing the maximum sentence from three months to 10 years imprisonment. This brings it in line with criminal damage of £5,000 or more and ensures our courts have sufficient sentencing powers to punish the emotional harm caused by this type of offending even when the financial impact may be low.

To support the parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, we are publishing on GOV.UK the following documents:

- Impact assessments covering sentencing, courts and criminal law;
- Delegated Powers memorandum;
- ECHR memorandum; and
- Fact sheets."

Tackling Intimidation in Public Life

[HLWS825]

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

I wish to update hon. Members on the steps that the Government is taking to tackle intimidation in public life.

In July 2017, the then Prime Minister commissioned the Committee on Standards in Public Life to undertake a review into abuse and intimidation in elections. This followed concerning evidence from many Parliamentary candidates across the political spectrum on their experiences during the 2017 general election. The Government's response to that report in March 2018 outlined the Government's planned programme of work in the area, and the Committee has published its own follow up to its report in December 2020.

Tackling intimidation in public life also forms an important part of the Defending Democracy programme, a cross-government initiative led by the Cabinet Office.

Protecting free speech within the law

It is important to distinguish between strongly felt political debate on the one hand, and unacceptable acts of

abuse, intimidation and violence on the other. British democracy has always been robust and oppositional.

Free speech within the law can sometimes involve the expression of political views that some may find offensive: a point that the Government has recognised in the Department for Education's policy paper, *Higher education: free speech and academic freedom* published last month. But a line is crossed when disagreement mutates into intimidation, which refuses to tolerate other opinions and seeks to deprive others from exercising their free speech and freedom of association.

Tackling threats to MPs

The Home Office is responding today, on behalf of Government, to the Joint Committee on Human Rights report on Democracy, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association: Threats to MPs.

This outlines how the Government is addressing the concerns raised in the report on:

- The need for collaboration to tackle the issue of threats to MPs;
- The national approach to prosecuting offences against MPs;
- The online abuse and harassment faced by MPs; and
- Policing around Parliament and beyond.

Ensuring safety of journalists

Also today, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is publishing the first *National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists*.

The Government's aim is to ensure that journalists operating in the UK are as safe as possible; reduce the number of attacks on and threats issued to journalists; and ensure those that are responsible for such are brought to justice. In order to support this goal, it outlines how the Government is taking steps to:

- Increase our understanding of the problem;
- Enhance the criminal justice system response in tackling crimes against journalists;
- Support journalists and their employers to build the resources they need to protect personal safety;
- Help online platforms to tackle the wider issue of abuse online; and
- Improve public recognition of the value of journalists.

Preventing intimidation in elections

In due course, the Government will legislate to introduce a new electoral sanction of intimidation against those who participate in elections and contribute to the political debate, including candidates and campaigners. This new sanction complements the existing offence of undue influence against electors.

Under this new electoral sanction, someone convicted of intimidating a candidate, future candidate, campaigner or elected representative will face a ban on standing for and holding elective office for five years. This five-year disqualification is in addition to the substantive

punishment for the underlying existing criminal offences of an intimidatory nature. It is simply not right that those who seek to damage free, fair and vibrant political participation should then be allowed to participate in the very same process they sought to undermine.

We have already updated electoral law to ensure local candidates can choose for their home address to not be made public; the local authority area in which they live can appear on the ballot paper instead.

The Government will also be legislating to require imprints on digital campaigning material. Whilst this will increase transparency in modern campaigning, it will also ensure greater scrutiny and accountability of those who promote material, including third party campaigners. The Cabinet Office has undertaken two separate consultations on this area, as it is complex. We need to be mindful not to impose excessive regulation of free speech by individuals, nor force campaigners to publish their home addresses as part of the imprint requirement.

The Government will also legislate to clarify and improve the offence of undue influence of a voter. We want to ensure that the offence offers adequate protection for electors to be free from undue influence and that the offence is effective for enforcement agencies. This reflects recommendations made by the (then Sir) Lord Pickles review into electoral fraud, following the 2015 election court relating to elections in Tower Hamlets.

Parties leading on codes of conduct and support

The Government response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life report asserted that all political parties should put in place their own individual, tailored code of conduct which sets out the standards of behaviour expected of their party members and representatives. All of the political parties represented in the House of Commons now have in place their own code of conduct.

The Government did not, and does not, support a joint code. This is impractical given there are over 300 registered political parties, and since joint codes may fuel and encourage the issuing of politically vexatious and unfounded complaints.

Many parties have significantly increased their support for elected representatives who face abuse.

Providing guidance for MPs

The Government has worked with the Law Officers to publish new guidance from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on the laws on intimidation, and the wide range of areas in which intimidation can be prosecuted under existing laws. This has been complemented by police guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council.

For hon. Members who have not previously read the CPS guidance, it can be found at:

Responding to intimidating behaviour: Information for Parliamentarians:

(<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/Responding-to-intimidating-behaviour-04-2019.pdf>).

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), CPS, College of Policing and Electoral Commission have also issued *Joint Guidance for Candidates in Elections*, which is distributed by the Electoral Commission:

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf_file/Joint-Guidance-for-Candidates-in-Elections.pdf

Action on online communications

The Government has published its full response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation. The response confirms that Ofcom will be named as the independent regulator, who will oversee the regulatory framework, setting clear safety standards, backed up by mandatory reporting requirements and strong enforcement powers to deal with non-compliance. Legislation will follow in due course.

We expect companies to take action now, ahead of the regulatory framework coming into force. We have set out steps that we expect companies to take across a range of harms on a voluntary basis ahead of legislation being finalised. These include ensuring products and services are safe by design and that users who have experienced harm are directed to, and are able to receive, adequate support. While it is not for the Government to dictate how companies allocate resources internally, we have been clear that platforms need to do significantly more to address online abuse.

We are also ensuring that the criminal law is fit for purpose to deal with online abuse. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry of Justice engaged the Law Commission on a second phase of their review of abusive and offensive online communications. This included considering whether co-ordinated harassment by groups of people online could be more effectively dealt with by the criminal law. The Law Commission has now consulted on proposed recommendations for reform. They will provide final recommendations in 2021, which we will carefully consider.

The Government is engaging with international partners to promote international consensus on what constitutes hate crime and intimidation online. The Government is currently working with international partners on this issue in the Council of Europe.

I hope this outlines how the Government is continuing to work to deliver its commitments to tackle intimidation in public life. The Government is open and receptive to ideas from hon. Members and other elected representatives on what further steps can be taken to protect the exercise of free speech and democratic representation across the United Kingdom.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 9 March 2021

Afghanistan: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) economic, (2) humanitarian, and (3) political, situation in Afghanistan. [HL13460]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Afghanistan continues to require support from international donors. Low economic growth has been compounded by the effects of Covid-19. In 2019/20, 15.6 million Afghans were living below the national poverty line. At the 2020 Geneva Conference, the UK committed to continuing to support Afghanistan's development. The humanitarian situation is concerning due to the high rate of poverty, internal displacement and civilian casualties from the continued conflict. 16.9 million people face acute food insecurity. In 2020-21, the UK is on course to provide up to £59.6 million in humanitarian assistance to help over two million people. UK Aid and development projects have helped lift life expectancy from 50 years in 1990 to 64 in 2018 and there are 8.2 million more children in school since 2002. Girls, who did not attend school pre-2001, now make up 39% of children enrolled.

Only a negotiated and inclusive political settlement between Afghans will bring a sustainable end to conflict. The UK supports negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. However, the high levels of violence are deeply concerning, especially targeted attacks on civilians. It is vital that there is a reduction in violence, leading to a comprehensive ceasefire, and meaningful engagement in a political process that can deliver the peace that Afghans want and deserve.

Armed Conflict: Explosives

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the international political declaration to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and whether they plan to endorse it. [HL13590]

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to make representations to other governments to encourage them to sign the international political declaration to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. [HL13591]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The political declaration can best protect civilians through the promotion of International Humanitarian Law and the sharing of best practice. The UK will continue to engage fully with the process and will take a view on endorsement as well as the merit of making representations to other governments once the declaration's final form is known.

Armed Forces: Cadets

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many state-funded schools have cadet forces. [HL13411]

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many school teachers are involved as cadet staff and instructors in state-funded schools. [HL13412]

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution the Department for Education makes towards school cadet forces. [HL13413]

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote the resumption of in-person cadet force activity. [HL13414]

Baroness Berridge: There are a total of 319 state funded schools in the UK that have a cadet unit. The Department does not collect data on the number of teachers that are cadet force adult volunteers or instructors in these schools. Cadets are funded through the Ministry of Defence and the Department supports this with co-chairmanship of the cadet expansion steering group and through its joint cadet expansion team that works closely with colleagues within Ministry of Defence. Several schools have continued cadet activities through virtual activities and remote education. Outdoor cadet activity can resume from March 8 within school grounds. It will be up to individual schools to undertake appropriate risk assessment to resume such activities in a COVID-19 secure manner. The Department recognises the significant benefits that cadet units in schools bring, for young people, schools, and local communities and that they can play an important part in catchup and recovery activity for many young people.

Armenia: Azerbaijan

Asked by Lord Sheikh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the Armenia about (1) recognising the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and (2) committing to regional cooperation in the South Caucasus. [HL13511]

Asked by Lord Sheikh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political situation in the South Caucasus. [HL13512]

Asked by Lord Sheikh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or intend to make, to the government of Armenia (1) to maintain peace in the

South Caucasus region, and (2) to ensure non-violent resolution of any future conflict. [[HL13513](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the 10 November peace deal including the implementation of many of the OSCE Minsk Group Basic Principles. During her recent visit to the region, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas urged the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to work together with the OSCE Minsk Group to settle all outstanding matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and implement the remaining Basic Principles to ensure future regional stability and peace. The UK Government firmly supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to ensure regional stability in the South Caucasus in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Asia Bibi

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they did not offer Asia Bibi asylum in the UK. [[HL13601](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am not able to provide specific information with regards to Asia Bibi's case as it is a longstanding Government policy not to comment on individual cases. Departing from this policy may put individuals and their family members in danger.

The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge.

Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the living conditions of the former Napier barracks, and (2) whether those conditions would be suitable for use by the British Armed Forces. [[HL13611](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As required by law, we provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation which is safe, secure and fit-for-purpose, paid for by the taxpayer.

We welcome independent scrutiny of our sites, processes and procedures; and routinely facilitate inspections from relevant bodies to assure ourselves of the

ongoing safety and suitability of the accommodation and services we provide.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration announced an inspection of contingency asylum accommodation on 25 January 2021.

The department acknowledges the ICIBI's decision to publish on 8 March the initial findings from site visits to Napier Barracks and Penally.

The ICIBI's inspection report will be laid before Parliament in the usual way after the inspection has concluded. The Department will issue a formal response alongside the report as it is published on Gov.UK. It is not known when the final inspection report will be received but this is a matter for the ICIBI.

An independent rapid review was also recently conducted to assure ourselves of the extensive COVID-19 protocols in place to safeguard the health and safety of asylum seekers during the pandemic. The Home Office is currently reviewing and acting upon the recommendations of the review.

We continue to work closely with our provider and partners to identify opportunities for improvement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

Broadband: Small Businesses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that full-fibre broadband is accessible for all small businesses. [[HL13688](#)]

Baroness Barran: In areas not covered by commercial delivery, support to provide full-fibre broadband to premises is currently being provided through schemes including the Superfast Broadband programme, Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) and Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) schemes. LFFN is a challenge funded scheme designed to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks across the UK. This programme will be ending in December 2021. RGC will be ending in March 2021, after which any new projects can be developed as part of the public sector hubs element of the new UK Gigabit programme.

The Government's ambition for digital infrastructure presents opportunities for growth and security in the UK economy. The National Infrastructure Strategy outlines how the Government is working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 and to go as far as possible beyond this as part of our £5 billion UK Gigabit programme. The 2020 Spending Review set out the timeline for how the first tranche of the £5 billion we have promised will be made available to industry.

Furthermore, as announced on 8 August 2020, to develop an evidence-based strategy to encourage take up of gigabit broadband services by consumers and small businesses, the government asked Which?, CBI and the FSB to convene a [Gigabit Take-up Advisory Group](#). The group has been engaging with a wide range of

stakeholders to develop its evidence and solutions. An interim report with the group's initial findings was published in December 2020, and is expected to publish a final report by Spring 2021 with its recommendations.

Companies: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that private companies retain interest in managing their environmental impact. [HL13620]

Lord Callanan: Achieving our net zero goal requires all businesses to take action to reduce their emissions, while helping to grow the economy. We are working with our stakeholders to drive the ambitious action needed from UK businesses to help tackle climate change and reduce their impact on the environment.

We are working across government, and with our regulators to drive progress on UK companies disclosing their climate risks in line with the framework provided by the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. TCFD can deliver high-quality disclosure on how organisations will manage the material financial risks and opportunities arising from climate change and will improve transparency and encourage better informed pricing and capital allocation.

The eyes of the world will be on the UK as we host the G7 and COP26 in 2021. Business action on climate is vitally important to achieving a successful summit and presidency, and is an excellent opportunity to showcase businesses as global leaders in tackling climate change in the year leading up to COP26.

Our main ask ahead of COP26 in November is for businesses to set ambitious targets and take action to reduce emissions and build resilience, joining the Race to Zero. This sends the strongest signal to markets, supply chains, governments and consumers that businesses are committed to the transition.

Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote internationally the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. [HL13793]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has made a number of political commitments to respond to alleged genocide and other atrocities. Where there is a risk of atrocities, we use diplomacy to highlight our concerns, including through the United Nations. As a party to the Convention on the Crime of Genocide, the UK is fully committed to the prevention and punishment of genocide as appropriate under the convention. We have co-sponsored resolutions on the Prevention of Genocide and on commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide and

other mass atrocities at the 43rd and 44th sessions of the UN Human Rights Council.

Since the majority of mass atrocities occur in and around conflict, the government believes a focus on conflict prevention is the best means to prevent most mass atrocities. Her Majesty's Government takes a consolidated, whole-of-government approach, using our diplomatic, development, defence, and law enforcement capabilities, to help pursue global peace and stability. We support work that seeks to address the root causes of conflict and drivers of instability, through tackling corruption, promoting good governance, improving access to security and justice, and furthering inclusive economic development. This approach aims to foster peaceful societies where atrocities are less likely to take place.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the first 100,000 people to die as a result of COVID-19 died in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland; how many of those died (a) in hospital, (b) in care homes, and (c) elsewhere; and how many of those were (i) over 80 years old, (ii) over 70 years old, (iii) under 50 years old, (iv) BAME, (v) male, and (vi) female. [HL13602]

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

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician

The Lord Marlesford DL House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

03 March 2021

Dear Lord Marlesford,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what proportion of the first 100,000 people to die as a result of COVID-19 died in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland; how many of those died (a) in hospital, (b) in care homes, and (c) elsewhere; and how many of those were (i) over 80 years old, (ii) over 70 years old, (iii) under 50 years old, (iv) BAME, (v) male, and (vi) female (HL13602).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes statistics on deaths in England and Wales and produces a weekly report[1] on provisional numbers of deaths involving COVID-19. Mortality statistics are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration. National Records for Scotland[2] and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency[3] are responsible for publishing statistics on deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

We cannot precisely organise deaths involving COVID-19 into the 'first 100,000' at this time. However, we have provided figures for deaths registered up to the end of Week 2 of 2021 (ending 15 January 2021) which is when deaths involving COVID-19 first passed 100,000 in total.

Table 1 below provides the number of deaths involving COVID-19 in the UK, and the proportion of these in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Table 2 provides the number of deaths involving COVID-19 by place of death in each UK country. Table 3 provides the number of deaths involving COVID by age group and sex. Please note that the UK totals in Table 3 are slightly different from Tables 1 and 2, as published data by age group and sex are only available for England and Wales combined (including non-residents) rather than England and Wales as individual countries.

The ONS has published a report on ethnic contrasts in deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales[4]. Table 4 shows the number of deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales; data have been published for deaths that occurred (rather than were registered) between 2 March 2020 and 28 July 2020. Please note this data includes only deaths that could be linked to the 2011 Census, as this was necessary to obtain ethnic group data. Because the method of calculation is different, the numbers do not relate directly to those in Tables 1 to 3.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Number and proportion of deaths involving COVID-19, weeks ending 13 March 2020 to 15 January 2021, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland [5] [6] [7] [8] [9]

	UK	England	Wales	Scotland ¹	Northern Ireland
Number of deaths involving COVID-19	104,446	88,974	5,884	7,460	2,128
% of UK total	100.0%	85.2%	5.6%	7.1%	2.0%

Source: ONS, NRS, and NISRA

Table 2: Number of deaths involving COVID-19, weeks ending 13 March 2020 to 15 January 2021 by place of occurrence, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland [10] [11]

Place of death	UK	England	Wales	Scotland ¹	Northern Ireland
All places of death	104,446	88,974	5,884	7,460	2,128
Home	5,256	4,376	286	459	135
Care home	26,393	21,615	1,267	2,869	642
Hospital	70,793	61,101	4,247	4,116	1,329
Other	2,004	1,882	84	16	22

Source: ONS, NRS and NISRA

Table 3: Number of deaths involving COVID-19, weeks ending 13 March 2020 to 15 January 2021, by broad age group and sex, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Sex	Age group	UK total ⁶	England & Wales ⁶	Scotland	Northern Ireland
People	All ages	103,720	94,132	7,460	2,128
-	Under 1 year	3	2	1	0
-	1-14	9	9	0	0
-	15-44	1,004	941	49	14
-	45-64	9,615	8,777	670	168
-	65-74	15,798	14,305	1,188	305
-	75-84	33,855	30,647	2,478	730
-	85+	43,436	39,451	3,074	911
Males	All ages	56,596	51,693	3,831	1,072
-	Under 1 year	2	2	0	0
-	1-14	4	4	0	0
-	15-44	587	554	27	6
-	45-64	6,188	5,656	433	99
-	65-74	10,036	9,119	729	188
-	75-84	19,848	18,067	1,376	405
-	85+	19,931	18,291	1,266	374
Females	All ages	47,124	42,439	3,629	1,056
-	Under 1 year	1	0	1	0
-	1-14	5	5	0	0
-	15-44	417	387	22	8
-	45-64	3,427	3,121	237	69
-	65-74	5,762	5,186	459	117
-	75-84	14,007	12,580	1,102	325
-	85+	23,505	21,160	1,808	537

Source : ONS, NRS and NISRA

Table 4: Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by ethnic group and sex, deaths occurring 2 March 2020 to 28 July 2020, England and Wales [12] [13]

Ethnic group	Sex	Aged 9 to 64 years	Aged 65 to 110 years
Bangladeshi	Male	61	112
Bangladeshi	Female	19	54
Black African	Male	159	188

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Aged 9 to 64 years</i>	<i>Aged 65 to 110 years</i>
Black African	Female	85	96
Black Caribbean	Male	95	514
Black Caribbean	Female	67	306
Chinese	Male	16	78
Chinese	Female	8	55
Indian	Male	180	525
Indian	Female	80	357
Mixed	Male	29	144
Mixed	Female	30	99
Other	Male	186	351
Other	Female	85	226
Pakistani	Male	119	286
Pakistani	Female	75	156
White	Male	1,939	20,531
White	Female	1,184	18,201

Source: *ONS*

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistereeweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>

[2] <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>

[3] <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/>

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/updatingethniccontrastsindeathsinvolvingthecoronaviruscovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurring2marchto28july2020>

[5] Weeks for Scotland run Monday to Sunday rather than Saturday to Friday, so Week 2 of 2021 is week ending 11th January 2021 rather than week ending 15 January 2021.

[6] Figures for individual countries exclude deaths of non-residents. Figures for “England and Wales” totals include non-residents of England and Wales; for this reason, UK totals in Table 3 differ from Tables 1 and 2.

[7] Data in Tables 1, 3 and 3 are based on date a death was registered rather than occurred. Data in Table 4 are based on the date a death occurred, registered up to 24 August 2020. There is a delay between a death occurring and it being registered.

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

[9] The International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2). We use the term “involving COVID-19” when referring to deaths that mentioned these ICD-10 codes anywhere on the death

certificate, whether as the underlying cause of death or elsewhere.

[10] Deaths at home are those at the usual residence of the deceased (according to the informant), where this is not a communal establishment. Other Communal Establishments include (for example) prisons, student residences, and hotels. Elsewhere includes all places not covered above.

[11] “Other” includes deaths in communal establishments other than hospitals and care homes, in hospices, and that occurred “elsewhere”.

[12] Data in Table 4 includes only death records that could be linked to the 2011 Census, to obtain ethnic group data.

[13] The detailed composition of each ethnic group is available to download: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/download/table?format=xlsx&uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/updatingethniccontrastsindeathsinvolvingthecoronaviruscovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurring2marchto28july2020/22f0c996.json>.

Coronavirus: Museums and Galleries

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government why museums have been included in Step Three rather than Step Two in the roadmap to ease the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL13615]

Baroness Barran: We seek to reopen outdoor elements of galleries and museums in Step 2, with indoor elements at these attractions opening at Step 3. This acknowledges the higher transmission risk posed by indoor settings.

The design of the roadmap has been informed by the latest scientific evidence and seeks a balance between our key social and economic priorities, whilst preserving the health and safety of the country. The scientific evidence shows that opening too early or too quickly risks a further lockdown.

The Chancellor announced in the 2021 Budget an additional £300 million to support theatres, museums and other cultural organisations in England through the Culture Recovery Fund. The Chancellor also set out that we will provide £90 million funding to support our government-sponsored national museums and some cultural bodies in England due to the financial impact of Covid-19. This is in addition to the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the continued reduction in VAT, among other measures.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the COVAX Facility's ability to provide (1) timely, (2) equitable, and (3) universal, access to COVID-19 vaccines for developing countries; and what plans they have to work with other countries

to coordinate the relaxation of intellectual property protections for COVID-19 pharmaceutical technology to allow for such access. [[HL13722](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK assesses that COVAX is on track to deliver its targets. Deliveries of vaccines have now begun, and COVAX's success in negotiating deals with manufacturers also means it is making good progress in securing and delivering its goal of at least 2 billion doses in 2021, including at least 1.3 billion for up to 92 low- and middle-income countries. The UK regularly engages stakeholders on the global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, participating in COVAX decision-making bodies through its governance mechanisms, including a seat on the Gavi Board. The UK is also a founding member of the Facilitation Council of the Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a coalition of leading international organisations to accelerate development and access to COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics.

Considering the evidence available, we do not believe that the relaxation of intellectual property (IP) rights would be an effective measure to address the multiple factors on which access to medicines depends. The existing IP system has mobilised research and development to deliver new medicines and technologies to detect, prevent, and treat COVID-19.

Corporation Tax: Tax Rates and Bands

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of 10 years' of reduction in the corporation tax rate on (1) economic growth, (2) productivity, (3) innovation, and (4) employment. [[HL13711](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The economic impacts of reductions in the rate of Corporation Tax since 2010 have been reflected in the OBR's forecasts, and detailed in the OBR's published Economic and Fiscal Outlooks as the rate had been reduced.

Creative Europe: Culture

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made to establish a domestic alternative to the Creative Europe's Culture sub-programme, following the announcement by the Chancellor of the Global Screen Fund on 25 November 2020. [[HL13576](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Government decided not to seek continued participation in the Creative Europe programme as part of the UK's withdrawal from the EU but to look at other ways of supporting the UK's arts and cultural sectors.

We understand the role international cultural partnerships and networking play in driving forwards the very best in leading contemporary practice. This Government will continue to assess the needs of the

sector through the continued impacts of COVID-19 and in establishing our place on the world stage outside of the European Union.

So far, we have provided £1.57bn through the Cultural Recovery Fund, ensuring record breaking support is available to support the cultural sector through the COVID-19 crisis.

Cyprus: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the UN-led settlement talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on their role in those talks. [[HL13352](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: A Cyprus Settlement remains key to resolving wider tensions in the region. We are supportive of the UN Secretary General's efforts and the proposal of the informal meeting between the parties ("5+UN"). The UK is actively engaging with the parties ahead of the 5+UN meeting to urge them to approach the meeting in the spirit of flexibility and compromise. The Foreign Secretary delivered this message to both the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader during his visit to Cyprus on 4 February, as well as in phone calls with the Turkish Foreign Minister and Greek Foreign Minister.

Talks to reunite Cyprus are led by the Leaders of the two communities on-island and facilitated by the UN. The UK's role as a Guarantor Power under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee is unrelated to our membership of the European Union.

Dance and Theatre: Insurance

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce an insurance scheme for dance and theatre, similar to the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme announced by the Culture Secretary on 28 July 2020. [[HL13575](#)]

Baroness Barran: We are aware of the concerns which have been raised about the insurance cover for live events, including dance and theatre. DCMS officials have been working closely with the sector to understand the challenges and to keep the situation under review.

Understandably, the bar for considering Government intervention is set extremely high, especially in light of recent announcements including the considerable extension to the furlough scheme and local business support as well as the uncertainty when mass gatherings can take place safely.

The evidence of why an indemnity scheme needs to be developed now must be clearly demonstrated and robust evidence must be provided that indemnity cover is the only barrier to staging events.

Given the high costs involved in setting up a scheme we also need to make sure it is the most effective and appropriate use of funds at a time when we are looking at how best to support the sector in facing the wider challenges around recovery and renewal. As such, HM Treasury does not believe that now is the right time for an insurance intervention.

Domestic Abuse

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the whether current statutory safeguarding provisions adequately (1) assist young victims of intimate partner violence, and (2) deal with perpetrators of intimate partner violence. [[HL13560](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: (i) *Young Victims*

We recently published an updated version of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. The guidance specifically references teenage relationship abuse as part of the statutory definition of domestic abuse. It also outlines the 'assessment of risk outside the home' which ensures that practitioners are alert to the risk of abuse for young people within their own intimate relationships.

Further to this, the draft guidance that will accompany the Domestic Abuse bill covers abuse in teenage relationships. The guidance has been seen in draft by a wide range of sector representatives, who have provided feedback. The guidance is being finalised ahead of a formal consultation period in the spring.

(ii) *Perpetrators*

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 ("CJA 2003") provides for the establishment of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements ("MAPPA") in each of the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales. These are designed to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders. They require the local criminal justice agencies and other bodies dealing with offenders to work together in partnership in dealing with these offenders.

MAPPA guidance states that under the Children Act 2004, the Responsible Authority and DTC agencies have a statutory duty to make arrangements for ensuring that 'their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' and that 'children should not be treated by MAPPA as 'mini-adults''.

The draft Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance which is due to be published following royal assent of the Bill also includes young people who perpetrate abuse.

Young people perpetrating abuse in their relationships must be supported in an appropriate way that places emphasis on tackling the drivers of their behaviour. Court and responding agencies must take into account youth justice guidelines when responding to cases of teenage relationship abuse, avoid unnecessarily criminalising

young people, and identify appropriate interventions to address behaviours that might constitute or lead to abuse. Relevant youth justice guidelines include:

- Case management guidance for Youth Offending Teams.
- Standards for children in the Youth Justice System.
- Crown Prosecution Service guidance on youth offenders.
- Sentencing Council guidelines on sentencing children and young people.

Elections

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to widen consultation over how elections are run to include (1) independent representatives, and (2) parties with at least one MP. [[HL13557](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Rennard***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park on 28 January (HL Deb col 1804), and the Written Answers from Lord True on 17 February (HL12832 and HL12833), what representations they received from members of political parties prior to the Minister of the Constitution's letter of 22 January which stated the Government view that campaigning activity should distinguish between volunteer distribution of campaign leaflets and identical activity by people paid by commercial organisations; and whether they received representations on this issue from (1) Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ), or (2) people who may have been acting on CCHQ's behalf. [[HL13605](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Rennard***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the legal basis for the view set out in the Minister of the Constitution's letter of 22 January distinguishing between volunteer distribution of campaign leaflets and identical activity by people paid by commercial organisations; what reference is made to this distinction in the COVID-19 regulations, and what assessment they have made of whether holding elections on 6 May with (1) this restriction, and (2) other restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, will contribute to reduced turnout and campaign activity. [[HL13607](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Rennard***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether sufficient information concerning elections and candidates can be obtained via (1) the internet, and (2) the media; and further to this, what assessment they have made of the reasons behind the significant level of spending of political parties on unsolicited literature delivered to voters prior to the 2019 general election. [[HL13608](#)]

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is still their aim to ensure that there is a level playing field in the conduct of election campaigns; what assessment they have made of whether this aim is achievable in elections scheduled for this May, in which the delivery of campaign literature by volunteers has been discouraged by the Government whilst the delivery of campaign literature by commercial organisations for political parties is not; and whether advice to party volunteers is consistent with that for party leaders making campaign visits across the country. [[HL13609](#)]

Lord True: Democracy should not be cancelled because of covid. As outlined in my Written Ministerial Statement of 8 February 2021 (HLWS766), the Government has confirmed that the set of council, mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for May will go ahead, and made a firm commitment that the Government will support the sector to deliver them.

The Government has published a Delivery Plan for the May elections, setting out how the Government will support local elections teams to deliver effective polls that are covid-secure for voters and staff. The Medical Officers advised Ministers in drawing up this delivery plan. The Government has committed to further engage with political parties through the Parliamentary Parties Panel and the Local Government Association; we are committed to ensuring we take into consideration the views of independent candidates as effectively as possible.

Campaigning is an essential part of democracy. Voters deserve to be well informed before going to the polls and there must be a level playing field for candidates. On 22 February the Prime Minister announced the Government's roadmap out of lockdown and we have since published guidance on campaigning reflecting the updated COVID restrictions/guidance.

The whole of England remains in a national lockdown and will do so until 29 March. The current restrictions do not support door-to-door campaigning or leafleting by individual campaigners. Leaving home to undertake leafleting increases the risk of unnecessary social interactions and viral transmission both during travel and on doorsteps. Campaigners should instead ensure leafleting is carried out through existing commercial delivery services, which are already operating and delivering during the national lockdown. Any spending on this which is incurred during a regulated period must count towards a candidate's spending limit.

From 8 March, individual activists will be able to campaign outdoors in a COVID-secure way. The rules will allow for individual campaigners to deliver leaflets and to engage with electors on their doorsteps - but they should always be socially distanced and not enter inside people's homes.

Entertainers: EU Countries

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to negotiate bilateral agreements with all EU member states exempting (1) touring performers, (2) creative teams, and (3) crews, including (a) dancers, (b) choreographers, (c) producers, and (d) technicians, from entry requirements or restrictions on short-term work for 90 days. [[HL13571](#)]

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision for the performing arts in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement; and what financial support they intend to provide, if any, to the performing arts sector to make up for added EU touring costs. [[HL13574](#)]

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to negotiate arrangements with the EU for reduced visa requirements for performances by (1) musicians, and (2) other artistic performers. [[HL13616](#)]

Baroness Barran: This Government recognises the importance of our world leading creative and cultural industries. That is why it provided an unprecedented £1.57bn package of support to help these sectors through the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, over £1 billion has been awarded to almost 3800 organisations, with at least 75,000 jobs saved so far, and many more freelancers also benefiting from new work that can now be created. At Budget 2021, HMT also announced £300m of additional funding for the Culture Recovery Fund which will be made available to support cultural organisations in England as audiences begin to return. This demonstrates our firm commitment to ensuring that UK culture continues to thrive.

We know that while leaving the EU will bring changes and new processes to touring and working in the EU, it will also bring new opportunities. Leaving the EU has always meant that there would be changes to how practitioners operate in the EU.

UK performers and artists are of course still able to tour and perform in the EU, and vice versa. However, we understand the concerns about the new arrangements and we are committed to supporting the sectors as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes.

We are now working urgently across government and in collaboration with cultural and creative industries, including through a new working group, to help address these issues so that touring in Europe can resume with ease as soon as it is safe to do so.

Eritrea: Refugees

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that refugee camps in Tigray have been destroyed, (2) that Eritrean refugees are missing as a result, and (3) that Eritrean refugees have been forcibly repatriated to Eritrea. [\[HL13341\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns the destruction of the Hitsats and Shimbella refugee camps in Tigray and calls for urgent assistance to those refugees displaced as a result. We are also concerned at reports that Eritrean troops entered Ethiopian refugee camps in Tigray and forced a number of refugees to return to Eritrea. If proven, this would be a serious violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Alleged violations of international law must be investigated as a means to promote respect for legal instruments and to prevent future violations, including as necessary through international criminal tribunals.

The British Ambassador in Eritrea raised these questions with the Eritrean Foreign Minister in December 2020, who denied that Eritrean forces had forcibly returned Eritrean refugees to Eritrea. We are extremely concerned that humanitarian agencies, including the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), do not have access to refugee camps in Tigray, meaning our understanding of the humanitarian and protection context in camps and refugee hosting areas is limited. It is the responsibility of the host state to ensure refugees are protected and are not subjected to forcible return. This was acknowledged by the Government of Ethiopia when we raised the matter.

Ethiopia: Eritrea

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reports that the government of Ethiopia has transferred military equipment and money to the government of Eritrea in exchange for the engagement of Eritrean soldiers in Tigray. [\[HL13340\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by involvement of Eritrean forces in hostilities throughout the Tigray region of Ethiopia and the growing weight of credible evidence of their involvement in human rights violations. The Minister for Africa has called for their immediate withdrawal, as they are fuelling the conflict. However, we are unable to verify reports that this includes the transfer of military equipment and money by the Government of Ethiopia to the Government of Eritrea. We have raised our concerns with Ministers in both governments, making clear the overriding need to protect civilians and adhere to international law and international human rights law.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what assessment they have made of the decision by the EU to suspend budget support to the government of Ethiopia whilst humanitarian aid workers are unable to access Tigray; and in view of any such assessment, what plans they have to suspend the provision of Official Development Assistance to that government. [\[HL13554\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We note and understand the decision by the EU to suspend budget support. The UK does not provide general budget support to the Government of Ethiopia. UK Overseas Development Assistance provided to the Government of Ethiopia in the form of financial aid supports the delivery of specific development results; and we track results to ensure our programmes are delivering these life-changing results for Ethiopians in desperate need. UK bilateral ODA spend for Ethiopia in 20/21 is £237m. We work closely with the Government of Ethiopia to ensure and monitor that aid is provided impartially and serves to improve the conditions of intended beneficiaries. We are keeping the provision of aid to Ethiopia under constant review.

Ethiopia: Overseas Aid

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that Official Development Assistance-funded programmes are distributed by the government of Ethiopia without reference to the ethnicity of those accessing services. [\[HL13384\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) portfolio is consistent with legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, which includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). PSED ensures that the FCDO understands how different people will be affected by their activities and services are non-discriminatory and accessible to all. UK ODA provided to the Government of Ethiopia in the form of financial aid supports the delivery of specific development results. We work closely with the Government of Ethiopia to ensure and monitor that aid is provided impartially and serves to improve the conditions of intended beneficiaries, with no reference to the ethnicity of those accessing services. We are keeping the provision of aid to Ethiopia under constant review.

Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote the participation of the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray state authorities in peace talks. [\[HL13555\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have, and will continue to advocate that a political process is essential to bring a full end to fighting and a sustainable settlement for Tigray. We have consistently urged all parties to end the conflict, prioritise the protection of civilians and allow unfettered humanitarian access. The Foreign Secretary raised these points when he met with Prime Minister Abiy on 22 January and also pressed for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray. The Minister for Africa also pressed for political dialogue to end the conflict when he spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 24 February.

Fire Safety Bill

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 Fire Safety Bill; what changes, if any, were made to the Bill as a result of any such discussions; and for what purpose were such changes made. [[HL13562](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Obtaining Queen's Consent is a normal procedure before the introduction of Bills which may affect the Royal Estate. The rationale for seeking this for the Fire Safety Bill was that parts of the Royal Estate may need to have their fire risk assessments updated following the passage of the Bill. The Home Office sought this on 20 February 2020 and obtained Queen's Consent on 9 March 2020.

Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they provide (1) to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and (2) to countries with the highest number of cases of (a) AIDS, (b) tuberculosis, and (c) malaria. [[HL13506](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is currently the second largest donor to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The Global Fund invests in over 100 countries, focusing on those countries with the highest disease burden and lowest ability to pay. Our contribution has helped to save 38 million lives since 2002 and aims to help save another 16 million in the next three years.

Resilient health systems are at the core of global efforts to prevent and treat diseases. The UK is partnering with countries with some of the highest rates of AIDS, TB and malaria, to strengthen their health systems. The UK also supports the civil society HIV response through funding to the Robert Carr Fund to advocate for the rights and needs of the most marginalised groups affected by HIV, such as LGBTQ+ people and sex workers.

Investing in research and development to better tackle the three diseases is also crucial. The UK's funding to TB

and malaria research is helping to develop new tools to prevent, diagnose and treat these diseases, including drugs that fight the threat of drug resistance. Our world-class research investments include the first child-friendly antimalarial drug, which has saved more than 1 million lives.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch COVID-19 transmission in hospitals: management of the risk – a prospective safety investigation, published in October 2020, what steps they are taking to provide clarity about national responsibilities, ownership and process for the development of national infection prevention and control guidance. [[HL13440](#)]

Lord Bethell: We will work with partners to develop a transparent process to co-ordinate the development, dissemination and implementation of national guidance across the healthcare system to minimise the risk of nosocomial transmission of COVID-19. This includes agreeing roles and responsibilities, a clear process and timescales with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Public Health England and other system partners for infection prevention and control guidance development or review at a national and system level.

International Citizen Service

Asked by Baroness Jay of Paddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to replace the International Citizen Service programme. [[HL13595](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The safety of volunteers is the FCDO's first priority. In response to the emerging pandemic, in March 2020 we suspended all International Citizen Service (ICS) placements and successfully returned all volunteers home.

We will continue to monitor the risks of overseas placements and place the wellbeing of volunteers at the heart of any future decisions on ICS or equivalent youth volunteering schemes.

Iraq: Kurds

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Worcester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the security situation in Iraqi Kurdistan following the mortar attack in Erbil on 15 February; and what assistance they are providing to the Kurdistan Regional Government (1) to investigate, and (2) to hold accountable, those responsible for the attack. [[HL13547](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise the security threat against Western interests posed by militia groups seeking to sow instability across Iraq, including

Iraqi Kurdistan. Although a militia group claimed responsibility for the attack, we have committed to supporting the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq in investigating the attack and holding accountable those responsible.

Kashmir: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a member of the British High Commission accompanied the reported "guided tours" of Kashmir given to envoys by the government of India; and if so, what conclusions were drawn. [HL13631]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the diplomatic visit to India-administered Kashmir that was organised by the Government of India in the week commencing 15 February 2021. The UK did not participate in this visit. We continue to work closely with the Indian authorities to identify the best opportunity for British High Commission representatives to visit Kashmir.

Languages: Education

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the effectiveness, and (2) the impact of, Modern Foreign Language Hubs; and if no such assessment has been made, (a) whether they plan to conduct such an assessment, and (b) if so, when. [HL13380]

Baroness Berridge: The National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy (NCELP) programme was established with its main aims being to provide support to secondary schools to improve languages teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4, and to align modern foreign language (MFL) teaching with the recommendations of the Teaching Schools Council's 2016 MFL Pedagogy Review. This was done so that in pilot schools more pupils will take up GCSEs in MFLs, and schools are enabled to achieve sustainable numbers and group sizes. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were agreed between NCELP and the department which link to these objectives.

As a consequence of school closures over the last year, and NCELP diverting much of its resource to assist the Oak National Academy by developing and recording Key Stage 3 lessons in French, German and Spanish, we have deferred our assessment of performance against KPIs until after December 2021. However, the information gathered to date shows that:

- 92.6% of all teachers taking part in the pilot reported in September 2020 that they were confident in delivering the MFL pedagogical approach as described in the 2016 MFL Pedagogy Review produced by the Teaching Schools Council; and

- Uptake of MFL GCSEs in the participating schools has increased by 8.2 percentage points between 2018 and 2020.

In the meantime, NCELP is on course to have completed work developing online resources for teaching and testing in French, German and Spanish in Key Stage 3 by December 2021, which are available free of charge for all MFL teachers at: <https://resources.ncelp.org>.

Latifa bint Mohammed al-Maktoum

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of India about the reported capture and detention of Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed al-Maktoum, including reports of the involvement of Indian special forces. [HL13369]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the allegations regarding the disappearance of Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed al-Maktoum. The UK is not directly involved in this case but we will follow any developments closely.

Leah Sharibu

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Leah Sharibu has been held captive by Boko Haram for three years. [HL13387]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government condemns the abduction of the Dapchi school girls in Nigeria in 2018 and the ongoing captivity of Leah Sharibu by Islamic State West Africa (ISWA). We are deeply concerned for the welfare of Leah and all those abducted by Boko Haram and ISWA. Officials at the British High Commission in Abuja raised Leah's case with the Nigerian authorities in February 2021. The Nigerian authorities have assured us that they remain committed to securing her return.

The Government is providing a comprehensive package of support to Nigeria to help tackle the terrorist threat in the North East. We regularly raise the issues of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria at the highest levels of the Nigerian Government, and will continue to use our public messaging to call for the release of Leah and all those abducted by terrorist groups in Nigeria.

Liverpool City Council

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the arrest of the Mayor of Liverpool in December 2020, what discussions they have had with local government officials about ensuring probity and confidence in the city's administration. [HL13720]

Lord Greenhalgh: Further to my answer on 23 December - UIN HL11323, Max Caller CBE continues to undertake his inspection of Liverpool City Council's compliance with regard to its Best Value Duty in relation to the authority's planning, highways, regeneration and property management functions and the strength of associated audit and governance arrangements. The Secretary of State has asked Max Caller to report his findings by 31 March 2021.

Local Government: Cumbria

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they will use to assess local support in the public consultation on local government reorganisation in Cumbria, published on 22 February. [HL13628]

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what weighting system, if any, will be used to assess responses from different stakeholders to the public consultation on local government reorganisation in Cumbria. [HL13629]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government welcomes the views of all those interested in the proposals for local government reorganisation in Cumbria, including local residents, town and parish councils, businesses and the voluntary sector. Once the consultation is concluded, the Government will decide, subject to parliamentary approval, which, if any, proposals are to be implemented, with or without modification. In taking these decisions it will have regard to all the representations it has received, including those from the consultation, and all other relevant information available to it, and reach a balanced judgement assessing the proposals against criteria, including on local support which will be assessed in the round across the whole area of the proposal.

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government which, if any, local authorities in Cumbria requested a delay to county council elections this year prior to the announcement of a delay in such elections to 2022. [HL13630]

Lord Greenhalgh: Cumbria County Council made a request to the Secretary of State to postpone its May 2021 local elections, following the Government's Written Ministerial Statement of 12 October 2020 (UIN - HLWS496). As explained in the Explanatory Memorandum to the secondary legislation (SI 2021 No. 174) which was laid before Parliament on 24 February, the Government has decided to reschedule from May 2021 to May 2022 local elections to Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, and South Lakeland District Council.

Marine Protected Areas: South Atlantic Ocean

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much has been spent as part of the Blue Belt programme on each of the South Atlantic Marine Protected Areas; and what has been achieved through that funding so far. [HL13597]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Blue Belt programme supports the UK Overseas Territories to enhance marine protection in their waters. Protection has now been put in place across more than 4 million km of ocean around the Overseas Territories. The programme has been supported by nearly £25m to date. Of this, around £3.7m has been spent specifically on St Helena, around £3m on Tristan da Cunha, and around £2.6m on Ascension. The programme has supported the three South Atlantic Overseas Territories to design and designate marine protection strategies for their waters, and to put the required legislation and management plans in place, with ongoing scientific monitoring and enforcement. Further details on the programme achievements can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/934959/Blue_Belt_Programme_2016_to_2020_programme_highlights_brochure.pdf.

Mayors

Asked by Lord Heseltine

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the devolution of powers to the Mayor of Greater Manchester, which powers, if any, have been devolved to other Metro Mayors since December 2019. [HL13667]

Lord Greenhalgh: In January 2020, Sheffield City Region Combined Authority took the decision to progress their stalled devolution deal, previously agreed in 2015. In July 2020 The Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2020 was approved by Parliament and made, conferring on the Combined Authority the powers agreed in this deal, including powers on planning, education and transport powers.

In March 2020, a West Yorkshire devolution deal was agreed and announced by the Chancellor at Budget. In January 2021 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021 was approved by Parliament and made, establishing a directly elected Mayor for West Yorkshire to be first elected in May 2021, conferring on the Combined Authority powers on housing, regeneration, education and transport, and providing that the West Yorkshire Mayor will take on the

functions of Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire.

Full details on the powers conferred on these Combined Authorities and their mayors are set out in the explanatory memoranda.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of clinical staff of children and adolescent mental health services have specialist training in (1) assisting young victims of intimate partner violence, and (2) dealing with perpetrators of intimate partner violence. [[HL13559](#)]

Lord Bethell: The information is not held in the format requested. All healthcare staff must undertake mandatory safeguarding training that enable staff to effectively safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Michael Smith

*Asked by **Lord Judd***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United Arab Emirates about the (1) continued detention, and (2) treatment, of Michael Smith; and when they last made any such representations. [[HL13458](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Embassy Dubai sent a Note Verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in August 2019 to clarify the terms of Mr Smith's continued detention. The FCDO Director of Consular Services also raised Mr Smith's detention in August 2019. We continue to speak with the local authorities regarding Mr Smith's welfare. Consular staff most recently spoke to the prison doctor on 28 January 2021.

Consular staff work incredibly hard and do all they can to assist people who ask for our help. We offer tailored support based on an assessment of a person's specific needs and circumstances.

Muslim Brotherhood Review

*Asked by **Lord Marlesford***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish in full the internal review of the Muslim Brotherhood commissioned in April 2014; what assessment they have made of the conclusions contained in the summary report Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings (HC 679), published in December 2015, that the Muslim Brotherhood

represents a "revolutionary challenge towards established states" and has "been contrary to national interests and national security"; and what plans they have to undertake a further review of the Muslim Brotherhood. [[HL13600](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There are no plans to publish the internal review into the Muslim Brotherhood. Our assessment of the Muslim Brotherhood remains as set out in the summary report published in December 2015.

The UK Government continues to assess the Muslim Brotherhood's activities when appropriate to ensure our position is based on the latest information available and we will consider action against the review's commitments if and where legal thresholds are met.

Myanmar: Arms Trade

*Asked by **Baroness Cox***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to advocate for a global arms embargo on the military regime in Myanmar. [[HL13577](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a longstanding supporter of an arms embargo on Myanmar. We are clear that no one should sell arms to the Myanmar military. The UK played a key role in securing and strengthening an EU arms embargo on Myanmar following the 2017 Rohingya crisis. Since we left the EU we have transitioned this into domestic law. The UK autonomous Myanmar sanctions regulations prohibit the provision of military related services, including the provision of technical assistance, to or for the benefit of the Tatmadaw. We will work closely with partners to put pressure on those who sell arms to Myanmar.

Myanmar: Human Rights

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Worcester***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to convene a Special Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council to address the human rights situation in Myanmar. [[HL13548](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK worked quickly after the coup, in conjunction with the EU, to convene a Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 12 February. We secured a resolution, agreed by consensus, which called for the immediate and unconditional release of all persons arbitrarily detained in Myanmar, and the lifting of the state of emergency. During this session, the UK read a statement submitted by elected Myanmar MPs, calling for support and an investigation into human rights violations.

As a champion of the rules based international order, and democratic government, we are driving the international response, including in our role as President of both the G7 and UNSC, urging the military to immediately hand back power to the Government that was democratically elected in November 2020.

Myanmar: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in response to the escalation in military offences in Karen State, Burma, which has resulted in the reported displacement of over 5,000 civilians. [[HL13389](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK strongly condemns the repeated violations of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement by the Tatmadaw in Kayin State. We raised this at the Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 12 February. The UK is currently providing humanitarian support to the around 5,000 displaced civilians in Kayin State through our partners, The Border Consortium and Danish Church Aid. There are continuing access constraints because the Myanmar military is reportedly blocking access. UK aid supports 158,000 displaced, conflict affected people and refugees in the Southeast and Thai Border. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

Myanmar: Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to respond to appeals for the urgent delivery of cross-border humanitarian assistance in Burma. [[HL13388](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK aid provides life-saving humanitarian assistance to around 460,000 conflict affected and displaced people in Myanmar and on the Thai border. We are concerned about the impact of recent fighting in Northern Shan and Karen State on civilian populations, and the increased vulnerability of internally displaced people as a result of COVID. We provide support through a range of partners including Danish Church Aid, The Border Consortium, Joint Strategy Team partners and Health Poverty Action to reach highly vulnerable people. We are closely monitoring the impact of the recent military coup including supply routes to ensure this support reaches those in most need.

Myanmar: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to implement targeted sanctions against military-owned enterprises in Burma. [[HL13390](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is looking at a range of measures to ensure the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar are respected. On 18 February, we announced the immediate imposition of asset freezes and travel bans against three members of the Myanmar military regime for their role in serious human rights violations during the coup. Prior to this, the UK had already imposed targeted sanctions on 16 individuals

responsible for human rights violations in Myanmar. This includes the Commander-in-Chief and his Deputy.

The military's influence is pervasive across Myanmar's economy and we have long been clear that Myanmar needs responsible investors. Her Majesty's Government works closely with UK businesses to ensure that they conduct thorough due diligence to try and avoid exposure to military businesses. We will continue to work closely with international partners on next steps, this includes exploring further sanctions.

North Korea: Prisons

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of North Korea has ordered the capacity of its prison camps to be expanded. [[HL13644](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned about the appalling human rights situation in the DPRK. We are aware of reports that the North Korean government has ordered the expansion of political prison camps in the country. We are unable to verify this activity but the UK remains clear that the DPRK must address the many reports of serious and wide-ranging human rights violations in North Korea, including the arbitrary detention of its citizens. That is why in July 2020, the UK designated two DPRK entities through the Global Human Rights (GHR) sanctions regime, including the Ministry of State Security Bureau 7 and Ministry of People's Security Correctional Bureau, which together are responsible for the country's notorious prison camp system. The UK continues to urge improvements in the DPRK human rights situation, and regularly raises these concerns, including on prison camps, in international fora and directly with the DPRK authorities.

Northern Ireland Government

Asked by Lord Caine

To ask Her Majesty's Government what outstanding legislative commitments they have for Northern Ireland in respect of the New Decade, New Approach Agreement 2020, published on 8 January 2020; and when they expect that these will be fulfilled. [[HL13693](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Good progress has been made in implementing the New Decade, New Approach deal, despite the huge challenge posed by the ongoing public health crisis.

The UK Government has released over £555 million of the £2billion of funding agreed in the deal, and has delivered multiple commitments including appointing a Veterans Commissioner, launching the Shared History Fund as part of our programme to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland, and establishing the governance structures that underpin NDNA. On 24 February, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland signed the Heads of Terms on the Derry/Londonderry and Strabane City

Deal that will deliver tangible benefits to the North West and the whole of Northern Ireland.

The UK Government is working to deliver the next tranche of our commitments, such as progressing legislation on the sustainability of the institutions and reforms to the Petition of Concern mechanism.

Occupied Territories: International Criminal Court

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take in response to the ruling by the International Criminal Court on 5 February that it has territorial jurisdiction over the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. [[HL13569](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We respect the independence of the ICC, and we expect it to exercise due prosecutorial and judicial discipline.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Jay of Paddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role they see for (1) UK and other international volunteers, and (2) the mobilisation of community and national volunteers within ODA-recipient countries, in the delivery of the UK's development goals. [[HL13594](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government understands the unique contribution volunteers can make to sustainable development, including the FCDO's seven priority areas. During the Covid-19 response, our Volunteering for Development (V4D) programme has demonstrated the utility of local community and national volunteers, who can mobilise as first responders even where national and international travel is restricted.

The UK Government was pleased to fund the Global Standard for Volunteering, launched in 2019, which sets a useful benchmark for how volunteers can be deployed in a responsible, effective and safe way.

Overseas Aid: Voluntary Organisations

Asked by Baroness Jay of Paddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to deliver the next phase of the Volunteering for Development programme. [[HL13596](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce our aid budget. We are now working through the implications of these changes for individual programmes, including for the Volunteering for Development grant. No decisions have yet been made.

Palestinians: Textbooks

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by the governments of Canada and Australia to investigate their contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency because of its reported use of inciteful material in educational textbooks; and what plans they have to establish their own investigation. [[HL13578](#)]

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority, following the publication of the report by IMPACT-se Review of UNRWA-Produced Study Materials in the Palestinian Territories, published in January, which found the reported use of inciteful material in educational textbooks used by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Gaza Strip and West Bank schools. [[HL13579](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the IMPACT-se report and have contacted United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) regarding this issue. We understand that once the issue was identified, UNRWA introduced additional quality assurance processes and will continue to develop new systems to ensure lessons taught by UNRWA are in line with UN values. The UK Government strongly condemns all forms of violence and incitement to violence and will continue to monitor UNRWA's implementation of its curriculum framework and self-learning materials to ensure lessons taught by UNRWA are in line with UN values. We use a variety of tools to monitor the UNRWA performance and ensure it continues to deliver quality services including via programme monitoring and annual assessments. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for peace.

Petition of Concern

Asked by Lord Caine

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many reports on the operation of the Petition of Concern process in the Northern Ireland Assembly have been laid before both Houses of Parliament, in accordance with the commitment in Annex A of the New Decade, New Approach Agreement 2020, published on 8 January 2020, to lay such reports every six months. [[HL13694](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The [second report](#) on the operation of the Petition of Concern process was published on 12 January 2021. It recorded that no Petitions of Concern have been lodged in respect of any motion in the Assembly since the [previous report](#) on 16

July 2020, and indeed, since the Executive was formed on 11 January 2020. The next report will deal with the period from 10 January 2021 to 11 July 2021.

Prisons: Body Searches

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow female prisoners to be searched by officers who have transitioned to female, or those who have indicated that they identify as female. [HL13570]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The national policy on the searching of prisoners (PSI 07/2016 – Searching of the Person) is currently under review and a revised version is intended to be published later this year.

The updated policy will include direction on transgender staff conducting searches. This will consider the position of staff with or without a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

In reviewing the policy, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has consulted with the Government's Legal Department and HMPPS Equalities Team. The new policy will be compliant with the Equality Act 2010, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the European Convention of Human Rights.

Public Sector: Internet

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to monitor the public sector's compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018; and what have been the findings of any compliance monitoring exercises so far. [HL13614]

Lord True: The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations, came into force in September 2018. They aim to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users.

In May 2020, Government Digital Service (GDS) began monitoring a sample of public sector websites using a combination of automated and manual audits. GDS also monitors websites where complaints have been sent to the Equality Advisory and Support Service and the Equalities Commission for Northern Ireland.

More information on how GDS monitors the accessibility of public sector organisations websites can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-website-and-mobile-application-accessibility-monitoring>.

GDS is creating an independent group of stakeholders consisting of organisations who represent the interests of users with a wide range of access needs to help aid GDS's accessibility monitoring duty as well as ensuring that

website users and the wider accessibility community's views are heard.

Pupils: Coronavirus

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include (1) social, (2) emotional, and (3) spiritual development, in the help being offered to primary school children to catch up on missed education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL13405]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review how a pupil's progress in education is assessed; and what consideration they have given to including social, emotional and spiritual development alongside academic attainment. [HL13406]

Baroness Berridge: We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe, to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. As a result, all schools must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The statutory relationships and health education curriculum includes teaching about mental wellbeing. The topic covers how to talk about emotions accurately and sensitively, the benefits and importance of physical exercise and community activities on mental wellbeing and happiness, and where and how to seek support if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing. A significant contribution towards developing primary school children's social, emotional and spiritual development is also made by school ethos, effective relationships throughout the school.

The department has committed £1.7 billion additional funding to date to help pupils recover from the recent disruption they have experienced: £1 billion in June 2020, including a £650 million premium for schools, and a further £700 million in February 2021 to provide additional funding through a Recovery Premium, summer schools, expansion of tutoring programmes and early language support.

This new one-off Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, will be provided to schools to use as they see best to support disadvantaged pupils. To help schools use this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation has published a support guide for schools with evidence-based approaches to catch up and a further school planning guide, which are available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/#nav-covid-19-support-guide-for-schools1> and

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/guide-to-supporting-schools-planning/>.

The guidance is clear that interventions, including those focused on aspects of education such as behaviour or pupils' social and emotional needs, are likely to be important to support those who have fallen furthest behind. Summer schools can also be effective in improving wellbeing, including through providing a mix of enrichment activities alongside academic content.

We have commissioned a mixed-methods research study that will examine schools' recovery approaches to lost time in education as a result of COVID-19. This research will deliver an understanding of how schools are assessing the scale of any attainment loss, how the catch-up funding is being used, and the approaches schools are taking to catch pupils up – alongside any barriers/success factors to these approaches. The study will also assess how schools are helping pupils recover from any wellbeing or behavioural loss that may have occurred as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

To provide further support during the autumn and spring terms, the department has worked with our partners, the Department of Health and Social Care, Health Education England, Public Health England and key voluntary sector organisations, to launch Wellbeing for Education Return. This project, backed by £8 million, will train local experts to provide additional training, advice and resources to schools and colleges to help support pupil and student wellbeing, resilience and recovery.

Religious Freedom

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Worcester

To ask Her Majesty's Government which countries are observers to the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance. [HL13550]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are three categories of participation in the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (Alliance): Members, Observers, and Friends. Members are states which have joined the Alliance and are invited to participate at Ministerial level during the annual Ministers' Forum; Observers are organisations, institutions, or entities which actively advance freedom of religion or belief globally; and, Friends are states or organisations that are considering joining or becoming observers.

The current Members are Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Estonia, The Gambia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Togo, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States; the current Friends are Canada, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and Sweden; the current Observers are the Sovereign Order of Malta and

the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Worcester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance established by the government of the United States. [HL13551]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a founder and active member of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance ('Alliance'), which was established in February 2020.

The Alliance is a network of countries committed to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). As the Minister of State response for Human Rights, I represented the UK at the first Ministers' Forum of the Alliance in November 2020. Following her appointment in December 2020, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB, Fiona Bruce MP, represents the UK at meetings of the Alliance. We use our membership to coordinate advocacy with other states to raise awareness of cases of particular concern and advocate for the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted for their faith or belief. Since its launch, the Alliance has increased its membership from 27 to 32 countries. In August 2020, the UK joined a statement (<https://www.state.gov/covid-19-and-religious-minorities-pandemic-statement/>) by the Alliance which recognised the impact of Covid-19 on minority and religious belief communities and called for the full respect for FoRB during the pandemic.

Schools: Counselling

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of counsellors in schools have specialist training in (1) assisting young victims of intimate partner violence, and (2) dealing with perpetrators of intimate partner violence. [HL13558]

Baroness Berridge: The Department for Education does not collect data on the specialist training of counsellors working in schools. It is up to schools decide what support to offer to pupils, depending on their circumstances. To support the provision of counselling support in schools, the Department published a blueprint for school counselling services. This provides schools with practical, evidence based advice, informed by schools and counselling experts, on how to deliver high quality school based counselling and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

The guidance reflects the importance of using qualified and experienced counsellors and strongly advises that counsellors should have a diploma and be on an Accredited Voluntary Register. The precise qualifications held will depend on the role being carried out by the

counsellor and how what they do fits with wider school support.

Headteachers and governing bodies are responsible for making decisions about how best to educate staff on their school's responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection. All staff should undergo safeguarding and child protection training. This training should be in line with advice from the local three safeguarding partners, considering the specific needs of individual schools. In addition, designated safeguarding leads have a duty to ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection and procedures.

Schools should consider reflecting domestic abuse in this training. The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance also makes it clear that if a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care immediately and, if appropriate, the police. The guidance includes an annex providing additional information on specific types of harm and abuse and additional information for staff on identifying and responding to domestic abuse. The guidance sets out that all schools should have an effective child protection policy.

The founders of Operation Encompass, an information sharing, safeguarding initiative between police and schools, have set up a teachers' helpline to assist staff in educational settings to support children who may be experiencing domestic abuse. Currently funded by the Home Office, with contribution from the Department for Education, the helpline is available weekdays from 8am to 1pm during term-time. It is manned by educational psychologists who can offer support and guidance to teachers, to help them to better understand the effect of domestic abuse on a child and to discuss strategies to help support the child during the school day. Further information about the helpline and resources for teachers are available here:

<https://www.operationencompass.org/school-participation/resources-for-teachers>.

Self-employed: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to support self-employed workers to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL13685]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has announced that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and fifth grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS continues to be one of the most generous income COVID support schemes for the self-employed in the world.

Individuals will be able to qualify for the new grants based on their 2019-20 tax returns. This means that over 600,000 self-employed individuals may be newly eligible

for the SEISS, including many new to self-employment in 2019-20.

The fourth SEISS grant will be worth 80% of average trading profits. The fifth and final SEISS grant providing support in the summer will include a turnover test (similar to those in operation in other countries' schemes) to ensure that the most generous support is targeted at those who most need it.

Through this crisis, the Government will spend over £33 billion supporting those in self-employment through the SEISS.

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the support available. The temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance has been extended for six months, and the Government has decided to extend the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for three months to the end of July 2021, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may have access to other elements of the package, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

Shellfish: Consumption

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage consumption of British shellfish in (1) hospitals, (2) schools, and (3) other public institutions. [HL13636]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government will always champion greater consumption of our excellent British food and drink, including seafood, within public sector settings. The Government's public sector food procurement mandatory and best practice guidance, including the Balanced Scorecard and Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF), encourages the procurement of UK seasonal and locally produced food.

Defra will be consulting on a refreshed version of the GBSF this summer. We will be seeking views on how the standards could be used to promote even greater uptake of locally produced food by public procurers and their suppliers.

Defra is also working closely with the Crown Commercial Service to develop the Future Food Framework which will create significant new opportunities for small businesses to contribute to regional public sector bodies. The trial will include a focus on local fisheries as one of the key food categories. The pilot is due to launch in the South West in 2022 with a national rollout planned for 2023.

Defra is also partnering with Seafish (the public body that supports the UK seafood industry) to encourage greater domestic consumption of seafood, to support and enhance our domestic fishing industry. The Love Seafood campaign will run throughout this spring and will

promote the wide range of fish and shellfish caught in UK waters.

Shellfish: Exports

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to compensate people who (1) harvest, and (2) sell, oysters whose businesses have been affected by the EU restrictions on importing UK shellfish. [[HL13635](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There is no scientific or technical justification for the European Commission banning the import of Live Bivalve Molluscs (LBMs), including oysters, from class B waters. We are seeking urgent resolution on the European Commission's decision.

In England funding is available through the Maritime and Fisheries Fund for applications from seafood businesses looking to adapt their businesses to new requirements. This includes oyster harvesters and sellers looking to adapt their business models. In England, this funding is delivered by the Marine Management Organisation. Seafood businesses in the rest of the UK should contact their fisheries administrations to see what development support may be available to them.

The Seafood Response Scheme is not specifically focused at mitigating the issues resulting from EU restrictions on LBM trade. Oyster farming/harvesting businesses that meet the eligibility criteria will, however, be eligible to apply.

Small Businesses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by Hiscox The Hiscox Business Demystified Survey Challenges for UK SMEs - 2020 and beyond, published on 4 January. [[HL13623](#)]

Lord Callanan: We have noted the Hiscox report and recognise the concerns it highlights that are faced by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), including access to finance, employee retention, and access to mental health support for employees.

The Government has implemented a range of measures to mitigate the immediate economic impacts of the covid-19 pandemic, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Additionally, as of the end of January 2021, over 12 million people and jobs have been protected to a sum of around £65 billion.

The loan schemes were launched at the beginning of the pandemic, and will close on 31 March 2021. A Successor Loan Scheme will be launched soon after to support additional lending.

We continue to engage with SMEs across the UK both directly and through the Business Representative Organisations such as the FSB, the CBI and Make UK.

Through GOV.UK's Coronavirus support for business webpages, we are signposting mental health resources for businesses and employers, including Mind's website and the Mental Health at Work toolkit.

In terms of wider support for businesses as restrictions ease, we continue to encourage businesses to access the free and tailored support available through our core services including GOV.UK, the FREEPHONE Business Support Helpline, and the network of 38 Growth Hubs operating in England.

Small Businesses: Loans

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of small businesses to obtain finance from banks that is not underwritten by the government. [[HL13622](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government continues to engage with UK Finance, the Bank of England, and the wider banking sector, to encourage the flow of finance to UK businesses.

The Government continues to publish free information and advice on business finance outside the business interruption loans – including finance available from a variety of sources such as private funds and investors, and not only those guaranteed by Government. This can be found online on GOV.UK, through the business finance finder, through the network of Growth Hubs in England, and through the free Business Support Helpline.

The Government has provided an unprecedented level of support to protect the UK economy through the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the business interruption loan schemes. The business interruption loans will close on 31 March and the new Recovery Loan Scheme will launch on 6 April and run until 31 December 2021, subject to review.

Social Enterprises: Finance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase financial support for social enterprises. [[HL13772](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Government has provided an unprecedented multi billion pound package of support, allowing social enterprises and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, to continue their vital work during the Covid-19 outbreak

The funding includes furlough payments, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and direct funding to the charity and social enterprise sector through the £750m sector support package, £150m release of dormant assets. The impact of the funding will continue beyond the life of the grants with equipment purchased still being used and service adaptations still benefiting people across the country.

Social Media: Press

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the introduction of a mandatory news media bargaining code by the government of Australia, what plans they have, if any, to introduce legislation to compel social media companies to pay for news content taken from other news outlets. [[HL13656](#)]

Baroness Barran: The UK government is committed to supporting the sustainability of trusted journalism.

We have announced plans to introduce a new code of conduct to govern the relationships between powerful online platforms and the businesses which depend on them. It will cover the relationships between publishers and platforms to ensure they are fair, and help support the sustainability of the press. The code will be overseen by a new Digital Markets Unit and we will consider all options as we consult on its form and function later this year. No decisions have yet been taken.

We are also engaging with the Australian government to develop our understanding of the progress they are making, and are closely monitoring the reaction from both publishers and platforms.

Social Services: Consultation Papers

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the publication of the social care green paper has been delayed since March 2017; whether that paper remains a Government priority; if not, why not; and when they estimate that paper to be published. [[HL10487](#)]

Lord Bethell: During the pandemic, the Government's priority for adult social care is to ensure that people get the care they need and are protected from COVID-19. We are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and to find long term solutions for one of the biggest challenges we face as a society.

Sri Lanka: War Crimes

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have supplied any (1) redacted, or (2) unredacted, copies of despatches written by Lieutenant Colonel Gash, the former defence attaché of the British High Commission in Sri Lanka about events in that country between 1 January and 18 May 2009 relating to the civil war to (a) the UK representative in the Chair of the UN Core Group on Sri Lanka, and (b) to the other country representatives on the UN Core Group on Sri Lanka. [[HL13478](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has not received a request from any UN Human Rights Council mechanism for copies of despatches written by

the former defence attaché Lieutenant Colonel Gash, and has no plans to provide any.

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they notified the UN Human Rights Council about the existence of despatches written by Lieutenant Colonel Gash, the former defence attaché of the British High Commission in Sri Lanka about events in that country between 1 January and 18 May 2009 relating to the civil war; and if so, when. [[HL13479](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has not received a request from any UN Human Rights Council mechanism for copies of despatches written by the former defence attaché Lieutenant Colonel Gash, and has no plans to provide any.

St Helena: Capital Investment

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the government of St Helena Strategic Plan for the SHG Capital Programme 2020-2030, published on 12 May; and what plans they have to draw up a new compact to change their relationship with that government from a donor-recipient to a development partnership. [[HL13599](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The St Helena Strategic Plan for the St Helena Government's Capital Programme 2020-2030 has helped shape UK Government's funding of a multiyear capital investment programme. The UK Government continues to work with St Helena to build a strong a partnership this including: jointly agreeing priority capital investments; support with governance reform and continued COVID 19 support which includes ongoing deliveries of personal protective equipment, testing equipment and a supply of vaccines for the adult population.

St Helena: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist the government of St Helena to improve its economy. [[HL13598](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to provide funding for a range of activities that assists St Helena Government improve the local economy. UK Government's funding makes up over 70% of St Helena's budget and therefore has a significant impact on the economy and local revenues generated. The UK Government is also funding infrastructure projects in St Helena under an Economic Development Investment Programme (EDIP) to support the island's economic development and improve opportunities for the local private sector. Current projects include the development of a container port at Rupert's Bay. This year, the UK Government provided an additional funding to St Helena's

budget Government to protect the economy from the impacts of COVID 19.

Sudan: Refugees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that over 60,000 refugees have left Ethiopia and entered Sudan following conflict in Darfur, what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) this does not destabilise Sudan, and (2) access to humanitarian aid is not affected. [HL13383]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The conflict in Tigray has had significant consequences and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, as well as impacting those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia and Sudan. During his visit the Foreign Secretary commended Sudan's leaders for their efforts to press for a peaceful resolution to the situation and for their support for refugees entering Sudan from Ethiopia. The UK has provided an additional £5 million in funding to the UN Human Rights Council and the Danish Refugee Council to address urgent needs arising from the Tigray crisis in Sudan. We continue to engage the Government of Sudan and the region on the need to find a peaceful resolution.

As a leading donor to Sudan, the UK is providing £125 million in economic and humanitarian assistance this financial year that is helping with stability and efforts to improve the lives of ordinary Sudanese. On 21 January the Foreign Secretary visited Sudan and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to support Sudan's democratic transition, including via £40 million funding to the Sudan Family Support Programme that will help with much needed economic reforms. The Foreign Secretary also visited a World Food Programme nutrition centre in Sudan, where he saw first-hand the vital role that UK aid is playing in helping those most in need of humanitarian assistance with the provision of life-saving food assistance to vulnerable communities.

Supply Teachers: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether supply teachers who are registered to work with a number of different supply agencies can receive payments through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and if so, how. [HL13619]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Where a supply teacher is supplied via an agency and paid through PAYE, they would be eligible to be furloughed and receive support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme provided that the remaining eligibility criteria are met.

Furlough should be agreed between the agency, as the deemed employer, and the worker. It is advised that the

need to furlough should be discussed with the end client involved.

Supply teachers are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme in the same way as other employees. If they hold multiple employment contracts, they are able to receive support from the scheme from multiple employers.

Supply teachers can be furloughed by one employer and continue to work for another. If they are furloughed by more than one employer, they will receive separate payments from each employer. Each employer can claim up to 80% grant for the hours not worked by an employee, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month.

The decision to furlough an employee, fully or flexibly, is entirely at the employer's discretion.

During this period of restricted pupil attendance, schools have remained open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, and remote education has been in place for other pupils. Schools have continued to engage supply staff where they have been needed to support either face to face or remote education.

Temporary Employment: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on putting in place reciprocal arrangements allowing exemptions from visa requirements for UK citizens to perform short-term paid work in EU countries in return for similar exemptions for EU citizens coming to the UK. [HL13553]

Lord Callanan: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) already includes measures for short-term business visitors, who can perform a list of 11 activities without requiring a work-permit, subject to a limited number of Member State reservations. EU Member States may allow more activities without a work-permit than those specified in the agreement. This will vary country to country.

Visa-free travel is not usually part of Free Trade Agreements, although the UK and EU both allow visa-free visits in their domestic laws. EU nationals can visit the UK for up to 6 months and perform a wide range of business activities (which can be found under the 'Permitted Activities' of the Immigration Rules). UK nationals can visit the EU for 90 days in every 180 days and also perform a range of visitor activities, although these will vary from Member State to Member State.

Trade Agreements

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Grimstone of Boscobel on 22 February (HL13173), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, further to the UK's departure from the EU, with which countries they have signed continuity trade agreements. [HL13586]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: We have secured trade agreements with 65 countries, plus the EU, covering £890 billion of trade in 2019, equivalent to 63% of the United Kingdom's total trade.

On 2nd March, HM Government signed a Trade Partnership Agreement with Ghana.

Some countries with which we have signed agreements have not been able to bring the agreement into effect or have not been able to do so fully. They are in the process of completing the final necessary steps to allow the agreements to enter into effect fully. This is the case for Canada, Jordan and Mexico.

We have set out on GOV.UK the signed agreements that entered into effect on 1st January and have published advice for those agreements that are not in place fully. The link can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries>.

Turkey: Russia

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the establishment of a Turkish–Russian joint monitoring centre in Aghdam. [HL13445]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the 10 November peace deal, and is closely following developments including the establishment of the joint monitoring centre. We continue to urge the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage with the OSCE Minsk Group to settle all outstanding matters; both Russia and Turkey are members of this group.

Turkey: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose targeted sanctions against (1) ministers of the government of Turkey, and (2) commanders of the Turkish Armed Forces, for any breaches of international law. [HL13593]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We do not speculate about possible future sanctions designations. We regularly raise human rights concerns with the Turkish government at Ministerial and senior official level. We will continue to encourage Turkey to adopt reforms, such as the next phase of the current reform process aimed at strengthening the role of the judiciary, and to sustain democracy, respect the rule of law and protect fundamental freedoms, in line with its international commitments.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the first Type 26 frigate was ordered; when the first steel was cut; what is the planned launch date of that frigate; and

when it is expected to be accepted into service by the Royal Navy. [HL13634]

Baroness Goldie: The £3.7 billion contract to manufacture the first batch of three Type 26 Frigates was awarded in June 2017 and steel cut on the first ship, HMS GLASGOW, in July 2017.

I have interpreted the Noble Lord's use of the term 'launch date' to mean when HMS GLASGOW will be in the water. On current plans, HMS GLASGOW will be floated-up in BAE System's Govan shipyard in the second half of 2022 and then transferred to its Scotstoun shipyard. There, she will be fitted-out with complex weapons and other systems. After completion of sea trials and Royal Navy training and preparations, she is currently expected to enter service in 2027.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by the British Chamber of Commerce on Brexit, published on 11 February; and what plans they have to allow small businesses to write off additional customs costs as a result of the UK–EU Trade Cooperation Agreement, against their tax bill. [HL13621]

Lord Frost: The nature of our new relationship with the EU - outside the Single Market and Customs Union - does mean that there are practical and procedural changes that businesses need to adjust to.

We continue to work closely with sectors across the economy and all parts of the UK to support businesses in adapting to our new trading relationship with the EU and to continue to successfully compete on the global stage. The Government is providing £20 million to support small and medium businesses in adjusting to new customs, rules of origin, and VAT rules when trading with the EU. Ministers across government have been speaking directly to hundreds of businesses large and small across the country, including through the Business Brexit Task Force to develop a shared vision and plan for the future.

Visas: Migrant Workers

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Permitted Paid Engagement visa route limits a professional's stay in the UK to up to one month; and what plans they have to extend the duration of its validity to 90 days. [HL13572]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Permitted Paid Engagement visitor route allows professionals in several sectors, including the creative sector, to enter the UK for up to one month to undertake permitted paid engagements, where they have been invited by a UK-based organisation and without the need to apply through the sponsored work routes.

Those wishing to undertake longer periods of engagement in the UK may use the T5 Creative concession, which allows non-visa nationals to enter the UK for up to three months without applying for a visa in advance, provided they have a Certificate of Sponsorship. For anyone wishing to remain in the UK for up to 12 months, the full T5 Creative route is also available.

We will continue to keep our policy under close review, including through wide engagement and dialogue with stakeholders from a range of sectors.

West Bank: Demolition

Asked by Baroness Hussein-Ece

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the (1) attempted removal, and (2) confiscation of property, of the residents of Khirbet Humsahin by that government. [[HL13592](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions in Humsa Al Baqai'a on 5 February 2021. The UK Ambassador joined the Ambassadors of European states on 25 February in a meeting with Israeli Authorities, urging the Government of Israel to cease demolitions and allow access of humanitarian support to the community in Humsa Al Baqai'a. At the UN Security Council on 26 February, the UK Permanent Representative called on Israel to allow the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid for those who have had their homes demolished or confiscated. We also joined European UN Security Council members in delivering a specific statement on this issue following the Middle East Peace Process session. Officials from the British Consulate General Jerusalem visited Humsa Al-Baqai'a on 6 November to reiterate UK support for the community.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1

Covid-19: Children's Social Care.....	1
Covid-19: Industrial Development Act 1982	3
National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists.....	3
Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Home Office Measures.....	4
Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Ministry of Justice Measures.....	5
Tackling Intimidation in Public Life	6

Written Answers.....8

Afghanistan: Politics and Government.....	8
Armed Conflict: Explosives	8
Armed Forces: Cadets	8
Armenia: Azerbaijan	8
Asia Bibi.....	9
Asylum: Napier Barracks	9
Broadband: Small Businesses.....	9
Companies: Environment Protection.....	10
Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.....	10
Coronavirus: Death.....	10
Coronavirus: Museums and Galleries.....	12
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....	12
Corporation Tax: Tax Rates and Bands.....	13
Creative Europe: Culture.....	13
Cyprus: Politics and Government.....	13
Dance and Theatre: Insurance	13
Domestic Abuse	14
Elections	14
Entertainers: EU Countries.....	15
Eritrea: Refugees	16
Ethiopia: Eritrea.....	16
Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid	16
Ethiopia: Overseas Aid.....	16
Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations.....	16
Fire Safety Bill	17

Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria.....	17
Hospitals: Coronavirus	17
International Citizen Service	17
Iraq: Kurds.....	17
Kashmir: Diplomatic Service	18
Languages: Education.....	18
Latifa bint Mohammed al-Maktoum	18
Leah Sharib.....	18
Liverpool City Council.....	18
Local Government: Cumbria	19
Marine Protected Areas: South Atlantic Ocean.	19
Mayors	19
Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	20
Michael Smith.....	20
Muslim Brotherhood Review	20
Myanmar: Arms Trade	20
Myanmar: Human Rights	20
Myanmar: Internally Displaced People	21
Myanmar: Overseas Aid.....	21
Myanmar: Sanctions	21
North Korea: Prisons	21
Northern Ireland Government.....	21
Occupied Territories: International Criminal Court	22
Overseas Aid.....	22
Overseas Aid: Voluntary Organisations	22
Palestinians: Textbooks	22
Petition of Concern.....	22
Prisons: Body Searches	23
Public Sector: Internet	23
Pupils: Coronavirus	23
Religious Freedom.....	24
Schools: Counselling	24
Self-employed: Coronavirus.....	25

Index to Statements and Answers

Shellfish: Consumption	25
Shellfish: Exports	26
Small Businesses	26
Small Businesses: Loans	26
Social Enterprises: Finance	26
Social Media: Press	27
Social Services: Consultation Papers	27
Sri Lanka: War Crimes	27
St Helena: Capital Investment	27
St Helena: Overseas Aid.....	27
Sudan: Refugees	28
Supply Teachers: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	28
Temporary Employment: EU Countries.....	28
Trade Agreements	28
Turkey: Russia.....	29
Turkey: Sanctions.....	29
Type 26 Frigates: Procurement	29
UK Trade with EU.....	29
Visas: Migrant Workers	29
West Bank: Demolition	30