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**Monday
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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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

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Written Statements

Monday, 15 March 2021

Future Trading Relationship with Australia

[HLWS839]

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

The fourth round of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with Australia took place between Monday 22 February and Friday 5 March. During the two weeks, negotiators held 51 negotiation sessions, covering 27 different chapter areas. In total, we have had 170 sessions since launching negotiations in July 2020.

Both the negotiation teams shared text and additional proposals before the round, including on Digital, Labour and Technical Barriers to Trade, allowing negotiators to enhance their substantive conversations. From this, negotiators were able to build mutual understanding, and make further progress consolidating texts in most chapter areas. Focused engagement has enabled negotiators to provisionally identify shared ambition and remaining points of divergence to work through ahead of the next round.

Good progress has been made in areas including Customs, Rules of Origin, and Professional Services. The majority of text has been agreed in chapters on Good Regulatory Practice, as well as Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises. Development in the latter reflects the commitment of both Australia and the UK to ensuring businesses of all sizes can benefit from the FTA.

Some text was agreed in cross-border trade in services. Negotiators were also able to hold technical discussions on mobility, international maritime transport services, express delivery services and domestic regulation.

Meanwhile, progress was also made on Procurement and Digital, with parts of the text agreed. In addition, there were productive discussions on the Innovation chapter.

Discussions were taken forward on Investment, where we hope to include provisions which further enhance our strong bilateral relationship, building on the UK's position as second largest direct investor in Australia and the second largest recipient of Australian Foreign Direct Investment in 2019.

The Australia and UK negotiation teams have also planned an intensive period of intersessional discussions in the coming weeks to continue this momentum ahead of a fifth round of talks.

Below is a summary list of the areas discussed in the round, which continued to take place by video conference:

- Anti-Corruption
- Competition
- Customs and Trade Facilitation

- Development
- Digital/e-commerce
- Environment & Clean Growth
- Financial Services
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Innovation
- Intellectual Property
- Investment
- Labour
- Legal and Institutional provisions
- Government Procurement
- Rules of Origin
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- Services, including movement of natural persons, professional services, international maritime transport services and delivery services.
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State-to-State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Telecommunications
- Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment
- Trade in Goods
- Transparency

Any deal the UK Government agrees will be fair and balanced and in the best interests of the whole of the UK. As we will in all negotiations, we remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in our trade agreement with Australia, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

[HLWS841]

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:

I am pleased to announce Mr David Neal's appointment as the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. The appointment has been made in accordance with the UK Borders Act 2007 and in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, following a fair and open competition. The appointment will be for a fixed term of three years. Mr Neal will take up post on 22 March 2021.

David Neal was appointed by HM The Queen as the Provost Marshal (Army) and commanded the 1st Military Police Brigade from 2016 until 2019. He led the Royal Military Police through major reforms including the Service Justice System Review, and was responsible for

Operation Northmoor, the Royal Military Police investigation into allegations of illegal killings by British troops in Afghanistan.

Local Transport

[HLWS842]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

Today the Government has published “Bus Back Better”, the long-term National Bus Strategy for England outside London.

Our strategy will deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered. The Prime Minister’s announcement of transformational funding (a combined £5 billion for buses, cycling and walking) in February last year demonstrated the Government’s commitment to buses and active travel. Following publication in June 2020 of Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking, today’s publication explains how buses will be transformed.

Buses are our most used form of public transport but, even before Covid-19, they faced challenges. There are pockets of good bus performance outside London, but far too many places have fallen behind. Turning this around is central to this Government’s objectives of reaching net-zero and levelling up.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on buses, as with all transport. It gives urgency to the strategy, but also an opportunity. Dealing with the emergency fostered greater cooperation between bus operators and local authorities, which we can build on. We know that wherever and whenever bus patronage grows, there are bus operators and local government working together to deliver improvements for passengers. We want this for all passengers, and the strategy sets out that we want every local transport authority and bus operator in England to be in a statutory Enhanced Partnership or a franchising arrangement, using existing powers in the Bus Services Act 2017. We will make £25 million available straight away to develop these.

The developing partnerships will be asked to produce robust and ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans by the end of October 2021. We will expect the plans to set out a roadmap to better services for passengers and communities, urban and rural, and be fully informed by local needs.

The strategy also sets out our ambitious roadmap to a zero-emission bus fleet, including a commitment that we will consult on ending the sale of new diesel buses. This will bring buses into line with other vehicles - we have already announced ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

Disabled people rely on bus services more than most and the strategy confirms our continuing commitment to supporting an inclusive transport system. One of the

strategy’s aims is to improve equality of opportunity, particularly for older and disabled people. We want to see improvement plans that drive improvement in accessibility for all. Disabled people should have the confidence to travel when and where they want to, and our plans ensure that bus services play their part in making that possible.

Alongside this, we have also announced today that 17 rural and suburban communities will see an additional investment of £20 million from the Government’s Rural Mobility Fund to trial innovative on-demand services that are able to get closer to where people live and at a time convenient for them – another example of the Government’s work to level-up transport infrastructure across the country.

I am placing a copy of the National Bus Strategy in the Libraries of both Houses.

Single-source Defence Contracts

[HLWS840]

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

I am today announcing that I have set the baseline profit rate for single source defence contracts at 8.31%, in line with the rate recommended by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO). The baseline profit rate is calculated on a three-year rolling average of underlying profit rates. The underlying profit rate decreased from 8.23% for 2020-21 to 8.19% for 2021-22. I have accepted the methodology used by the SSRO to calculate these figures.

In addition to the main rate, I am announcing an additional baseline profit rate of 0.057%. This will only apply to Qualifying Defence Contracts where:

- i. the contract is between Secretary of State and a company incorporated under the Companies Act that is wholly owned by the UK Government; and
- ii. both parties to the contract agree that it should apply.

The intention is that this rate can be used to set Contract Profit Rates at a rate that does not result in such companies making a profit, should it not be appropriate for them to do so. Application of the five further steps set out in Section 17 of the Defence Reform Act 2014 may result in a rate that is slightly different from zero on individual contracts.

Setting this additional rate diverges from the SSRO’s recommendation. The SSRO has welcomed the intention to bring contracts into the regime where it is appropriate that the contractor does not make a profit. This will enable the pricing and transparency provisions of the regulatory framework to be applied to both the contract and relevant subcontracts, which provisions are intended to assist the government to obtain value for money and contractors to be paid fair and reasonable prices.

I am also announcing new Capital Servicing Rates and a SSRO funding adjustment as recommended by the

SSRO, which can be found at Table 1 below. These rates have been published in the London Gazette, as required by the Defence Reform Act 2014.

All of these new rates will come into effect from 1 April 2021.

Table 1: Recommended Rates agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence

Element	2020 rates	2021 rates
Baseline Profit Rate (BPR) (% on contract cost)	8.22%	8.31%
Baseline Profit Rate to apply to contracts between the Secretary of State and a company wholly owned by the UK Government and where both parties agree (% on contract cost)	N/A	0.06%
Fixed Capital Servicing Rate (% on Fixed Capital employed)	3.66%	3.27%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on positive Working Capital employed)	1.22%	1.33%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on negative Working Capital employed)	0.61%	0.65%
SSRO Funding Adjustment		

Written Answers

Monday, 15 March 2021

Absent Voting: Proof of Identity

Asked by *Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow individual local authorities to request that applicants for postal or proxy voting arrangements provide proof of (1) identification, and (2) residence; whether (a) they, or (b) the Electoral Commission, have approved the addition of any such requests to relevant application forms; and what assessment they have made of the impact of such requests on the number of applications to vote by post or proxy. [[HL13766](#)]

Lord True: Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are responsible for processing applications for a postal or proxy vote, and for applying the legislative requirements. Postal or proxy voters must, by law, supply their date of birth and signature at application and again when they return their postal ballot at an election or referendum. The law does not require applicants to verify their identity or address when applying for a postal or proxy vote. EROs do not have the power to reject or refuse an absent vote application if the applicant does not provide additional proof of identity or residence.

British Nationality

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the statelessness of the 150 British nationals who have had their citizenship removed since 2010. [[HL13756](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Section 40(2) of the British Nationality Act 1981 (BNA) allows the Secretary of State to deprive any person of British citizenship, should they deem it conducive to the public good to do so.

In every decision taken under section 40(2), the Secretary of State was satisfied that the individual was a dual national at the point of deprivation and so would not be not left stateless by the decision. This is in accordance with UK's commitments under the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Where a person has acted in a manner which is seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the UK, section 40(4A) of the BNA provides that deprivation can proceed even where it would make a person stateless. To date this power has not been used.

Separate provisions exist where individuals have employed fraud or false representations, these decisions are made under s40(3) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Cabotage: Exemptions

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the new cabotage rules for touring performers and orchestras introduced by the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement; and whether they will provide details of all official meetings held between the UK government and the EU at which those rules have been discussed. [[HL13956](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport's assessment is that the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) allows for the majority of haulage operations that were being undertaken by UK hauliers before the end of the transition period. However, UK operators will not be allowed to undertake more than 2 movements within the EU before returning to the UK. These rules will also apply to specialist hauliers, such as hauliers who carry equipment for touring performers and orchestras.

Alternative arrangements for specialist hauliers were discussed in detail as part of negotiations, including specific proposals for liberalised access, but the EU was unwilling to agree more flexible arrangements. Unfortunately, the Department is not able to release the content of correspondence and records pertaining to the negotiation; these texts are confidential, and it is therefore not appropriate for them to be published.

Care Homes

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current occupancy rates of care homes in England. [[HL13589](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department receives data on spare capacity on a voluntary basis from care homes. However, this data is not sufficiently accurate to provide a comprehensive assessment of national spare capacity.

Care Homes: Sheffield

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Sheffield City Council has instructed care homes in Sheffield not to use COVID-19 lateral flow tests for admitting visitors due to concerns that such tests lack accuracy. [[HL10993](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are aware of reports that Sheffield City Council communicated with care homes about the sensitivity of rapid lateral flow tests. However, the Council issued clear advice in line with national policy on 11 December 2020. The Department continues to engage with local authorities to assure their local recommendations remain aligned to the Department's testing policy.

Child Benefit

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what, if any, assessment they have made of the level at which child benefit would need to be paid to ensure that no more than 100,000 children of single-parent families are in poverty. [HL13739]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made.

This Government champions the principle of work as the best route out of poverty and towards financial independence. Getting parents back to work and supporting them to progress is at the heart of our sustainable approach to tackling child poverty. Our approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risk of child poverty and is underpinned by our Plan for Jobs.

Children: Poverty

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of children who would be living in poverty if their household income fell by (1), £1,000, (2) £2,000, (3) £3,000, (4) £4,000, (5) £5,000, (6) £10,000, (7) £15,000, or (8) £20,000, per annum. [HL13741]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made.

Children's Social Care Independent Review: Staff

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the staff comprising the secretariat of the independent review of children's social care were recruited (1) from within the Department for Education, or (2) externally. [HL13851]

Baroness Berridge: The review team is made up of civil servants from across government, including the Department for Education, and come from a range of backgrounds and disciplines. More information can be found on the independent review of children's social care's website here: <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/people/>.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities have spent the funds allocated to them to support people self-isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic; how many such authorities are refusing new applications; and of those local authorities that are

funding such payments from their own budgets, (1) how much they have spent on such payments, and (2) whether they will be reimbursed for them. [HL12410]

Lord Bethell: We are working closely with all 314 lower tier and unitary local authorities to collate information on how the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is progressing and will release information on the number of applications, successful applications and amounts paid out in due course.

If a local authority has used all of its discretionary funding, it is for that authority to decide whether to accept further applications or whether to use other sources of funding. However, the funding made available to local authorities to make discretionary payments under the scheme has been increased to £20 million per month from March 2021.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they, or their agencies, regularly determine the operational false positive rates for polymerase chain reaction tests carried out at each laboratory undertaking analysis for mass COVID-19 testing; whether they use an 'end to end' method to audit those rates; if not, what methodology they use to make such determinations; and whether those methods include inserting samples into the system that cannot be positive. [HL10846]

Lord Bethell: Currently samples are not placed into the system to test operational sensitivity. The Department has undertaken substantial work with Porton Down and the Milton Keynes Lighthouse Laboratory to conduct temperature and long-term stability experiments on sample collection kits to ensure swabs meet an appropriate standard for testing.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend (1) shielding, and (2) financial support, for immunosuppressed clinically extremely vulnerable people while research into the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines is carried out. [HL13925]

Lord Bethell: The Government is currently advising everyone considered clinically extremely vulnerable to shield and is providing the guidance and support required to enable this until 31 March. This includes financial support such as the free medicines delivery service and eligibility for statutory sick pay and other benefits for those who are unable to work from home. The Government has also extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme until 30 September 2021.

Any decision to extend or end shielding measures will be decided upon by the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers and will be based on the latest scientific

evidence. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks to all clinically extremely vulnerable people outlining the guidance that they should follow beyond 31 March.

Detention Centres

Asked by *Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the role of Detention Gatekeepers in immigration removal centres. [HL13749]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There are no plans to review the role of Detention Gatekeepers in immigration removal centres at this time.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration annually inspects how the Government manages vulnerable persons in detention. Should recommendations be made around the efficacy of the Detention Gatekeeper, they will be considered in line with Governmental priorities.

Detention Centres: Staff

Asked by *Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average salary of a full-time equivalent member of staff in an immigration removal centre. [HL13748]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Home Office staff working in immigration removal centres (IRCs) range from Administrative Officer grade, through to Assistant Director grade (Grade 7). The number of Home Office staff based in IRCs vary at each location depending on the operational requirements of the centre. Home Office structure and salaries transparency data (last updated May 2019) is published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/structure-and-salaries-series>.

The average salary of a full-time equivalent member of staff in an immigration removal centre is not held in a reportable format. To obtain this information would require detailed reporting against multiple cost centres and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs. The Home Office provide standard pay ranges by grade as set out in the table below, as of 1 July 2020:

Grade	National	London Provincial	London
Administrative Officer (AO)	£21,431 (spot rate)	£22,356 (spot rate)	£25,626 (spot rate)
Executive Officer (EO)	£24,883 min, £27,372 max	£25,773 min, £28,349 max	£28,654 min, £31,519 max
Higher Executive Officer (HEO)	£30,817 min, £33,899 max	£32,173 min, £35,389 max	£35,054 min, £38,558 max
Senior Executive Officer (SEO)	£37,450 min, £41,193 max	£39,068 min, £42,973 max	£41,950 min, £46,144 max
Assistant Director (Grade 7)	£52,051 min, £57,254 max	£54,591 min, £60,047 max	£57,434 min, £63,175 max

The Home Office uses private companies to manage immigration removal centres, except Morton Hall which is managed by HM Prison and Probation Service on our behalf. The details of the operating costs for each of these contracts, including staff salaries, is commercially confidential. However, the Home Office publishes payments in excess of £25K on its website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/home-office-spending>

Fisheries

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons for the decline in fish populations, in particular eels, in UK rivers. [HL13776]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Freshwater fisheries and aquaculture policy are devolved in the UK.

In England, the status of fish populations, and reasons for any declines, are assessed through an extensive monitoring programme covering a wide range of species, undertaken by the Environment Agency.

The reasons for the eel's decline are complex and not fully understood but human impacts and oceanic factors are assumed to have major impacts on the stock. These factors will likely affect local production differently throughout the eel's continental range. Human factors may include fisheries (legal and illegal), habitat loss and blockage to migratory pathways, mortalities at hydropower turbines and water pumps, contaminants, non-natives and various climate change factors.

The state of the European eel stock across the UK and the level of man-made impacts are assessed every three years, with a UK report prepared and reported to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for international assessment of this stock. The next report for 2018-2020 is expected later this year.

Fly-tipping

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the two per cent increase in the number of fly-tipping incidents dealt with by local authorities in England in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19; and what plans they have to address fly-tipping. [HL13744]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Fly-tipping is a crime which blights local communities and the environment, and we are committed to tackling this unacceptable behaviour.

We have not made an assessment of the 2019/20 fly-tipping statistics for England published by Defra. A detailed breakdown of the incidents reported by local authorities is however available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england>.

We continue to work with partners to tackle this crime. In recent years we have bolstered local authorities' powers to tackle fly-tipping, such as by introducing the power to issue fixed penalty notices and to stop and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers.

Our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy set out our strategic approach to prevent, detect and deter waste crime. We committed to strengthen sentences for fly-tipping and to develop a fly-tipping toolkit to help local authorities and others work in partnership to tackle this crime. We also committed to increasing penalties for fly-tipping in our manifesto.

Budget 2020 allocated up to £2million to support innovative solutions to tackle fly-tipping. We are exploring funding opportunities and priorities at this stage, including considering the role of digital solutions.

We are also preparing a number of legislative reforms to tackle waste crime, which will help to tackle fly-tipping. We are taking forward the commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to develop proposals for the reform of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime. We are working with industry and the regulator and we intend to consult later this year. We also intend to consult on the introduction of mandatory electronic waste tracking. This will help to ensure that waste is dealt with appropriately and to reduce the incidence of waste crime and fly-tipping.

The Environment Bill also includes several measures to help tackle waste crime. The Bill will ensure agencies and authorities can work more effectively to combat waste crime through better access to evidence and improved powers of entry. These new powers will help ensure waste criminals, such as illegitimate waste operators reliant on fly-tipping for income, are held accountable for their actions.

Football: Gambling

Asked by Lord Smith of Hindhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the introduction of rules by the Betting and Gaming Council aimed at preventing football clubs using social media to promote gambling, what plans they have to ensure other forms of potentially harmful advertising are addressed. [HL13940]

Baroness Barran: My department has been considering how online advertising is regulated through its Online Advertising Programme, and will be consulting on this issue later this year. Our aim is to foster fair, accountable and ethical online advertising that works for citizens, businesses and society as a whole. In particular, we want to ensure standards about the placement and content of advertising can be effectively applied and enforced online so that consumers have limited exposure to harmful or misleading advertising.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8th December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of the broad scope of that Review, we have called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing gambling operators to advertise. The Call for Evidence will remain open until 31 March, and no policy decisions have yet been made. The government intends to set out conclusions, including any proposals for change, in a white paper later this year.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the rates of problem gambling among the professional football community. [HL13958]

Baroness Barran: The Government is aware of research that has suggested professional sports people may be at increased risk of experiencing gambling harm. Employers across all sectors have a duty to look after the welfare of their employees. Footballers can also access support from The Professional Footballers' Association, which provides a 24/7 counselling helpline for past and present members, and Sporting Chance.

The Government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. The Review will be wide-ranging and evidence led and aims to make sure we have the right protections in place to make gambling safer for all.

Gambling: Rehabilitation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include consideration of issues relating to gambling harm in the professional sports community in the development of the cross-Government addiction strategy. [HL13934]

Lord Bethell: Due to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic on departmental resources, work on the cross-Government addiction strategy has been delayed. The scope of the strategy is yet to be determined, with work on this expected to resume later in 2021.

Gaza: Offshore Industry

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Investment Fund, Consolidated Contractors Company and the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company on the development of off-shore gas near Gaza; and what plans they have to contribute UK (1) technical expertise, and (2) funding, to this endeavour. [HL13755]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This issue is being discussed with the parties at international level in the context of how to facilitate a sustainable and long-term solution to the energy crisis in Gaza.

Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Paymaster General on 1 March that "trans men are men and trans women are women", how they intend this phrase be understood. [HL13820]

Lord True: The Ministerial and Other Maternity Allowances Act provides for maternity leave for mothers, irrespective of gender reassignment. We believe that all people should be treated with respect and their rights protected. We also believe in the compatibility of protecting women's rights and the rights of transgender people.

Health Services: Equality

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Health Foundation's report Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review, published in December 2020. [HL13488]

Lord Bethell: We have considered the report and the Government agrees that recovery from COVID-19 must be undertaken in a way that ensures inequalities are addressed. The report will help inform our recovery from the pandemic.

Historic Buildings and Museums and Galleries: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) educational, (2) well-being, and (3) cultural, impact of allowing museums, galleries and heritage buildings to re-open. [HL13785]

Baroness Barran: There is clear evidence of an association between arts and culture participation and self-reported subjective wellbeing, even when social, economic and lifestyle factors are taken into account. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing found evidence that cultural engagement reduces stress and helps people to live longer and happier lives. During the first national lockdown, a DCMS study showed well-being increased with access to outdoor space, often accessed at heritage sites.

Learning is at the heart of museums, galleries and heritage sites. Many identify as delivering education as their primary function. In the public consultation for the Mendoza Review, 85% of over 1,200 respondents felt that museums and galleries are primarily places for education.

Museums, galleries and heritage sites contribute to positive social outcomes at a local level, making places more attractive to businesses and residents.

Our roadmap is driven by the latest evidence on the risk of transmission. We are therefore reopening outdoor settings before indoor settings, and reopening relatively

low risk indoor settings where household mixing is less likely to take place at an earlier step, including retail, personal care and exercise facilities.

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the impact of the loss of business during (1) Easter, (2) other school holidays, and (3) May, on museums, galleries and heritage buildings. [HL13786]

Baroness Barran: The Department has been working closely with stakeholders across museums, galleries and heritage sites throughout the pandemic, and do not underestimate the significant impact that the closure - and subsequent loss of visitors and in-person access - has had.

In the roadmap laid out by the Prime Minister, outdoor activity has been prioritised because the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission is substantially lower in the open air than indoors. From 29th March, groups of six, or two households will be able to meet outside and socialise outdoors at heritage sites, with seasonal offers including Easter walking trails.

In the Budget, the Chancellor announced extensions to measures which have supported museums, galleries and heritage sites throughout the pandemic. These include extending the COVID Job Retention Scheme and Self Employment Income Support Scheme until September 2021; hospitality VAT set at 5% until July 2021; and a new programme of business loans.

Building on the £100m awarded to DCMS-Sponsored Arm's Length Bodies, (including national museums and galleries) in 20-21, the government will now provide an additional £90m to mitigate the financial impacts of Covid-19.

We have made a record investment in cultural and creative sectors, including museums, galleries and heritage buildings - nearly £2 billion (including additional support for the Culture Recovery Fund and £500 million on the Film and TV Restart scheme). These are unprecedented sums.

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 develop staff health and wellbeing initiatives to assist with the emotional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL13972]

Lord Bethell: A comprehensive package of health and wellbeing services are in place for National Health Service staff, including helplines for counselling and support and free access to well-being apps. An extra £30 million has been invested in enhanced mental and occupational health support services and mental health

hubs offering outreach and assessment services to help frontline staff receive rapid access to evidence based mental health services.

Immigration: EU Nationals

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Bristol***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office on 7 October 2020 (96911), what further plans they have to publish guidance on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme. [HL13731]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Government has made clear, where a person eligible for leave under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications by those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

We will publish clear, non-exhaustive guidance in the near future on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. Yet our focus remains on communicating information about the scheme and helping people to apply within the deadline.

*Asked by **Baroness Hamwee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish guidance on reasonable grounds for a late application to the EU Settlement Scheme; and if so, when. [HL13745]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Government has made clear, where a person eligible for leave under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications by those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

We will publish clear, non-exhaustive guidance in the near future on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. Yet our focus remains on communicating information about the scheme and helping people to apply within the deadline.

Innovate UK: Reorganisation

*Asked by **Lord Broers***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on innovation of moving Innovate UK from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to UK Research and Innovation. [HL13732]

Lord Callanan: UKRI was set up in 2018 to maximise the collective impact of the seven research councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of HEFCE. The impact of innovation takes a long time to realise. As part of UKRI, Innovate UK have

successfully delivered new approaches to innovation funding, such as the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and Innovation Loans pilot.

Iran: Nuclear Power

*Asked by **Baroness Goudie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent call by the President of France for any future dialogue with the government of Iran on its nuclear programme to include Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region. [HL13742]

*Asked by **Baroness Goudie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the inclusion of neighbouring countries to Iran in any future dialogue with the government of Iran on its nuclear programme. [HL13743]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Iran's continued systematic non-compliance with its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) is jeopardising our efforts to preserve the JCPoA and risks compromising the important opportunity for a return to diplomacy with the new US Administration. We continue to engage closely with the US, JCPoA participants and the region on this, and have made our position clear, including in recent E3 statements, that Iran must halt this activity, and return to compliance with its JCPoA commitments without delay.

We have always been clear that any sustainable solution will need to address a range of issues, in particular Iran's nuclear programme but also regional security concerns, including Iran's ballistic missile programme and destabilising activity. We are committed to engaging regional partners in any future negotiations on regional security.

Literacy and Numeracy: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Rebuck***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role the new Education Recovery Commissioner will play in helping to close the attainment gap in reading and maths between pupils in schools with high levels of disadvantage and those in schools in more affluent areas. [HL13765]

Baroness Berridge: The objectives of the Education Recovery Commissioner, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, are to advise on the design and implementation of potential interventions that will help pupils to catch up on lost education due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Terms of Reference for the Education Recovery Commissioner are published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960070/Terms_of_reference.pdf#:~:text=Education%20Recovery%20Commissioner%3A%20role%20specification%20and%20ter

[ms%20of,approach%20for%20education%20recovery%20C%20with%20a%20particular%20focus.](#)

The department will continue to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on pupils and their catch-up needs to help target support across the system effectively.

Maths

Our national network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs aims to help local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching based on best practice. The Maths Hubs programme aims to improve attainment gaps, which may be associated with disadvantage, gender, or other factors, and the programme's capacity has been substantially expanded in the geographical areas where it is needed most.

Maths Hubs deliver our £100 million Teaching for Mastery programme, which is focused on depth of understanding, and is characterised by whole-class teaching where pupils work on the same content together ensuring no one gets left behind. It encourages all pupils with the belief that by working hard at mathematics they can succeed and rejects the idea that some pupils "can't do maths".

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, Maths Hubs have continued to offer support and training to schools across the country by bringing much of their offer online. The department has also funded the development of free expert resources to support maths teaching, including a range of materials now available from the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths, as well publishing new guidance to support curriculum planning and prioritisation in primary schools.

Reading

In 2018, the department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, particularly for disadvantaged children. We have since invested a further £17 million in this school-to-school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. We have appointed 34 primary schools across England as English Hubs. The English Hubs programme is supporting nearly 3000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development, and reading for pleasure. The English Hubs are focused on improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged pupils in Reception and Year 1.

The overall programme is aimed at improving the teaching of early reading across England. In this early delivery stage, we are focusing on systematic synthetic phonics, but our hubs will start to deliver medium-level support in all three priority areas: improving the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics; encouraging early language development; and developing a love of reading. For early language development, hubs will focus on providing evidence-based approaches to early language development and closing the word gap in Year Reception and Year 1, including appropriate use of formative assessment.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, English Hubs have continued to offer support and training to schools across the country by bringing much of their offer online.

Literacy: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Rebuck

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of their report Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year: Interim findings, published on 24 February, relating to estimated overall learning loss in reading in primary schools; and what powers the new Education Recovery Commissioner will have to direct the use of (1) additional, or (2) reallocated, resources, to literacy. [[HL13764](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The 'Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year' report finds that in reading Year 3-9 pupils are on average around 1.6-2 months behind where we would expect them to be in a 'normal' year. For primary pupils, estimates are:

<i>Year Group</i>	<i>Estimated Learning Loss in Reading</i>
Year 3	1.8 months
Year 4	1.8 months
Year 5	1.9 months
Year 6	2.0 months

The Government has invested £1.7 billion to give early years, schools and colleges support to help pupils get back on track, including additional funding for tutoring, early language support and summer schools.

We have also appointed an Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on this work. The objectives of the Education Recovery Commissioner, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, are to advise on the design and implementation of potential interventions that will help pupils catch up learning lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Terms of Reference for the Education Recovery Commissioner is published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960070/Terms_of_reference.pdf#:~:text=Education%20Recovery%20Commissioner%3A%20role%20specification%20and%20terms%20of,approach%20for%20education%20recovery%20C%20with%20a%20particular%20focus.

We are investing in a national network of English Hubs across the country to improve the teaching of literacy, focusing on Reception and Year One.

In 2018 the Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs Programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading. We have since invested a further £17 million in this school-to-school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. We have appointed 34 primary schools across England as English Hubs. The

English Hubs programme is supporting nearly 3000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development, and reading for pleasure. The English Hubs are focused on improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged pupils in Reception and Year 1.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, English Hubs have continued to offer support and training to schools across the country by bringing much of their offer online.

Migrants: Detainees

Asked by Baroness Hamwee

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many places in immigration removal centres are (1) currently occupied, and (2) available; and what assessment they have made of the number of immigration removal centre places for (a) men, and (b) women, that will be required within their current planning period. [HL13746]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity, in the right places and that it provides value for money. We will maintain sufficient capacity to support the removal of those who abuse our hospitality by committing serious, violent and persistent crimes as well as those who do not comply with our immigration laws.

The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Data on people in detention under immigration powers are published in Table Det_03a of the 'Detention summary tables - List of tables - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

The total operational capacity for the immigration removal centres (if all rooms and beds are in use) is 2462 and the current occupancy rate is 367 as of 3 March 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Detention Summary - List of tables [detention-summary-sep-2020-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-01/HL13746>

Ministers: Email

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the practice of journalists offering ministers a "right of reply" to a story by email correspondence; whether such correspondence is

considered to be confidential; and, if so, whether such confidentiality is in the public interest. [HL13679]

Lord True: It is not for the government to comment on the journalistic practice of offering a right of reply, and the confidentiality of such correspondence.

National Institute for Health Protection

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish the National Institute for Health Protection. [HL13789]

Lord Bethell: Plans are on track to establish the National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) in spring 2021, with staff and systems moving into the new organisation over the following months. The recruitment process for the NIHP Chief Executive and Chair are ongoing and the outcomes will be announced in due course.

National Tutoring Programme: Publicity

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to advertise the National Tutoring Programme to disadvantaged pupils. [HL13790]

Baroness Berridge: There is extensive evidence that tutoring is one of the most effective ways to accelerate pupil progress, and we want to extend this opportunity to disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

We are committed to ensuring that there is a strong take-up of the programme. We have undertaken a range of communications and engagement activities to ensure that schools are aware of the support offered by the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). Our activities include offering school-focused webinars throughout the academic year and working with a range of key stakeholders to increase awareness and interest in the programme in areas that need it most, for example, through opportunity areas, multi academy trusts and regional schools commissioners. In addition, we have also been communicating with local authority groups, networks, and teaching unions.

The NTP is providing regular newsletters and blogs direct to schools, alongside targeted social media activity. Since the programme went live in November 2020, we have continued to share case studies and good practice to show how tuition can support pupils effectively, including a guide of how to make the most out of tutoring during the most recent lockdown period. We will continue to monitor take-up throughout the course of this academic year and ensure further communication is directed towards areas of low take-up.

Neuromuscular Disorders: Mental Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Gale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many services have been commissioned through Improving Access to Psychological Therapies for People with Long-term Physical Health Conditions for people with (1) Parkinson's, and (2) neurological conditions. [HL13961]

Lord Bethell: No Improving Access to Psychological Therapies for Long Term Condition services have been commissioned specifically for people with Parkinson's or neurological conditions.

NHS: Migrant Workers

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which NHS shortages of (1) nurses, (2) medical practitioners, and (3) other staff, could be filled by those coming to the UK from Hong Kong under (a) the British National (Overseas) visa, and (b) any other schemes; and what plans they have (i) to identify, and (ii) to recruit, suitably qualified people from Hong Kong for such roles. [HL13878]

Lord Bethell: Hong Kong is not on the World Health Organization's Workforce Support and Safeguard List, 2020. Therefore, the Department considers Hong Kong a suitable country for supplying the National Health Service with qualified health workers. Agencies are working in Hong Kong and some nurses have already joined the NHS.

North Korea: Human Rights

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they changed their engagement with (1) the government of North Korea, and (2) the UN in relation to North Korea, following the report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, published on 7 February 2014. [HL13727]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has deep concerns about the appalling human rights situation in the DPRK including as documented in the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry Report, and has responded to recommendations made by that report. Since the Report's publication, we have maintained a high level of engagement at the UN on the situation and we continue to press for annual debate on the DPRK's human rights issues in the UN Security Council. We continue to raise our concerns directly with the DPRK government, including with the DPRK's Ambassador in London. We

also support the annual Human Rights Council resolution on human rights in North Korea which stresses the importance of following up recommendations from the Report and provides the basis for further work on a credible framework for accountability for human rights violations in the country.

Offenders: Deportation

Asked by *Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of (1) women, and (2) men, currently held in immigration removal centres are classed as 'foreign criminals' according to section 32 of the UK Borders Act 2007. [HL13747]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This Government puts the rights of the British public before those of criminals, and we are clear that foreign criminals should be deported from the UK wherever it is legal and practical to do so.

The Home Office publishes data on people in detention by gender, as at the last day of the quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release', Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) published on the 25 February 2021, and is available from table Det_D02 of the Detention detailed datasets. Information on those held in immigration removal centres that are classed as 'foreign criminals' by gender, is not separately available in a reportable format.

We make every effort to ensure that a person's removal by deportation coincides, as far as possible, with their release from prison on completion of sentence. Where an FNO refuses to cooperate with the removal or deportation process, they may be detained. Foreign national offenders held in detention have the option to apply to an independent immigration judge for bail at any point, irrespective of gender.

Since January 2019, we have returned 7,240 FNOs, and we make no apology for protecting the public.

Palestinians: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the responsibilities of the government of Israel in relation to the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and what plans they have to make representations about this matter to the government of Israel. [HL13754]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised the issue of vaccines with the Israeli Authorities on 24 February, encouraging the Government of Israel to continue to facilitate the transfer of vaccines to the PA when required. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem will

continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines and medical equipment.

Prisoners' Release: Females

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that vulnerable female prison leavers, in particular those with complex needs, have access to safe and secure accommodation immediately on release. [HL13757]

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to the recommendations of the report by the Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison initiative Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison, published in October 2020. [HL13758]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The report by the Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison initiative incorrectly suggests that six in ten female prisoners are released homeless. This is based on a sample of just 116 women from a single prison in 2019. Official statistics published in July 2020 show that 6,185 women were released from custody in the year to March 2020, with 50.8% of them going into secure, long-term accommodation and a further 7% to approved premises. 18.3% (i.e. fewer than 2 in 10) were recorded as being homeless at the point of release.

Nonetheless, too many prisoners, of both genders, are released homeless. We are strengthening our work to prevent homelessness on release by continuing the successful probation Homeless Prevention Teams (HPT), which have supported many homeless service users during the pandemic. We are also engaging with other organisations to develop new initiatives.

We are launching a new accommodation service in Summer 2021, providing up to 12 weeks of basic temporary accommodation for prison leavers who would otherwise be homeless. This service will launch in five of the 12 probation regions in England and Wales: the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, Greater Manchester, Kent Surrey and Sussex, and the North West. It is our intention to roll out the accommodation provision nationally, pending the Spending Review later this year.

We also continue to ensure that appropriate funding is available to women's community sector organisations, having invested £5.1 million in the two years following publication of the Female Offender Strategy as well as announcing a further £2.5 million last year to cover the core costs of these organisations. This funding responded directly to the many requests for the Government to act to address financial instability in parts of the sector.

HMPPS has also recently announced the development of Eden House, which will be a new Approved Premises for women in Bristol; it is due to open in June 2021 and will be the first new Approved Premises in over 30 years.

Prisons: Body Searches

Asked by Lord Morrow

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a new section to their publication Procedures for searching people: PSI 07/2016, published on 26 July 2016, (1) on the conduct of searches by transgender prison officers, and (2) to confirm that the right of women prisoners to be searched only by officers of female sex assigned at birth will be maintained. [HL13760]

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

The updated policy will include direction on transgender staff conducting searches. This will encompass staff with or without a Gender Recognition Certificate.

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, the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the European Convention of Human Rights.

Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel will meet; and when it is expected to complete its work. [HL14048]

Baroness Barran: The Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel was established on 10 November 2020. As of 9 March 2021, it has met on two occasions.

There is no fixed end-date for the Advisory Panel's work, but the Department's expectation is that it will meet a total of 6 times over the course of a year.

Further information about the Advisory Panel is available from GOV.UK (please see attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Public Service Advisory Panel [Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel - Terms of Reference - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-09/HL14048>

Railways: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) Transport for the North's "preferred route" for Northern Powerhouse Rail, (2) how that route was chosen, and (3) whether the route can be built with the previously announced funding estimate of £42 billion. [HL13901]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has been actively considering this as part of its Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) which will outline the investment blueprint for Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 Phase 2b and other transport investment in the North and Midlands. Work is ongoing to establish the exact costs.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of proposals for rail network improvements in Lancashire and Cumbria in Transport for the North's plan for Northern Powerhouse Rail. [HL13902]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has worked closely with Northern leaders to develop a Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network that benefits all regions of the North, including Lancashire and Cumbria. The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), which will outline a recommended way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing of NPR, has carefully considered the views of stakeholders across the North of England to produce an investment programme that truly reflects the key transport priorities of the North.

Schools: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Department for Education's 2018 guidance Charging for school activities, whether "other equipment" includes (1) laptops, (2) broadband, and (3) data, where the guidance states "school governing bodies and local authorities, cannot charge for ... education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)". [HL13853]

Baroness Berridge: Schools cannot charge for education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment. This includes laptops, broadband and data. A school can only charge parents for equipment, such as a laptop, where the child's parent wishes their child to own it.

Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage investment in maritime decarbonisation. [HL13729]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Clean Maritime Plan, published in 2019, represents the Government's route map for achieving net zero emissions in domestic shipping by 2050. Alongside the plan, the Government launched a £1.5 million R&D competition, match-funding industry investment in zero emission marine technologies.

Building on the vision set out in the plan, in November 2020 the Government announced a £20 million Clean

Maritime Demonstration Competition, which will encourage investment in the UK design and development of zero emission technology.

In parallel, the Government is developing a Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) that puts transport on a path to delivering its contributions to carbon budgets and net zero by 2050. The plan will take a holistic and cross-modal approach to decarbonising the entire transport system for the first time, setting out a credible and ambitious pathway to cut emissions, including for maritime and we expect to publish it in Spring 2021.

Slavery

Asked by Baroness Hamwee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend legislation relating to transparency in supply chains to businesses whose turnover is below the current threshold of £36 million; and what assessment they have made of the implications of such action for (1) compliance with the level playing field provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and (2) good regulatory practice within the UK. [HL13750]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations set out the amount of total turnover for the purposes of making a commercial organisation subject to the Act's Transparency in Supply Chains Provisions. The Regulations set the turnover threshold for commercial organisations required to report at £36m.

Under section 4 of the Regulations, the Secretary of State is required to carry out a review of the Regulations every five years.

The Government published a review of the current turnover threshold as part of the Government response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation, published on 22 September 2020. The review concluded that the £36m threshold remains appropriate and proportionate and also noted that the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act did not advise lowering the existing threshold, and instead recommended that Government focus on improving compliance, quality of reporting and enforcement at the current threshold.

The new Government modern slavery registry, which is due to launch this year, will enable Government to more effectively drive compliance, as well as incentivising more transparent and detailed reporting, by providing a dedicated platform for investors, consumers and civil society to view and compare statements published under the Act.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sustainability of small and medium-size businesses. [HL13771]

Lord Callanan: The Government is in regular discussions with businesses and business representative organisations over a range of issues affecting small and medium-sized businesses, including Covid-19. Through this engagement we will continue to monitor the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on SMEs.

In addition, the Government monitors a number of data sources, including ONS business resilience data, and will continue to do so.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of small businesses to repay loans provided by the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL13773](#)]

Lord Callanan: As of 21 February 2021, the Government's lending schemes have approved over 1.5 million Government-guaranteed loans worth over £72 billion to support cashflow for businesses across the UK affected by Covid-19.

We recognise that some borrowers will benefit from repayment flexibility, and that is why we announced the Pay As You Grow measures, which give Bounce Back Loan borrowers more time and greater flexibility to repay their loans.

We have also enabled lenders to extend the repayment period for Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) facilities beyond 6 years (up to a maximum of 10 years) where this is needed in connection with the provision of forbearance. CBILS term extensions are offered at the discretion of lenders. This measure is designed to help businesses that would struggle to repay their CBILS facility on their existing terms, by reducing monthly repayments.

The Government continues to enhance its engagement with a broad range of trade and representative bodies, in particular SME networks, to continue to understand the impact of Covid-19 on businesses and the concerns they have.

Sports: Gambling

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children exposed to gambling advertising through professional sports. [[HL13957](#)]

Baroness Barran: The government does not hold data on the number of children exposed to gambling advertising through professional sports. However, the Gambling Commission's annual survey of children and young people includes figures on the proportion of children who have seen gambling adverts in a number of settings. In 2019, that survey found that 50% of 11-16 year olds had seen or heard a gambling advertisement linked to a sports event. In 2020, the survey found that

41% of 11-16 year olds had seen or heard gambling adverts linked to a sports event but the outbreak of Covid-19 halted fieldwork for the 2020 survey before it was finished. The 2020 survey is therefore not directly comparable to previous years.

All gambling advertising, wherever it appears, is subject to strict controls on content and placement and must never be targeted at children or vulnerable people. In 2019, the Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising was amended to include a whistle-to-whistle ban on betting adverts being shown during live sport before the 9pm watershed.

We launched the Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of the wide scope of that Review, we have called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing gambling operators to advertise.

Test and Trace Support Payment

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities (1) have used up the Government grant provided in September 2020 to make payments under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, (2) are topping up such payments from other sources, and (3) are no longer making those payments; and what is the average wait time between an application being made and receipt of payment. [[HL11912](#)]

Lord Bethell: This information is not currently held centrally. However, data on the scheme will be published in due course, subject to assuring the quality of the data submitted by local authorities.

West Bank: Schools

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 8 February ([HL12565](#)), what steps they intend to take to prevent the destruction of schools and other infrastructure in the West Bank. [[HL13769](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to oppose Israel's proposed demolitions of Palestinian schools and calls on Israel to reconsider its plans to do so. The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February 2021. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised his concerns about demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure, including the potential demolition of schools, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

Yemen: Famine

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have to alleviate famine in Yemen. [[HL13762](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK will provide at least £87 million to Yemen over the course of our next financial year (2021/22), making us the 5th largest donor; with the UK contributing over £1 billion since the conflict began. Our funding will feed an additional 240,000 of the most vulnerable Yemenis every month, support 400

healthcare clinics and provide clean water for 1.6 million people. We will also provide one-off cash support to 1.5m of Yemen's poorest households to help them buy food and basic supplies.

An inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. We fully support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to secure a lasting political settlement to the Yemen conflict. The Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa spoke with him on 1 March to discuss how the UK can best support the UN-led peace process.

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