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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Answers.....1

[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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<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, Ministry of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Answers

Monday, 12 April 2021

Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made, if any, of the threat to national security posed by the preacher Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips. [HL14457]

Lord Greenhalgh: We do not comment on individual cases.

The Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Asked by **Baroness Finlay of Llandaff**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand same-day emergency care to all emergency departments in England; and what the timescales are for any such plans. [HL14438]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement's planning guidance 2021/22 priorities and operational planning guidance published on 25 March 2021 includes guidance to progress the work already underway through the same day emergency care (SDEC) programmes. This guidance includes that systems should:

- maximise the utilisation of direct referral from NHS 111 to other hospital services including SDEC and specialty hot clinics and implement referral pathways from NHS 111 to urgent community and mental health services; and

- adopt a consistent, expanded, model of SDEC provision, including associated acute frailty services, within all providers with a type 1 emergency department to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

A copy of the planning guidance is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

2021/22 planning guidance [B0468-nhs-operational-planning-and-contracting-guidance (1) (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-22/HL14438>

Accountancy: Tax Avoidance

Asked by **Lord Sikka**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the judgment by the Court of Appeal in the case of GDF Suez Teesside Ltd v Revenue And Customs [2018]

EWCA Civ 2075 on 5 October 2018, what action they have taken, if any, against Ernst & Young for designing and marketing an unlawful tax avoidance scheme. [HL14346]

Asked by **Lord Sikka**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the penalties levied on accounting firms for designing and marketing unlawful tax avoidance schemes. [HL14347]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) cannot comment on individual cases. HMRC will investigate allegations of wrongdoing brought to their attention.

The Government is determined to tackle promoters and enablers of tax avoidance schemes and in March 2020, HMRC published their strategy for tackling promoters of tax avoidance schemes. The strategy outlines how HMRC will continue to take robust actions against promoters and enablers of tax avoidance.

Finance Bill 2021 includes new measures which will strengthen the existing anti-avoidance regimes and help HMRC act more swiftly against promoters. The Government has also announced a further package of measures to ensure promoters face stronger sanctions more quickly; the consultation was published on 23 March.

These proposals build on the enablers of defeated tax avoidance legislation that was introduced in 2017 and include provision for the publication of information, including the name of the enabler and the total number and amount of penalties incurred by the enabler, if they have been charged 50 or more penalties or £25,000 in penalties in any one year.

Aerospace Industry: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the financial support they provided to the aerospace sector during the Covid-19 pandemic was allocated to aerospace manufacturers in the UK. [HL14311]

Lord Callanan: The Government has put in place substantial cross-economy support measures to help the UK economy through this pandemic.

Due to the nature of these support measures, it is not possible to set out in full the proportion provided to the aerospace sector. However, we are able to confirm that UK aerospace manufacturers and their aviation customers, over the next 3 years, will benefit from £8 billion in export guarantees and have utilised up to £2.6 billion in Covid Corporate Financing Facility support. The Aerospace sector will also continue to be supported by the £150 million per annum Aerospace Technology Institute research and development programme and the £125 million Future Flight research and development programme.

These figures do not include other measures such as the Job Retention Scheme which, we know, the aerospace sector will also have benefited from.

Ahmad Dola

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the death of Ahmad Dola in a house fire in Kafr Aqab, East Jerusalem, on 8 March; and in particular, concerning the reports of Palestinian fire engines being delayed at a checkpoint. [[HL14506](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of the reports surrounding the death of Ahmad Dola. Free movement of essential personnel is vital to the effectiveness of care. Delays of essential services and permit delays can endanger the health and lives of everyday Palestinians. The UK will continue to raise the issue of freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including for emergency services, with the Israeli authorities and stress the impact that their restrictions on movement and access are doing to ordinary Palestinians who rely on these fundamental rights.

Ahmad Erekat

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by Forensic Architecture The Extrajudicial Execution of Ahmad Erekat, published on 23 February. [[HL14235](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the report by Forensic Architecture: The Extrajudicial Execution of Ahmad Erekat, published on 23 February. We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether use of live fire had been appropriate.

Airports and Ports: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funds have been paid to date to the Northern Ireland Executive for the creation of infrastructure at (1) ports, and (2) airports in Northern Ireland, as a result of the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [[HL14629](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: A total of £16 million was allocated to the Northern Ireland Executive in the 20/21 financial year for infrastructure, IT systems and personnel for the work necessary to carry out Sanitary and Phytosanitary checks at Northern Ireland's Points of Entry required by the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Alternative Education

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many alternative schools are registered; and what estimate they have made of the number of unregistered alternative providers. [[HL14397](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The Alternative Provision (AP) sector serves approximately 26,000 pupils across 348 state-place funded AP settings (pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools).

As of 19 March 2021, there were 197 pupil referral units, 102 AP academies (74 converters and 28 sponsored) and 49 open AP free schools in England. Beyond this the sector is made up of other forms of AP, such as AP placements in independent schools (circa 29,500 pupils), post-16 providers offering pre-16 AP or charities.

Many of these providers are unregistered, as they do not meet the threshold to register as a school. These small providers are commissioned by local authorities, mainstream and AP schools and offer a limited number of hours of training – often vocational – per week, supplementing the curriculum offered by the child or young person's school. It is an offence under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to conduct unregistered AP if the provision offered meets the statutory definition of a "school".

Andrew Pollard

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Ministers have reviewed the decision for Professor Andrew Pollard to recuse himself from all meetings of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation discussing Covid-19. [[HL14515](#)]

Lord Bethell: Ministers have not reviewed this decision. Conflicts of interest are set out in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) code of practice. In order to prevent any perceived conflict of interest it was agreed that the JCVI's Chair, Professor Andrew Pollard, who is involved in the development of a Covid-19 vaccine at the University of Oxford, would recuse himself from all JCVI meetings related to the virus.

Animal Products: Imports

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to compensate companies that recruited additional qualified veterinarians to administer checks on meat and dairy products entering the UK from the EU from 1 April who may now face redundancy following the decision to delay the introduction of these checks and health certificates; and what plans they have

to meet with representatives of the affected companies. [HL14340]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra is working with PHAs to have new staff (including OV's) recruited and trained in advance of October, and will continue engaging with a number of organisations, including vet providers, to ensure we meet those timelines. PHAs are continuing to recruit OV's in order to train, familiarise and prepare themselves for the changes from 1st October.

Animal Products: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to negotiate a sanitary and phytosanitary trade agreement with the EU. [HL14652]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) chapter of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement puts in place a framework that allows the UK and the EU to take informed decisions to reduce their respective SPS controls, with a commitment to avoid unnecessary barriers. It is in both Parties' interests to use this framework to reduce the rate of SPS checks required.

We are open to discussion with the EU on an agreement that goes further in reducing trade frictions between us, but it cannot be on the basis of alignment with EU rules as this would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws.

Animal Welfare

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise animal sentience in law. [HL14637]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: This Government has a manifesto commitment to introduce new laws on animal sentience, which we will do as soon as parliamentary time allows.

We can be rightly proud that the UK already has world-class animal welfare standards, but the Government is committed to strengthening these further, including increasing maximum sentences for animal cruelty, banning third party sales of puppies, and introducing one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales.

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide for animal sentience in law; and if so, whether the definition of animals in that law (1) will be the same as that for vertebrates in the Animal Welfare Act 2006, and (2) will include decapods and cephalopods. [HL14638]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: This Government has a manifesto commitment to introduce new laws on animal sentience, which we will do as soon as parliamentary time allows.

The current science is clear that vertebrates can experience pain and suffering. It is on that basis that the definition of "animal" in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 is limited only to vertebrates. Defra has commissioned an independent external review of the available scientific evidence on sentience in decapods and cephalopods. This review is expected to report shortly.

Apprentices: Assessments

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the percentage of apprentices required to complete Functional Skills Level 2 qualifications in (1) Maths, (2) English, and (3) Information and Communication Technology, during the course of their apprenticeship; and how this figure varies by ethnicity. [HL14355]

Baroness Berridge: We publish data which shows the number of apprentices enrolling on funded level 2 functional skills qualifications during their apprenticeship. We cannot determine if these qualifications are required in order to achieve the overall apprenticeship. We do not publish breakdowns of this data by ethnicity.

Not all apprentices are required to achieve level 2 functional skills by the end of their apprenticeship. An apprentice may have already obtained the required level of English and maths for the apprenticeship either via GCSEs, functional skills qualifications, or accepted equivalent qualifications, prior to starting their apprenticeship. The current and prior qualifications accepted as meeting the minimum English and maths requirements for apprenticeships can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-and-maths-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above>.

In general, level 2 apprentices without the required level of English and maths will need to achieve level 1 functional skills, and apprentices at level 3 and above will need to achieve level 2 functional skills. There are exceptions to the regular English and maths minimum requirements for people with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities. These are set out in the apprenticeship funding rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>. The achievement of information and communication technology functional skills is only a requirement of some apprenticeships.

Apprentices: Small Businesses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the number of apprentices for which small businesses who do not pay the apprenticeship levy can claim cash incentives. [HL14352]

Baroness Berridge: The government recognises the enormous value that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute to the UK economy. SMEs will play a

key role as we look to rebuild from the effects of Covid-19, and to increase opportunities for young people to embark on apprenticeships.

In 2021-22 financial year, we are making available £2.5 billion to support apprenticeships in all employers, including employers that do not pay the levy who will continue to be able to reserve funding for 95% of apprenticeship training and assessment costs. From 1 April all SMEs arranging new apprenticeship starts will do so through the apprenticeship service, as levy payers do now, giving them more control over their apprenticeship choices and the ability to reserve funds before choosing the provider that best meets their needs.

From 1 April, all non-levy employer reservation levels will be reset to zero, enabling each employer who does not pay the levy to make up to 10 new reservations to fund new starts in the 2021-22 financial year. As part of the government's Plan for Jobs, we have increased the incentive payments to £3,000, meaning that employers who do not pay the levy will be able to reserve funds and claim incentive payments for up to 10 new apprentices hired between 1 April and 30 September 2021.

In 2020-21 financial year, funds transferred from employers who pay the levy to other employers are not included when measuring the number of reservations that smaller employers can make, so further incentive payments could be claimed for apprentices being funded through a transfer. From August 2021, levy-paying employers will be able to create a pledge of funds that they would like to make available for transfer. In August, we will also introduce a new online service to match levy payers with SMEs that share their business priorities allowing levy payers to support apprenticeships in their supply chains and help to meet local and regional skills needs.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions: Appeals

Asked by Lord Craig of Radley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce direct lodgement for all appeals to the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber; and if so, (1) how, and (2) when, it will be implemented. [HL14406]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: As part of the reform within the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber, the Ministry of Justice will continue to work closely with colleagues in the Ministry of Defence to explore options for introducing Direct Lodgement for all appeals. This is part of the Government's £1 billion investment to reform our courts and tribunals system. Our programme will improve the service provided to users by building a modern system for administering justice which will benefit all users.

Armed Forces: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British armed forces personnel were recruited between 1 January 2020 and 1 March 2021. [HL14563]

Baroness Goldie: The requested information up until 31 December 2020 can be found in the attached 'UK Regular Forces Intake and Outflow' tables 4 and 5a in the excel spreadsheet of the quarterly Service personnel statistics.

Information for the most recent quarter, 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021, will be published on 27 May 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14563 - Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics [HL14563 - Copy of 1_January_2021_SPS_-_Values_Only.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-24/HL14563>

Armenia: Genocide

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will formally observe Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on 24 April. [HL14566]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The events of 1915-1916 were a tragic episode in the history of the Armenian people and they must never be forgotten. The UK Government of the day condemned the massacres and this Government fully endorses that view. The policy of the UK Government is that any judgement on whether genocide has occurred is a matter for competent courts, rather than for governments. Although we will not formally be observing the 'Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day' our thoughts will be with the Armenian people

Asylum: Housing

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of staff working for asylum accommodation providers have received the training specified in the Asylum Accommodation and Support Statement of Requirements; and whether training for staff who have face-to-face contact with service users is stipulated in Home Office contracts with providers. [HL14571]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts (AASC) are published and the requirements of the contract are set out in the Statement of Requirements, this includes provisions around training and the training programme for those with face-to-face contact with our customers.

The Provider must fully equip and train staff (including volunteers) to ensure they are able to fulfil their roles and ensure appropriate and sufficient security provisions are made for all staff undertaking face-to-face activities. Those with face to face contact must cover the following:

- Ethnic diversity and cultural awareness
- Suicide and self-harm awareness and prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Gender based violence
- Fire Safety
- Health and Safety
- Vicarious Trauma
- Unconscious Bias
- Counter Terrorism
- Modern Slavery
- Training relating to housing standards and regulatory requirements

As a minimum, provider staff should receive refresher training on the requirements listed above annually (i.e. refresher training completed every twelve (12) months), or more regularly if required.

The Home Office does not intend to publish data on the number of staff employed by accommodation providers, who will be expected to undertake training. However, provider performance and service delivery is discussed on a weekly basis. There are formal performance meetings each month, plus strategic boards with senior provider management, once a quarter.

The Home Office discusses performance of the contracts and service improvements with Local Authorities who participate in asylum dispersal. Durham is the only Local Authority in the North East of England who do not accommodate supported asylum seekers. We would encourage all Local Authorities to play their part and hope Durham will join their neighbours in doing so.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures they have established to (1) monitor, and (2) evaluate, contracts with asylum accommodation providers. [[HL14572](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: We expect the highest standards from our providers, who are expected to conduct regular checks across the accommodation estate. The Home Office have access to providers' systems to monitor compliance.

The Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts (AASC) have a robust performance management system, against which providers are expected to deliver. Where performance falls short of the required standard, failures are recorded and can result in the award of points and, ultimately, service credits being applied. Providers' performance is monitored closely by dedicated staff in each contract area, who are in daily contact with them.

This is supplemented by a formal governance process which includes quarterly Strategic Review Management Boards and monthly Contract Management Groups. Service credits and subsequent improvement plans are discussed and monitored as part of this process.

Contract management is operated in line with Covid-19 guidance. Service Delivery Managers speak daily with providers about service delivery and performance. In response to the global pandemic, officials also have formal meetings on a weekly basis to ensure individuals are housed safely, services are delivered in line with their contractual obligations and adherence to guidance from Public Health England (PHE) is followed.

Asylum seekers can also raise specific issues or concerns about their accommodation through the 24/7 Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service operated by Migrant Help. The Home Office and our providers receive feedback on complaints raised through our regular dialogue with Migrant Help, which enables attention to be focussed on particular areas of concern.

Asylum: Military Bases

*Asked by **Lord Hyton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the number of residents at Napier Barracks and Penally training camp has reduced since 12 March; how many residents have tested positive for Covid-19; and when they expect to provide adequate accommodation for all residents. [[HL14386](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The number of residents at Napier has reduced since 12 March 2021.

Due to the closure of Penally Training Camp, the accommodation providers Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) have moved all remaining asylum seekers as of the 21 March.

197 people accommodated at Napier tested positive for coronavirus earlier this year. There have been no recorded cases at Penally.

All asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with safe, suitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice on 11 February 2021 (150977), what are the timescales for ending the use of (1) Napier, and (2) Penally, barracks to accommodate asylum seekers. [[HL14573](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Napier Barracks will remain in operation in accordance with current needs.

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to relocate all asylum seekers who are housed at Napier Barracks. [HL14396]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The current global pandemic has presented us with significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation, including sourcing sufficient suitable accommodation to meet demand.

The use of hotels and wider government facilities as contingency accommodation are a short-term measure. We are working to move people to longer-term dispersal accommodation as soon as it becomes available.

Atef Yousef Hanaysha

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the reported killing of Atef Yousef Hanaysha by Israeli forces during a protest against the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. [HL14537]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the reports surrounding the death of Atef Yousef Hanaysha. Whilst we have not made representations on this particular case, in instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Bank Services and Billing: Older People

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the digitalisation of banking and billing services on elderly people. [HL14560]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The retail sector is evolving, as more consumers and businesses opt for the convenience, security, and speed of digital payments and digital banking.

While these innovations have brought considerable benefits to many consumers, the Government recognises that some people continue to prefer to access their banking and payments through more traditional channels. Though the Government does not make direct assessments of the impact of digitalisation of banking and billing services on the elderly, it firmly believes that it is vital to ensure that all customers, including the elderly, have suitable access to banking and bill payment services.

That is why UK banks and building societies are required to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all of their customers, including the elderly, as set out in the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) Principles of Business. For example, if a customer did not have access to the internet, then the FCA would expect the customers' bank to provide paper bank statements to them instead.

For billing services, the energy regulator Ofgem requires energy suppliers to maintain a Priority Services Register of customers in vulnerable circumstances, which includes customers of pensionable age. A range of protections are available to these customers, including the provision of account and bill information in an accessible format.

Bereavement Leave: Costs

Asked by Lord Knight of Weymouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost to employers of Parental Bereavement Leave since April 2020. [HL14225]

Lord Callanan: Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay was introduced in April 2020. The Impact Assessment carried out by the Department (copy attached) estimated that annual costs to employers of the policy would be £2.6m, with an additional £4.8m in one-off costs for employers to familiarise themselves with the policy when it was introduced.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay IA [Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay IA.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-15/HL14225>

Biomethane

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of biomethane to assist hydrogen transport; what plans they have to utilise biomethane gas from farms and cities to fuel (1) trains, (2) trams, and (3) buses, until the cost of green hydrogen can be reduced to a competitive level; what estimate they have made of the impact of any such plans on the level of (a) the income experienced by farmers, and (b) soil quality and nutrition; and what assessment they have made of the use of biomethane as an energy source for cities. [HL14383]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Hydrogen is already powering vehicles in use on UK roads, including buses. We will set out its important role across all forms of transport, including trams and trains, in our ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan, due to be published this spring. The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation helps promote a market for a broad range of low carbon fuels, and renewable hydrogen and biomethane are already

eligible for support through it for transport. We have made no specific assessment of the use of biomethane as a bridge to future hydrogen transport applications or on the impacts of that on farmers, soil quality or nutrition. The BEIS-led Green Gas Support Scheme (GGSS), will open to applicants in Autumn 2021 for four years and will provide tariff support for biomethane injection into the gas grid as a potential energy source for cities.

*Asked by **The Earl of Dundee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Department of Transport and DEFRA are taking any joint steps to support UK farming communities to harness methane emissions to be used as renewable biomethane fuel for buses, trains and trams along with digestates capable of enriching soils and sequestering carbon; and if so, what are any such steps. [[HL14384](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation scheme was amended in 2015, to reward biomethane used in transport and non-road mobile machinery, on the basis of its energy content rather than volume. As a consequence, biomethane is eligible to receive 1.9 Renewable Transport Fuel Certificates (RTFCs) per kilogram, an increase on 1 RTFCs per kilogram, and double that number when produced from wastes such as manure.

The Green Gas Support Scheme (GGSS) will open to applicants in Autumn 2021 for four years. The GGSS will provide tariff support for biomethane injection into the gas grid, and will encourage the use of waste feedstocks, including agricultural wastes, to produce the biomethane. The scheme will include a payment formula, which allows biomethane producers to split payments between the GGSS and the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), enabling different consignments of biomethane to receive payments from either the GGSS or the RTFO within the same quarter. To encourage good use of digestate produced during biomethane production, scheme participants will be required to dispose of the digestate using low emission techniques when spreading on land.

Blood Tests: General Practitioners

*Asked by **Lord Balfre***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the clinical impact of GPs directing patients to dedicated blood test centres rather than carrying out such tests at local surgeries during the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL13651](#)]

Lord Bethell: No formal assessment has been made. Offering blood tests has continued throughout the pandemic, with urgent tests being prioritised. However, infection control measures have necessitated changes to the model of delivery in some parts of the country. For some general practitioner practices, their own services will have been able to continue. For other practices, teams may have joined up to create a hub offer to provide extra capacity.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

*Asked by **Lord Myners***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 17 December 2020 (HL11087), what assessment they have made of whether it would now be a good use of public resources to publish the names of those firms borrowing under Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back Loan Scheme. [[HL14453](#)]

Lord Callanan: Details of facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module.

*Asked by **Lord Myners***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will disclose the names of (1) borrowers, and (2) amounts borrowed, under (a) the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, and (b) the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. [[HL14591](#)]

Lord Callanan: Details of facilities made available under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course.

Brain: Tumours

*Asked by **Lord Crisp***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to accelerate (1) the progress, and (2) the dissemination of the findings, of research into the (a) prevention, and (b) treatment, of brain tumours. [[HL13064](#)]

Lord Bethell: In 2018 we announced £40 million over five years to accelerate progress in brain tumour research. This was highlighted within the research community with workshops to support high quality brain tumour research applications.

The findings of brain tumour research will be disseminated via the planned network of Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence, presentations at conferences, publications in journals and through the National Institute for Health Research and its Centre for Engagement and Dissemination.

Breakfast Clubs

*Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the value of school breakfast clubs, and (2) the impact of hunger on learning in the classroom; and what steps they intend to take in response. [[HL14178](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department knows that breakfast clubs can bring a wide range of benefits for children. An evaluation by the Education Endowment Foundation found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of 2 months additional progress for pupils in key stage 1 with moderate to low security. Breakfast club schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.

We support around 1.4 million children through universal infant free school meals, and a further 1.4 million through the benefit related free school meals, providing nutritious meals for children.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, we have continued to support children learning at home while schools were largely closed, through the provision of vouchers or lunch parcels. Our supplier, Edenred, have reported that more than £90 million vouchers have been redeemed by families for use in supermarkets during the most recent period of school closures.

The department is investing up to £38 million in the National School Breakfast Programme. This money is kick-starting or improving breakfast clubs in up to 2,450 schools in disadvantaged areas, making them sustainable in the long run. Approximately 280,000 children are supported by this scheme.

We are extending our support for breakfast clubs until 2023, to make sure thousands of children in disadvantaged areas have a healthy start to the day.

Cabinet Office: Research

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average cost of literature reviews commissioned by the Cabinet Office. [HL14598]

Lord True: This information is not held centrally.

Cameroon: Vatican

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See has met the Vatican Secretary of State following the visit by Cardinal Parolin to Cameroon in February; what (1) financial, and (2) other, support they have provided to faith-based groups working in conflict resolution in that country; and if none, what plans they have to provide such support in future. [HL14369]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See is in regular contact with the Vatican and met Cardinal Parolin following his visit to Cameroon.

The FCDO is committed to conflict resolution and finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis is the Government's top priority in Cameroon. The UK continues to work with the Catholic Church on a range of

global challenges. In financial year 2019/20, FCDO provided a grant of £20,000 to the Peace and Justice Commission of the Bamenda Archdiocese to fund a project to document and report on serious and systemic human rights violations in Cameroon. During his visit to Cameroon, the Minister for Africa and the UK High Commissioner to Cameroon met religious leaders from a number of faiths to hear first-hand their accounts of the crisis in the North-west South-west regions.

Cancer: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment and research they have undertaken in support of advice or guidance for (1) the treatment of, (2) evaluating the risk of, and (3) recommending the most effective vaccine for, Follicular Lymphoma. [HL12370]

Lord Bethell: In 2016, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published the guideline Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: diagnosis and management. The guideline covers diagnosing and managing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in people aged 16 years old and over. The guideline includes specific recommendations related to the management and treatment of different stages of follicular lymphoma. A copy of the guideline is attached.

UK Research and Innovation is funding research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individual as part of its support for the OCTAVE study in the National Core Studies (NCS) Immunity Programme. The NCS Immunity Programme was established in October 2020 to enable the United Kingdom to use health data and research at scale, recognising the need to respond to near term strategic, policy and operational pressures and ultimately maintain resilience against Covid-19.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: diagnosis and management
[nonhodgkins-lymphoma-diagnosis-and-management-pdf-1837509936325.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-20/HL12370>

Care Homes: Safety

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the remit of the Healthcare Safety Investigative Branch to conduct overarching, independent investigations into patient safety concerns in residential care homes in England. [HL14318]

Lord Bethell: The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) conducts independent investigations of patient safety concerns in National Health Service-funded care across England. Currently, it can investigate patient safety concerns in care homes if the patient's care is NHS-funded and meets the HSIB's criteria for its national

investigations. There are also plans in place to amend the NHS Health and Care Bill to extend the HSIB's remit to identify and address patient safety risks in the provision of NHS services and other healthcare services in England.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government which national body or agency is responsible for conducting overarching, independent investigations into patient safety concerns in residential care homes in England. [HL14319]

Lord Bethell: The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) can investigate individual safety concerns in care homes if the patient's care is National Health Service-funded and the referral meets their investigation criteria.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitors, inspects and regulate services to ensure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety, while the local authority takes the lead in safeguarding cases. As part of this, the CQC inspects and rates residential care homes and nursing homes, which includes assessing how safe care homes are and taking action to protect people from harm and to hold those responsible for poor care to account. There are cases where both agencies may be involved. Complaints can also be investigated by the Health and Safety Executive, Health Service Ombudsman or Local Government Ombudsman.

Carers: Living Wage

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of National Living Wage costs on care providers in the charitable sector. [HL14371]

Lord Bethell: The Department does not make separate assessments of the cost of the National Living Wage in respect of for-profit, local authority-run and not-for-profit providers, or at the level of individual providers.

Census: Gender

Asked by Baroness Noakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what costs were incurred by (1) the UK Statistics Authority, and (2) the Cabinet Office, in the judicial review proceedings against the UK Statistics Authority brought by Fair Play for Women in relation to the 2021 census. [HL14334]

Asked by Baroness Noakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Minister for the Cabinet Office was listed as an interested party in the judicial review proceedings brought by Fair Play for Women against the UK Statistics Authority in relation to the 2021 census. [HL14335]

Asked by Baroness Noakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the declaration in the Order of Consent following the judicial review proceedings brought by Fair Play for Women against the UK Statistics Authority, what plans they have to review how (1) government departments, and (2) public sector bodies, use the word "sex". [HL14336]

Asked by Baroness Noakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conduct of (1) the UK Statistics Authority, and (2) the National Statistician, in relation to the determination of how questions on sex in the 2021 census and the related guidance were framed. [HL14337]

Asked by Baroness Noakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidance to (1) the Civil Service, and (2) public bodies, to ensure that consultations on policies or practices in relation to sex and gender receive responses from a broad range of respondents. [HL14338]

Lord True: In the proceedings brought by Fair Play for Women in relation to the sex question guidance in Census 2021 in England and Wales, the claimant's solicitors named the Minister for the Cabinet Office as an interested party. The Cabinet Office considered this appropriate as the department responsible for the census legislation.

The legal costs have not yet been fully determined for the above proceedings.

The Order made by the court, in the case referenced above specifically related to the census legislation. The court made a distinction between a person's sex as recognised by law and the gender with which a person self-identifies. HM Government will note this more broadly, and reflect on whether further guidance for government departments and public bodies is required.

HM Government also recognises the importance of accurate data collection.

HM Government has monitored progress of Census 2021 through regular engagement with the Cabinet Office, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and HM Treasury. The Government is confident that Census 2021 will be successful and provide a wealth of data reflecting the society we live in today.

Chemicals: EU Law

Asked by Lord Hannan of Kingsclere

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost of applying the EU's REACH Regulation (1907/2006); and what assessment they made, if any, of that cost compared to the risk-based regime that predated REACH. [HL14636]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In 2006, Defra produced a Partial Impact Assessment ahead of the implementation of EU REACH [please see attached]. It forecasts the cost to UK industry of implementing EU REACH to be £404m. The costs associated with supporting HSE in its role as the UK competent authority under EU REACH since it came into force are estimated at around £15m. A comparative assessment of these costs and the regime that predated EU REACH, is not available.

In 2018, the European Commission published an evaluation of EU REACH. It found that costs to industry for the first two registration deadlines amounted to €2.3-2.6 billion. Dossier evaluation costs were estimated at €200 million. Restriction costs were estimated at €170 million per year.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14636 Attachment [HL14636 Attachment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-25/HL14636>

Children in Care

Asked by Lord Russell of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Practice guidance: placements in unregistered children's homes in England or unregistered care home services in Wales, published on 12 November 2019; and, in the light of that guidance, whether it is permissible for a child on remand to be (1) placed, and (2) detained, in unregulated accommodation. [HL14659]

Baroness Berridge: The practice guidance: Placements in unregistered children's homes in England or unregistered care home services in Wales was developed and issued by the President of the Family Division of the courts, with input from Ofsted and the Department for Education. This guidance sets out steps that must be followed in circumstances where courts use their inherent jurisdiction to authorise a residential placement where restrictions are placed on the liberty of a child.

The guidance makes clear that where a child's care needs are such that the setting in which they are placed should be registered as a children's home, steps must immediately be taken by those operating the unit to apply for registration, so that the placement will become regulated as soon as possible. The guidance also requires the court to monitor the progress of the application for registration and, if registration is not achieved, to review its continued approval of the child's placement where necessary.

The government is clear that local authorities have statutory duties to meet the needs of the children whom they look after, and to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation. Where settings meet the definition of a

children's home, they must register as one: it is an offence not to do so.

Where a child is remanded to local authority accommodation, they become a looked after child and the designated local authority are responsible for identifying a suitable placement. As long as they remain looked after, these children and young people are entitled to the same care planning and review processes as any other looked after children, including ensuring that they are placed in a setting which meets their needs and keeps them safe.

In discharging these duties and making these decisions for children on remand, local authorities must also consider any restrictions that the court has imposed, such as a curfew or electronic monitoring, and ensure that any placement is able to effectively incorporate these restrictions. For many young people, particularly those with more stringent restrictions set by the court, placements in independent and semi-independent provision will not be a suitable option. Local authorities should place young people in settings that best meet their needs while being able to facilitate any restrictions the court has ordered. This could include a placement with foster carers or in a children's home.

Children who are remanded to youth detention accommodation, can be placed in either a Youth Offenders Institution, a Secure Training Centre or a Secure Children's Home.

Children's Social Care Independent Review

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the scope of the Independent review of children's social care includes consideration of possible changes to the service and protection rights of children and families provided under the Children Act 1989. [HL14302]

Baroness Berridge: The review's terms of reference set out the questions and themes the review will consider. The Review themes and questions can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952624/terms_of_reference_independent_childrens_social_care_review.pdf.

They include:

1. Support: what support is needed to meet the needs of children who are referred to or involved with social care, in order to improve outcomes and make a long-term positive difference to individuals and to society?
2. Strengthening families: what can be done so that children are supported to stay safely and thrive with their families, to ensure the exceptional powers that are granted to the state to support and intervene in families are consistently used responsibly, balancing the need to protect children with the right to family life, avoiding the need to enter care?
3. Safety: what can be done so that children who need to be in care get there quickly, and to ensure those children feel safe and are not at risk of significant harm?

4. Care: what is needed for children to have a positive experience of care that prioritises stability, providing an alternative long-term family for children who need it and support for others to return home safely?

5. Delivery: what are the key enablers to implement the review and raise standards across England, such as a strong, stable and resilient workforce, system leadership and partnerships, and what is needed so that this change can be delivered?

6. Sustainability: what is the most sustainable and cost-effective way of delivering services, including high-cost services, who is best placed to deliver them, and how could this be improved so that they are fit for the future?

7. Accountability: what accountability arrangements are necessary to ensure that the state can act appropriately, balancing the need to protect and promote the welfare of children with the importance of parental responsibility, and what is needed to ensure proper oversight of how local areas discharge those responsibilities consistently?

Ultimately, the review has a broad remit. Josh MacAllister, the reviewer, is independent and it will be for him to look at the evidence presented to him and decide where change is needed.

Children's Social Care Independent Review: Public Appointments

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 16 March (HL13849), for what reasons they redacted the section entitled 'Terms of Reference and ways of working' in the contract of the chair of the independent review of the children's social care sector. [HL14354]

Baroness Berridge: It is usual practice, in line with The Cabinet Manual, to redact contracts where information is included relating to Cabinet agreement.

The Cabinet Manual can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-manual>.

China: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make at the UN Human Rights Council regarding alleged violations of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the government of China, in connection with restrictions on (1) BBC broadcasts, (2) media freedom, and (3) freedom of speech, in (a) China, and (b) Hong Kong. [HL14550]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK continues to take a leading international role in holding China to account for its human rights violations, including by leading the first statement at the UN Human Rights Council on Xinjiang and Hong Kong. On 22 February, the

Foreign Secretary delivered a ministerial statement at the Human Rights Council where he expressed our deep concerns about the situation in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong. We continue to urge the Chinese authorities to allow journalists to practice their profession without fear or arrest, harassment or reprisal, and to end extensive censorship and control over the media and wider freedom of expression. In Hong Kong, rights and freedoms, including the right to freedom of speech, are expressly guaranteed in the Joint Declaration, and must be upheld.

China: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by the government of the United States of America to impose sanctions on officials of the governments of China and Hong Kong whose actions they deem to have "reduced Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy"; and what plans they have to impose similar sanctions on these officials. [HL14308]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has already taken a number of actions in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) (BNOs), suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong indefinitely, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

We will continue to consider designations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future. We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong as befits our historic commitment to them, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms.

We will also continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

Climate Change

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that measures (1) to mitigate the impact of climate change, and (2) to promote COP26, are taken account of in their levelling up agenda. [HL14626]

Lord Callanan: Many of the actions we need to take to mitigate the impact of climate change and reach net zero emissions will support both our recovery from Covid-19 and the future growth of our economy, including levelling up our regions.

My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution will mobilise £12

billion government investment across the UK to accelerate the net zero transition, support up to 250,000 green jobs and reinvigorate our industrial heartlands, helping to level up the country.

As part of the Ten Point plan, we will for example, invest £1 billion to support the establishment of CCUS in at least four industrial clusters. Developed alongside Hydrogen, we can create transformative ‘SuperPlaces’ in areas such as central and north-eastern Scotland, south Wales, the Humber, Teesside and Merseyside.

Over the coming months, ahead of COP26, we will bring forward further bold proposals, including a Net Zero Strategy, to cut emissions and create new jobs and industries across the whole country – going further and faster towards building a stronger, more resilient future and protecting our planet for this generation and those to come.

Climate Change: Population

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the report by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*, published on 2 February, what steps they will take in response to the contribution of global population growth to climate change. [HL14252]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The independent Dasgupta Review explores a range of actions it argues are needed to protect the environment and our prosperity. The Government will examine the Review's findings closely, call on international partners to do the same, and will respond formally in due course. The review focuses on biodiversity, rather than climate change and carbon emissions.

It is growth in levels of consumption driven by unsustainable development that influences carbon emissions, and increases climate change, rather than population growth itself.

The UK supports many low income countries to plan for population growth and harness a demographic dividend, including through UK aid investments in voluntary family planning and 12 years of quality education. Effective investments in health and education can also build the adaptive capacity of communities to respond to climate change.

Common Travel Area: Undocumented Migrants

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have taken to ensure that people who are not permitted to enter the UK are prevented entry when they seek to enter through the Common Travel Area via the Republic of Ireland. [HL14377]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that the law relating to entry to, and departure from, the UK of non-UK citizens is enforced in the Common Travel Area. [HL14378]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As part of the Common Travel Area (CTA) arrangements, the UK does not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from within the CTA, with no immigration checks whatsoever on the Northern Ireland-Ireland land border. However, everyone entering the UK, regardless of where they enter from, is required to meet UK immigration framework. The UK does conduct intelligence-led controls on CTA routes, including away from the land border in Northern Ireland. This is to detect those who intend to abuse CTA arrangements. Anyone identified attempting to circumvent UK border controls is liable to be removed, if they are not lawfully present within the UK.

We also work closely with Ireland to secure the external CTA border, including data sharing and operational co-operation.

Companies: Insolvency

Asked by Lord Lennie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of registered company insolvencies in England since March 2020, by the parliamentary constituency in which the company registered office was based. [HL14411]

Lord Callanan: The Insolvency Service publishes National Statistics on insolvency cases for England and Wales combined. It is not possible to identify accurately companies that traded within specific parliamentary constituencies before entering insolvency. The data used for insolvency statistics is compiled from information at Companies House. The registered office address for a company may not be representative of its trading location, and often it is changed upon insolvency to the address of the appointed Insolvency Practitioner dealing with the case. This means that some cases may be counted as being in the constituency of the insolvency practitioner rather than the constituency of the registered office of the company before it went into insolvency.

Subject to these caveats, the table provided as Annex A sets out the data on all registered company insolvencies from March 2020 to January 2021 (inclusive).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14411 - Annex A [HL14411 ANNEX A - Registered Company Insolvencies since March 2020.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-19/HL14411>

Company Accounts

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) sections of the Companies Act 2006, or (2) regulations made under that Act, outline (a) the accounting treatment, and (b) the disclosure requirements, for finance secured through reverse factoring. [HL14423]

Lord Callanan: The Companies Act 2006 does not include specific requirements for finance secured through reverse factoring. However, section 393 places a requirement on directors that the accounts must provide a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of a company or group. This places a responsibility to provide such information as is necessary to ensure that requirement is met, including where reverse factoring is used in supply chain arrangements.

The correct accounting treatment for reverse factoring is dependent on the terms and conditions of the factoring arrangement in place. The International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Interpretations Committee and the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) have both issued guidance addressing the accounting standards requirements for reverse factoring, including guidance on additional disclosures. Copies of the guidance are attached below. The International Accounting Standards Board is also considering whether to add a project on reverse factoring to its agenda, as part of their responsibility for issuing International Financial Reporting Standards.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Disclosures on the sources and uses of cash [Disclosures-on-the-sources-and-uses-of-cash-Final.pdf]

Supply Chain Financing Arrangements—Reverse Factor [supply-chain-financing-arrangements-reverse-factoring-december-2020.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-19/HL14423>

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. [HL14565]

Baroness Barran: The Government values the profound contribution of the UK's craft workers, artisans and artists to the preservation of our unique intangible heritage. We are exploring the merits of ratifying the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as a potential addition to the

broad range of support measures which already exist for this vital aspect of our nation's life.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 17 December 2020 (HL 11087), whether they continue to believe that it would not be the best use of public resources to publish the names of firms borrowing under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. [HL14226]

Lord Callanan: Details of facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government which government department was responsible for approving Greensill Capital as a lender under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and whether in making this decision they took advice from any other government department or regulatory agency. [HL14227]

Lord Callanan: The British Business Bank is responsible for accrediting lenders to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS).

Greensill Capital (UK) Limited were approved by the British Business Bank for CBILS and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme last year in accordance with its published guidance on accreditation.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government which government agency was responsible for monitoring the activities of Greensill Capital under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and whether in their monitoring duties they involved or sought advice from any other government department or regulatory agency. [HL14228]

Lord Callanan: All accredited lenders across the three Covid-19 loan schemes (the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme) are subject to audit by the British Business Bank to ensure their compliance with scheme rules. The British Business Bank has appointed KPMG and RSM to undertake annual audits of each accredited lender under the schemes.

The audit programme has been established to provide assurance as to whether the participating lenders are administering the schemes in line with guarantee agreements entered into with lenders, as well as other agreed rules and procedures of the schemes. An audit review panel within the British Business Bank has been

established as the governing body that provides direction and subsequent actions based on findings from the audits. The panel's responsibilities include reviewing all draft audit reports to determine remediation actions required by lenders. The panel also monitors auditor performance and agrees the strategy for the following year with respect to operational audits.

Coronavirus: Care Homes

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they first started testing all care home staff for Covid-19 in England. [HL13544]

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they first started testing all care home residents for Covid-19 in England. [HL13545]

Lord Bethell: The Department began piloting testing of care homes on 1 May 2020 and launched the care home portal to allow care home managers to order tests for all staff and residents on 11 May. The whole care home portal was expanded to all adult care homes, including care homes for adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues, for all care home residents and care home staff, regardless of symptoms, on 7 June.

Regular retesting for residents and staff of care homes for over 65 year olds and dementia commenced from 6 July. This included weekly testing for staff and every 28 days for residents. All remaining adult care homes were able to apply for retesting from 31 August.

Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultants they have used in the (1) planning, and (2) rollout, of the Covid-19 test and trace system. [HL14106]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total amount they have spent to date on consultants in the (1) planning, and (2) rollout, of the Covid-19 test and trace system. [HL14107]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what targets they set for each consultancy appointed to work on the Covid-19 test and trace system; and when each of these targets was met. [HL14108]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent to date on the Covid-19 test and trace system; and, of the total amount, how much has been spent on consultancy fees. [HL14109]

Lord Bethell: Around 2500 consultants from approximately 72 different consultancies have been hired by the Department for any period from 1 March 2020 to the present day to undertake work on the planning and then rollout of the NHS Test and Trace programme. The figures have changed week on week since the programme began. Information how these figures are apportioned between the planning and rollout phases is not held in an appropriate format and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

In financial year 20-21, £450 million is budgeted for Professional Services, which includes management consultants. This was revised on 28 Feb 2021 from £438 million. We do not have an audited figure which differentiates between what was spent on the planning and the rollout stages of the Test and Trace Programme. Audited annual accounts will be published later this year for the Test and Trace Programme.

Every consultancy contract awarded by the Department contains a set of service objectives and activities which the suppliers will deliver. These are set out in the individual contracts which are published. The service objectives are linked to the overall programme plan and business objectives for the Test and Trace initiative. Each contract has a different timeframe for the delivery and completion of its objectives; progress and performance is monitored by regular meetings and engagement with the supplier.

£450 million of the £22 billion funding for Test and Trace, is allocated to 'professional services' which includes management consultants. Audited annual accounts will be published later this year for the Test and Trace Programme.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the paper by the Public Health England Transmission Group PHE: Factors contributing to risk of SARS-CoV2 transmission in various settings, published on 26 November 2020, and in particular the finding that strengthened income relief could improve adherence to isolation guidelines. [HL12059]

Lord Bethell: The Government has assessed the need for financial support noted in the Public Health England's paper and has implemented the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to provide targeted support to individuals on low incomes who will lose income as a result of having to self-isolate. The Government has provided £70 million to local authorities to meet the costs of payments under the scheme, with a further £39 million being released at the end of February.

The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme will continue into the summer and will be expanded to cover parents who are unable to work because they are caring for a child who is self-isolating. The Government keeps all elements of its Covid-19 response under review,

including the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. We will continue to work closely with the 314 unitary and district authorities in England to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme.

Coronavirus: Employment

Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether employers can insist that employees have a Covid-19 vaccine; what actions an employer can take in respect of (1) employees who refuse to have a Covid-19 vaccine, and (2) employees who refuse to work with employees who have refused the vaccine other than on medical grounds; and, in such circumstances, what are employers' health and safety obligations to their employees (a) individually, and (b) collectively. [HL12221]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom operates a system of informed consent for vaccinations. Employers are bound by a range of legal obligations to their staff including under employment, equalities, data protection and health and safety law and they will need to ensure that any vaccination policy is consistent with those legal duties.

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the measures (1) in place to address the Covid-19 pandemic, and (2) aimed at minimising the impact of Covid-19 among BAME communities. [HL14461]

Lord Bethell: Throughout the pandemic the Government has sought robust scientific evidence and advice to guide decisions regarding the measures taken to address the Covid-19 pandemic. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and its sub-groups has undertaken significant wider analysis and evaluation including consideration of economic impacts, the level of compliance with measures, amount of enforcement needed and impacts felt by local authorities. The measures taken have been effective at slowing the virus while balancing the need to protect the economy.

The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) is leading cross-Government work to tackle disparities experienced by ethnic minority groups. The second quarterly report, published on 26 February 2021, set out work conducted since the first quarterly report, including reviewing the effectiveness of current actions being undertaken by the Government to lessen disparities in infection and death rates. The report reflects that considerable efforts are underway to address these disparities, including through the Community Champions scheme led by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which has provided £23.75 million in funding to local authorities. The report commits

the Government to monitoring the impact of the scheme. The report found that the direct impacts of Covid-19 improved for ethnic minorities as a whole during the early second wave. A copy of the *Second quarterly report on progress to address Covid-19 health inequalities* is attached. The Government remains committed to addressing ethnic disparities and tackling deprivation will be a particular focus of work in the third quarter.

Coronavirus: Exercise

Asked by **Baroness Scott of Needham Market**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they recommend graded exercise therapy for patients with post Covid-19 symptoms. [HL14293]

Lord Bethell: On 18 December 2021 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network published a guideline on the management of the long term effects of Covid-19. A copy of *Covid-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of Covid-19* is attached. In developing the guideline, an expert panel undertook an evidence review into self-pacing and graded forms of exercise.

The panel considered the careful self-pacing of exercise to be an important element of self-management. However, they concluded that in the absence of evidence relating to people with ongoing symptoms from Covid-19, it could not make specific recommendations. A copy of *Covid-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of Covid-19 (NG188). Evidence review 5: interventions* is attached. Covid-19 is a new disease and therefore it is not yet clear what the physical, psychological and rehabilitation needs will be for those experiencing long term effects of the virus.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Covid-19 Rapid Guideline [Initial Reply - PQ HL14293 - Attachment1.pdf]

Covid-19 Rapid Guideline [Initial Reply - PQ HL14293 - Attachment2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-16/HL14293>

Coronavirus: Mental Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Scott of Needham Market**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether patients presenting with 'long-Covid' symptoms following (1) diagnosed, or (2) undiagnosed Covid-19, are recommended to participate in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme for medically unexplained symptoms. [HL14292]

Lord Bethell: Integrating working between mental health and physical health services is an important principle of the treatment and rehabilitation of people with 'long' Covid-19. The National Health Service is

supporting the establishment of assessment clinics in England for patients with long Covid-19 symptoms who were diagnosed with the virus or who were undiagnosed but suspected of having had Covid-19. This will include specialist physical, cognitive or psychological assessment.

Following assessment, people with persistent mental health problems that involve depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder should be considered for a referral to an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service. Where appropriate, people can be referred to IAPT for long term conditions and medically unexplained symptoms service where they exist.

Coronavirus: Nottinghamshire

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been tested for Covid-19 in Nottinghamshire since the announcement of mass testing in November 2020. [[HL11756](#)]

Lord Bethell: The total number of people tested for Covid-19 in Nottinghamshire between 29 October 2020 and 27 January 2021 is 329,057.

Coronavirus: Prisoners

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners aged 80 years old and over received the Covid-19 vaccination by, and including, 15 January. [[HL12206](#)]

Lord Bethell: The information is not currently held centrally in the format requested.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Bethell on 10 December (HL10847 and HL10848), why the information sought is not held in the format requested; whether, and if so, (1) how, and (2) where, that information is held; whether they collect any data on the operational false positive rate for polymerase chain reaction Covid-19 tests; if so, which data; what plans they have to publish those data; and what quality assurance checks they undertake on their answers to parliamentary questions. [[HL11387](#)]

Lord Bethell: Information regarding the assessment of false negatives is not held in the format requested due to the challenges in estimating clinical sensitivity. We do not collect data on the operational false positive rate.

All Written Questions receive several stages of quality assurance to ensure that responses are accurate. All answers are drafted by subject matter experts and assured

by a senior civil servant with the appropriate knowledge to certify the accuracy.

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the false positive rate from rapid lateral flow test carried out on asymptomatic school children. [[HL13817](#)]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England and Oxford University have estimated the false positive rate among asymptomatic school children is fewer than one in every 1,000 lateral flow tests.

Coronavirus: Travel

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 8 February (HL12760), what plans they have to change the format of NHS Test and Trace to allow it to "provide a result notification in a format that would be acceptable to meet the new pre-departure testing requirements". [[HL13355](#)]

Lord Bethell: There are no plans to do so. NHS Test and Trace testing is for those with symptoms of Covid-19 or who are clinically advised to take a test and are not to be used for international travel.

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 8 February (HL12760), whether there are any (1) financial, or (2) other, arrangements for private providers to be admitted to their list of Covid-19 test providers; how companies are admitted to that list; and what ongoing inspection takes place to ensure that they meet appropriate standards. [[HL13356](#)]

Lord Bethell: There are no financial or other arrangements for private providers to be added the list of providers. Any provider may submit a self-declaration stating that their full end-to-end process meets the minimum standards set out in legislation. Following the review of these self-declarations by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), the provider may be added to the list of private testing providers, subject to their meeting the minimum standards. This is the first stage of a three-stage assessment process in order to attain full UKAS accreditation.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long the immunity resulting from the Covid-19 vaccines lasts for in different (1) age, and (2) ethnic, groups. [[HL11360](#)]

Lord Bethell: It is currently too early to say how long the immunity resulting from Covid-19 vaccines will last.

More data will be published as the programme progresses through to second doses.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish a daily report of the number of people who have received a Covid-19 vaccination in each 24 hour period. [HL11766]

Lord Bethell: The Government publishes daily data on the number of people who have received a vaccination, first and second dose, on the National Health Service online Covid-19 vaccinations dashboard.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the optimum gap between the first and second dose of (1) the Oxford/AstraZeneca, and (2) the Pfizer/BioNTech, Covid-19 vaccine for securing the longest period of protection against Covid-19. [HL11805]

Lord Bethell: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA's) Information for Healthcare Professionals regarding the Pfizer vaccine states that a second dose of it should be given at least 21 days after the first dose. For the AstraZeneca vaccine, the Information for Healthcare Professionals states that the second dose should be given between four and 12 weeks after the first dose. This advice is based on clinical trial data and other information submitted to MHRA by the manufacturer.

Based on trial data showing the effectiveness of both vaccines, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that both vaccines should be given up to 12 weeks apart. The JCVI also advised that priority should be given to having a greater number of people given a first dose, which would have a greater public health impact than prioritising second doses.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to deliver a 24 hour a day Covid-19 vaccination programme. [HL11863]

Lord Bethell: University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Nottinghamshire's Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have been piloting 24 hours a day vaccination services since 20 January. NHS England will continue to test extended opening hours, including 24 hours a day provision and findings will be kept under review.

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the quantity of glass vials that will be needed to distribute Covid-19 vaccines, (2) the capacity to manufacture these vials, and (3) any procurement or delivery issues that may arise. [HL11867]

Lord Bethell: The procurement of vials is the responsibility of the manufacturer and the United

Kingdom Government has actively engaged with each manufacturer regarding manufacturing capacity, procurement and delivery to ensure enough stock is available, providing additional support where required. The UK has a sufficient number of glass vials available, due to orders already placed with manufacturers.

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what level of protection one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine provides against Covid-19; and what plans they have to publish the evidence base that informs their data on the effectiveness of one such dose. [HL12050]

Lord Bethell: Since the beginning of the vaccination programme, Public Health England (PHE) has been monitoring the effectiveness of the vaccines in the real world. PHE's first analysis of the early effects of Covid-19 vaccination in England, using routine testing and vaccination data, was published on 1 March. The data shows effectiveness of a single dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against symptomatic Covid-19 reaches approximately 60% in those aged 70 and over in the general population, reaching 85% to 90% after two doses in those aged 80 years and over. The data also shows a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine is 80% and 95% effective at reducing hospitalisation and mortality from Covid-19, respectively, in those aged 70 and over. PHE's latest vaccine effectiveness report can be found attached entitled, 'Public Health England vaccine effectiveness report March 2021'

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Public Health England vaccine effectiveness report
[SP_PH__VE_report_20210317_CC_JLB.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-12/HL12050>

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the spread of misinformation regarding the Covid-19 vaccine; and what plans they have to ensure that there is public confidence in vaccinations in the future. [HL12062]

Lord Bethell: The Department is working closely with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to provide authoritative information to the public and urge everyone to seek National Health Service advice, so they have the right information to make an informed choice about getting vaccinated. We are also working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to help social media platforms identify and act against incorrect claims about the virus in line with their terms and conditions. This includes anti-vaccination narratives that could endanger people's health.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Israel's approach

to administering vaccinations for Covid-19; and what aspects of that approach, if any, they have drawn on for the implementation of the UK's Covid-19 vaccination programme. [[HL12138](#)]

Lord Bethell: We have not made a formal assessment. However, the Department continues to monitor vaccine deployment programmes across the world, including Israel, to share learning and collaborate internationally on the role of deploying safe, effective vaccines in the response to Covid-19.

Asked by Lord Hannay of Chiswick

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 19 January (HL11665), what steps they are taking to ensure that the vaccine record card which will be issued to patients by the NHS will be recognised as an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis. [[HL12347](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government will review whether Covid-19 status certification could play a role in reopening the economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. This will include assessing to what extent certification would be effective in reducing risk and the potential uses to enable access to settings or a relaxation of Covid-19 secure mitigations. The Government will also consider the ethical, equalities, privacy, legal and operational aspects of this approach and what limits, if any, should be placed on organisations using certification. It will draw on external advice to develop recommendations that take into account any social and economic impacts, and implications for disproportionately impacted groups and individuals' privacy and security. The review will also include consideration of potential solutions for people to access their Covid-19 vaccination status.

Asked by Baroness Young of Old Scone

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide denominator information (1) by priority groups for Covid-19 vaccination, and (2) by ethnic group, to local public health directors and their staff; if they plan to provide such information, when they will do so; and what assessment they have made of the potential for such information to enable local conversations about how to improve uptake between local public health directors and those communities with poorer uptake of Covid-19 vaccination. [[HL13148](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are committed to ensuring that local authorities and Directors of Public Health have the data they need to understand uptake in their local areas and tailor efforts to reach those who have not yet taken up the offer of a vaccine appointment.

Data on number of Covid-19 vaccinations given is being shared with Directors of Public Health at both a Middle Layer Super Output Area level and a lower tier local authority level. This includes both data by age cohort and ethnic group. Directors of Public Health also receive vaccination uptake and denominator information

for age cohorts and priority groups, by ethnicity and deprivation index at sustainability transformation partnership and Lower Layer Super Output Area level. This provides information on vaccine uptake that enables local conversations about designing and improving operational delivery locally.

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that homeless people receive Covid-19 vaccinations. [[HL13238](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recognises that many people who are homeless or sleeping rough are likely to have underlying health conditions which would place them in priority group six. These conditions are likely to be under-diagnosed or not properly reflected in general practitioner (GP) records. The JCVI has advised that homeless people should be offered the vaccine without the need for a National Health Service number or GP registration.

There is work being undertaken to update our operational guidance on reaching rough sleepers and homeless people based on this recent JCVI advice. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government are working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement to support outreach, and further work is being done to explore the availability of effective on-street models which could be used to support this work. Local teams are now prioritising all homeless people for vaccination alongside priority group six.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that asylum seekers living in temporary accommodation receive Covid-19 vaccinations. [[HL13249](#)]

Lord Bethell: Vaccination against Covid-19 is offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status. No immigration checks are needed to receive these services and the National Health Service is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

An NHS number is not needed to make a booking for a Covid-19 vaccine or when attending a vaccination appointment. If individuals are registered with a general practitioner (GP), their GP will contact them in due course.

For those not registered with a GP, NHS regional teams working with various appropriate local systems will contact unregistered people to ensure they are offered the vaccine, when eligible.

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government to which (1) Commonwealth countries, and (2) non-Commonwealth countries, they have supplied Covid-19 vaccines; and how many Covid-19 vaccines each of those countries have received. [[HL14214](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not directly provided Covid-19 vaccines to any country outside the UK, Crown Dependencies, and Overseas Territories. However, the UK is among the biggest donors to the COVAX facility, which is rolling out vaccines globally, including to low and middle income countries. We have committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, which will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries this year. All but two members of the Commonwealth are COVAX members, and 31 Commonwealth countries will be receiving vaccines in the first phase of the COVAX rollout (Ghana was the first COVAX recipient on 24 February 2021). The Prime Minister has confirmed that the UK will share the majority of any future surplus Covid-19 vaccines from our domestic supply with the COVAX procurement pool to support developing countries.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they (1) have had, and (2) intend to have, with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency about the (a) safety, and (b) effectiveness, of Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine. [[HL14290](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department has regular discussions with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency regarding the safety and effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccines.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations about (1) the reduction in the number of available Covid-19 vaccines during April, and (2) the impact of that reduction on the UK's vaccination programme. [[HL14391](#)]

Lord Callanan: UK Government Ministers and officials are in weekly discussions with the Devolved Administrations regarding the supply of vaccines. This is in addition to the UK Government sharing a rolling 13-week forecast with the four nations each week, as well as a 6-month forward look which is shared each month. This helps to ensure that deployment can be planned effectively and aligned to forecast supply.

Our forthcoming scheduled deliveries will fully support our target of offering a first vaccine dose to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) priority cohorts 1 to 9 by 15 April and all remaining adults by 31 July.

The UK Government is responsible for supplying vaccines to the Devolved Administrations. However, as health policy is a devolved matter, the vaccination programme in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the respective Devolved Administrations.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to tailor their approach to BAME communities to aid uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine. [[HL14460](#)]

Lord Bethell: Over £23 million has been allocated through the Community Champions scheme to 60 councils and voluntary groups across England to expand work to support those most at risk from Covid-19 and boost vaccine take up. The Department of Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the National Health Service hold regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders and black, Asian and minority ethnic organisations to provide advice and information about Covid-19 vaccines and how they will be made available. A coalition of trusted voices to promote vaccine confidence in target audiences will be built and also provide us the opportunity to listen to concerns and adjust our approach. Local NHS staff and council officials have attended online question and answer sessions facilitated by local community leaders and community engagement workers have visited areas of low vaccine uptake to provide information in spoken and written community languages.

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Covid-19 vaccines have been disposed of in the UK as a result of missed vaccination appointments. [[HL14488](#)]

Lord Bethell: This information is not held centrally.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish all the vaccine effectiveness assessments which Public Health England has provided to date to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. [[HL14517](#)]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) has provided various vaccine effectiveness assessments to the Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation (JCVI). The assessments provided are recorded in the minutes of the JCVI meetings which are published online.

PHE's monitoring of vaccine effectiveness is also regularly published online.

Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for enabling individuals to show proof of having been vaccinated against Covid-19. [[HL14630](#)]

Lord True: As set out in the 'Covid-19 Response - Spring 2021,' published on 22 February, the Government will review whether Covid-status certification could play a role in reopening our economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. The Government will set out its conclusions ahead of Step 4 of the roadmap, which will happen no earlier than 21 June.

The Government has published the Terms of Reference for the review.

Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made regarding the consultation on coronial investigations of stillbirths since it closed on 18 June 2019. [[HL14440](#)]

Lord Bethell: Work on analysing the responses to the consultation has been delayed during the Covid-19 pandemic but we hope to publish the response to the consultation as soon as possible.

Corporation Tax: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Caine

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to devolve responsibility for corporation tax to the Northern Ireland Executive; what assessment they have made of the expected change in the level of revenue generated from corporation tax from any such transfer of responsibility; and, in particular, whether Her Majesty's Government would be able to offset any shortfall in revenue resulting from such a transfer of responsibility. [[HL14260](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Stormont House Agreement between the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive agreed, in principle, for the power to set the rate of corporation tax in Northern Ireland on certain trading profits to be devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

It was agreed that the Executive would need to demonstrate that its finances were on a sustainable footing before devolution of this power could be undertaken, and that the Executive's block grant would need to be adjusted to reflect the corporation tax revenues foregone if the devolved power were exercised.

Council Housing: Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of electrical safety issues in local authority housing stock. [[HL14451](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The English Housing Survey is a continuous national survey commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It collects information annually about people's housing circumstances and the condition of housing in England.

English Housing Survey data shows that local authority (LA) homes are in better condition in respect of electrical safety than other tenures. In 2018, 73% of LA dwellings had all 5 recommended electrical safety features installed. This has increased from 56% in 2010. This compares with

60% of owner-occupied, 62% of private rented and 74% of housing association dwellings.

Councillors: Internet

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made (1) of the requirement for councillors to publish their home addresses on council websites, and (2) of the effect of this requirement on the safety and welfare of councillors, and female councillors in particular; and what plans they have to remove this requirement so that councillors have parity with Members of Parliament. [[HL14385](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: At present, councillors are required to register their home address as part of their council's register of interests given that planning decisions, for example, can have a substantial impact on an area in which a councillor lives. Registers of interests are typically published on council websites, but there are already provisions in section 32 of the Localism Act 2011 to allow councils to withhold sensitive interests from the public register where their disclosure could lead to violence or intimidation.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life's review of Local Government Ethical Standards noted that the sensitive interest provisions are often only used when a member has already experienced intimidation or harassment, and so recommended that councillors should not be required to register their home addresses as a disclosable pecuniary interest. The Government is considering the recommendations from the CSPL's report and we intend to publish a response in due course.

Counter-terrorism

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 1 December 2020 ([HL10439](#)), what lessons they have learned from the anti-terrorism measures introduced by the governments of (1) France, and (2) Austria; and what new anti-terrorism measures they plan to introduce as a result. [[HL14592](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 1 December 2020, HMG already has robust counter-terrorism measures in place, which are outlined in the UK's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST).

Our overseas approach to countering terrorism is global but completely integrated with our domestic approach. We continuously review policies in light of new developments. We closely monitor France and Austria's responses to the attacks.

We will continue to look to learn from these examples where they are applicable to the UK context. We continue to share best practices, and discuss evolving threats and

responses, such as preventing terrorist use of the internet, with the governments of both France and Austria.

Courier Services: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of Great Britain to Northern Ireland parcel delivery services; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol on such services. [HL14485]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Earlier this month, the Government took several temporary operational steps to avoid disruptive cliff edges which could have affected the delivery of parcel services. These included extending the temporary arrangements that the Government set out on parcels before the end of the transition period, giving further time to parcel operators to prepare for new requirements and minimise the impact on day-to-day lives in Northern Ireland.

The Government remains committed to meeting its obligations in the Northern Ireland Protocol and to doing so in a pragmatic and proportionate way, taking full account of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The Government is continuing to support parcel operators and businesses across sectors to adapt to the new trading arrangements with the EU.

Courts: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce delays to court cases arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL14479]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are keenly aware of the need to improve timeliness for both defendants and victims, and mitigate the impact of delays on victims and witnesses. Judges have been prioritising the most serious cases throughout the pandemic, including those involving vulnerable victims and witnesses as well as those with defendants nearing custody time limits.

We will continue to do more, and the recovery of our courts to full operational capacity is our highest priority in order to reduce waiting times within the justice system. The steps taken so far – to adjust court rooms to hold Covid-secure trials, to open more court rooms, and to move to virtual hearings where possible – have helped. Crown Court disposals increased from June 2020 and were higher than pre-Covid levels for the first two weeks of 2021. The increase has slowed slightly, with disposals throughout February consistently 5% below the pre-Covid baseline, and the outstanding caseload in Magistrates' courts has reduced from the peak reached in August. As of the end of March 2021, we have created a total of 60 Nightingale courts.

We continue to work with partners across the justice system to assess what more can be done to improve the resilience of the courts during the pandemic, and to assist faster recovery. We recognise the particular impact of delays on victims and witnesses, and are providing £151m to victim and witness support services in 2021-22 to ensure victims receive the support they need.

Crime Prevention: Females

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what technology they are (1) using, and (2) developing, to improve the safety of women. [HL14534]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Home Office is supporting policing to build its digital capability and maximise the use of technologies to ensure it can respond effectively to crime and protect the public, including women.

The Single Online Home (SOH) is a national platform that provides a digital front counter and online services for the public. SOH launched a pilot domestic abuse reporting service in October 2020 across five forces following heightened risks of hidden harms during the pandemic. Designed in consultation with forces, the NPCC Domestic Abuse Lead, and external charities, the service is very much victim focused and provides victims with a discrete reporting mechanism to access the support they need. The service has received a total of 1168 reports and is being used to inform a national roll out.

In light of the recent and tragic death of Sarah Everard, we have more than doubled the size of the Safer Streets Fund, which will bring funding for these local projects to £45 million in the 2021/22 financial year. Through the Safer Streets Fund, we will work with Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Authorities to deploy measures such as CCTV and improved street lighting that improve the safety of public spaces, with a focus on increasing the safety of women and girls.

Through our landmark Domestic Abuse Bill we will also strengthen our response to perpetrators and improve our support to victims. The Bill will introduce mandatory polygraph examinations of high-risk domestic abuse offenders on licence.

We intend to publish two strategies this year focussed on tackling Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse, which will ensure a cross-government response to ensuring and increasing the safety of women and girls.

We have published the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper, which includes specific measures to work with private companies and ensure that they are held to account for tackling illegal activity and content, such as hate crime, harassment, and cyberstalking, as well as activity and content which may not be illegal but is nonetheless highly damaging to individuals (legal but harmful). The Full Government Response will be followed by legislation, which we are working on at pace, and will be ready this year.

Crime Prevention: Finance

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will change the focus of the current round of the Safer Streets Fund so that all applications aimed at protecting women from attack are eligible. [HL14284]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Recent tragic events have highlighted the importance of ensuring people are safe whilst walking our streets.

We have announced we are investing a further £25m into the Safer Streets Fund this year, focused on ensuring people feel safe in public spaces and building on the £45m we have already committed. This investment will be launched in May once the Purdah period attached to local council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections has ended.

The Fund will deliver physical crime prevention measures, such as improved street lighting or increased CCTV coverage. There is strong evidence to show that simple solutions like these help prevent crimes before they happen, empowering communities and individuals, including women and girls, to feel truly safe.

The ongoing application process for the second, £20m round of Safer Streets Funding will remain unchanged.

Crime: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps (1) they have taken, and (2) they intend to take, to address the level of (a) domestic abuse, (b) violence against women and girls, (c) hate crime, (d) online hate, and (e) online radicalisation, experienced by BAME communities. [HL14464]

Lord Greenhalgh: *Domestic Abuse and VAWG*

Tackling Domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a government priority. These abhorrent crimes have no place in our society.

We know that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of ethnicity or background. That is why the Home Office has provided funding to 'by and for' specialist services including, Southall Black Sisters who have been provided with £80,951 in funding during the Covid pandemic.

Added to this, our landmark Domestic Abuse Bill which is due to achieve Royal Assent this Spring will strengthen our response to perpetrators and improve our support to victims. This Summer the Government will also publish a strategy to combat Violence Against Women and Girls, followed by a complementary strategy on Domestic Abuse.

Hate Crime & Online Hate

The Government has been clear that all forms of hate crime are unacceptable and that the cowards who commit these crimes should face the full force of the law. Action under the hate crime action plan 2016-20 (Action Against

Hate: The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime) included approximately £5 million for protective security measures to protect places of worship and asking the Law Commission to review the effectiveness and coverage of hate crime legislation.

In November 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded £1.8 million through the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme to support established community groups and civil society organisations to run short projects to boost shared values and tackle religiously and racially-motivated hate crime.

We have published the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper, which includes specific measures to work with private companies and ensure that they are held to account for tackling illegal activity and content, such as hate crime, harassment, and cyberstalking, as well as activity and content which may not be illegal but is nonetheless highly damaging to individuals (legal but harmful). The Full Government Response will be followed by legislation, which we are working on at pace, and will be ready this year. The Home Office also funds a Police Online Hate Crime Hub to improve the police response to victims of online hate crime.

Online radicalisation

Terrorist groups use the internet to spread propaganda designed to radicalise, recruit and inspire vulnerable people, and to incite, provide information to enable, and celebrate terrorist attacks. Our objective is to ensure that there are no safe spaces online for all forms of terrorists to promote or share their extreme views.

In 2010, we set up the police Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), based in the Metropolitan Police. To date, over 314,500 individual pieces of terrorist content referred by CTIRU have been removed by companies and the Unit has also informed the design of the EU Internet Referral Unit based at Europol.

The Government has also pressed companies to increase the use of technology to automate the detection and removal of content where possible. As a result of continued engagement, companies have expanded the use of automated removals.

Crime: Victims

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of mental health and wellbeing provision for victims of crime. [HL14499]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: This Government is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the public, including victims of crime, and to ensuring that the right support is in place to help victims cope and recover both within and beyond the pandemic.

In recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of victims, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) established the Victim and Witness Silver Command Group in March 2020 in order to identify and assess

developing risks and issues that may have an impact on victims of crime, including their mental health support needs. This group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis and its comprehensive membership consists of representatives from across government including representatives from the Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England, criminal justice agencies, external stakeholders, and the third sector.

In 2021-22, we will provide just under £151m for victim and witness support services, including an extra £51m to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims, building on the emergency funding from this financial year to help domestic abuse and sexual violence services meet increased levels of demand.

Additionally, on 23rd November 2020 the Government published 'Staying Mentally Well: Winter Plan 2020 – 21' which includes a commitment, backed by £50 million, to boost capacity and support good-quality discharge for mental health service users from inpatient settings. We have also announced that in 2021/22 the NHS will receive around an additional £500 million to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the NHS workforce. We are absolutely committed to our ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan to expand and transform mental health services in England and to investing an additional £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023/24.

Crimes Against the Person

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to protect adults who fear assault. [[HL14392](#)]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision of personal alarms to vulnerable people who fear assault. [[HL14393](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is committed to reducing serious violence and putting an end to the tragedies afflicting our communities. It is important that we work across government, statutory, private, and voluntary sectors to deliver change.

We have announced we are investing a further £25m into the Safer Streets Fund this year, focused on ensuring people feel safe in public spaces and building on the £45m we have already committed. This investment will be launched in May once the pre-election period attached to local council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections has ended.

The Fund will deliver physical crime prevention measures, such as improved street lighting or increased CCTV coverage. There is strong evidence to show that simple solutions like these help prevent crimes before they happen, empowering communities and individuals, including women and girls, to feel truly safe.

Violence Reduction Units are a key component of the Government's investment to tackle violence at a local level. They bring together local partners in the 18 areas most affected by serious violence to deliver an effective, joined up approach to tackling violent crime and its drivers. The Home Office has invested £70m funding over two years (19/20 – 20/21) for Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). On 8 February, we announced a further £35m of funding for VRUs for 2021/22.

We are committed to tackling all forms of abuse against women and girls. The previous VAWG Strategy included sexual harassment for the first time in recognition of the disproportionate impact that it has on women and girls.

The Government takes all forms of harassment extremely seriously. Whether it is in the workplace, on the street, or as part of domestic or sexual abuse – sexual harassment, in any situation, is unacceptable.

We will be publishing a new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy in 2021 which will help to better target perpetrators and support victims of these crimes and increase our ability to tackle emerging forms of VAWG such as 'upskirting' and revenge porn.

To inform the new strategy, we launched a Call for Evidence on 10 December, inviting responses from the public, victims, their friends, family and colleagues as well as victim support organisations, frontline professionals, and academics.

Following the tragic case of Sarah Everard and subsequent outpouring of stories and experiences of women who have faced violence or harassment, the Home Secretary decided to re-open the Government's Call for Evidence on Friday 12 March, for a 2-week period, to inform the new strategies to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls. So far there have been over 147,000 responses to the call for evidence.

Cruise Missiles: Proliferation

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking within appropriate multilateral institutions to develop a strategic response to the proliferation of cruise missiles (1) to foster maximum transparency, and (2) to develop a coherent safeguarding approach within arms control arrangements. [[HL14447](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is a member of relevant multilateral export control regimes, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Wassenaar Arrangement. The MTCR seeks to prevent the proliferation of sensitive missile systems and technologies, including cruise missiles, to countries and end users of concern. The Wassenaar Arrangement in turn seeks to prevent the regional destabilising accumulation of conventional weapons, including cruise missile systems.

The UK plays an active role in both regimes and through them the UK promotes transparency, the control and greater responsibility in transfers of all missiles types,

as well as conventional weapons and related dual-use technologies. In addition, the UK is a State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which establishes common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, which includes cruise missile systems. The ATT requires annual reporting on transfers to reinforce transparency among State Parties.

Culture Recovery Fund

*Asked by **Baroness Bull***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the level of funding (1) creative freelancers, and (2) arts institutions, receive from the Cultural Recovery Fund is sufficient to meet requirements; and what comparative analysis they have made of the efficacy of such funding distributed in (a) England, (b) Northern Ireland, (c) Scotland, and (d) Wales. [[HL14257](#)]

Baroness Barran: As a proportion of the funding is yet to be disbursed we cannot yet comprehensively assess the CRF's success. However, so far, over £1 billion worth of funding from the Culture Recovery Fund has been allocated, including over £800 million to almost 3800 arts, culture and heritage organisations in England, helping to support at least 75,000 jobs. Freelancers have been supported through the Fund so far and this is on top of support from Arts Council England, who have made over £51 million of awards to individuals through non-CRF funds in this financial year alone.

£400 million was held back from the first round as contingency and now forms the basis of the second round of grant (£300m) and repayable finance (£100m) funding. Applications have been assessed and an announcement will be made in due course.

Additionally, the Chancellor announced in the 2021 Budget an additional £300 million for the Culture Recovery Fund, showing an unprecedented commitment to support the sector during this pandemic. The Culture Recovery Fund as a whole also included £188 million for the devolved administrations via the Barnett formula: Northern Ireland (£33 million), Scotland (£97 million) and Wales (£59 million). We know that Scotland, Wales and NI are also deeply committed to their arts, culture, and heritage sectors and have provided a range of support funding, building on and including the CRF allocation.

Defence

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to (1) the government of Russia's seizure of Crimea, and (2) the government of Azerbaijan's attack on Nagorno-Karabakh, what plans they have to review their policies for (a) nuclear, and (b) other deterrence. [[HL14575](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The international order is more fragmented, characterised by intensifying competition between states over interests, norms and values.

The UK's defence and deterrence policy is kept constantly under review to ensure that it reflects the current security environment. NATO remains the foundation of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area, where our commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty remains our most powerful deterrent. To respond to emerging security challenges, including sub-threshold activity, Her Majesty's Government applies modern deterrence: the application of all appropriate tools to deter actual or potential adversaries from attempting harm against the UK or our partners.

We continue to use the full spectrum of our capabilities to deter adversaries and to deny them opportunities to attack us or our allies. The UK's nuclear deterrent exists to deter the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life.

Defence: Finance

*Asked by **Lord Sikka***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the financial contributions made by (1) the Crown Dependencies, and (2) Overseas Territories, to the annual defence budget of the United Kingdom. [[HL14422](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The annual defence budget is funded entirely from the Supply Estimates process.

Supply Estimates are the means by which the Government seeks Parliament's authority for its spending plans. The Estimates reflect the HM-Treasury budgetary control structure and where appropriate are net of certain types of income where this can be used to reduce the overall amount of resource required by the Department.

Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories do not provide a direct contribution to the annual defence budget of the United Kingdom.

Records show that there is a very small amount of income received during Financial Year 2020-21 that has been received from the Government of Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories. This is for actual services supplied to those Governments for which the Ministry of Defence has sought reimbursement on a full cost recovery basis.

Department for Education: Reviews

*Asked by **Lord Storey***

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many review groups are currently established in the Department for Education, and (2) what areas they cover. [[HL14666](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department has a number of current review groups including: the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and call for evidence at level 2 and below; the independent review of children's social care; the review of provisions for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities; and the initial teacher training market review. My right hon. Friend, the

Secretary of State for Education, has also recently asked Ofsted to undertake an immediate review into sexual abuse across state and independent schools.

Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that questions for written answer from members of the House of Lords that are allocated to the Department for Health and Social Care are answered on time; and what plans they have to recruit more staff for that purpose. [[HL13652](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department has received an unprecedented number of Written Questions since March 2020. We are working hard to improve our response rate through an iterative written questions recovery plan and performance is now improving at a steady rate. The core Department has increased by a further 400 posts since December 2020, to support the Covid-19 response across all areas.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the cuts to UK Research and Innovation funding on (1) the role of the UK in supporting the global health response to Covid-19, and (2) the capacity of the UK to provide expertise to assist international development as proposed in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [[HL14612](#)]

Lord Callanan: The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships and supporting the UK research sector. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer committed to increase investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22; this will support our ambitions set out in the Integrated Review, which recognises the importance of international collaboration to a healthy and productive R&D sector.

The Department is committed to delivering on the global health response to Covid. Despite the budgetary pressure caused by Covid last year, the Department mobilised £14.5m of ODA funding through the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund to support research into Covid in developing country contexts.

We are currently working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the financial year 2021/22 ODA allocations.

Diplomatic Service

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of diplomatic protection accorded to the EU Ambassador to the UK; and what plans they have, if any, to grant them full diplomatic status. [[HL14570](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We continue to engage with the EU on the long-term arrangements for the EU Delegation to the UK, and it would not be right to pre-empt the outcome of those discussions. Pending the conclusion of an Establishment Agreement, the Head of the EU Delegation and their staff enjoy privileges and immunities under Protocol 7 to the EU Treaties.

Disability

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the panel overseeing the tendering process for the Cabinet Office's systematic review of the lived experience of disabled people (CCZZ21A07) (1) includes, or (2) is chaired, by a disabled person. [[HL14599](#)]

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government which disabled peoples' organisations were involved in (1) developing the criteria for the tendering process of the Cabinet Office's systematic review of the lived experience of disabled people (CCZZ21A07), and (2) appointing the body responsible for the review. [[HL14600](#)]

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the criteria for the tendering process of the Cabinet Office's systematic review of the lived experience of disabled people (CCZZ21A07). [[HL14601](#)]

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Cabinet Office's systematic review of the lived experience of disabled people (CCZZ12A07) will be made publicly available. [[HL14602](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The systematic review is part of Disability Unit's ongoing work to improve and systematise the evidence base on the lived experience of disabled people in the UK.

The tendering process has been overseen by Disability Unit (DU) staff as well as procurement specialists from Crown Commercial Service (CCS). We do not know

about those from the CCS side, but some DU staff involved do have lived experience of disability.

The scope and criteria were drawn up by Disability Unit, informed by knowledge of the existing evidence base and its gaps, and also incorporating the focus areas of the National Strategy for Disabled People. Since the tender was conducted as an open competition, all of the criteria (e.g. the requirements and the evaluation criteria) for the tendering process were available on Contracts Finder.

Domestic Abuse Bill

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the additional resources required to implement the provisions of the Domestic Violence Bill; and by when they expect to provide those resources. [[HL14254](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Department is currently focused on securing the successful passage of the landmark domestic abuse bill. The bill will achieve better support and protection for victims of domestic abuse and their children and bring more perpetrators to justice.

We have acquired additional resource to begin bill implementation planning. Whilst it is anticipated that further resource will be needed after Royal Assent, our final assessment on requirements will be made once debate on the bill has been completed.

Education and Vocational Guidance: Travellers

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their white paper Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth, published on 21 January, what steps they are taking (1) to ensure equality of opportunities for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children and young people of compulsory education age who are out of school or not in education, employment or training to gain the Maths and English Level 2 qualifications required to access further education and training, including apprenticeships, and (2) to ensure that careers advice and guidance is accessible to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma students who have missed out on schooling; and what plans they have to ensure that all Government-backed careers advisors receive training on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma culture. [[HL14306](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The participation age has been raised so that young people are now required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. Young people can do this through full-time education, a job or volunteering combined with part-time study, or by undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. The government has invested nearly £7 billion during the

academic year 2020/21, to ensure there is a place in education or training for every 16 to 19 year old.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and track the participation of 16 and 17 year olds, supporting those who are not participating to do so and making sure that there is sufficient and suitable education and training provision to meet their needs.

The September Guarantee places a further duty on local authorities to ensure that all year 11 pupils (and year 12 pupils on one year courses) receive an offer of a place in education or training for the following September. It aims to ensure that all young people, regardless of what they achieved in school, understand that there are opportunities that will help them to progress, and to ensure that they get the advice and support they need to find a suitable place.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress. This includes traineeships, which provide unemployed young people with employability training, work experience and English and maths, and Supported Internships which offer tailored support for young people aged 16 to 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities.

We know students who leave school with a good grasp of English and maths increase their chances of securing a job or going on to further education, which is why students who do not achieve a GCSE grade 4 at age 16 must continue to study these subjects in Post-16 (it is also known as the 'condition of funding'). Students who just missed out on a GCSE grade 4 are given the opportunity to achieve a GCSE. We recognise that for students with prior attainment of a GCSE grade 2 or below, a level 2 Functional Skills qualification may be more appropriate.

Alongside this, English and maths are crucial elements of a T Level and apprenticeship. Each T Level student and apprentice must ensure they have achieved a prescribed level of English and maths in order to successfully complete their programme.

The government is committed to ensuring that young people and adults are provided with high-quality careers information, advice, and guidance, regardless of their background.

We have provided specific support for pupils from disadvantaged groups such as Gypsy, Traveller and Roma, special educational needs, and looked after children. This includes investing over £1.7 million to test new approaches to broaden aspirations and raise awareness of pathways into training and work.

Our statutory guidance, first introduced in September 2012, requires that schools secure independent and impartial careers guidance on the full range of education and training options.

Members of the careers profession, including careers advisers are trained to give impartial careers, information, advice and guidance. They work closely with school leaders to develop careers plans that reflect a pupil's personal circumstance. They also take into account a pupil's background and aspirations when giving them

impartial careers advice. We will continue working with members of the careers profession, including the Careers Development Institute, to ensure careers advisers and other professionals receive adequate training to enable them to deal with pupils from all backgrounds, including those from the traveller community.

Election Observers

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government to which international elections the UK has sent observers in each year from 2015 to 2020. [HL14509]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We do not hold a central database of information related to the number of UK observers who have engaged on elections overseas.

Electric Vehicles

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide (1) additional support to councils to electrify their vehicles, and (2) councils with advice on how they can achieve electrification of their vehicles. [HL14418]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Local authorities and other public sector bodies are increasingly supporting the transition to zero emission vehicles, including electrifying their own fleets. The Government funds the Energy Saving Trust (EST) to run the Local Government Support Programme, which provides impartial advice to local authorities in England on fleet electrification, and wider local policies to support zero emission vehicle uptake. EST also provides a fleet management toolkit to any public or private organisation, which offers in-depth, impartial fleet support to help them reduce costs and limit the environmental impact of their fleet.

Government's ULEV Readiness Programme was launched in January 2015 and as well as funding charging infrastructure, supported 296 ultra-low emission vehicles across the public sector, including 90 in local authorities. It also offered fleet reviews to 35 Public Sector Bodies (including Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and Fire and Rescue Services). We will continue to work with and encourage local authorities to electrify their fleets and to apply for available funding for chargepoints in their local areas.

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their decision to alter the grant scheme for plug-in electric vehicles, announced on 18 March, on demand for electric vehicles from (1) private individuals, and (2) fleet purchasers; and what further financial encouragement they intend to provide to fleet purchasers in order to meet the Government's targets for ending sales of petrol and diesel cars. [HL14459]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We signalled our intention to manage an exit from the plug-in car grant in our Road to Zero Strategy, published in 2018, and transition to support through other measures. As the market has developed, we have changed our criteria to focus the plug-in car grant on vehicles, which have the greatest impact on reducing carbon emissions.

In March 2020, the Government extended the plug-in vehicle grant schemes for another three years to 2022/23. For cars, the grant rate is being reduced from £3,000 to £2,500 per car, allowing the funding to last longer and make it available to 20% more drivers, with the cap reducing from £50,000 to £35,000. The increasing choice of new vehicles, growing demand from customers and the rapidly rising number of chargepoints, means we are today, re-focusing our vehicle grants on the more affordable zero emission vehicles – where most consumers will be looking and where taxpayers' money will make more of a difference.

Although the market is at an early stage, demand for zero emission vans increased substantially in 2020, with increased interest from commercial fleets. We expect this trend to continue as more models are brought to market and supply increases. Since the grant scheme was launched in 2012, it has since supported over 15,000 electric vans and HGVs across the UK. There are now more than 20 models eligible for the grant and this continues to increase.

The Government has pledged a £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles including £1.3 billion for charging infrastructure, £582 million for vehicle grants and up to £1 billion to help secure the transformation of the automotive sector by developing and embedding the next generation of automotive technologies in the UK. We keep our policies and grant rates under review and will monitor the market closely, to ensure the grant remains an effective incentive and good value for money for the taxpayer.

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that (1) electricity networks have capacity to facilitate the mass rollout of electric vehicles, and (2) the process of connecting electric vehicle charging points to those networks is effective and efficient. [HL14595]

Lord Callanan: Mechanisms are in place to ensure networks are prepared for the significant new demand for electricity from the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). Ofgem, as the independent regulator, use the price control framework to ensure that the network companies provide the required infrastructure to deliver the capacity to meet both current and future demand on the network.

EVs also offer new opportunities for consumers to be part of a smarter and more flexible energy system. Smart charging can help reduce the need for additional network investment by shifting charging to off-peak periods. In 2019, the Government consulted on mandating that all

private charge points sold or installed in the UK must have smart functionality and meet device level requirements. We intend to lay the relevant legislation later this year.

Ensuring a smooth process for connecting EV charging points to the electricity networks is the responsibility of network operators at both the distribution and transmission levels, and they are incentivised to do so through the regulatory framework, also set by Ofgem. Officials from BEIS and the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles regularly meet both network operators and connection customers, such as fleet operators, from across the country to discuss the connection process and ensure that the needs of consumers are placed at the heart of the EV transition.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of local councils in delivering electric vehicle charging infrastructure to meet the Government's 2030 target to end the sale of new diesel and petrol cars in the UK. [[HL14417](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Local councils have an important role to play in the transition to zero emission driving and we are working with them to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. The Government's On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) is available to all UK local authorities to provide charging infrastructure for those without private parking. More than 105 local authorities have already taken advantage of the scheme, funding more than 3,800 chargepoints. We encourage local authorities to apply for funding to provide chargers for their residents.

We provided £40 million of funding via our Go Ultra Low city scheme to 8 cities across the UK, to support uptake of ultra low emission vehicles in those cities. Over 3,500 chargepoints were installed as part of this scheme. Bristol, London, Milton Keynes and Nottingham have been delivering ambitious plans to become global exemplars of ultra low emission vehicle uptake. The scheme also provided £5 million of development funding for specific initiatives in Dundee, Oxford, York and the North East region. The Government has committed £90 million at Spending Review to fund local electric vehicle charging infrastructure, in particular to support the roll out of larger, on-street charging schemes and rapid hubs in England.

Later this year, the Government will publish an electric vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, which will explore the roles and responsibilities for central government and wider stakeholders involved in the deployment of charging infrastructure. As part of this, we will be engaging with local authorities, charge point operators and other stakeholders to ensure that future charging infrastructure is practical, accessible and deliverable.

Eleven Plus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many pupils entered the 11-plus examination in (1) 2019, and (2) 2020. [[HL14399](#)]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many pupils qualifying for Pupil Premium funding entered the 11-plus examination in (1) 2019, and (2) 2020. [[HL14400](#)]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many pupils qualifying for Pupil Premium funding achieved a qualifying score or pass mark in the 11-plus examination in (1) 2019, and (2) 2020. [[HL14401](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department does not hold this information. Selection tests are administered locally, and the department does not routinely collect information on individual tests.

English Language: Education

Asked by Baroness Hooper

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to support the economic role of UK English Language Schools accredited by the British Council following the reduction in their income during the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL14317](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government will continue to support the UK English Language Training (ELT) sector, working closely with English UK - which manages the Accreditation UK quality assurance scheme for UK ELT centres in partnership with the British Council - and others to co-ordinate efforts to boost UK education exports. The Government also continues to support the UK ELT sector more broadly through the global 'Education is GREAT' campaign. The Chancellor confirmed the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will be extended until 30 September 2021 in the 2021 Budget announced on 3 March 2021. A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as language schools, has also been made available.

The FCDO has provided significant support to the British Council to help mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic on their operations.

Environmental Stewardship Scheme

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to investigate any differences reported in the application of Higher Level Stewardship extensions on common land. [[HL14270](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We are offering extensions of one year to suitable expiring Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements, as an alternative to entry into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, ahead of the introduction of new schemes such as Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) published the criteria used to offer HLS extensions which can be found on the GOV.UK website.

We understand that some may not agree with the decision so we have included an opportunity to review decisions not to offer an extension formally. We know that the position on common land is more complex and RPA is working closely with Natural England and commoners to resolve any differences of opinion.

*Asked by **Baroness Hayman of Ullock***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they intend to provide to Higher Level Stewardship agreement holders to ensure a smooth transition to the Environmental Land Management Scheme. [[HL14272](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are a range of options being provided to help farmers continue to manage their land sustainably and prepare to take part in new schemes as they are introduced.

Defra will be offering certain Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement holders the opportunity to extend their agreements as their existing agreements expire, if they wish to do so and meet the extension criteria. The criteria ensure that the agreements continue to deliver positive environmental outcomes and protect our Priority Habitats and SSSIs.

Additionally, it is now possible for HLS agreement holders to apply for the Countryside Stewardship Capital grants offer alongside their HLS agreement, where they wish to undertake new works. Alternatively, agreement holders can apply for a new five-year Countryside Stewardship agreement if they want to make changes to their land management options.

These opportunities will help to bridge the gap between current agreements and the start of the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes, ensuring a continuation of both environmental benefits, and funding for agreement holders.

Erasmus+ Programme

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to replace the eTwinning scheme, which ended when they withdrew from the Erasmus+ programme. [[HL14427](#)]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The new Turing Scheme, which replaces the Erasmus+ programme, will provide funding for school pupils to participate in international placements and exchanges, and the scheme is now open for schools to apply to. The scheme does not provide a like-for-like replacement of the eTwinning online platform. In considering what elements of the Erasmus+ programme we would immediately replicate under the Turing Scheme, we prioritised funding school pupils and students to participate in exchanges in person, to ensure that as many pupils as possible can benefit, including a focus on widening access for disadvantaged students. We want to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to travel abroad to experience different cultures, improve their language skills, and build their independence.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Situation

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia on 23 March that "reports indicate that atrocities have been committed in Tigray region", and (2) the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia. [[HL14650](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome Prime Minister Abiy's statement on 23 March that the perpetrators of human rights atrocities in Ethiopia's Tigray region should face justice - whoever they are. We need to see action now to stop further atrocities and to allow for the independent investigation of those that have occurred. Since the conflict started, the UK has consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians.

The UK has also been consistent in calling for free and unfettered humanitarian access to the 4.5 million people in Tigray in need. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for humanitarian access to Tigray with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit to Ethiopia and pressed for a political dialogue to bring lasting peace to the region. The Minister for Africa re-enforced the urgency of the need for humanitarian access when he spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 24 February. The presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray is one of the main barriers to humanitarian access and they should leave Ethiopia immediately. Humanitarian providers must be protected to ensure they can help those in need. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are delivering support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. A joint humanitarian and political team from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa visited Mekelle on 5 March. They heard harrowing accounts of human rights violations, the challenges of aid delivery and how some of the £15.4m of UK Aid is helping to support those affected by the Tigray conflict. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with community-based organisations about supporting BAME communities to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL14463]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government has been engaging with community-based organisations to reach, engage and communicate with those disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, in particular people from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Through our community champions scheme we are working with organisations, such as Strengthening Faith Institutions and Near Neighbours, that have successful track record of delivering initiatives in grass root communities to support BAME communities recover from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

These organisations work directly with communities to identify and train community champions. Government is working with them to promote relational community engagement, including up-to-date public health messages and to promote positive messages within government guidelines on how to make local activities safer. Government is also working with them to develop resilience and increase mechanisms for outreach, communication and engagement, and is developing strategic communications which trains those communities and supports BAME community organisations to sustain, scale-up and develop Covid-19 response projects and activities to recover from impact of the pandemic.

European Institute of Human Sciences

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the activities of the European Institute for Human Sciences in respect of any risk to (1) UK national security, and (2) the incidence of anti-Semitism. [HL14455]

Lord Greenhalgh: We do not comment on individual cases.

The Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

Euthanasia and Suicide

Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the study 'Does Euthanasia Have a Dampening Effect on Suicide Rates? Recent Experiences from the Netherlands', published in the Journal of Ethics in Mental Health on 28 December 2017, and (2) the relationship between the legalisation of assisted suicide and suicide rates in the general

population; and what plans they have to address any such relationship as part of their Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Work plan, published in January 2019. [HL14497]

Lord Bethell: The Government has made no formal assessment of these studies, nor of the relationship between the legislation of assisted suicide and the rate of suicide in the general population.

Export Health Certificates

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their decision to delay the requirement for export health certificates for Products of Animal Origin on the ability of the British Veterinary Association's members to prevent disease incursion to the UK. [HL14268]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are no biosecurity risks from delay. The agreement reached with the EU means the UK and EU have highly similar animal and plant health measures, now the transition period has ended.

Moving forward, we are committed to maintaining high biosecurity, food safety and animal welfare standards. This includes the introduction of the staged SPS controls.

In advance of the implementation of the new regime of checks, we already have controls in place on high risk goods. This includes Products of Animal Origin that are subject to additional safeguard measures, and the Government remains able to take emergency safeguard action at very short notice to prohibit or restrict the importation of certain products from certain countries following an outbreak of disease or a public health issue, such as avian influenza.

Ferries: Wales

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the effect of the UK's departure from the EU on ferry crossings from Ireland to Welsh ports since 1 January. [HL14533]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has had a number of discussions with ferry, port and haulage operators, in relation to Irish Sea traffic, since 1 January. It is too early to identify any longer-term trends or say what the longer-term impacts will be. The Government is, however, confident that Welsh ports, and Holyhead in particular, will continue to provide critical routes to and from the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe, irrespective of direct links for haulage between Ireland and France. The land bridge route has significant advantages for hauliers over maritime routes and the Government is confident that Welsh ports will continue to thrive, as we build on the opportunities provided by being an independent trading nation.

Financial Ombudsman Service: Credit

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Financial Ombudsman Service about (1) the Ombudsman's mass claims unit, and (2) the affordability of mass claims relating to consumer credit companies. [HL14653]

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) they, or (2) the Financial Conduct Authority, approved the use by the Financial Ombudsman Service of 'mass claims' to deal with claims against consumer credit companies. [HL14654]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Treasury is in regular dialogue with the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) including on matters relating to consumer credit affordability and redress claims.

To help alleviate the pressure on firms, the FOS currently sets the number of free cases at 25. From the 26th complaint onwards, businesses are currently charged a £650 case fee to cover the cost of subsequent complaints brought against them, regardless of outcome. It is estimated that nine in ten businesses whose customers bring complaints to the FOS won't pay any case fees.

It is important to note that the FOS is an independent non-governmental body which makes decisions within the statutory framework agreed by Parliament. The Government is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the FOS.

The independence of the FOS is vital to its role. Its credibility, authority and value to consumers would be undermined if it were possible for the Government to intervene in its decision making.

Football Index

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what dates capital adequacy and stress tests were carried out by the UK Gambling Commission on Football Index; and what the outcome was of those checks. [HL14470]

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Jersey Gambling Commission regarding capital adequacy and stress tests carried out on Football Index. [HL14472]

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the collapse of Football Index. [HL14494]

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the Gambling

Commission's decision to grant an operating licence to Football Index, and (2) whether the level of oversight of that company's activities was adequate. [HL14495]

Baroness Barran: The government is monitoring the situation with Football Index closely and Ministers [the Secretary of State and Minister for Media and Data] have met the Gambling Commission twice to receive urgent reports. A live investigation by the Commission is ongoing. The Commission has been in close contact with the Jersey Gambling Commission throughout this case and continues to work closely with them. Further information can be found on the Commission's website: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/news/2021/BetIndex-update.aspx>

The Gambling Commission does not carry out capital adequacy and stress tests, which would normally apply to banks, or routinely monitor the financial viability of operators. It looks at suitability when licensing an operator, including their financial circumstances, and may review these aspects in the course of its compliance activity. The Commission will investigate where there is evidence that operators have breached licence conditions.

Football: World Cup

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about the joint bid for hosting the FIFA Men's World Cup in 2030. [HL14379]

Baroness Barran: We regularly engage with the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as the other Devolved Administrations, on a range of sporting matters. This includes discussions around a potential UK and Ireland bid to host the 2030 FIFA World Cup which is being coordinated across the five Football Associations in the UK and Ireland.

Forced Marriage

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 8 March (HL13499), how many cases were brought forward for (1) forcing someone to marry, and (2) breaching a forced marriage protection order, under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, in (a) 2014, (b) 2015, (c) 2016, (d) 2017, (e) 2018, (f) 2019, and (g) 2020. [HL14198]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The number of offences forced marriage recorded by police forces in England Wales able to supply data to the Home Office can be found in the table. Data for the whole of 2020 is not yet available. This will include cases where an attempt to commit a forced marriage offence was thwarted as well as completed offences.

*Table: Forced marriage offences, England and Wales**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offences</i>
2015	44
2016	99
2017	76
2018	128
2019	131

*Excludes police forces: Kent, Wiltshire, Staffordshire, Humberside and Greater Manchester Police

Foreign Nationals: Myanmar

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to citizens of Myanmar currently in the UK who cannot safely return to their country; and what plans they have to (1) offer visa extensions to, and (2) adapt the Leave outside the Immigration Rules for, those people. [HL14554]

Lord Greenhalgh: Under the Points-Based-System, there are a comprehensive range of work and study routes, and most visa holders can apply to extend their stay or switch from one immigration route to another without having to leave the UK.

For individuals who are unable to return to their home country due to the impact of the Covid pandemic, they can apply under the Exceptional Assurance which can be found at the following link;

Coronavirus (Covid-19): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

As there are currently no flights to Myanmar, individuals will fall within the scope of this policy. Where no other route is applicable, individuals can also apply for Leave Outside the Rules.

Given the wide number of options already available there are no plans to offer a blanket extension.

Fraud: City of London Police

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the City of London Police Fraud unit has received any (1) sponsorship, or (2) funding, from Lloyds Banking Group. [HL14343]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: City of London Police (CoLP) entered into a three-year funding agreement for a total of £1.5m with Lloyds Banking Group in 2019. This agreement has been used to fund initiatives across policing to reduce fraud and economic crime.

This is in line with the goals of the government's joint public-private sector Economic Crime Plan that will cut economic crime, including fraud.

Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many frigates they plan to be in commission on (1) 1 April 2026, and (2) 1 April 2027. [HL14609]

Baroness Goldie: Shipbuilding investment will double over the life of this Parliament rising to over £1.7 billion a year; this investment will allow us to increase the number of Frigates and Destroyers beyond the 19 we currently have by the end of the decade. Orders for the Type 26 and Type 31 Frigates have already been placed and will be introduced from around the mid-late 2020s.

GAM Greensill Supply Chain Finance Fund

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Young of Cookham on 24 June 2019 (HL16211), whether they received a response from the Financial Conduct Authority after it had been made aware of the Parliamentary Question regarding Greensill. [HL14288]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Financial Conduct Authority acknowledged notification of the Parliamentary Question regarding Greensill referenced in the Written Answer by Lord Young of Cookham on 24 June 2019 (HL16211).

Gambling: Health Services

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they will give to gambling-related harm as part of their forthcoming cross-government Addiction Strategy. [HL14493]

Lord Bethell: Due to the pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic, work on the cross-Government addictions strategy has been delayed. While the scope of the strategy is yet to be determined, it is likely to include gambling-related harms.

Gambling: Internet

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for a product licensing regime for online gambling products. [HL14492]

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of levels of online problem gambling. [HL14500]

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the support from large technology

companies for tackling online problem gambling. [HL14501]

Baroness Barran: The government launched its 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 case for greater controls on the design of online gambling products, including pre-release testing.

We welcome steps taken by technology companies to support people who are experiencing problem gambling. This includes Google's recently announced plans to allow its users to opt out of gambling advertising.

According to the 2016 Combined Health Survey, the rate of problem gambling among those who had gambled online during the past year was 3.5%. The 2018 Health Survey for England found a problem gambling rate of 4.2% among past-year online gamblers.

Gay Conversion Therapy and Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the United Nations Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity Report on Conversion Therapy, published in February 2020, what assessment they have made of its findings; and what plans they have this year to take forward the recommendation to ban conversion therapy. [HL14617]

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Curbing Deception: a world survey of legal restriction of so-called "conversion therapies", published in 2020, what assessment they have made of its findings, especially its strategies to restrict conversion therapy practices. [HL14618]

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include bans on attempts to change someone's gender identity with any ban on conversion therapy practices. [HL14619]

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their research on conversion therapy practices in the UK has included consultation with (1) religious organisations opposed to a ban, and (2) survivor groups and victims. [HL14620]

Baroness Berridge: The Government will ban conversion therapy. The ban will cover both sexual orientation and gender identity. How we ban these practices is a complex issue that we must get right. Officials continue to consult a range of organisations with

diverse views. As well as this consultation, officials continue to assess the most up-to-date evidence, including that of the UN's Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. We have also undertaken research to understand practices, experiences and impacts associated with conversion therapy and will publish this in due course. The Government is working at pace on this issue and will outline its plans shortly.

Georgia

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to agree a visa-free facilitation regime with the government of Georgia. [HL14402]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Decisions on changes to the visa regime are taken following thorough consultation across government and reflect key facets of the bilateral relationship with the country concerned. These often include security, compliance, returns, and prosperity.

There are no current plans to change the visa regime for Georgia.

Graduates and Work Experience

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with universities regarding (1) the technical skills, and (2) the employability, of graduates; and what steps they are taking to increase practical work experience opportunities for young people. [HL14544]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Since the announcement of our Higher Technical Education reforms in July 2020, we have engaged with a number of universities. Whilst we want to see further education colleges expanding their higher technical provision, we also want universities to offer more higher technical qualifications or apprenticeships, which are a more focused and better targeted route for students, employers, and the economy.

Many universities are already delivering higher, level 6 plus, and degree apprenticeships. We regularly engage with the higher education sector, including via higher education provider representative bodies, to encourage more universities to work with employers to deliver apprenticeship training wherever there is employer need.

We recognise that a number of education leavers will face challenges gaining employment due to the ongoing adverse impact on the UK labour market and economy of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government is doing all it can to help people who are at the start of their career journey. The Department for Work and Pensions has successfully recruited over 13,500 new work coaches by end of March 2021. This will

ensure that high quality work search support is available to those who need it. The Office for Students' Local Graduates competition has awarded £5.6 million to 16 projects across England to help graduates into local employment opportunities.

As part of the government's Skills Recovery package plan for jobs announced on 8 July 2020, we are investing an additional £32 million in the National Careers Service up to March 2022. This investment will provide individual careers advice for 269,000 more people whose jobs or learning have been affected by Covid-19.

The Skills Toolkit has free courses to help graduates to learn new skills, including general skills that apply to all sectors and more specialised skills. In September 2020 we added additional courses to The Skills Toolkit with new content including a range of courses to develop 'work readiness' skills that employers report they value in their new recruits.

The Department for Education is working with Universities UK, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, the Institute of Student Employers, the Office for Students, and the sector to understand what more we can do to support graduates who are looking to enter the labour market or continue their studies at this challenging time. The Office for Students' Local Graduates competition has awarded £5.6 million to 16 projects across England to help local graduates into local employment opportunities.

Work experience is important for getting into any career. The careers statutory guidance makes it clear that schools should offer work placements, work experience and other employer-based activities as part of their careers strategy for year 8-13 pupils and that secondary schools should offer every young person at least seven encounters with employers during their education.

We are providing valuable support to schools and colleges to provide work experience through The Careers and Enterprise Company, which has been given the task of increasing access to work experience for young people. Guidance around work experience can also be found on the National Careers Service website.

Greensill

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role the (1) Financial Conduct Authority, and (2) Prudential Regulation Authority, played in granting regulatory approval for Greensill Capital or its associates; and whether they advised BaFin in connection with the acquisition of Greensill Bank in Germany. [[HL14287](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Greensill Capital (UK) Limited was not authorised by the FCA. It was a registered entity under the Money Laundering Regulations, which means that it was subject to FCA regulation only for compliance with Anti-Money Laundering rules, not for wider conduct issues. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd was an Appointed Representative

of an FCA-regulated firm, under whose supervision it could conduct some regulated activities. However, it was not itself supervised or authorised by the FCA. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd is no longer an Appointed Representative.

At no time has the Bank of England authorised or supervised Greensill Bank AG, Greensill Capital (UK) Limited or any member of their group.

The UK Financial Authorities were not involved in the acquisition of Greensill Bank AG by Greensill Capital PTY in 2014.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 16 March (HL13828), what records they hold of (1) correspondence, or (2) telephone conversations, between ministers and officials in (a) Her Majesty's Treasury, (b) the Cabinet Office, or (c) the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy about (i) Lex Greensill, (ii) representatives of Greensill Capital, or (iii) the Rt Hon David Cameron, on matters relating to Greensill Capital. [[HL14333](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Senior civil servants and ministers routinely meet and correspond with a range of private sector stakeholders. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis, and are currently publicly available for Senior Official and Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further the Written Answer reply by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 16 March (HL13828), whether David Cameron attended any meetings with ministers or civil servants relating to Greensill Capital. [[HL14415](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Senior civil servants and ministers routinely meet and correspond with a range of private sector stakeholders. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis, and are currently publicly available for Senior Official and Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what records they have of (1) the dates of meetings between the Financial Conduct Authority, the directors of Greensill Capital, and that company's auditors, and (2) the details of matters discussed at any such meetings. [[HL14425](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which is operationally independent from Government. The question has been passed on to the FCA. The FCA will reply directly to the noble Lord by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what dates capital adequacy and stress tests were carried out on Greensill Capital; and what the outcome was of those checks. [[HL14467](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Greensill Capital (UK) Limited was not authorised by the FCA. It was a registered entity under the Money Laundering Regulations, which means that the FCA supervised it but only for compliance with Anti-Money Laundering rules, not for wider conduct issues. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd was an Appointed Representative of an FCA-regulated firm, under whose supervision it could conduct some regulated activities. However, it was not itself supervised or authorised by the FCA. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd is no longer an Appointed Representative.

At no time has the Bank of England authorised or supervised Greensill Capital (UK) Limited or any member of their group.

Given Greensill Capital was not authorised by the Bank of England or the FCA no capital adequacy or stress tests were required or carried out.

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what record they have of (1) letters, (2) emails, (3) phone calls, (4) text messages, and (5) other communications, from former Prime Minister David Cameron to officials in (a) the Treasury, and (b) the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in connection with Greensill Capital. [[HL14469](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Senior civil servants and ministers routinely meet and correspond with a range of private sector stakeholders. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis, and are currently publicly available for Senior Official and Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government why Greensill Capital remains listed on the British Business Bank website as an accredited lender. [[HL14524](#)]

Lord Callanan: The British Business Bank is tasked with administering the Covid-19 debt guarantee schemes to ensure compliance with its terms. The details of its compliance activity with individual lenders is a commercially sensitive matter.

While the Bank looks into Greensill's position it is not able to originate new lending that benefits from a Government guarantee.

Greensill and Sanjeev Gupta

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether records at HM Treasury record or refer to any conversation since

1 January between David Cameron and ministers or senior civil servants relating to (a) Mr Lex Greensill, (b) Greensill Capital, or (c) Mr Sanjeev Gupta and his businesses; and if so, whether they will place copies of these records in the Library of the House. [[HL14414](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Senior civil servants and ministers routinely meet and correspond with a range of private sector stakeholders. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis, and are currently publicly available for Senior Official and Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

Greensill and SoftBank

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) ministers, or (2) senior civil servants, have met either (a) Mr Lex Greensill, or (b) representatives of Greensill Capital or SoftBank, since 1 January; and if so, (i) who attended the meeting, and (ii) on what dates were the meetings held. [[HL14286](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Senior civil servants and ministers routinely meet and correspond with a range of private sector stakeholders. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis, and are currently publicly available for Senior Official and Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

Greensill: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) when, and (2) for what reasons, they withdrew Greensill Capital's approval as a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme lender. [[HL14285](#)]

Lord Callanan: The British Business Bank is tasked with administering the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to ensure compliance with its terms. The details of its compliance activity with individual lenders is a commercially sensitive matter.

While the Bank looks into Greensill's position, it is not able to originate new lending that benefits from a Government guarantee.

Greensill: Money Laundering

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) about Greensill Capital and anti-money laundering regulations; and on what dates the FCA visited Greensill Capital in relation to such regulations. [[HL14528](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The FCA is the supervisor for firms registered as Annex 1 firms under the Money Laundering Regulations 2017. Greensill Capital UK (Limited) was not authorised by the FCA. It was a registered entity under the Money Laundering Regulations, which means that it was subject to FCA regulation only for compliance with Anti-Money Laundering rules, not for wider conduct issues. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd was an Appointed Representative of an FCA-regulated firm, under whose supervision it could conduct some regulated activities. However, it was not itself supervised or authorised by the FCA. Greensill Capital Securities Ltd is no longer an Appointed Representative.

It would not be appropriate for HM Treasury to comment on the actions taken by an independent regulator regarding an individual firm.

Grenfell Tower: Fires

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many residents made homeless by the fire at Grenfell Tower are still in temporary accommodation. [[HL14642](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: All 201 households from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk have accepted an offer of accommodation, and over 95% (195 households) have moved into a new permanent home.

Currently 6 households are not yet in permanent homes. These households are currently living in high quality temporary accommodation. The Council is working with these households at a pace that suits them.

Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expedite the re-opening of Hammersmith Bridge. [[HL14439](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As owners of Hammersmith Bridge, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) is responsible for the maintenance, repair and decision-making on its upkeep.

The Government has ensured that £4 million is being spent on the stabilisation and repair of the bridge via the TfL Extraordinary Funding and Financing package agreed on 31 October 2020. This has funded mitigation works which will give us a better insight into the condition of the bridge and de-risk the overall works programme, helping expedite the long-term repairs. This is a vital step before any other engineering works can be undertaken.

We have commissioned engineering experts to assess the condition of the bridge and their reports suggested the logic keeping the bridge entirely closed could be revisited following the above works. We continue to explore this possibility with LBHF and their engineering consultants.

We recognise there needs to be a temporary solution in place for residents to be able to cross the river whilst the bridge is closed. As part of the TfL bailout last October we provided funding to TfL to set up and run a ferry service.

We have received outline financing options for the long-term bridge repair from LBHF but require much more detail before they can be properly assessed. We are working with the borough to develop these options further.

Hate Crime: Gender

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 17 March (HL Deb, col 371), that "on an experimental basis" they "will ask police forces to identify and record any crimes of violence against the person, including stalking and harassment, as well as sexual offences where the victim perceives it to have been motivated by a hostility based on their sex", whether the police will record the sex of the victim on the basis of the victim's legal sex or of their self-identified sex. [[HL14389](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is discussing this request with the police in the near future, following which further details about the data collection will be made available.

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to lay before Parliament the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 drafted by the Joint Committee on Human Rights. [[HL12997](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government acknowledges the drafted regulations and responded to the Joint Committee on Human Rights regarding them on 22 February 2021. Although we have considered using these regulations to help allow care home visiting, we have decided to pursue non-legislative routes, which allow us to move more swiftly in changing circumstances and to accommodate all care homes.

We recognise the very significant impact that restricting visiting in care homes and mental health settings has had on residents, their family and loved ones.

We are taking a carefully balanced, step-by-step approach to opening up more visiting opportunities. New visiting arrangements started on 8 March and every care home should enable each resident to nominate one named person who can make regular, indoor visits.

Those residents with the highest care needs can also nominate an "Essential Care Giver" who will be able to visit more often in order to provide essential care. They

will have the same testing and personal protective equipment arrangements as care home staff.

Our guidance makes clear that care homes should support this visiting as the default. We are working with the care home sector to encourage and enable care homes to do so.

Health Education

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote health and wellbeing nationally. [HL14624]

Lord Bethell: In summer 2020 Public Health England launched the 'Better Health' programme with a television, radio and digital campaign to support the nation to take simple steps to look after their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Better Health is focused on a number of health behaviours including weight loss, physical activity, mental health and quitting smoking. It is targeted at those most at risk. The Better Health programme directs people to evidence-based online apps and tools to support them make and sustain changes to improve their health. This includes the National Health Service 12-week Weight Loss app, Couch to 5K, Mind Plan and Active 10.

Health Services: Females

Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 19 February (HL13078), whether the women's health strategy that is currently in development will make provision for improving patient access to diagnosis and treatment for women-specific health concerns including heavy menstrual bleeding and endometriosis. [HL14634]

Lord Bethell: The evidence gathered through the call for evidence will inform the priorities, content and actions in the new Women's Health Strategy for England. The online survey within the call for evidence seeks information on menstrual health and gynaecological conditions, including endometriosis.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Costs

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will correct the figure for the estimated cost of the works for HS2 Phase 2a on their website page HS2 Phase 2a: High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Act 2021; why other documents on this page have been updated but this figure has not; and whether they will place in the Library of the House the most recent comparable figures. [HL14481]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The estimated cost of works on the gov.uk web page is the Estimate of Expense

as required by Standing Order 45 of the House, when the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill was deposited in July 2017. There is no requirement for the Estimate of Expense to be updated, although other documents linked on the web page have been updated when required by Standing Orders. The Government committed to regularly update Parliament on the progress of the HS2 programme by issuing reports twice a year, with the most recent on 23 March and contains updated cost figures.

Higher Education and Research: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusion in the report by King's College London and the Harvard Kennedy School The China question: managing risks and maximising benefits from partnership in higher education and research, published on 9 March, that the UK "urgently needs to put in place a robust framework for engaging China in research and higher education". [HL14363]

Lord Callanan: Her Majesty's Government supports the sector to make informed decisions on international research collaboration and cooperates closely with universities, funding bodies and industry in protecting our higher education and research sector from interference. This is backed by a robust legal and regulatory framework including on exports, intellectual property and academic freedom and freedom of speech. We have strengthened protective measures and keep them under review. Trusted Research and the security guidelines commissioned by the Government and released by Universities UK are an important step to encourage secure partnerships and promote our values. We are pleased to see the university sector addressing these challenges and we will continue to work with the sector on implementing guidelines recommendations.

Home Education

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide an update on the progress of the consultation on elective home education, including consideration on the introduction of legislation. [HL14303]

Baroness Berridge: In spring 2019, a consultation was held on proposals for a mandatory register of children not attending state or registered independent schools. This consultation was held in order to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to children not in school alongside the duty on parents to register their child with the local authority if not registered at specified types of schools, the duties on proprietors of certain education settings to respond to enquiries from local authorities, and the duty on local authorities to provide support to parents who educate children at home.

The consultation closed on 24 June 2019 with nearly 5000 responses. Responses to the consultation have been considered and the government is committed to publishing the response in due course.

Home Education: Regulation

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of regulations regarding home education. [HL14539]

Baroness Berridge: The current legal system around elective home education is a system for identifying and dealing with children who, for any reason and in any circumstances, are not receiving an efficient suitable full-time education. A situation in which a child is not receiving a suitable full-time education requires action by a local authority under education law.

In the spring of 2019, a consultation was held on proposals for: a mandatory register of children not attending state or registered independent schools to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to children not in school, a duty on parents to register their child with the local authority if not registered at specified types of schools; a duty on proprietors of certain education settings to respond to enquiries from local authorities; and a duty on local authorities to provide support to parents who educate children at home.

The consultation closed on 24 June 2019 with nearly 5000 responses. Responses to the consultation have been considered, and the government are committed to publishing the response in due course. Following the publication of the consultation, the department will make an assessment of regulations and the need for any legislative change.

Hong Kong: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision of the government of the United States of America to impose sanctions on (1) 14 vice chairs of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, and (2) officials in (a) the National Security Division of the Hong Kong Police Force, (b) the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, and (c) the Office for Safeguarding National Security; and what plans they have to impose sanctions on overseas financial institutions that knowingly conduct significant transactions with these individuals. [HL14309]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has already taken a number of actions in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include

introducing a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) (BNOs), suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong indefinitely, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

We will continue to consider designations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future. We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong as befits our historic commitment to them, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms.

We will also continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

Horizon Europe

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on research outcomes of using funds from UK Research and Innovation to contribute to Horizon Europe. [HL14474]

Lord Callanan: We are continuing to work through the details of the costs for Horizon Europe. We will set out our plans for R&D spend in 2021/22 – including funding for Horizon Europe – in due course.

Asked by Baroness Morgan of Huyton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to fund the UK's participation in the Horizon Europe research programme. [HL14523]

Lord Callanan: I am pleased that the UK reached an agreement to take part in the Horizon Europe programme. Association to Horizon has been welcomed by businesses and the research community and will bring huge benefits to the UK. We are continuing to work through the details of the costs for Horizon Europe. We will set out our plans for R&D spend in 2021/22 – including funding for Horizon Europe – in due course.

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their decision to remove the cost of association with Horizon Europe from the provision for research and development in the UK budget; when they made the decision to treat Horizon money as additional funding; how much will be the total annual cost of association with Horizon Europe; and what plans they have to re-assess this decision in the future. [HL14531]

Lord Callanan: I am pleased we reached agreement to take part in Horizon Europe; it will bring huge benefits to the UK.

We are continuing to work through the details of the costs for Horizon. We will set out our plans for R&D spend in 2021/22 – including funding for Horizon Europe – in due course.

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain funding for the UK's participation in the Horizon programme at the same level as that before the UK's departure from the EU; and what plans they have to (1) maintain, and (2) enhance, the level of funding for UK Research and Innovation. [[HL14538](#)]

Lord Callanan: I'm pleased we reached agreement to take part in Horizon Europe, this is a great outcome for British businesses and researchers. We are continuing to work through the details of the costs for Horizon Europe.

Similarly, we are currently working closely with our delivery partners, including UKRI, to develop the 2021/22 allocations and help them plan their implementation.

We will set out our plans for R&D spend in 2021/22 – including funding for Horizon Europe and UKRI – in due course.

We are increasing funding for research and development and putting it at the heart of economic and social recovery from the impacts of Covid-19, enabling us to build back better for a greener, healthier and more resilient UK. We are committed to increasing total UK investment in R&D to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

Asked by Baroness Morgan of Huyton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will announce how much funding they will contribute as part of the UK's participation in Horizon Europe. [[HL14588](#)]

Lord Callanan: I refer the noble Baroness to the answer I have given her today to Question HL14523.

Hospital Beds

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Royal College of Emergency's Medicine's call to (1) restore bed capacity to pre-Covid levels, and (2) provide an additional 9,429 hospital beds, as set out in their letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 1 March. [[HL14437](#)]

Lord Bethell: We will continue to support the National Health Service in taking action to help reduce pressures on hospital bed capacity and increase patient flow through the emergency care pathway. This includes action within community services to help avoid unnecessary emergency admissions and the enhanced patient discharge arrangements which the NHS estimates has reduced long lengths of stay, increasing capacity to the equivalent of over 6,000 beds.

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 support NHS staff who have experienced fatigue and emotional distress during the Covid-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of the impact of such effects on staff on the NHS's ability (1) to mitigate against nosocomial transmission, and (2) to respond to any further rise, of Covid-19. [[HL13971](#)]

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 a national strategic focus on adapting NHS work systems to mitigate any risks associated with staff fatigue. [[HL13973](#)]

Lord Bethell: Following extensive engagement with front line staff, NHS England and NHS Improvement recently issued a suite of online products to support excellence in infection prevention and control measures. These products propose actions to tackle fatigue, including creating a culture of kindness and support, an environment which allows staff to speak up and a focus on changing behaviours in non-clinical areas, where staff have been found to be at greater risk of contracting Covid-19.

The National Health Service has put in place a national health and wellbeing offer, which will be maintained during 2021/22 and includes access to a confidential helpline and text service, a range of apps and an online portal of guidance and materials. The content of this offer will continue to be refreshed, based on staff feedback, usage rates and evidence of outcomes.

In November 2020, funding of £15 million was announced to establish 40 mental health and wellbeing hubs nationally. Twenty-two hubs are now active with the remaining due to mobilise by spring 2021. The NHS People Plan also puts health and wellbeing at its core. This includes a new wellbeing guardian role which will ensure board level scrutiny of health and wellbeing support for staff; continued support for staff to get to work and free car parking; a focus on healthy working environments and safe spaces for staff to rest and recuperate; and support to take breaks and annual leave.

Hospitals: Parking

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that NHS key workers are exempt from hospital car parking charges during the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL14490](#)]

Lord Bethell: Free car parking for National Health Service staff was announced on 25 March 2020 for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic. This remains the

Government's position and funding has been provided to trusts to support this commitment.

Since October 2020, additional funding for the delivery of free staff parking is included as part of trusts' overall systems allocation. The system funding allocation guidance provided to trusts sets out that money for free staff car parking is provided. A copy of *Guidance on finance and contracting arrangements for H1 2021/22* is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Guidance on finance and contracting arrangements [B0468-h1-21-22-guidance-on-finance-and-contracts-arrangements.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-23/HL14490>

Housing: Construction

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government how their proposals in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation to allow the conversion of use Class E units to residential will operate alongside local plans that have already been developed to identify where housing should be situated. [HL14546]

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that proposals in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation do not lead to developments that (1) fail to meet adequate design standards, and (2) fail to contribute to local areas and result in poorer living environments. [HL14547]

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likelihood of use Class E units converted to residential use, as proposed in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation, returning to high street or town centre uses. [HL14548]

Lord Greenhalgh: The new homes delivered under the Class E to residential Permitted Development Right will help to increase housing supply. The Right will include a prior approval process to allow for local consideration of specific planning matters such as the impact of the introduction of residential use in general industrial, waste management, or storage and distribution areas on future occupiers. In addition, all new homes delivered under the Right will need to meet Nationally Described Space Standards and provide adequate natural light in all habitable rooms. A full Impact Assessment has been prepared which will be published shortly.

Housing: Equality

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of potential impacts arising from the measures proposed in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation on those with a protected characteristic. [HL14510]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to evidence that overcrowding disproportionately affects those with protected characteristics in their proposals in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation to allow conversion of use Class E units to residential units. [HL14511]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their proposals in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation to allow conversion of use Class E units to residential on high street recovery plans. [HL14512]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their proposals in the Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure consultation to allow conversion of use Class E units to residential on levels of physical activity, given that gyms, swimming pools and sports and leisure facilities are included within that Class. [HL14513]

Lord Greenhalgh: In developing the proposals we are taking account of any potential impacts of the proposals on people with protected characteristics. A full Impact Assessment has also been prepared which will be published shortly.

Human Trafficking: Children

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that police forces in England and Wales can collaborate with EU counterparts on missing children and trafficking investigations when a child has been trafficked from the UK to Europe. [HL14407]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Tackling modern slavery, including child trafficking, is a priority for this Government and we are committed to continuing to work closely with EU partners to address this heinous crime.

The UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) delivers a comprehensive package of capabilities that ensures we can work with counterparts across Europe to

tackle serious crime. This includes enabling our law enforcement agencies to continue to share information on investigations, including those related to child trafficking, with EU counterparts.

ICT: Further Education

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Learning and Work Institute Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap, published on 22 March; and what steps they are taking to encourage more young people to enrol in further education IT courses. [HL14476]

Baroness Berridge: Computing provides individuals with the knowledge and expertise to access the digital skills of the future.

This government wants every child in England to have access to a world-class computing education. That is why we created the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in 2019, backed by £84 million of government funding, to improve the quality of computing teaching in England and drive-up participation to the computer science GCSE and A level. Since the NCCE's creation, nearly 30,000 teachers have engaged with the programme.

The computer science GCSE was taken by over 77,000 pupils in 2019 and, from 2013 to 2019, was one of the fastest growing GCSE subjects. We recognise that some pupils who would previously have chosen to study information and communications technology (ICT), may not choose to study computer science due to the fundamental differences in content. In 2019, over 48,000 pupils took a level 2 ICT Technical Award, which are high quality equivalents to the computer science GCSE and are included in school performance tables.

The department is reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below, including ICT and digital qualifications, to ensure that every qualification approved for public funding has a distinct purpose, is high quality and supports progression to positive outcomes. Our aim is for clearer qualifications choices for young people and adults.

For 16 to 18 year olds, we are introducing T Levels as a new, high quality technical education route. T Levels in digital production, design and development are now being taught and will be followed by T Levels in digital support services and digital business services, from September this year.

For adults (19+) with no or low digital skills, we have introduced a legal entitlement to study new Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs) at entry level and level 1 for free. EDSQs are a new qualification type, based on new national standards for essential digital skills, which will provide adults with the digital skills needed for life and work. We also continue to support the provision of basic digital skills training for adults in community learning settings through the Adult Education Budget.

Employers have continued to recognise the value apprentices bring to their businesses. Starts in the ICT sector subject area have increased per academic year from 15,470 in 2016/17 to 21,110 in 2018/19. In 2019/20, there were 18,230 starts.

In higher education, computer science degrees saw the largest percentage increase in new entrants at 7%, alongside Medicine and Dentistry and Business and Administrative Studies.

Outside of the education system, the department has invested £2.5 billion to deliver the National Skills Fund. As part of this, Skills Bootcamps are being delivered, which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving adults aged 19 and over the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. In September 2020, bootcamps launched in 4 areas, initially focusing on digital skills such as software development, digital marketing and data analytics. Registrations opened in December 2020 for more bootcamps in three regions, and from April 2021, we are investing a further £43 million to extend further in England. These bootcamps will cover digital skills and technical skills training.

From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over, looking to achieve a first full level 3 will be able to access a fully funded course, which will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market.

We will target this on subject areas that have strong outcomes at level 3 linked to labour market need, including a range of qualifications that are valuable across the economy in multiple sectors, such as digital skills, accountancy, and business skills.

Immigration Act 1971

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) arrests, (2) prosecutions, and (3) convictions, there were for offences committed under section 24 of the Immigration Act 1971 in each of the last five years. [HL14496]

Lord Greenhalgh:

	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17
Arrests	129	16	42	57	209
Charges	116	13	24	48	154
Convictions	48	11	23	48	117

Immigration: Roma

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist members of the Roma community to apply for settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme before 30 June; and what assessment they have made of the barriers (1) to obtaining the required documentation during the Covid-19 pandemic, and

(2) to accessing, and completing, online applications, experienced by that community. [HL14662]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has provided £17million in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations which provide bespoke support to vulnerable and hard to reach EU citizens and their family members eligible to apply to EUSS, including members of the Roma Community.

Of the 72 Grant-funded Organisations (GFOs), 54 support members of the Roma community to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, with 5 organisations primarily focused on working with vulnerable members of this cohort (Clifton Learning Partnership, Tros Gynnal, STEP Northern Ireland, Tower Hamlets Law Centre, and Positive Action in Housing).

On top of the £17million in grant funding, the Home Office recently announced a further £4.5million of funding to the current 72 organisations to continue these support services well beyond the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Whilst the GFN directly funds 72 organisations, these organisations have expanded their network across the UK by forming partnerships with other organisations. These partners are similar, they are on the ground, giving direct support to the vulnerable including homeless/rough sleepers, victims of domestic violence and members of the Roma community.

This network is also supported by the Home Office through an online GFO forum called 'Basecamp'. This platform allows organisations to share ideas, best practise and for organisations to reach out to one another for help and support. It is the innovative ways of working demonstrated by the Grant Funded Network during the Covid-19 pandemic, which have continued to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals for completing online applications or accessing digital status, such as virtual face to face meetings and, where necessary, face to face appointments with use of lateral flow testing, enabling them to do so in a safe way for both themselves and these vulnerable individuals.

The EU Settlement Resolution Centre, will also continue to provide over the phone digital assistance to applicants who require support to access their digital status.

Indo-Pacific Region: Navy

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to establish a permanent naval force in the (1) Indian, and (2) Pacific, oceans; if so, where they intend to establish dockyards to conduct repairs for those forces; and whether such forces would be protected by permanent air defences. [HL14443]

Baroness Goldie: In support of the strategic tilt toward the Indo-Pacific announced by Her Majesty's Government in the Integrated Review (CP 403) on 16 March 2021, the Ministry of Defence plans to establish a

persistent maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific region. On 22 March 2021, the Secretary of State for Defence outlined a plan to Parliament (CP 411) to deliver this through Offshore Patrol Vessels from 2021, a Littoral Response Group from 2023 and a permanently assigned Frigate by the end of the decade. These forces will intentionally operate asymmetrically, without a nominated base. They will use existing UK, allied and partner facilities around the region enabled by our existing global support agreements. Consequently, no permanent air defences are required.

Industrial Strategy Council

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they decided to disband the Industrial Strategy Council; and what plans they have to replace it with another independent body. [HL14356]

Lord Callanan: The Government has decided that the Industrial Strategy Council in its current form will no longer be needed to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Industrial Strategy, following Industrial Strategy's transition to *Build Back Better: our plan for growth*, and so will be wound down after its Annual Report. We will draw on the Industrial Strategy Council's work and expertise, both on success metrics and insight projects, in taking forward further work in this area.

However, we must ensure our plan is carried through with a relentless focus on delivery and we will continue to evaluate our work. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet Secretary have asked Sir Michael Barber to conduct a rapid review of government delivery to ensure that it remains focused, effective and efficient, and to suggest how it could be strengthened.

Furthermore, The Build Back Better Business Council was convened by the Prime Minister to support 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth'. The Build Back Better Business Council brings together a broad range of business leaders from across the whole British economy to work in partnership with the Government to recover from Covid-19, unlock investment, boost job creation, level up the whole of the UK, and promote Global Britain.

Industry: Departmental Responsibilities

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government which department leads on the Industrial Strategy; whether that department will continue to lead that strategy (1) during the next financial year, and (2) to the end of the current parliament; and if that department will not continue to lead that strategy, (a) which department will do so, and (b) whether the Industrial Strategy will need to be updated. [HL14357]

Lord Callanan: Since the Industrial Strategy was published in 2017, the UK has been presented with new challenges and new opportunities; we have legislated to

end our contribution to climate change by 2050, we are forging a new path outside the European Union and continue to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore right that we take a fresh look at our plans for industrial policy and long-term economic growth.

We are morphing and changing the Industrial Strategy into Build Back Better: our plan for growth and its supporting strategies to reflect the change in economic landscape since 2017. The plan and its supporting strategies will protect and create jobs as we transition to net zero with a renewed focus on infrastructure, skills, and innovation.

Although 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth' has been led by HM Treasury, this is setting the framework for the work that we will do across Government to ensure we build back better from the current challenges and deliver long term economic growth. Ministers and Departmental officials will continue to work together to ensure our priorities are met, delivering these strategies to ensure longer-term economic growth.

In order to support the Government's 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth', the Department plans to set out details of our approach to supporting sectors, places, and technologies in the Innovation Strategy. The Department is already leading on strategies with respect to net zero, hydrogen and, innovation itself, as well as the space strategy. The work the Department has and continues to do has contributed greatly to the work for 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth' and will contribute to its supporting strategies.

Industry: Policy

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the impact, and (2) the effectiveness, of the Industrial Strategy. [[HL14358](#)]

Lord Callanan: The majority of the 142 policy commitments in the 2017 Industrial Strategy are now in delivery phases, with around £45 billion of funding assigned to Industrial Strategy initiatives.

We have made progress strengthening the foundations of productivity, by investing in transport, housing, and digital infrastructure through the National Productivity Investment Fund. On skills, we have invested in maths, digital and technical education, and in September 2020 we introduced T-Levels.

The Grand Challenges and missions have strengthened the UK's standing as a global leader in AI, clean growth, healthy ageing, and future transport technology, bringing Government together with industry to inspire and develop an Innovation Strategy that will improve lives and support our economy. This includes securing our landmark legislative commitment to end the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050, while supporting our businesses to adapt to a decarbonised future.

We have brought industry along with us, publishing eleven Sector Deals across ten sectors – comprising over

170 individual commitments with £3.25 billion in combined investment from industry and Government, including Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund monies.

Insolvency

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of businesses subject to pre-pack administration survive longer than (1) five years, (2) 10 years, and (3) 15 years. [[HL14468](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government does not hold or collect information on survival rates of businesses subject to a pre-pack administration.

Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy will (1) take account of, and (2) address the links between social norms, gender discrimination and broader drivers of violence. [[HL14222](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Integrated Review was published on 16 March and can be found on gov.uk. The review is the most comprehensive articulation of a defence, development, foreign and national security approach published by a British Government in decades.

The UK is a world leader on advancing gender equality and women's rights. The Integrated Review reaffirms the Government's commitment to promote gender equality, working with women's rights organisations to tackle the discrimination, violence and inequality that hold women back. We will continue to be a progressive force for good, working across government, amplifying our development, diplomatic, defence and trade approaches to deliver for women and girls. We will work with partners, including women's rights organisations to build more open, inclusive and resilient societies, championing and supporting women's participation and empowerment.

We will continue to champion gender equality in international fora, including through our Presidency of the G7, and our co-hosting of the Global Partnership for Education replenishment and of COP26, and we will challenge attempts to roll back rights globally. In our role as co-leader of the Global Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence, we will use UK-funded evidence to drive coordinated, scaled-up global action and investment across the international system to prevent GBV and support survivors.

International Open University

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the activities of the Islamic Online University in respect of any risk to (1) UK national

security, and (2) the incidence of Islamist radicalisation in the UK. [HL14456]

Lord Greenhalgh: We do not comment on individual cases.

The Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

Investment Income

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 27 October 2020 (HL9157), whether they will provide (1) the names of the "Several bodies" who have "powers in certain circumstances to investigate and take action if illegal dividends have been paid"; and (2) the number of cases examined by each such body. [HL14424]

Lord Callanan: Compliance is primarily a matter for the directors, and there are rights of recourse to the courts in response to unlawful distributions. Where a company becomes insolvent after paying dividends the courts have wide powers to apply a variety of sanctions and remedies. Data on illegal dividends is not collected.

A number of bodies, however, have an interest in dividend payments from their particular regulatory perspectives. They include the Insolvency Service and insolvency practitioners who will investigate dividend payments and seek to recover them if they are found to be illegal. HM Revenue and Customs has an interest in the proper payment of dividends to the extent that there may be tax consequences leading to a loss to the Exchequer. The Prudential Regulation Authority has rules and powers under financial services legislation regarding dividends and other distributions for the purpose of banks and building societies' capital conservation. Data on this aspect of the regulators' work is not collected.

Proposals in the Government's recently published consultation document on *Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance* would improve dividend transparency and provide stronger reassurance that dividends are being paid in line with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. These include proposals to require companies to disclose their known distributable reserves in their financial statements, and to require directors to confirm that dividends are within known distributable reserves and that it is their reasonable expectation that payment of the dividend will not threaten the solvency of the company over the next two years.

Israel: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to call for a vote on resolutions on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab

territories under item 7 of the current session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. [HL14181]

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their position on the resolutions on Israel to be considered under (1) item 2, and (2) item 7, at the current session of the United Nations Human Rights Council [HL14183]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has stood up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, and has been clear that the existence of a dedicated agenda item in the Human Rights Council ('Item 7') is damaging and does little to advance dialogue, stability or mutual understanding. The 46th session of the Human Rights Council is currently in session. This government will continue to vote against all Item 7 resolutions. At the same time, we will not stop raising valid concerns about Israel's actions. That's why we engaged constructively with negotiations on the Item 2 resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, we ultimately abstained, as we judged that the final resolution text needed to address more fully the conduct of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza, particularly Hamas' treatment of the Palestinian population of Gaza.

The UN and its member states have every right to address issues of concern in a measured, balanced and proportionate way. We will continue to support scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, so long as it is justified, proportionate, and not proposed under Item 7.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Save the Children *Defenceless: The Impact of Israeli Military Detention on Palestinian Children*, published on 29 October 2020; and what representations they have made to the government of Israel. [HL14199]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: With reference to the answer to question HL10992 given to the noble Lord on 15 December:

We are concerned by the findings of the Save the Children's report entitled, 'Defenceless: The impact of the Israeli military detention system on Palestinian children'.

We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv have a regular dialogue with Israel on this issue. We also fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the demolition of Palestinian homes in Al-Bustan, East Jerusalem, and (2) the displacement of Palestinian residents from that area. [[HL14504](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is supporting communities in Area C, whose homes have been demolished, to remain on their land. We continue to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on issues affecting Palestinians, including demolitions. The UK urged the Government of Israel to end demolitions of property in the West Bank at the UN Security Council on 25 February 2021. On the same day, the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised his concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020.

UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of Palestinian families in the West Bank being attacked by Israeli settlers; what steps they will take to support such families; and what further representations they will make to the government of Israel to protect such families. [[HL14536](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We call on the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and allegation of crimes against protected persons in the West Bank, and where appropriate bring those responsible to justice.

Ivory: Trade

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish (1) the conclusions of their consultation, and (2) any proposed changes in policy, following the call for evidence on the non-elephant ivory trade. [[HL14269](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The summary of responses to the call for evidence on non-elephant ivory trade was published on 10 November 2020. We are currently considering this evidence and plan to consult on potential policy options later in the year.

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel is planning to remove 37 Palestinian households from the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan areas of East Jerusalem; and what action are they taking, both unilaterally and multilaterally, to prevent any such removals. [[HL14507](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly make clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem, both bilaterally and in co-operation with like-minded diplomatic partners. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity.

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 of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised the issue of evictions of Palestinians from their homes, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020, and the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raises this issue regularly with the Israeli authorities. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. On 25 November 2020, the UK Consul General Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah, restating UK opposition to evictions of Palestinians from their homes.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how often the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation meets; what was the date of the most recent meeting; and when the minutes of the most recent meeting will be published. [[HL14518](#)]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a publicly available register of interests for the members of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. [[HL14519](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation usually hold main committee meetings three times a year. Due to the pandemic, the Committee have undertaken ad-hoc meetings to discuss Covid-19. The most recent meeting was held on 16 March 2021. The minutes of this meeting will be published on or before 27 April 2021. Members' declarations of interest are published as an annex to the minutes. All minutes are published online.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they next plan to order F35B aircraft; and how many they plan to order. [HL14608]

Baroness Goldie: The Defence Command Paper confirms our intention to continue the growth of our F-35B Lightning Force, beyond the 48 we have already ordered. We will now undertake a period of detailed analysis to evaluate the scale and timeline for procurement of our second tranche of F-35B Lightning Aircraft, associated infrastructure, equipment and support requirements.

Kashmir: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL13631), whether a representative from the British High Commission was invited to attend the diplomatic visit to Indian-administered Kashmir organised by the government of India in the week commencing 15 February. [HL14243]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British High Commissioner was invited to attend the diplomatic visit to India-administered Kashmir organised by the Government of India in the week commencing 15 February. We regularly discuss the prospect of British High Commission officials visiting India-administered Kashmir and are working closely with the Government of India to identify a suitable opportunity to visit.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL13631), what assessment the British High Commission made of the diplomatic visit to Indian-administered Kashmir organised by the government of India in the week commencing 15 February. [HL14244]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: According to a statement on the Government of India's Ministry of External Affairs website, the itinerary for the two-day trip covered Srinagar, Budgam and Jammu. Participants met some local representatives, civil society groups and residents of India-administered Kashmir, and received a briefing on the local security situation. 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.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL13631), which countries participated in the diplomatic visit to Indian-administered

Kashmir organised by the government of India in the week commencing 15 February. [HL14245]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This is a matter for the Government of India. According to information on the Government of India's Ministry of External Affairs website (https://mea.gov.in/response-to-queries.htm?dtl/33544/Official_Spokespersons_response_to_media_queries_on_the_Visit_of_Foreign_Heads_of_Missions_to_Jammu_amp_Kashmir), Heads of Mission attended from Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Estonia, Finland, European Union, Eritrea, France, Ghana, Italy, Ireland, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Malawi, Netherlands, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Sweden and Tajikistan.

Kickstart Scheme

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications have been received for the Kickstart Scheme; how many have been approved; and how many individual participants this includes. [HL14420]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As of 18th March 2021 there have been over 15,000 applications received for Kickstart Scheme, we have approved over 150,000 jobs and over 6,000 young people have started their placements.

As of the 12th March 2021, there had been over 900 unique gateway applications approved and over 1,200 unique employer bids accepted on the Kickstart Scheme.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that more young people are enrolled in the Kickstart scheme. [HL14542]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Departments' Kickstart Scheme is open to 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit, at risk of long term unemployment. Work Coaches refer eligible young people who are at risk of the scarring effects of long term unemployment to Kickstart jobs following a discussion to ensure the best fit for employer and young person.

Kidney Diseases: Medical Treatments

Asked by Baroness Cumberlege

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will undertake a review to assess the benefits of home haemodialysis compared to in-centre dialysis for

supporting dialysis patients safely to shield from Covid-19. [HL14213]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that there are currently no plans to undertake such a review. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence *Covid-19 rapid guideline: dialysis service delivery*, sets out guidance for clinicians to maximise the safety of patients on dialysis during the pandemic, both at home and in dialysis units. It contains recommendations for providers to continue and maintain current home dialysis provision where possible and to consider the possibility of increasing provision for new incident patients. A copy of the guideline is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Covid-19: dialysis service delivery [covid19-rapid-guideline-dialysis-service-delivery-pdf-66141894031045 (2).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-15/HL14213>

Languages: GCE A-level and GCSE

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Global Future Silenced Voices, published on 10 March; and what plans they have to help community language teaching (1) recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and (2) increase. [HL14429]

Baroness Berridge: The government remains committed to increasing take-up of all languages at GCSE through the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Languages serve to broaden young people's horizons and, as referred to in the Global Future Silenced Voices report, provides them with a number of employment opportunities and equips them with valuable skills that help ensure they can compete in the global market.

Since 2014, the national curriculum was reformed to include a modern or ancient language from age 7 to 11 at key stage 2. The expectation for secondary schools is to teach a modern language from age 11 to 14 at key stage 3 and for an increasing proportion of 14 to 16 year olds at key stage 4 to study a GCSE in a foreign language. Since 2010, the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 4 entering modern foreign language GCSEs has increased from 40% to 46%.

We do not prescribe which languages schools should teach. Schools are free to teach any languages, including community languages, for whatever reasons they consider relevant, such as local demographics, social unity, or opening up wider career and future education opportunities. There is a broad range of community languages on offer in which pupils can take a GCSE or A level and we would like this to continue to be the case.

The Global Future Silenced Voices report mainly focuses on the importance of those studying GCSEs or A levels in a community language receiving a grade this

year – in particular, those who have been studying outside a mainstream school environment. Private candidates can work with a centre to be assessed on a range of evidence, which could include evidence from an established educational provider and the board-provided assessment materials. The Joint Council for Qualifications has issued guidance for centres about assessing private candidates, taking into account their different circumstances.

To support centres with the additional requirements of assessing private candidates this year, and avoid the cost being passed on to candidates, we are providing a grant for centres to claim £200 per private candidate entry. The government is encouraging all available exams centres to sign up to help these candidates achieve their qualifications in this exceptional year.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact the revised tax legislation which takes effect next month will have on the ability of HGV drivers to remain self-employed. [HL14478]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The changes to the off-payroll working rules come into effect on 6 April 2021 and were legislated for in Finance Act 2020. The off-payroll working rules have been in place for over 20 years and are designed to ensure that individuals working like employees but through their own limited company pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) as those who are directly employed.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) ^[1] published at Spring Budget 2021 sets out HMRC's assessment that the reform of the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect about 180,000 individuals working through their own limited companies.

The changes to the off-payroll working rules do not introduce a new tax liability and do not apply to the self-employed. HMRC's published guidance ^[2] includes an explanation of when lorry (HGV) drivers are likely to be employed and self-employed. This guidance applies to those working through Personal Service Companies and so in scope of the off-payroll rules, and is not changed by the reform.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-status-manual/esm4210>

Lebanon: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that the Prime Minister-designate of Lebanon and the President of Lebanon are yet to agree on the formation of the government of

Lebanon's cabinet, and (2) the political situation in Lebanon [[HL14649](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This government continues to urge Lebanon's leaders to urgently form a government willing to implement the reforms needed to stabilise the economy and meet the basic needs of its citizens. The UK stands in support of the Lebanese people.

Levelling Up Fund: Cultural Heritage

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 12 March (HL Deb, col 1982), what steps they are taking to ensure that cultural institutions are prioritised by local authorities as part of any bids made to the Levelling Up Fund; and what guidance they have provided to assist local authorities with the bidding process. [[HL14258](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The first round of the Fund will focus on three themes: smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas, town centre and high street regeneration, and support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets.

Bidding authorities should consult a range of local stakeholders across the full geography of a place in developing their proposed investments for the Fund. Bids should demonstrate evidence for this overall local engagement as part of their strategic case through stakeholder letters or similar.

Further details on how the Fund will operate were published in the prospectus at Budget – including who can bid, the types of projects eligible for funding, and the criteria for assessing proposals. Further guidance and templates for bid submissions, including package bids, will be provided to local authorities shortly after Budget.

Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support infrastructure projects in Northern Ireland through the Levelling Up Fund. [[HL14561](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

The Fund will operate UK-wide, extending the benefits of funding for priority local infrastructure across all regions and nations.

In Northern Ireland, the UK Government will accept bids at the most local level, from a range of local applicants, including but not limited to businesses, voluntary and community sector organisations, district

councils, the Northern Ireland Executive and other public sector bodies.

LGBT People: Gay Conversion Therapy

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives following that organisation's declaration against conversion therapy of December 2020. [[HL14616](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government funded the Global Interfaith Commission's (GiC) launch on 16 December where it delivered a declaration calling for an end to violence and criminalisation against LGBT+ people and for a global ban on conversion therapy. We remain in regular dialogue with the Director of the GiC.

Libya: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to show support for the new National Unity-led government of Libya; and what discussions the Prime Minister has had with the interim Prime Minister of Libya. [[HL14648](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK welcomes the inauguration of the interim Government of National Unity in Libya, charged with leading the country to elections. This is an important step towards the unification of Libyan institutions and a comprehensive political solution that ultimately makes Libya more stable, secure and prosperous. On 12 Feb, the Prime Minister spoke to then Prime Minister designate Dabaiba to express UK support for the new government. The UK is working with international partners, including through the UN Security Council and the Berlin Process, to support the interim Government of National Unity to hold national elections in December 2021, improve the delivery of services to the Libyan people, and prioritise implementation of the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement, including the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.

Litter

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress towards (1) reducing litter, and (2) reducing litter in (a) the countryside, and (b) on the seashore. [[HL14656](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We published the Litter Strategy for England in April 2017, setting out our aim to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering within a generation. Annual reports of progress with delivery of the Litter Strategy can be found at [gov.uk](#).

We have also published a “litter dashboard” which explains the Government’s approach to understanding the extent of litter and littering in England. The dashboard is available at gov.uk.

The latest Litter Strategy annual report and litter dashboard have been delayed due the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our latest study of litter composition in the UK, carried out by Keep Britain Tidy, is attached.

There has been an increase in number of visitors accessing the countryside since lockdown restrictions were first introduced last year. We know that people’s health, wellbeing and resilience can be improved and strengthened by spending time in the natural environment. We are clear, however, that everyone should follow the recently updated Countryside Code, which is available on gov.uk. A key part of government strategy is to get clear and consistent messages to the media, which highlight the problem and promote better behaviour in the countryside and encourage a partnership response.

In response to Covid-19, Defra has developed a ‘Respect the Outdoors’ campaign to encourage people to follow the Countryside Code and to highlight the impacts of littering. We also supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy’s Love Parks campaign, which encouraged people to treat our parks with respect. Preliminary evaluation of these campaigns indicates that they had a positive influence on the target audience’s intended disposal of PPE litter, with anecdotal reports from local authorities that the intervention resulted in a markedly beneficial outcome.

Plastic pollution is one of the biggest challenges facing the marine environment today with plastic pollution found on coastlines accounting for 5% of the plastic that litters the ocean, according to EUNOMIA. Defra funds the Marine Conservation Society to record litter from sections of our coast which helps us to monitor the levels and trends of plastic pollution across several years. As the majority of ocean plastic pollution originates on land our efforts have focussed on preventing plastic entering the ocean in the first place.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Litter Composition Analysis [HL14656 Attachment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-25/HL14656>

Liverpool City Council

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what role they envisage for the commissioners overseeing elements of the (1) planning, (2) highways, and (3) regeneration departments of Liverpool City Council; what is their (a) purpose, and (b) objectives; and how long they expect the commissioners will be involved in the running of these departments of Liverpool City Council. [HL14551]

Lord Greenhalgh: The proposed intervention package for Liverpool City Council presented by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to Parliament on Wednesday 24 March includes the appointment of Commissioners for a minimum of three years and the transfer of all executive functions associated with regeneration, highways and property management at the Council to those Commissioners. The Secretary of State will take a final decision, following consideration of any representation received from the Council, after 24 May.

The Secretary of State has expressed the hope that it will not be necessary for the Commissioners to exercise these powers, but instead that their main role would centre on supporting the Council itself in making changes. It is proposed that most decisions continue to be made by the Authority and the intention is that these powers should only be used as a last resort, should the Authority not satisfy the Commissioners in their improvement processes.

Liverpool City Council: Criminal Investigation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty’s Government whether tax payers in Liverpool will fund the cost of (1) the investigation led by Max Caller into activities at Liverpool City Council, and (2) commissioners for the investigation; how much the investigation is expected to cost; and how much money is alleged to have been overspent as a result of an alleged lack of oversight by that Council. [HL14614]

Lord Greenhalgh: Liverpool City Council funded the cost of the Best Value Inspection, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999. In the past, where Commissioners have been appointed under Best Value powers, the relevant Directions required the local authority to meet all reasonable fees and expenses associated with the Commissioners. This expectation is set out in section 5.6.2 of the Statutory intervention and inspection: a guide for local authorities (May 2020). The Secretary of State will take a final decision, following consideration of any representation received from the Council, after 24 May.

Liverpool City Council: Standards

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty’s Government to provide details of (1) the “pervasive and rotten culture”, and (2) the “culture of intimidation”, within Liverpool City Council, described by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in a statement on 24 March. [HL14552]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty’s Government to provide details of what the report of the findings of the Best Value

inspection into Liverpool City Council, published on 24 March, identified as a "secret cabal" operating within Liverpool City Council; what assessment they have made of which documents, if any, have been destroyed in any of the Council's departments; and to provide details of the "serious breakdown of governance at the council" described by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 March. [HL14553]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government fully accepts the findings of the independent Best Value Inspection Report subject to any representations Liverpool City Council may wish to make about the report. The report, produced by Max Caller CBE, is based on the documentation and personal testimony provided by councillors, officers, and members of the public to the independent inspectors. The full report can be viewed (attached) at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liverpool-city-council-best-value-inspection-report>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Liverpool best value inspection report [210329
Liverpool_Best_Value_inspection_report HL14552 and
HL14553.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-24/HL14552>

Local Government: Buildings

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the resources local authorities will need to replace fossil fuel heating in their buildings and housing stock to meet the Government's net zero carbon emission targets. [HL14416]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises that Local Authorities have an important part to play in tackling climate change, including in heat and buildings decarbonisation. Meeting our net-zero target will require virtually all heat in buildings to be decarbonised, and heat in industry to be reduced to close to zero carbon emissions. Local Authorities can play a number of important roles in heat and buildings decarbonisation, including decarbonising heat in their own buildings and raising awareness of the support available to increase voluntary uptake of low carbon heat and energy efficiency measures. Local Authorities are able to apply for funding to decarbonise heat in their buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

We also work closely with Local Authorities to support heat pump and heat networks deployment through schemes such as the Local Authority Delivery scheme and Local Energy Hubs, as well as providing funding through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve the energy performance of social homes. In addition, the Government is providing funding and prioritising support for councils to tackle climate change as part of the annual

Sector Support Programme delivered by the Local Government Association in 2021/22.

The upcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy will set out further details on how we plan to work with local authorities to meet our ambition on heat and buildings decarbonisation.

Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with local government to deliver national strategies for carbon reduction. [HL14594]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to tackling climate change, and local authorities have a vital contribution to make. Their unique insight into local opportunities and priorities, their role as place-shapers, and their convening power enable them to drive carbon emissions reductions and develop climate resilient services across their whole area, with co-benefits for better public health and thriving local economies.

Tackling emissions at a local level will make an important contribution to the decarbonisation of transport, energy and buildings. As such, many parts of Government work closely with local government to deliver national strategies for carbon reduction effectively at the local level.

In 2020 the Government launched the Greenhouse Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund.

The Local Energy programme also supports Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local authorities and communities in England to play a leading role in decarbonisation and clean growth. The Government's wider plan to work with local government to deliver national strategies for carbon reduction will be set out in our forthcoming net zero strategy.

In Spring 2021 we will be publishing a bold and ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will set out how to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport. Different decarbonisation solutions will be required and will work best in different places across the UK, and we have engaged with local government at all levels in developing this Plan.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, now and over the course of the net zero transition.

Marine Animals: Animal Welfare

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide legal protections for aquatic animals. [HL14503]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: There is a range of legislation already in place to protect aquatic animals

including the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, Eels Regulations 2009, Conservation of Seals Act 1970, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has recently commenced the seventh Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Later this year, JNCC will make evidence-based recommendations to the Secretary of State as to which species warrant additional legal protections to secure their future conservation. The Government will consider any recommendations to add species to Schedule 5 or 8, at this point, once these recommendations have been submitted.

Further, the Fisheries Act's ecosystems objective contains a requirement to "minimise, and where possible eliminate bycatch of sensitive marine species". We will set out policies that will help to achieve this objective in the Joint Fisheries Statement, which is a UK-wide document.

Marines

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the trained personnel strength of the Royal Marines on (1) 1 April 2010, (2) 1 April 2016, and (3) what do they estimate will be the trained personnel strength on 1 April 2025. [HL14667]

Baroness Goldie: As at 1 January 2021, the current Full Time Trained Strength of the Royal Marines is 5,968. On 1 April 2010 and 1 April 2016, the Full Time Trained Strength of the Royal Marines was 7,082 and 6,921 respectively.

The recent Defence Command Paper announced that the Royal Marines will transition into the Future Commando Force and adopt new and autonomous capabilities. As a result, force structures will change but decisions are yet to be made on the future size of the Royal Marines.

Marriage

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the High Court's judgement in *Harrison v Secretary of State for Justice & others*, published on 31 July 2020, what plans they have to introduce legislation to recognise humanist marriages in England and Wales. [HL14304]

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation in response to the Law Commission's forthcoming review on weddings law. [HL14305]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Law Commission is conducting a fundamental review of the law on how and

where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the Government invited the Law Commission to make recommendations about how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent.

The Commission launched its consultation on 3 September 2020 and this closed on 4 January 2021. The law on wedding ceremonies is a complex and important area of the law. The Commission considered it essential to conduct an extensive consultation with the wide range of interested groups and individuals who would be affected by reform.

The Commission expects to report to Government with its recommendations in the second half of this year. The Government will decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage, on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

Mediterranean Sea: Migrants and Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the call by the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organisation for Migration on 20 August 2020 to strengthen the search and rescue capacity of refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean to prevent further loss of life. [HL14189]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean continues to have an important role in saving lives at sea. The UK Government remains concerned about the continued high number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and the number of fatalities.

Since October 2015, the UK has allocated over £175 million of humanitarian assistance in response to the Mediterranean migration crisis. Any assistance assigned to Libyan search and rescue entities should be made conditional on no one being arbitrarily detained, ill-treated or subjected to human rights violations post-disembarkation.

Mental Health Services: Carers

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take support the mental health needs of frontline care workers in the charitable and not-for-profit sectors. [HL14370]

Lord Bethell: We have worked alongside the National Health Service and other organisations to provide a package of emotional, psychological and practical resources for all care workers, including those in the charitable and not-for-profit sectors. This package includes support helplines, guidance, bereavement resources and a bespoke package of support for registered managers. We have also worked with the sector to ensure

that wellbeing resources and best practice advice are streamlined and easier to navigate.

Mental Health Services: Young People

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide targeted mental health support to unemployed young people. [HL14241]

Lord Bethell: We remain committed to the aims of the NHS Long Term Plan to invest at least an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services for all ages, including for children and young people aged 0 to 25 years old, by 2023/24. We are introducing new models of care that will give 370,000 people, including young adults with serious mental illness, greater choice and control over their care and that will support them to live well in their communities. These models include access to employment support.

Metropolitan Police: Misconduct

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 16 March (HL Deb, col 167), what discussions they have had with the Independent Office for Police Conduct about the reasons (1) why the deputy assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police was not cross-examined in relation to allegations of misconduct during Operation Midland, and (2) for the length of time it took to complete its inquiry. [HL14387]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Operational decisions made as part of its investigations are a matter for the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). In response to Sir Richard Henriques' recent letter to the Home Secretary, she has written to the IOPC asking that it replies directly to Sir Richard about its decisions concerning Operation Midland.

This letter is available on gov.uk at the following address:-

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970281/HS_Letter_to_Michael_Lockwood_-_Op_Kentia.pdf.

Miscarriage: Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they conducted a consultation to inform their actions pursuant to section 3 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019; and if so, what the outcome of the consultation was. [HL14441]

Lord Bethell: The Government has not conducted a consultation to inform actions pursuant to section 3 of the

Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019. The Pregnancy Loss Review team has been speaking with women and men with lived experience of pregnancy loss, clinicians, nurses, bereavement midwives, registrars, faith leaders, charities and officials in the United Kingdom and other countries, drawing on other methods for gathering evidence.

Montelukast: Children

Asked by The Lord Bishop of London

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recommendations have been made by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency regarding the prominence of warnings concerning mental health risks associated with the use of Montelukast in children; and what is the timescale for implementation of any such recommendations. [HL14325]

Lord Bethell: Warnings on mental health risks associated with the use of montelukast in children are included in the product information and in prescribing and other resources available to health professionals and patients. The warnings were strengthened in 2019 and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency issued an alert in its Drug Safety Update bulletin for prescribers. However, in response to concerns raised and in line with independent expert advice, more prominent warnings will be included in product information and patient alert cards and safety leaflets will be provided to patients. These materials are currently being developed and are expected to be introduced later this year.

Mozambique: Democratic Republic of Congo

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) security situation in Mozambique, and (2) the statement by Save The Children, published on 16 March, highlighting atrocities that have occurred in the Cabo Delgado province, including the beheading of children; and what steps they are taking with international partners to prevent Islamic State from gaining influence in (a) Mozambique, and (b) the Democratic Republic of Congo. [HL14647]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in northern Mozambique, and the increasing attacks by groups with links to Islamist extremism. As the Minister for Africa set out publicly on 17 March, we are appalled by reports of beheadings of children in the Cabo Delgado province. We have been particularly concerned by recent attacks in Palma, which we utterly condemn, and are in close contact with the local authorities in Cabo Delgado. We regularly engage with our international partners, including the US, France, Portugal and South Africa, to discuss a shared approach to the situation in Cabo Delgado.

We are working with the Governments of Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to address the root drivers of conflict and instability. In Mozambique we are providing targeted assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding and £19m of humanitarian and development support to support those displaced by the conflict. In DRC we are contributing to the UN Peacekeeping Mission MONUSCO (£52m in 2020/21 and the provision of three military staff officers), while our seven-year peace and stability programme is supporting local-level peace building initiatives and helping communities to secure land access, construct critical infrastructure and access income-generation opportunities in the east. We continue to urge the UN and the DRC Government to work closely together to protect civilians from ongoing violence and address the root causes of conflict. The Minister for Africa discussed the importance of addressing these issues with President Tshisekedi during his visit to DRC in November last year and during a telephone call on 10 March.

Mozambique: Politics and Government

Asked by The Lord Bishop of London

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to facilitate a coordinated response from UK political, economic and faith leaders to the situation in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique; and, in coordinating any such response, how they will take account of the influence of (1) natural disasters, (2) insurgents aligned with Islamic State, and (3) the recruitment of poor and disaffected young people to armed groups in the region. [[HL14326](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in northern Mozambique. We are working with the Government of Mozambique and other key stakeholders to address the root drivers of conflict and instability in Cabo Delgado province. This includes close co-operation with the Government of Mozambique's regional development authority in Cabo Delgado; providing targeted technical assistance under the framework of our Defence Memorandum of Understanding; and providing £19m of humanitarian and development support to internally displaced people through UN agencies, ensuring they have access to food, shelter and basic healthcare. UK development assistance in Mozambique also includes programmes to drive more inclusive growth and to promote good governance. We are also working with the government and private sector to promote training and skills opportunities for youth in the region. As one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world, the UK is partnering with Mozambique on climate adaptation, including by building the resilience of the most vulnerable to climate shocks and natural disasters.

Mozambique: Terrorism

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the prevalence of Islamist insurgency in north-east Mozambique, and (2) the number of people displaced as a result of that insurgency. [[HL14231](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in northern Mozambique, and the increasing attacks by groups with links to Islamic extremism. To date, the insurgency has claimed over 2,000 lives and displaced over 670,000 people. We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability, including through engagement with the Government of Mozambique's regional development authority in Cabo Delgado, and by providing targeted technical assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. The UK has provided £19m of humanitarian and development support to internally displaced people in northeast Mozambique through UN agencies, ensuring they have access to food, shelter and basic healthcare.

Music: Education

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) funding, and (2) operations, of music hubs. [[HL14348](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The government believes that the arts are an essential part of a broad and balanced education and that high-quality arts education should not be the preserve of the elite, but the entitlement of every child.

Music Education Hubs have a vital role to play not only in core school music but also ensuring children have access to all the benefits of a wider musical education through instrumental lessons and ensembles. They have acted swiftly and innovatively to support schools through the Covid-19 outbreak, including the continuation of continuing professional development to classroom teachers.

On Friday 26 March, the department announced £79 million in the financial year 2021-22, to fund Music Education Hubs. This funding had already been confirmed earlier this month with Arts Council England, our music hubs delivery partner, and they confirmed funding with all the Music Education Hubs organisations. The government also announced our ambitious plan for all children to have access to high-quality music education, with the publication of the Model Music Curriculum, a new music curriculum for key stages 1, 2

and 3. The plans to refresh music lessons follow the full return to school for all pupils this month, and alongside wider plans to help pupil catch-up on lost education.

Musicians: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government which EU Member States they have spoken to since 1 January about touring arrangements for musicians; and whether any of the solutions relating (1) to visas, and (2) to work permits advocated by music organisations sitting on the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Cultural Renewal Taskforce Working Groups were discussed at those meetings. [\[HL14368\]](#)

Baroness Barran: This Government understands that the cultural and creative sectors rely on the ability to move people across borders quickly, simply, and with minimal cost and administration. Touring is a vital part of musicians' and performers' careers, providing not only a vital income stream, but also enriching opportunities for cultural exchange across the world.

The UK's rules for touring creative professionals are more generous than many EU Member States. Our proposals remain on the table and our door is open if the EU is willing to reconsider its position.

We are now working urgently across government and in collaboration with the music and wider creative industries, including through the DCMS-led working group, to look at the issues and options, to help the sectors resume touring with ease as soon as it is safe to do so.

We will engage with bilateral partners to find ways to make life easier for those working in the creative industries in countries across the EU. We will prioritise seeking to ensure all Member States' public guidance around existing rules is simple and accessible.

Myanmar: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of (1) Australia, and (2) the United States, about the situation in Myanmar; and what plans they have to replicate the special measures introduced by those countries for Myanmar citizens unable to return to their country safely. [\[HL14555\]](#)

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is leading a strong and coordinated international response to the coup. We continue to engage closely with partners on a range of issues. We welcome the US announcement on Temporary Protected Status for Myanmar nationals in the country. Australia has not yet introduced special measures for Myanmar Nationals. We are continuing to explore the options for supporting Myanmar Nationals in the UK who could be in danger if they return.

The majority of Myanmar nationals present within the UK have already utilised the switching provisions within our immigration system to continue their regularised stay.

Myanmar: Religious Freedom

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the contribution made to aiding reconciliation by, and (2) the vulnerability of, religious groups in Myanmar. [\[HL14611\]](#)

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is very concerned by divisive, racist and nationalist propaganda perpetuated by the military regime since the coup. Our Embassy is meeting with a range of stakeholders, including Buddhist, Christian and Muslim leaders who are bravely standing up against the military junta. The UK also works with partners and other community leaders to improve religious tolerance and social cohesion through facilitating a greater understanding of religious and cultural differences, and promoting dialogue between different communities across Myanmar.

We continue to raise our concern, including at the UN Human Rights Council, at the Race and Religion Laws and the 1982 Citizenship Law which have been used to discriminate against non-Buddhists.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Cultural Heritage

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Armenian cultural heritage, including churches and monuments, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region has been destroyed by Azerbaijan during the dispute over that territory. [\[HL14660\]](#)

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan about reports of the (1) destruction of an Armenian church, and (2) destruction of cultural heritage, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. [\[HL14661\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas has emphasised the importance of protecting all cultural heritage sites to both the Armenian and Azerbaijani Governments, most recently during her visits to the region in February. The UK Ambassador to Azerbaijan has also raised this issue with representatives of the Azerbaijani Government. The protection of cultural heritage affected by conflict and the prevention of acts of destruction remains a priority for this Government. We continue to underline our support for the efforts of UNESCO in this regard, and for the Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Minsk Group in their work to facilitate a lasting peaceful settlement to the conflict.

National Economic Crime Centre: Lloyds Banking Group

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Economic Crime Centre of the National Crime Agency has received any (1) sponsorship, or (2) funding, from Lloyds Banking Group. [[HL14342](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) has not received any sponsorship or funding from Lloyds Banking Group.

The NECC has one non-costing secondee from Lloyds. This is their third private sector secondee. All secondees complete a vetting process and sign a secondment agreement that includes restrictions on disclosure of National Crime Agency information.

National Tutoring Programme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expand the capacity of the National Tutoring Programme. [[HL14606](#)]

Baroness Berridge: In summer 2020, as part of the initial £1 billion Covid-19 catch-up package, we announced the £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) to help tackle the impact of lost teaching time. As schools continue to face unprecedented challenges, the NTP has been designed to help ease the burden on teachers and school leaders and support them in helping those pupils who have missed out the most.

To date, since its launch in November 2020, over 155,000 pupils and 4,000 schools have enrolled for tuition support with the NTP Tuition Partners. Over 20,000 tutors are now supporting pupils across England and our aim is to provide tuition to over 250,000 pupils this academic year. This is in addition to placing over 1,000 Academic Mentors in our most disadvantaged schools to provide tuition to pupils that need the most help to catch-up.

The NTP ensures that additional support has been allocated to regions with the largest numbers of disadvantaged pupils, and in regions where access to tutoring has historically been lower. The Tuition Partners offer a good blend of national and regional providers, which can offer support to schools across all regions in England.

We are extending the programme further to provide tuition in the next academic year. This will help us continue to deliver high quality tutoring, which will benefit even more disadvantaged pupils. In February 2021, the government announced a further allocation of £83 million to assist in expanding the 2021/22 programme. The new funding enables the NTP to reach hundreds of thousands more disadvantaged pupils in the next academic year. We are currently undertaking a

procurement process for a delivery partner for next year's programme.

National Tutoring Programme: Vetting

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the safeguarding requirements for tutors working with children on the National Tutoring Programme. [[HL14664](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The safeguarding of children and young people is paramount to the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), and we have worked closely with our delivery partners to ensure that robust safeguarding processes are in place across both pillars of the NTP.

Safeguarding was fully assessed as part of the application process with detailed due diligence checks carried out for potential tuition partners ahead of agreements being entered, and ongoing monitoring throughout the lifetime of the grant. The assessment carried out as part of the application focused on five broad areas: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures; Safeguarding Training and Development; Organisational Structure and Governance; Safe Recruitment Policies and Procedures; and Specific Practices for Online Tuition. We take safeguarding seriously and we have robust processes in place before and during the delivery of the NTP. To date, no safeguarding incidents have been reported by schools in the programme.

Individual tuition partners are responsible for managing their own safeguarding policies and procedures, with oversight from the Education Endowment Foundation to ensure processes remain robust and required standards are met. However, all tutors are required to be enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service and Barred list checked (or equivalent for international tutors), and complete appropriate safeguarding training to work on this programme.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) discussions they have had with, and (2) representations they have made to, the government of Iran about the court proceedings against Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe [[HL14232](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are using every diplomatic tool available to secure the immediate and permanent release of arbitrarily detained dual British nationals in Iran. We continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case at the most senior levels in the Iranian Government. We requested access to the hearing on 14 March, as we have done for previous hearings and will do for any future hearings. Iran routinely denies us access to these because they do not recognise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe as a dual British national and view her as solely Iranian.

The Foreign Secretary continues directly to press Foreign Minister Zarif for her release and the Prime Minister has raised this with President Rouhani, most recently on 10 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most recently on 15 March.

NHS: Apprentices

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of interest in NHS apprenticeships; and what estimate, if any, they have made of the number of people they expect to apply to such schemes in the next 12 months. [[HL14603](#)]

Lord Bethell: There is a high level of interest in National Health Service apprenticeships. Data from the Department for Education shows over 18,000 NHS apprentices started training in 2019/20 in a range of roles.

We have not undertaken an estimate of the numbers of applications to NHS apprentice schemes in the next 12 months.

NHS: Procurement

Asked by Baroness Hooper

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact on the principles of (1) transparency, and (2) accountability, of their proposed changes to NHS Procurement in England. [[HL14314](#)]

Asked by Baroness Hooper

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to amend their proposals for the reform of NHS procurement in England so that, once a decision in principle to proceed to a competitive tender has been made, the procurement rules are the same as those applicable to the rest of the public sector. [[HL14315](#)]

Asked by Baroness Hooper

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how the proposed reform of procurement by the NHS in England will (1) prevent, and (2) address, conflicts of interest within integrated care systems in which providers and commissioners are working together. [[HL14316](#)]

Lord Bethell: NHS England is currently consulting on the proposal for a new provider selection regime. The central requirement of the proposed new regime is that arrangements for the delivery of healthcare services must be made in a transparent way, in the best interests of patients, taxpayers and the population. All other procurement will continue to be subject to Cabinet Office procurement processes.

The proposed new provider selection regime will set out overarching requirements in relation to the

competitive tender exercise - for example, that it must be transparent and fair. NHS England's consultation seeks views on the proposed key criteria to be considered when decision makers are running a competitive tender to ensure that services are arranged in the best interest of patients, taxpayers and the population. The proposal will include steps that decision-making bodies can take to manage conflicts of interest when arranging services. We will also develop a broader conflict of interest policy in relation to integrated care systems to address this issue specifically.

Niger: Economic Situation and Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political and economic situation in Niger. [[HL14449](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK welcomes the first democratic transition of power in Niger's history with the upcoming inauguration of President-Elect Mohamed Bazoum on Friday 2 April. We hope this achievement will help pave the way for greater political stability in the future. However, the UK remains concerned about human rights abuses and violations in Niger. The recent attacks in Niger's border areas are also deeply troubling.

Regarding the economic situation in Niger, the country remains at the bottom of the Human Development Index. We are focused on supporting stability in Niger and the wider Sahel. We are providing humanitarian assistance, support for conflict resolution, and tackling the root causes of instability and poverty, including through support to girls' education.

Nigeria: Fulani

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the types of weapons used by Fulani herdsmen involved in fighting in Nigeria's Middle Belt, and (2) from which countries these weapons originate. [[HL14568](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence. These have had a devastating impact on both Christian and Muslim communities across multiple states in Nigeria. The UK Government urges all communities to work together to address problems peacefully and to avoid division. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. The Minister for Africa and the Deputy National Security Adviser have raised the issue of intercommunal violence with President Buhari's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, most recently in December 2020. The Minister for Africa publicly

welcomed President Buhari's commitment to protect all religious and ethnic groups in the country in February this year, and reiterated the importance of communities working together.

The FCDO monitors incidents of intercommunal violence very closely, both from the UK and through the British High Commission in Nigeria. Although we do not hold figures on the numbers killed during incidents of intercommunal violence, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project estimates there have been just over 6,000 fatalities from all conflict and political violence across Nigeria's Middle Belt, plus Kaduna and Taraba, over the last five years. These fatalities span all religious groups and ethnic backgrounds. Perpetrators of violence in the Middle Belt have used a range of weapons, including staves, knives and guns in attacks.

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people killed by Fulani herdsman during fighting in Nigeria's Middle Belt in each of the previous five years. [[HL14569](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence. These have had a devastating impact on both Christian and Muslim communities across multiple states in Nigeria. The UK Government urges all communities to work together to address problems peacefully and to avoid division. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all. The Minister for Africa and the Deputy National Security Adviser have raised the issue of intercommunal violence with President Buhari's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, most recently in December 2020. The Minister for Africa publicly welcomed President Buhari's commitment to protect all religious and ethnic groups in the country in February this year, and reiterated the importance of communities working together.

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North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group

approved the control of eight GP Services contracts to be passed to Operose Health; and what consultation involving (1) local authorities, and (2) patient representatives, was undertaken before that decision was approved. [[HL14426](#)]

Lord Bethell: After forming a partnership with Operose Health Ltd, the contract owner AT Medics Ltd asked permission of the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as the commissioner of the relevant services, for the transfer of the holdings to Operose Health Ltd. Such a transfer is allowed under the terms of the GP contract. In this case, there was no legal or contractual basis for the CCG to reject the transfer as it will not lead to any significant change in service provision. The contract owner remains AT Medics Ltd and the change of control of the holding company to Operose Health Ltd does not affect service provision in any way.

No consultation involving local authorities and patient representatives was undertaken as this is only required when there is a significant change in service provision.

North Korea: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the public executions in Pyongyang on 2 March of people charged with illegally distributing entertainment media; what representations they have made to the government of North Korea about such reports; and what plans they have to raise these reports at the next meeting of the UN Human Rights Council. [[HL14404](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of recent reports of public executions in Pyongyang of individuals charged with distributing illegal entertainment media. Due to the closed nature of the regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we cannot verify the accuracy of these reports. The UK, working with partners, ensures that annual UN resolutions consistently call on the DPRK to end its use of the death penalty and adhere to international standards on judicial procedures. We also continue to raise our concerns directly with the DPRK Government, including with the DPRK's Ambassador in London.

North Korea: Guided Weapons

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in response to the recent ballistic missile tests conducted by North Korea in the Sea of Japan. [[HL14641](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the launch on 25 March of two short range ballistic missiles by North Korea in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. The Minister for Asia made clear our deep concern in a statement that day and called

on North Korea to refrain from further provocations and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the United States. The UK joined other members of the UN Security Council in requesting that the Council address North Korea's latest actions at its meeting on 30 March. We remain committed to securing peace on the Korean peninsula, working closely with allies and partners in upholding the rules-based international system and securing an end to North Korea's illegal activities.

North Korea: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the humanitarian situation in North Korea. [[HL14640](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned that humanitarian needs may be growing in North Korea. According to UN figures, 40% of North Korea's population were food insecure in 2019. We assess that North Korea's own restrictions at the border have prevented aid shipments from entering the country since January 2020, and that natural disasters last year may have reduced harvest yields. Restrictions on internal movement, including for UN agencies and NGOs, have also severely impacted the distribution of aid and support, and resulted in the departure of most of the international community. Without an international presence able to access affected areas, it is not possible to arrive at a full assessment. We encourage North Korea to allow entry for humanitarian workers to carry out an independent assessment of humanitarian needs, and to allow aid to flow freely into the country. We fully support the delivery of humanitarian support to the most vulnerable in North Korean society and continue to urge North Korea to concentrate on improving the lives of its most vulnerable people rather than developing its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that citizens of Northern Ireland have the same rights as citizens of other nations in the United Kingdom. [[HL14276](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government is firmly committed to ensuring the ongoing recognition and protection of rights for all people across the UK.

Guarantees of equality and rights, which recognise the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, are a fundamental part of the Belfast Agreement.

The Government remains firmly committed to upholding the Belfast Agreement in all its parts, including

the important rights it protects, the constitutional principles it upholds, and the institutions it established.

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the UK's obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [[HL14328](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the UK is obliged to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Maintaining and renewing elements of the UK's nuclear deterrent capability is fully consistent with this obligation.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the UK's obligations as a depositary government of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and what steps they take to fulfil the responsibilities of that role. [[HL14330](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK government acts in accordance with Article IX of the NPT which states: 'The Depositary Governments shall promptly inform all signatory and acceding States of the date of each signature, the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification or of accession, the date of the entry into force of this Treaty, and the date of receipt of any requests for convening a conference or other notices.'

Nuclear Weapons

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remark by Baroness Goldie on 23 March (HL Deb, col 808) that "We are satisfied that we are compliant with the non-proliferation treaty", what assessment they have made of the statement on 17 March by a UN spokesperson that the decision of the Government to increase their nuclear weapons arsenal is "contrary to its obligations to Article Six of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". [[HL14587](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Maintaining and renewing elements of the UK's nuclear deterrent capability is fully consistent with our international legal obligations, including those under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The UK remains committed to the step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament under the framework of the NPT, and the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Occupied Territories: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 February (HL13287), what is their assessment of the involvement of UK citizens in the deaths of Palestinian citizens while serving with the Israeli Defence Forces. [HL14236]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of this issue. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Occupied Territories: International Criminal Court

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL13569), what assessment they have made of the reported concerns of the governments of (1) the United States, (2) Australia, and (3) Canada, about the International Criminal Court opening an investigation into alleged war crimes in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. [HL14182]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK officials are in regular contact with US, Australian and Canadian authorities on a range of issues and are aware of their views on this matter. We respect the independence of the International Criminal Court, and we expect it to exercise due prosecutorial and judicial discipline.

Offences against Children: Jersey

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the BBC Four documentary *Dark Secrets of a Trillion Dollar Island: Garenne*, broadcast on 15 March, what assessment they have made of the government of Jersey's handling of child abuse; and whether they will appoint an independent inquiry to investigate the handling of such abuse. [HL14421]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: In December 2013 Jersey's government appointed an independent inquiry to investigate allegations of the abuse of children in the island's care system from 1945 to date. The Independent Jersey Care Inquiry (IJCI) opened on 3 April 2014. Led by an independent panel of experts, the IJCI conducted a wide-ranging investigation into all aspects of child care and protection services in Jersey, closing on 3 July 2017

with the publication of the "Final Report of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry".

The Inquiry's Report made eight key recommendations for the future management of child care in Jersey, all of which were accepted by the government of Jersey. The Report also suggested that the IJCI should be invited, in 2019, to review Jersey's progress against those recommendations. Jersey agreed; the review took place as scheduled with the follow-up report being published on 23 September 2019. It acknowledged Jersey's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the ICJI and commended Jersey on its progress.

Jersey is not part of the United Kingdom. As a self-governing dependency of the Crown with autonomy in its domestic affairs, child care and protection matters in Jersey are the responsibility of the Jersey authorities. It would not therefore be appropriate for the UK to appoint an independent inquiry to investigate this matter.

Ogier: Fines

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the tax tribunal judgment in *Odey Asset Management LLP and others v HMRC* [2021] UKFTT 31 (TC), what penalties have been levied upon Ogier Trustee (Jersey) Limited. [HL14471]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs. It would not be appropriate for Treasury ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to adopt the target set by the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, to spend 50 per cent of their aid budget in countries affected by conflict. [HL14179]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In November 2020 the Foreign Secretary announced a new strategic framework for how the UK's Official Development Assistance will be spent in 2021. The framework sharpens our focus on the seven global challenges where the UK can make the most difference including: climate and biodiversity; Covid and global health security; girls' education; science and research; open societies and conflict; humanitarian assistance; and trade. This year, the Foreign Secretary will lead a cross-departmental review on a new development strategy to ensure close alignment of UK aid with the objectives to be set out in the Integrated Review.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to provide relief for civil society in those countries affected by conflict where the UK has sought to bring an end to violence. [HL14180]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO works closely with civil society partners in countries affected by conflict, on conflict prevention and resolution and related issues including humanitarian relief.

This year we will establish a new conflict centre within the FCDO and prioritise the resources of the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund on the foundational link between stability, resilience and security, and work with governments and civil society in regions that are of greatest priority to the UK. This activity will be supported by funding of £874 million for 2021-22. We will continue to work with civil society to increase our impact on conflict in priority regions, and to ensure support is directed to help the most vulnerable.

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the analysis by Lord Macdonald of River Glaven of their decision to cut the level of foreign aid spending to 0.5 per cent of the national income. [[HL14465](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary has taken a range of advice in respect of the decision to reduce aid spending to 0.5% of GNI. The International Development (Official Assistance Target) Act 2015 clearly envisages that the 0.7% target may not be met in a particular year, in the light of economic and fiscal circumstances, and provides for reporting to Parliament in the event that the target is not met. Since the economic situation is difficult to predict, we are monitoring the situation and planning accordingly.

*Asked by **Baroness Morgan of Huyton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Official Development Assistance research projects, including those under the Global Challenges Research Fund are (1) being cut, or (2) having funding reduced; and whether any funding is being cut from projects relating to (a) girls' education, (b) food security and nutrition, (c) HIV, or (d) ventilators. [[HL14521](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Morgan of Huyton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why Official Development Assistance (ODA) research funding is being cut at this time in the financial year; and what assessment they have made of the compatibility of such cuts to ODA with their stated aim of the UK becoming a "scientific superpower". [[HL14522](#)]

Lord Callanan: The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships, and supporting the UK research sector. Our commitment to research and innovation has been clearly demonstrated by

my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget announcement of increasing investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22, and as has been set out in our Integrated Review ambitions, international collaboration is central to a healthy and productive R&D sector.

We are currently working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the financial year 2021/22 ODA allocations. UKRI have written this week to many GCRF award holders setting out the next stage of the review of ODA funding next year, and to explore options for individual programmes (full details have been published on the UKRI website). Until that work is complete, it will not be possible to give an accurate picture of the likely impact for individual GCRF programmes.

Overseas Aid: Research

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of cuts to Official Development Assistance on (1) university research, and (2) the UK's soft power across the world. [[HL14532](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Covid pandemic's economic impact has forced the government to take the difficult decision to temporarily reduce ODA to 0.5% of GNI. Despite this reduction, we will remain a world-leading ODA donor, spending around £10 billion on ODA in 2021-22. The Foreign Secretary has set out a strategic approach to ensure maximum impact for our aid spend for 2021-22, laying a Written Ministerial Statement for Parliament in January, summarising overall departmental cross-government allocations of ODA. FCDO and other departments are working through the implications of their allocations for the research programmes they manage with universities.

The UK has led funding for scientific advances that have helped drive significant reductions in extreme poverty, increases in agricultural productivity, declines in childhood mortality, and increases in life expectancy across the developing world. We remain committed to the use of ODA to support research that can provide new solutions to critical challenges in development.

Overseas Students: China

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what risk assessment they have conducted of students from China undertaking research in universities which are carrying out research connected with (1) critical infrastructure, and (2) national security, particularly in relation to (a) cyber technology, (b) artificial intelligence, (c) nuclear capability, (d) automation, (e) telecommunications and material sciences, and (f) weapons development; and what conclusions they have drawn. [[HL14360](#)]

Lord Callanan: Her Majesty's Government welcomes all international students to UK universities, including those from China. We have taken robust measures to ensure that the university sector is protected from misappropriation of research relating to the areas listed. Measures include the Academic Technology Approval Scheme, which vets postgraduate students seeking to study proliferation sensitive courses, and outreach activity through the "Trusted Research" campaign. We continuously review measures that protect national security to ensure they remain effective.

Overseas Students: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 10 March (HL13719), whether (1) universities, and (2) independent schools, are permitted to accept payment of course fees in cash. [HL14295]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Universities, as autonomous institutions, are responsible for ensuring their compliance with the law. They need to uphold applicable public interest governance principles in order to meet the regulatory requirements of the Office for Students, the independent regulator for the higher education sector in England.

To be registered with the Office for Students, a higher education provider must have in place adequate and effective management and governance arrangements to deliver them in practice.

Whilst universities can accept cash payments, the Department for Education has spoken to representatives of the sector and understands that very few universities do this.

Independent schools are private businesses and, like universities, their handling of cash payments is subject to the same regulation as for all businesses.

The government's money-laundering regulations require firms to combat money-laundering and to ensure that key professionals identify their customers and understand the purpose behind transactions, including the source of funds. Universities and independent schools are not within the regulated sector, but those most at risk from money-laundering – including banks, money service businesses, lawyers, and accountants – are in scope.

Overseas Students: Myanmar

Asked by Baroness Nye

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Myanmar citizens are currently in the UK on student visas. [HL14390]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Home Office Migration Statistics do not capture the number of Myanmar citizens currently in the UK on student visas.

The Home Office does though publish data on how many study applications were issued for Myanmar citizens. These can be found in our published statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>.

Pakistan: Ahmadiyya

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of damage caused to the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Garmolavirkan, Punjab, by a police raid on 17 March; whether they have had discussions with the government of Pakistan about these reports; and if so, what response they have received. [HL14403]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against religious communities in Pakistan, including against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

We are aware of reports that police in Pakistan damaged an Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosque in Garmola Virkan, Punjab.

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their religion or belief. Most recently, I raised the need to promote respect for all religions with Pakistan's Special Representative for Religious Harmony, Tahir Ashrafi, on 23 March 2021. I also raised our concerns on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Pakistan with the Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February 2021.

Pakistan: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about (1) the death sentence imposed on Sajjad Masih Gill, and (2) the use of the death sentence in Pakistan; and what response they have received (a) on this case, and (b) on the use of the death sentence. [HL14613]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is the UK's longstanding policy to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We are concerned about the case of Sajjad Masih Gill, who was sentenced to death in March 2021, after being convicted for blasphemy.

We do not comment on our handling of individual cases but regularly raise our concerns about blasphemy laws at a senior level with the Government of Pakistan. On 23 March, I discussed Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Special Representative for Religious Harmony, Tahir Ashrafi. On 20 February, I also raised our concerns about the protection of minority religious communities,

including the use of blasphemy laws, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari.

Pakistan: Radicalism

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about reports that extremist ideology has been taught in schools in that country. [HL14201]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I recognise the concerns raised by minority groups in Pakistan that the introduction of a single curriculum may be used to marginalise some communities. Through our representation, the UK has made clear that there is a need for an inclusive curriculum, one that encompasses the rich diversity of Pakistan's communities and traditions. We are engaging with the Provincial and Federal Governments to ensure that the new curriculum promotes diversity and inclusion. Through our diplomatic network in Pakistan we have also engaged with young people to discuss the promotion of intolerance and inclusiveness. I will continue to scrutinise UK-funded education programmes in Pakistan to ensure they promote inclusive education.

I discussed the need for inclusive and tolerant education when I met with Pakistan's Minister for Education, Mr Shafqat Mahmood on 1 October 2020, and with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, on 8 September 2020. I raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief and the protection of minority religious communities with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 20 February 2021, and with Pakistan's Advisor to the Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior, Shahzad Akbar, on 7 December 2020.

Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, further to the remarks by the Leader of the House of Commons on 11 March (HC Deb, col 1006), what discussions they have had with him about reports of the costs of the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster; and whether they have any plans to review (1) the feasibility, or (2) the affordability, of the refurbishment. [HL14480]

Baroness Scott of Needham Market: The Sponsor Body has regular engagement with the House of Commons Commission (which includes the Leader of the House as a member) on a range of issues relating to the Restoration and Renewal Programme, including on costs.

The Sponsor Body has a statutory duty, under the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019, to have regard to the need to ensure that the Parliamentary building works represent good value for money. Value for money is at the heart of everything we

do and we have robust assurance processes in place to ensure costs are minimised.

The Sponsor Body does not recognise the reported figures of £10 to £20 billion costs for the Parliamentary building works. Supported by the Delivery Authority, the Sponsor Body is in the process of developing a detailed and costed restoration and renewal plan that will for the first time give an accurate sense of the costs, timescales and full detail of the work needed. It is the work of the detailed and costed restoration plan which will determine the forecast cost for R&R. The detailed restoration plan will be focused on delivering value for money and will be informed by more than 100 surveys and investigations of the Palace of Westminster. The detailed and costed plan will be put before both Houses for a decision before the Parliamentary building works can commence.

The Sponsor Body has recently undertaken and published a Strategic Review of the R&R Programme. The purpose of the review was to consider whether anything had changed so significantly as to warrant a change in the strategy for the Programme. The Sponsor Body invited views from Members, Members' staff, parliamentary staff and members of the public. We also consulted with the Commissions of both Houses, as well as relevant parliamentary committees, on the draft Strategic Review recommendations. The review recommends new approaches to completing the restoration while minimising costs and ensuring value for money, and provides a clear direction for the next stages of the work. The Review is available at: <https://restorationandrenewal.uk/resources/reports/strategic-review>.

Palestinians: Children

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the number of Palestinian children (1) killed, or (2) maimed, by (a) the Israeli Defence Forces, or (b) Israeli settlers, in the last five years. [HL14237]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The overall numbers of Palestinian and Israeli casualties are routinely reported in the FCDO's annual human rights and democracy report. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provide breakdowns of casualties, such as by age and gender. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice.

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to protect Palestinian children from being arbitrarily arrested by Israeli security forces. [HL14320]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

Palestinians: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the Palestinian Authority to ensure that supplies of Covid-19 vaccines (1) to the West Bank, and (2) to Gaza, are not delayed. [HL14535]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to global equitable access to effective vaccines as demonstrated by our £548 million contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. We were pleased to note that the first shipment of over 60,000 doses from the COVAX scheme arrived in the OPTs on the 17th March and that over 21,000 were sent to Gaza.

The British Consulate-General in Jerusalem is in regular contact with the Palestinian Authority and will continue to raise timely and appropriate access to Covid-19 vaccines. UN agencies, the PA and the Israeli Government are also working together to ensure that essential medical supplies and staff can access Gaza.

Palestinians: Elections

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to participate in the Palestinian elections scheduled for May; and what steps they will take to ensure that they are able to participate. [HL14505]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have welcomed President Abbas' announcement of dates for legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for the first time since 2006. We encourage the Palestinian leadership to work toward strong, inclusive, accountable and democratic institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights. Free and fair elections are an important and necessary step. The UK will work closely with the Palestinian Authority and international partners to support this, including encouraging the Government of Israel to allow elections in East Jerusalem, in keeping with the Oslo Accords.

Palestinians: Road Traffic Offences

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning (1) the reported increase in the number of hit-and-run offences against Palestinians, and (2) the death of Bilal Bawatneh. [HL14234]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the reports surrounding the death of Bilal Bawatneh. Whilst we have not made representations on this particular case, the UK condemns any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We call on the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and allegation of crimes against protected persons in the West Bank, and where appropriate bring those responsible to justice.

Passports

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any passport offices are still issuing the burgundy-coloured UK passports; and if so, which ones. [HL14251]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Her Majesty's Passport Office ceased issuing British passports with a burgundy cover in September 2020.

All new British passports are issued with a blue cover.

Pâté De Foie Gras

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ban (1) sales, and (2) imports, of foie gras. [HL14267]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese raises serious welfare concerns.

Production is banned in the UK as it is incompatible with domestic legislation including the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it a criminal offence not to provide for an animal's welfare needs and to allow an animal to suffer unnecessarily.

Now our future relationship with the European Union has been established the Government is considering the further steps it could take in relation to foie gras.

Peers: Conduct

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the 'Valuing Everyone' training session for Peers on the morning of 16 March, whether describing a female over the age of 14 as a 'girl' rather than a 'lady' in the course of their parliamentary duties would constitute a breach

of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords; and if so, what the penalty would be. [[HL14454](#)]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: Only the Commissioner for Standards and the Conduct Committee can decide whether something is a breach of the Code of Conduct, upon receipt of a specific complaint to the Commissioner or appeal to the Conduct Committee. They do not deal with hypothetical situations.

Penally Camp

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Ministry of Defence will use Penally training camp once it is returned to them by the Home Office on 21 March. [[HL14395](#)]

Baroness Goldie: Following the completion of a successful handover from the Home Office to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the intent is to return Penally Training Camp to its primary purpose; providing accommodation and catering facilities to Defence users who will be utilising MOD training facilities in the local area.

Plastics

Asked by Baroness Parminter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ban oxo-degradable plastics. [[HL14658](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government recognises that some innovative new packaging types, like biodegradable plastics, could help reduce the environmental impact of plastic, when used in niche applications and if disposed of in the right way. However, the Government is concerned that, in the absence of robust standards, claims about the biodegradability of plastic-based products cannot be verified.

The Government published a call for evidence in July 2019 to help consider the development of standards or certification criteria for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics, as well as to better understand their effects on the environment and our current waste system. The Government response was published on the 8th April which can be found on gov.uk.

Following consideration of the submissions we received the Government is minded to introduce a ban on oxo-degradable plastics, subject to further evidence and a public consultation.

Plastics: Recycling

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress towards (1) increasing recycling and reducing waste, (2) increasing recycling of plastic waste, and (3) reducing plastic waste. [[HL14655](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is committed to increasing recycling rates and reducing waste, including plastics.

Our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy outlines our commitments to:

- eliminate avoidable waste by 2050;
- achieve 65% recycling rate for municipal (household-like) waste by 2035;
- work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025;
- eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042.

To help us achieve this target, we have introduced legislation through the Environment Bill that will require local authorities in England to collect a core set of recyclable materials, including plastics, from households and businesses. By making recycling clearer and easier, we will better preserve material value and help to grow demand for recyclables. We are also seeking a new power in the Environment Bill to be able to place charges on other single-use plastic items to encourage businesses and citizens to shift toward more reusable products.

Together with the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and the HM Treasury's Plastic Packaging Tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, these reforms will increase demand for secondary material plastic and therefore increase investment in recycling infrastructure. We have recently published consultations on introducing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, and will be consulting on introducing consistency in household and business recycling shortly.

We have made significant progress so far to reduce plastic waste, by introducing one of the world's toughest bans on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, and significantly reducing the sales of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarket retailers by 95% with our 5p charge. We are extending the charge to all retailers and increasing the charge to at least 10p in Spring 2021. We also introduced a restriction on the supply of plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers from the 1st October and we are currently assessing whether there are additional items for which a ban would be a suitable and proportionate measure.

More generally, on 18 March we launched a 12 week consultation on a new 'Waste Prevention Programme for England: Towards a Resource Efficient Economy' (attached). This builds on the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy and seeks to agree a programme which helps with our strategic goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving Net Zero, protecting our natural capital, addressing our resource security, and creating jobs and growth, as well as increasing our resource productivity and minimising waste. The consultation document outlines the potential for, and benefits of, action on waste prevention. It recognises that action is required

across society - by Government, businesses, local authorities, consumers and others - for progress to be made.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Waste Prevention Programme for England [HL14655
Attachment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-25/HL14655>

Plastics: Seas and Oceans

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they provide to organisations which seek to reduce plastic pollution in oceans. [HL14282]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to protecting the marine environment from all stressors and recognises the importance in involving all actors to tackle the urgent issue of plastic pollution of the ocean.

The Government has funded a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. This includes £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150m investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging, which will aim to make the UK a world-leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products.

In 2018, the UK launched the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (CCOA) with its co-chair, Vanuatu, calling on Commonwealth countries to pledge action on plastic pollution. Alongside the CCOA, we have committed up to £70 million to tackle plastic pollution, which supports organisations and initiatives to tackle ocean plastic pollution globally.

Poland: Deforestation

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Judgment by the Court of Justice of the European Union in Case C-441/17 Commission v Poland (Białowieża Forest) in April 2018, what representations they have made to the government of Poland about deforestation in that country. [HL14639]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: HMG are monitoring the management of the Białowieża forest and acknowledge the statement by Poland's National State Forest on 15 March concerning Poland's implementation of the 2018 judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union. We will continue to work with Poland, building on the successes of COP24 held in Katowice, while we look ahead to a successful COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

Police: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of frontline police officers. [HL14564]

Lord Greenhalgh: Our police do a very demanding job and continue to dedicate themselves to protecting the public during this hugely challenging time. We recognise that the pandemic will have no doubt had an impact on their wellbeing. The Government and police leaders take this matter very seriously and are working to support the mental and physical wellbeing of all police officers and staff.

This includes providing ongoing funding to the National Police Wellbeing Service in England and Wales, which is helping forces to identify where there is most risk of impacts on mental health, developing work around building resilience, as well as supporting those who need it in response to traumatic events.

The Government has also accelerated work to introduce a Police Covenant for England and Wales, which will ensure our police get the support and protection they need. The Covenant will be enshrined in law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, introduced to Parliament on 9 March. The legislation provides a statutory duty for the Home Secretary to report annually to Parliament on the work undertaken. Our focus will be on health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families, with a real emphasis on mental health support.

Police: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all applicants to police forces in England undergo (1) psychological, and (2) behavioural, assessment as part of the recruitment process; and if not, why not. [HL14289]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The standards, assessment and selection framework for police recruitment are managed by the College of Policing. Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for local recruitment into forces and are supported by this national framework and guidance. All forces are currently using the College Online Assessment Centre as part of the recruitment process which has been designed to maintain the same high standards as set by the College of Policing. Candidates are required to pass each stage of the recruitment process and this includes the assessment centre, vetting, medical assessment and fitness.

All new recruits are subject to a rigorous vetting and assessment process to assess suitability for the role of police officer, including testing against core behaviours and values. This does not currently include psychological

assessment as standard and it would be for the College of Policing to assess if additional elements of assessment are required. Following national assessment, some forces may choose to run additional assessments locally to further refine the field of candidates.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many police officers have been recruited as part of the campaign to recruit 20,000 additional police officers, announced on 5 September 2019. [HL14394]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This Government is committed to recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023.

We are providing £700 million this year to help with the recruitment of 6,000 additional officers by the end of March 2021.

I am pleased to say that as at 31 December 2020, 6,620 additional officers have been recruited as a result of the Police Uplift Programme.

I am extremely grateful to those brave men and women who have signed up to join the police and keep our communities safe.

Police: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) cost, and (2) practicability, of establishing a police presence at sites in towns and cities that do not have police stations; and if so, what consideration they have given to such sites being staffed by volunteers, communicating with the nearest full police station as required. [HL14644]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: On the 4th February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21. Overall police funding available to PCCs will increase by up to £703 million (5.4% in cash terms) next year.

Decisions about the allocation of police resources and deployment of officers are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable PCCs. They are responsible for ensuring the needs of the local community are met.

Political Parties: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government which political parties have claimed (1) furlough payments, or (2) other emergency funding related to the Covid-19 pandemic, since March 2020; and what amount was paid to each one. [HL14466]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Due to HMRC's duty of confidentiality, HMRC cannot publish identifying information that relates to their functions, which includes the coronavirus financial support schemes, unless there is an appropriate legal basis for publication. No such legal basis was in place for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) prior to 12 November 2020 when the CJRS Direction extending the scheme from 1 November was signed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In line with the direction that was published on 12 November, as part of HMRC's commitment to transparency and to deter fraudulent claims, HMRC published information about employers who claimed for December[1] and will continue to do so on a monthly basis.

[1]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employers-who-have-claimed-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

Polypropylene

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the reduced supply of polypropylene, (2) the increased price level of polypropylene, and (3) the impact this will have on supplies for medical use. [HL14197]

Lord Callanan: BEIS officials are in regular contact with the British Plastics Federation (BPF) who have informed them that there are global pressures affecting the demand and supply for some plastics polymers including polypropylene. These pressures are currently shared with a number of different materials sectors.

The BPF regularly surveys its members on key issues and have passed on information outlining that these pressures are due to a variety of issues including the current pandemic and some instances of extreme weather that has affected production. Officials will continue to work with the sector and with other government departments to monitor the effects of such issues, especially if they appear to have an impact on vital supplies of products that are needed for medical use.

Prison Sentences

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were sentenced to custody for 20 years or more, who were not subject to a life sentence, in each of the last 10 years. [HL14482]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Figures covering the period 2009 to 2019 for the number of individuals sentenced to custody for 20 years or more who were not subject to a life sentence can be found in the table below.

Number of individuals sentenced to custody at all courts, 2009 to 2019 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total sentenced to custody	100,231	101,513	106,170	98,044	92,966	91,313	90,348	89,862	86,354	78,876	75,971
Less than 20 years	98,778	100,073	104,907	96,848	92,491	90,807	89,888	89,376	85,874	78,291	75,391
20 years or more and less than life	31	37	49	37	71	64	91	79	118	153	124
Imprisonment for Public Protection ⁽³⁾	1,001	1,019	819	747	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Life sentence	421	384	395	412	395	442	369	407	362	432	456

Source: MoJ court proceedings database

Notes

1. The figures given in the table relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

2. Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

3. Sentences of imprisonment for public protection were introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and abolished by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Prisoners

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people currently in prison serving an imprisonment for public protection sentence who have spent a total period of 10 years or more in custody have been (1) unreleased, and (2) recalled. [HL14434]

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison serving a life sentence who have spent a total period of 10 years or more in custody having been either (1) unreleased, or (2) recalled. [HL14484]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The total number of life and imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence prisoners currently in prison, who have spent a total of at least 10 years in custody and who have either (1) never been released or (2) are in custody having been recalled, is provided below.

Sentence Type	Unreleased	Recalled
IPP (10+ years in custody)	1311	257
Life (10+ years in custody)	3262	210

These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any large-scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

The total unreleased IPP population is reducing year on year - it stood at 1,849 as of 31 December 2020, down from 2,134 on 31 December 2019. IPP prisoners continue to have a high chance of a positive outcome from Parole Board hearings. In 2019/20 72% of Parole Board hearings resulted in either a recommendation for a progressive transfer to an open prison or release.

Offenders on licence in the community will be recalled to custody where they breach their licence conditions in such a way as to indicate that their risk has increased to the level where it may no longer be managed effectively in the community, even by the imposition of additional licence conditions and other controls. Recall is a vital measure to protect the public from those who are assessed as likely to commit further offences causing serious harm if they were to remain in the community.

The Government's primary responsibility is to protect the public. HM Prison and Probation Service remains committed to supporting the progression of those serving IPP and life sentences in custody, so that the Parole Board may direct their release or, as the case may be, re-release, as soon as it is safe to do so.

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners currently sentenced to imprisonment for public protection were convicted of theft. [HL14435]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: None. Offences contrary to section 1 of the Theft Act 1968 ("theft") never qualified as serious specified offences within the meaning of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 for which a sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) could have been imposed. However, a conviction for certain other offences within the Theft Act 1968, such as that for robbery or aggravated burglary, could have led to an IPP sentence. As of 31 December 2020, there were 714 (339 unreleased and 375 recalled) prisoners serving an IPP sentence who have a recorded offence in the category of "robbery" and 80 (34 unreleased and 46 recalled) prisoners serving an IPP sentence who have a recorded offence in the category of "theft offences". But these data do not give an indication of the precise specific serious specified offence, or the context or severity of the crimes, which led to a Judge deciding that the case was so serious that it merited the imposition of an IPP sentence.

The independent Parole Board determine whether it is safe to release prisoners serving an IPP sentence. Consequently, where a prisoner remains in custody, it is because the Parole Board has judged that their risk is too high for them to be safely managed in the community.

The Government's primary responsibility is to protect the public; however, HM Prison and Probation Service remains committed to supporter prisoners to reduce their risk to the level where the Parole Board will judge that they may now be safely supervised on licence in the community.

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more; and of these how many (1) have never been released, or (2) have been recalled. [HL14558]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The total number of people currently in custody serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more who have never been released is 1,276. There are a further 27 people in custody serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more, having been recalled from the community.

These figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

The power to recall is a vital public protection measure and all individuals on licensed supervision in the community are liable to recall to prison if they fail to comply with the conditions of their licence in such a way as to indicate that their risk has escalated to the point where they may no longer be safely managed in the community.

Prisoners' Release

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were released from prison while serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more in the last year that figures are available; and of these, how many have subsequently been recalled to custody. [HL14433]

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were released from prison in the last year that figures are available while serving (1) a life sentence, or (2) an imprisonment for public protection sentence, having spent at least 10 years in custody; and of these, how many have subsequently been recalled to custody. [HL14436]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The total number of releases and subsequent recalls in the last year that figures are available is provided as follows, broken down by (1) determinate sentences of 20 or more years, (2) prisoners serving life sentences who have been in custody for 10 or

more years, and (3) prisoners serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences who have been in custody for 10 years or more.

<i>Sentence Type</i>	<i>Total released between 1 Oct 2019 and 30 Sept 2020</i>	<i>Total recalled since release</i>
Determinate – 20+ years	33	4
Life (10+ years in custody)	326	24
IPP (10+ years in custody)	210	51

These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any large-scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

Offenders on licence in the community will be recalled to custody where they breach their licence conditions in such a way as to indicate that their risk has increased to the level where it may no longer be managed effectively in the community, even by the imposition of additional licence conditions and other controls. Recall is a vital measure to protect the public from those who are assessed as likely to commit further offences causing serious harm if they were to remain in the community.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public. HMPPS remains committed to supporting all offenders recalled to custody to reduce their risk, so that the independent Parole Board (or, in the case of some determinate sentence offenders, the Secretary of State using executive powers) may direct their re-release as soon as it is safe to do so.

Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more, categorised by ethnicity. [HL14483]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The information requested is shown in the tables below.

I can also confirm that sentencing is a matter for the independent judiciary based on the facts of each case.

Prisoners serving a determinate sentence of 20 years or more, by ethnicity, as at 31 December 2020, in England and Wales.

All	1,276
Asian / Asian British	150
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	194
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	36
Other ethnic group	17
White	874
Not stated	5

Prisoners: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 10 March (HL13677), what assessment NHS England & Improvement has made of the impact on the mental health of prisoners of being confined to their cells for 23 hours a day or more. [HL14452]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise that isolation and limited interaction with others over a prolonged period of time will have an impact upon prisoners' mental health and well-being. Across the prison estate, healthcare teams including mental health professionals have been working in partnership with colleagues to identify and meet the mental health needs of the population, provide resources and appropriate interventions to promote well-being and prevent ill-health.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the mental health of the prisoners serving an imprisonment for public protection sentence who continue to be detained 10 years or more beyond their tariff. [HL14529]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government recognises that those serving indeterminate sentences (life and imprisonment for public protection (IPP)) face particular challenges in maintaining their emotional wellbeing, especially during the restrictions imposed on account of the Covid pandemic. The guidance and training produced by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) directs the attention of prison staff to the needs of indeterminate sentence prisoners. HMPPS allocates a key worker to all such prisoners and also makes available to them peer supporters such as Samaritans-trained Listeners.

The unreleased IPP prisoner population is continuing to reduce, year on year; it stood at 1,849 on 31 December 2020, down from 2,134 on 31 December 2019. The majority of IPP prisoners continue to have a high chance of a positive outcome from Parole Board hearings. In 2019/20 72% of Parole Board hearings resulted in either a recommendation for a progressive transfer to an open prison or release.

The Government's primary responsibility is to protect the public; however, HMPPS remains committed to supporting prisoners serving an IPP to reduce their risk to the level where the Parole Board determines that they may be supervised effectively on licence in the community.

Prisons: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that deaths from Covid-19 in

prisons in England and Wales rose by 50 per cent in a month in December 2020; what percentage of prisoners have now been vaccinated against Covid-19; and what other measures they have taken to decrease the risk of Covid-19 being transmitted to prisoners and to prison officers [HL14310]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: As was the case in the community, infection rates in prisons increased over the winter months which, sadly, led to an increase in deaths where Covid-19 was suspected as being the cause. With a small number of tragic exceptions, we have protected the lives of tens of thousands of staff and prisoners. Our decisive action – backed by Public Health England and Wales – has meant that the number of deaths we have seen in prisons is significantly lower than Public Health England's Modelling at the start of the pandemic, which said there could be 2,700 deaths from coronavirus in prisons.

As of 18 March 2021, the percentage of the whole prison population in England who have received a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine is 23.4%, equivalent to 79% of the priority cohorts 2-6 (as defined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation). The vaccination programme is making good progress and has recently expanded to start vaccinating those prisoners in priority groups 7 - 9, in line with the wider community.

The safety of our staff and those under our supervision remains a top priority. We have taken preventative measures, such as restricting regimes, minimising inter-prison transfers, and compartmentalising our prisons into different units to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. A comprehensive testing regime is in place, where staff are tested weekly and prisoners are tested on reception and prior to transfer. This is key in helping to prevent the spread of the virus.

Latest published data shows positive evidence that the rate of new infections in custody is now falling substantially.

Prisons: Violence

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the level of violence in prisons. [HL14559]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Despite the progress made, the level of violence in prisons remains too high. We are continuing work to address this by giving all staff the tools and training needed to help them reduce violence.

We are spending £100 million across the estate to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars.

We have developed the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP), which is the national case management model for managing those who pose a raised risk of being violent and is being used in all prisons.

We are rolling out PAVA, a synthetic pepper spray, in the adult male estate to protect staff and prisoners from incidents where there is serious violence, or an imminent or perceived risk of serious violence. Alongside this will be the introduction of a new Personal Safety package; (S.P.E.A.R.) to ensure that PAVA is introduced as part of a wider package of skills for staff to resolve and deescalate incidents.

We continue to support the effective use of the 6,000 Body Worn Video Cameras across the estate, whilst continuing to embed the training provided to staff to promote rehabilitative conversations. This provides staff with skills and equipment to deal with challenging situations in a fair and just way. The cameras will also provide high-quality evidence to support prosecutions.

Any prisoner who commits an act of violence should expect to have action taken against them, including an adjudication, which could downgrade their incentives and earned privileges level, or further time added to their sentence.

Prisons: Visits

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria need to be satisfied to allow family visits of prisoners to resume; what date they plan to resume family visits of prisoners; and what plans they have to provide more video-capable telephones in prisons. [[HL14188](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Social visits in adult prisons have been suspended during the period of national lockdown, but will resume once it is safe to do so.

Decisions will be based on public health advice, assessments of local outbreaks and ability to safely facilitate visits, and so dates may vary between different sites. No sites will resume visits before the end of March when the 'stay at home' order is expected to be lifted under the government roadmap on easing restrictions.

Visits to children in the youth custody estate and compassionate visits to adult establishments have continued throughout national lockdown.

Secure video calls have now been introduced at all prisons across England and Wales, though there are no plans to provide video-capable telephones at this time. Currently 66% of prison cells have in-cell telephony. Additionally, within open prisons, mobile phones have been permitted as a transitional measure for family contact. Further considerations for their use are being made in line with regime recovery and availability of secure video calls across all open prisons.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prioritise the use of videophones by prisoners with children while family visits are not possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic; and what plans they have for similar prioritisation for prisoners held at long-distance

from their families when the restrictions in place to address the Covid-19 pandemic have ended. [[HL14442](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are committed to continuing to offer secure video calling after the current Covid-19 restrictions have ended, and are considering future options in line with the recommendations of Lord Farmer's reviews for maintaining family ties. We will continue to be guided by public health advice, and we will work with our stakeholders to inform our longer-term planning.

Secure video calls are now running in all public and private prisons and Young Offender Institutions across England and Wales. This was introduced alongside other measures to support family engagement, such as additional mobile phone handsets and extra phone credit while social visits have been suspended. Social visits in the Youth Custody Service estate have continued and on compassionate grounds in the adult estate.

Public Health: Grants

Asked by The Lord Bishop of London

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to reverse the real terms cuts to public health grants for local authorities, and (2) to maintain the amount allocated for public health grants as a percentage of the total budget of NHS England. [[HL13465](#)]

Lord Bethell: The public health grant to local authorities in England was £3.279 billion in 2020/21, a £295.1 million real-terms increase. The public health allocations to local authorities in England for 2021-2 were published on 16 March, and the total public health grant to local authorities will be £3.324 billion, a rise of £332.4 million in cash terms. The grant will be ring fenced for use on public health functions and includes £23.4 million for routine commissioning of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Public Sector: Gender

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the judicial review proceedings brought by Fair Play for Women against the UK Statistics Authority, whether they will standardise the use of the words 'sex' and 'gender' by public authorities. [[HL14514](#)]

Baroness Berridge: Both 'sex' and 'gender' are terms used in legislation. It is up to individual organisations to decide which terms to use within their documents. In doing so, they will consider the language used, and how to ensure clarity and comprehension.

The Government has committed to review its approach to drafting legislation on subjects which prompt questions around language. As in the case of the Ministerial and other Maternity Allowances Act 2021, the most obvious area is legislation relating to pregnancy or childbirth, but there will, no doubt, be other related subjects where

similar issues arise for the drafting and the review will consider those as appropriate. The review will consider the recent debates in both Houses arising from the passage of this particular Act, as well as practices adopted in other English language legislatures.

Pupils: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure the new £700 million education recovery package for children and young people will prioritise those from disadvantaged backgrounds. [[HL14419](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department is aware that the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has been felt most heavily by disadvantaged children and young people, and so it is vital that support is targeted here.

In June 2020, the department announced an initial package of support worth £1 billion, including a catch up premium worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. Alongside this universal grant, a National Tutoring Programme worth £350 million will provide additional, targeted tuition support to disadvantaged pupils who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Research shows high quality individual and small group tuition can add up to five months of progress for disadvantaged pupils.

In February 2021, the department appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise how to help pupils make up for their lost education over the course of this Parliament. The department has provided a further £700 million to support education recovery measures, bringing total investment in catch up to over £1.7 billion. This package includes significant funding aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

This package includes a one-off £302 million recovery premium for the next academic year that will be allocated to schools based on the pupil premium eligibility. Schools with more disadvantaged pupils will therefore receive larger allocations.

Schools will continue to receive the pupil premium every quarter. Each school's original pupil premium strategy will not have been delivered since March 2020 and the pupils' needs will have changed or intensified. The department recommends that, as part of the planning for needs based universal catch up, headteachers should review their pupil premium strategy and amend it to reflect the new situation from September 2020.

The department will provide £200 million in order to expand our successful tutoring programmes. This will fund an £83 million expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for 5 to 16 year olds in the 2021/22 academic year, £102 million funding extension of the 16 to 19 tuition fund for a further year to support more students in English, mathematics and other vocational and academic subjects, and £18 million funding to support language

development in the early years, supporting a critical stage of child development.

The department will also make a further £200 million available to secondary schools to help deliver face to face summer schools this year, offering a blend of academic teaching and enrichment activities to support education recovery. Schools will be able to decide whether to run a summer school and how to make places available. We recommend an initial focus on incoming year 7 pupils, but schools will have the flexibility to target provision towards the pupils they feel will most benefit.

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to periodically review the £700 million education recovery package for children and young people, announced on 24 February, to ensure that those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are being supported. [[HL14596](#)]

Baroness Berridge: Understanding the impact of lost education on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the government, and an independent research and assessment agency has been commissioned to monitor progress over the course of the year and help us target support.

The department knows that the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has been felt most heavily by disadvantaged children and young people, and so it is vital that we target support towards these pupils.

In February 2021, the department appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise how to help pupils make up their education over the course of this Parliament. As an immediate step, we have invested a further £700 million to support education recovery measures (bringing total investment in catch up to over £1.7 billion).

The package contains a new one-off £302 million Recovery Premium (which includes £22 million to scale up evidenced approaches) for state primary and secondary schools in the 2021/22 academic year. Building on the pupil premium, the Recovery Premium will help schools to deliver evidence-based approaches for supporting the most disadvantaged pupils.

£200 million will be used to expand our successful tutoring programmes. The National Tutoring Programme was first announced in June 2020 and has increased access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers. This investment will fund an £83 million expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for 5–16-year-olds in 2021/22, in order to reach hundreds of thousands more pupils next academic year; a £102 million extension of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year to support more students in English, maths and other vocational and academic subjects; and £18 million funding to support language development in the early years, supporting a critical stage of child development.

Railways: Exhaust Emissions

*Asked by **The Earl of Dundee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to develop (1) ultra light, and (2) very light, rail to achieve decarbonised transport; what assessment they have made of the (a) efficiency, and (b) longevity, of rail vehicles as compared with road vehicles; and what is their timetable for investment into light rail in urban locations, as well as on branch railway lines. [HL14380]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department is considering the next steps and future direction for Light Rail Policy. This includes Mass Rapid Transit, Very Light Rail and other intermediate modes to reflect the wider Government agenda.

Through funding packages to cities, the Government has paid for or underwritten significant investments in light rail in recent years.

Local transport authorities have responsibility for transport planning, including considering bus rapid transit and other such schemes which lie between conventional bus and light rail. These bring the benefits and user experience of light rail to bus corridors at significantly lower cost, as stated in 'Bus Back Better'.

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. The Plan will be published in Spring 2021.

Regional Planning and Development: Ministerial Responsibility

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Cabinet minister is responsible for the levelling up agenda. [HL14625]

Lord Greenhalgh: Levelling up all areas of the country remains at the centre of the Government's agenda and this requires collective action across Government as a whole. We remain committed to levelling up opportunity across the UK so that people feel that they can succeed in their local area. The Spending Review established a set of provisional priority outcomes and metrics across all Departments and policy areas which have been published (attached) here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2020-documents>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Spending review [210408 Spending Review 2020 - GOV.UK - HL14625.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-25/HL14625>

Religious Buildings: Islam

*Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 22 March (HL14054), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what assessment they have made of any Islamist teaching in mosques in the UK; what assessment they have made of the number of Imams in the UK who cannot speak English; and what plans they have to require services in mosques in the UK to be conducted in English. [HL14593]

Lord Greenhalgh: As outlined in our previous response, religious organisations and faith-based institutions may recruit religious leaders from overseas via our T2 Minister of Religion route. The Immigration Rules governing this category require applicants to demonstrate a strong command of the English language in order to qualify for a visa.

The Government will always protect people's legitimate rights – for example, to free speech and to practise their religion within the law – but we cannot and will not shy away from challenging cultures and practices that are harmful. Whether through Islamism or any other ideology, the Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

MHCLG continues to lead on broader matters of integration and faith, including on religious practice in communities.

Renewable Energy: Heating

*Asked by **Lord Vaux of Harrowden***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of Seasonal Coefficient of Performance which is achieved by air and ground source heat pumps in real-life installations compared to those stated in the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Product Directory; and what plans they have (1) to introduce a requirement that real-life performance and efficiency must be stated by manufacturers in advertising and technical literature, and (2) to ensure that purchasers and installers are able to make a realistic assessment of the likely running costs. [HL14549]

Lord Callanan: Based on historic evidence from trials we can assume that air source heat pumps have a Seasonal Coefficient of Performance of 2.4, while ground source heat pumps have a coefficient of 2.7. We are currently seeking to update our assumptions based on real-life data from the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project and the Metering and Monitoring Service Packages, installed as part of the Renewable Heat Incentive.

We understand that there may be a performance gap between stated efficiency and real-life efficiency. This is something we are seeking to address by working with the standard setting bodies to improve the accuracy of these

measurements. We are also looking to develop a Home Suitability Model, as part of the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project, to more clearly communicate to the public the expected running costs of heat pumps based on real-life performance.

Republic of Congo: Elections

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the elections in the Republic of Congo; and whether the UK sent observers to monitor those elections. [HL14508]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK notes the re-election of Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who received 89 per cent of the vote in the Republic of Congo's Presidential election as announced by the Republic of Congo's authorities on 23 March. The Electoral Commission estimates turnout was 67.5 per cent. The UK has no permanent diplomatic presence in Republic of Congo and it was not possible to deploy a British official to monitor the election under the terms set out by the Republic of Congo authorities. The African Union observer mission noted several irregularities. One of the candidates in the election also sadly passed away on the day it took place. The UK is concerned about the reported irregularities and urges the Republic of Congo authorities to ensure its constitution is followed in respect of the election results.

Research: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusions in the report by King's College London and the Harvard Kennedy School The China question: managing risks and maximising benefits from partnership in higher education and research, published on 9 March, that (1) China is projected to become the UK's most significant research partner, and (2) collaborations with China account for more than 20 per cent of the UK's high-impact research in 20 subject areas. [HL14364]

Lord Callanan: Her Majesty's Government recognises the enormous benefits from collaborating on scientific research with China. We cannot address global challenges, such as climate change, without their support and engagement. We will continue to support research collaboration with China where it is clearly in the national interest to do so.

Research: Finance

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published on 16 March, and their

stated aim to secure the UK's status as a 'Science and Tech Superpower' by 2030 by redoubling the commitment to research and development, whether they intend to reverse funding cuts to research and development programmes; and if so, to which programmes they intend to provide increased funding. [HL14646]

Lord Callanan: Our commitment to research and development has been clearly demonstrated through the Spending Review announcement to increase investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22. This increase in investment will help deliver our ambition to increase total UK R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

The increased investment will put research and development at the heart of economic and social recovery from the impacts of Covid-19, enabling us to build back better for a greener, healthier and more resilient UK.

As the custodian of the R&D system, BEIS was allocated £11.1 billion for R&D in 2021/22. Funding for each individual programme is subject to our Departmental allocations process, which is under way. We will provide an update in due course.

Reserve Forces

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Goldie on 23 March (HL Deb, col 811), whether the review of reserves by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton will cover the provision of soldiers for 'Military Aid to the Civil Power', including (1) resilience, and (2) disaster relief, following the recent cut in the size of the armed forces. [HL14610]

Baroness Goldie: The Reserve Forces 2030 (RF30) review was initiated by the Chief of the Defence Staff in February 2020. Lord Lancaster was invited to prepare an independent report on the reserve forces and how their likely future employment will contribute to defence and wider Government out to 2030.

The RF30 review has yet to be published, but is a welcome and thorough review of reserves' contribution to the Armed Forces including resilience. The MOD will carefully consider all of the review's recommendations and report back to Parliament in due course.

Retail Trade: Finance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional financial support to retail businesses who do not trade online. [HL14605]

Lord Callanan: Retailers have been able to benefit through an unprecedented support package including loan schemes, grant funding, tax deferrals, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The Government will continue to provide eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties in England with 100% business rates relief from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021. This will be followed by 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, capped at £2 million per business for properties that were required to be closed on 5 January 2021, or £105,000 per business for other eligible properties.

We have provided one-off 'Restart Grants' of up to £6,000 for non-essential retail premises, expected to benefit over 450,000 non-essential retail businesses.

My Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced a new 'Help to Grow' initiative, providing £520 million to help SMEs recover from the Covid-19 pandemic by adopting digital technologies and providing management training to boost productivity.

The initiative contains two schemes:

- **Help to Grow: Digital** – this scheme will be available from the Autumn with small businesses able to access free impartial advice on how technology can boost their performance. Eligible businesses will also be able to get a discount of up to 50% on the costs of approved software, worth up to £5,000. Vouchers are initially expected to be available for software that helps businesses:
- Build customer relationships and increase sales.
- Make the most of selling online.
- Manage their accounts and finances digitally.
- **Help to Grow: Management** – this scheme will offer MBA-style management training to SMEs with the aim of increasing innovation and boosting growth.

Roads: Exhaust Emissions

*Asked by **The Earl of Dundee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce particulate pollution from urban traffic; and what assessment they have made (1) of the report by University College London and Harvard University et al Global mortality from outdoor fine particle pollution generated by fossil fuel combustion, published on 9 February, and (2) in particular the finding that exposure to fossil fuel air pollution accounts for 18 to 21.5 per cent of global deaths each year. [[HL14382](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Our landmark Environment Bill introduces a duty to set a legally binding target for fine particulate matter, in addition to a further long-term air quality target. Achieving these targets will require action on a wide range of sources, including urban traffic and fossil fuel combustion. Specific measures will depend on what targets are set and ultimately the pathway and approach to achieving the targets. We will be carrying out a public consultation on proposed targets, which is likely to commence in early 2022.

Rugby: Listed Events

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, about listing the Six Nations Rugby Championship as a Group A sporting event under broadcasting regulations. [[HL14458](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Government does not have plans to review the listed events regime at this time. We believe that the current listed events regime works well to deliver the best outcome and strikes an appropriate balance between retaining free-to-air sports events for the public while allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport.

Russia: China

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister last spoke to (1) the President of Russia, and (2) the President of China, about the military presence of those countries within the Arctic Circle; and what discussions they have had with (a) the government of Russia, and (b) the government of China, at any ministerial level about that issue. [[HL14645](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The UK's primary objective in the Arctic is to maintain the region as one characterised by high levels of international cooperation and low tensions. We support the Arctic Council and continue to play an active role in its work as a state observer, and are committed to working with our partners to ensure that increasing access to the region and its resources is managed safely, sustainably and responsibly. Russia and China's military presence in the Arctic has not been part of any recent Prime Ministerial or Ministerial discussions.

Russia: Disinformation

*Asked by **Lord Strasburger***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the written evidence by the Paymaster General to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, published on 3 March, which states that "since 2016 £100m of funding has focussed on building collective resilience to Russian disinformation across Europe and the Eastern Neighbourhood Region", on what that money was spent; and what is the equivalent figure for funding resilience against Russian disinformation targeted at the UK. [[HL14541](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The CDMD programme contributes to HMG's Russia Strategy and UK national security by supporting projects which expose and build resilience to disinformation operations associated with Russia across Europe and the Eastern Neighbourhood. The types of support given varies from mentoring with UK media organisations; consultancy on programming; funded co-productions and support for regional Russian language media initiatives. Addressing

the challenge of disinformation is a whole of Government effort and draws on resources from a number of Departments with costs met through their respective budgets.

Rwanda: Economic Situation and Politics and Government

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political and economic situation in Rwanda. [[HL14448](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in our statement on Rwanda at the Human Rights Council in January, the UK Government is concerned about restrictions on civil and political rights and media freedom in Rwanda. Civil society and opposition parties in Rwanda must be able to operate freely, holding the Government of Rwanda to account and contributing to the debate on how Rwanda should be governed. We regularly raise specific cases of concern with the Rwandan Government and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, and call for free and fair trials for all those in detention. We will continue to urge Rwanda, as a member of the Commonwealth, and future Chair-in-Office, to uphold and champion Commonwealth values of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Following strong growth for over a decade, the Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically stalled economic progress and increased poverty in Rwanda. We welcome the Government of Rwanda's ongoing commitment to development and its Covid-19 response, which includes an economic recovery fund to support hard hit businesses, and expanded social protection programmes for the poorest and most vulnerable. However, this commitment to social and economic progress must be matched with gains in civil and political rights for its people.

Sally Davies

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what public responsibilities are currently held by Professor Dame Sally Davies. [[HL14520](#)]

Lord Bethell: Professor Dame Sally Davies was appointed to the unpaid role of United Kingdom Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in 2019. Dame Sally represents the UK internationally on the subject of AMR, engaging bilaterally and multilaterally through international organisations, including the United Nations and the World Bank.

As Special Envoy, the responsibilities include:

- Representing the UK on the United Nations' One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, a global governance structure to maintain public support and political momentum for AMR on the global agenda;

- Working across all Government departments to advise on policy and delivery of a 'One Health' response to AMR, including health, agriculture and the environment;

- Advising the UK Government on possible commitments to take forward on AMR through the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021; and

- Acting as an ad hoc adviser to the UK Fleming Fund, the Global AMR Innovation Fund and other UK Government funded AMR activities overseas.

Sanjeev Gupta

*Asked by **Lord Myners***

To ask Her Majesty's Government to which entities owned by Sanjeev Gupta did the British Business Bank extend the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; who was responsible for (1) credit assessment, and (2) due diligence; and from which accounts were any loans issued. [[HL14590](#)]

Lord Callanan: We are unable to provide information relating to individual borrowers as it is commercially sensitive. However, details of facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course.

CBILS facilities are delivered through the British Business Bank's accredited lenders, who are responsible for making credit decisions in accordance with the scheme's rules.

Sarah Everard

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the actions of the Metropolitan Police at a vigil in memory of Sarah Everard at Clapham Common on 13 March. [[HL14233](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Following events surrounding the vigil in memory of Sarah Everard on Clapham Common, the Home Secretary asked for an immediate full report from the Metropolitan Police, which she received on Sunday 14 March.

The Home Secretary felt there were still questions to be answered and – in the interest of confidence in policing – has asked HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services to look into what happened in more detail.

It would be inappropriate for Government to comment further until the report is complete.

Schools: Admissions

*Asked by **Lord Lucas***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for requiring schools that are responsible for their own admissions policies to

provide their local education authority with (1) data on the most recent admissions round, and (2) their current admissions policies. [HL14412]

Baroness Berridge: Local authorities will hold data on the most recent admission round because they receive all applications in the normal admissions round and send out offers of places on the national offer days, which are 1 March for secondary schools and 16 April for primary schools.

All admission arrangements for state-funded schools are also published in the local authority composite admissions prospectus which can be found on each local authority's website.

Admission authorities are required, by the School Admissions Code and the School Information (England) Regulations 2008, to send their admission arrangements to their local authorities for inclusion in the composite prospectus by 8 August each year.

Schools: Private Finance Initiative

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to deal with the Private Finance Initiative school contracts that will end in the next five years. [HL14540]

Baroness Berridge: The Department has recently established a Contract Expiry Unit. That unit is actively working alongside the relevant local authorities and academy trusts on seven pathfinder projects. Those pathfinder projects are the earliest Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects to expire in the education sector. The Department is also considering how best to assist local authorities and academy trusts on the later PFI contracts to expire.

Schools: Standards

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to raise educational standards in schools across the United Kingdom. [HL14498]

Baroness Berridge: Education is a devolved matter, and the response will outline the education reforms for England.

Since 2010, this government has been committed to raising educational standards in all schools across the country to ensure that all young people leave school with the knowledge, qualifications, and skills they need to succeed in life. The proportion of schools now rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding has risen from 68% in 2010 to 86% in 2020.

We know that the Covid-19 outbreak poses great challenges to the education system. That is why in June 2020, the Department announced a £1 billion catch-up package, which includes £350 million for the National Tutoring Programme. This will increase access to high-

quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackle the attainment gap between them and their peers. More recently, in February 2021, we committed a further £700 million of funding for the 2021/22 academic year. This package includes a new one off £302 million Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, to further support pupils who need it. The devolved administrations are receiving additional funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way. This funding enables the devolved administrations to deliver support where programmes do not apply across the whole of the UK.

Schools: Uniforms

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many parents who have been unable to resolve the issue of excessive school uniform costs with schools directly have raised that issue with the Department for Education in each of the last three academic years. [HL14398]

Baroness Berridge: The department does not centrally collect detailed information on the number of complaints received and the exact nature of the complaint. However, we have identified 25 complaints in the last three years for which school uniform was selected as the nature of the complaint. This figure includes complaints about aspects of school uniform other than cost and excludes complaints where school uniform is referenced but is not stated as the primary reason for the complaint.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government on how many occasions the voluntary guidance on school uniform costs has been amended since 2013. [HL14405]

Baroness Berridge: The non-statutory 'school uniform: guidance for schools' has not been updated since September 2013. This guidance updated the department's previous guidance on school uniform, published in May 2012, giving it a greater emphasis on securing best value for money in the supply of school uniforms. The guidance is available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform> and in the attached document.

The government is supporting the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Private Members' Bill to enable the department to put our guidance on the cost of school uniform on a statutory footing.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14405_attachment
[HL14405_attachment_School_Uniform_Guidance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-19/HL14405>

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidelines to independent schools about the cost of school uniforms. [HL14621]

Baroness Berridge: The government is supporting the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) private members' bill to enable us to issue statutory guidance on the cost of school uniform. The bill does not extend to guidance for independent schools.

In choosing an independent school for their child, parents accept and expect certain associated fees, and school uniform costs are something that they need to take into consideration as part of their decision to seek a private education for their child.

Shipping: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to contribute to accelerating the decarbonisation of the maritime industry; and whether they expect to contribute to this initiative through (1) the UK Infrastructure Bank, or (2) alternative means. [HL14668]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: To support the decarbonisation of the maritime sector, Government is investing £20 million in a Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition. This competition will support the UK design and development of clean maritime technologies as part of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Launched on 22 March 2021, this programme builds on the vision set out in the Department's Clean Maritime Plan and underlines our commitment to addressing emissions from this sector. Further plans for the decarbonisation of the maritime sector will be set out in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which will be published this spring.

The UK Infrastructure Bank's core objectives are to help tackle climate change, particularly meeting our net zero emissions target by 2050, and to support regional and local economic growth through better connectedness, opportunities for new jobs and higher levels of productivity. The Bank will be operationally independent and will invest to meet these objectives.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what compensation they provide, if any, to commoners when Natural England make a decision that curtails economic activity on a common on the basis that it contains a site of special scientific interest. [HL14271]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Natural England must notify all owners and occupiers where it considers an area to be of special interest (notification of Sites of

Special Scientific Interest – SSSIs). This will usually follow informal discussion, including discussion about management. Consensus between regulators, land managers, users and other stakeholders is generally required to deliver positive conservation outcomes for SSSIs. Countryside Stewardship currently provides the principal mechanism to help private land managers meet the cost of any positive management needed to restore SSSIs to, or maintain them in, favourable condition.

Skilled Workers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that local skills improvement plans will meet the skills gaps in each local authority. [HL14543]

Baroness Berridge: Business representative organisations will be given the leading role in developing Local Skills Improvement Plans in trailblazer areas, informed by key stakeholders such as local authorities, so that they provide credible and evidence-based assessments of local skills gaps and priorities. The plans will bring colleges and other providers together to agree how skills gaps can best be filled, and our Strategic Development Funding will support colleges and other providers to do this in trailblazer local areas.

It is our intention to legislate to put the employer leadership of Local Skills Improvement Plans on a statutory footing, strengthening the voice of employers in local skills systems across the country. We will also consult on introducing new accountability structures to underpin their delivery.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of small businesses which are not eligible for Covid-19 Government grants; and what steps they are taking to reduce that number. [HL14238]

Lord Callanan: The government engages with a range of stakeholders to understand the reach and scope of the grant support that has been made available. All small business premises that have been mandated in legislation to close are able to access grant support including up to £4,500 per six weeks of closure.

For those small businesses that have not been mandated to close, £2bn of funding via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) has been made available to Local Authorities to develop business support, including grants, that suits their local area. Local Authorities provide regular data reports on the number and value of grants they are making across all grant schemes available, and this is available on the GOV.UK website.

Small Businesses: Corporation Tax

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of planned corporation tax increases on the profitability of small businesses. [HL14351]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Corporation Tax is payable on companies' taxable profits. From April 2023 companies with small profits, those companies with profits of £50,000 or less, will continue to pay 19%. That means that c.70% of actively trading companies will be protected from a rate increase.

Marginal relief will be available for companies with profits between £50,000 and £250,000 ensuring that the effective rate of Corporation Tax increases gradually for companies with profits over £50,000, avoiding the distortions which would come with a sharp increase in rate.

Small Businesses: Mental Illness

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of a recent survey by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and the Corporate Finance Network, published on 11 March, which found that one in five small business owners are struggling with mental health issues; and what steps they are taking to increase the wellbeing of small business owners. [HL14299]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises the significant impact that the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had on both employers and employees.

In order to highlight available support around mental health, the Government is signposting to resources for businesses and employers, including Mind's website and the Mental Health at Work toolkit, through GOV.UK. We also continue to work with the Thriving at Work Leadership Council to encourage employers to sign up to the Mental Health at Work (MHAW) commitments. We also engage leading Mental Health charities and organisations to better understand issues around SME mental health, financial insecurity for small business owners and the self-employed, and we continue to explore what further support may be offered.

We also know how worried people are, and we are taking many steps to protect both jobs and the long-term financial future of businesses during the current economic emergency. Throughout this crisis, our priority has been clear: to protect lives and livelihoods. We have introduced an unprecedented and comprehensive package of business support measures to help as many individuals and businesses as possible, which has mitigated some of the worst immediate impacts of Covid-19 on risk factors for poor mental health. This includes measures such as the small business grants, the Coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS),

the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more. Businesses can also access tailored advice through our Freephone Business Support Helpline, online via the Business Support website or through their local Growth Hubs in England. The Business Support Helpline continues to support business owners with tailored advice and information, and also signposts individuals to mental health support services where appropriate.

Further measures were also announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget that build on the significant support already available as well as set out how current support will evolve and adapt. This includes the extension of the CJRS until September 2021, and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue with a fourth and a fifth grant. The Chancellor announced that a further 600,000 people, many of whom became self-employed in 2019-20, may now be able to claim direct cash grants under SEISS. The Chancellor also announced in the Budget that from 1st April one-off Restart Grants of up to £6,000 for non-essential retail and up to £18,000 for hospitality, leisure, personal care, and accommodation businesses will be available to support them to reopen as Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed.

Businesses and individuals can use our checker tool on GOV.UK to quickly and easily determine whether they are eligible for any further financial support at this time. We will continue to work with colleagues across Government, businesses and other organisations, to ensure the right support is available for employers and employees.

Small Businesses: Pay

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of small business owners who have foregone their personal salaries to provide additional investment for their businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL14350]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises the challenges faced by small business owners due to Covid-19. That is why the Government has committed to a very substantial package of support to help businesses, their owners and employees through this difficult time. Small business owners may benefit from extensions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) to September 2021 announced at the recent Budget. The CJRS has supported 11.2 million unique jobs (by 15 February 2021) supporting 1.3 million employers with £53.8 billion. The next SEISS grants will potentially support an additional 600,000 claimants, bringing the Government's support for the self-employed to £33 billion. Alongside this, small businesses have benefited from Small Business Rates Relief and may continue to benefit from the extended business rates relief for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. These firms may be eligible for the newly introduced Restart Grants, due to

start in April, alongside having the opportunity to apply for a share of an additional £425 million top up to Local Authority Additional Restriction Grants. They may also be eligible to apply for the new Recovery Loan Scheme and may also benefit from the reduction of VAT for eligible businesses, and deferrals to VAT repayments.

Despite this level of support, the Government acknowledges that it has not been possible to support everyone as they might wish, such as company directors. Where groups have not been included it has been because of two guiding principles; to target support to those who need it most, and to protect public money against error, fraud and abuse. Despite extensive analysis and engagement, no practical way has been found to identify and target directors unable to draw on the SEISS or CJRS, and to assess the value of support they should receive.

Small Businesses: Redundancy

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by takepayments, published in February, which found that 30 per cent of small businesses have had to let staff go due to the Covid-19 pandemic. [[HL14477](#)]

Lord Callanan: Through regular engagement with small and medium-sized businesses, the Government is aware of the issues highlighted by the results of the takepayments survey and recognises the individual impact on those that have lost jobs or had their livelihood affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Plan for Jobs measures announced last year provides significantly expanded employment support, (including extra Work Coaches) to help people who have become newly unemployed, and individuals who have fallen into longer term unemployment, whoever they are and wherever they live.

Further support will be announced shortly. DWP Train and Progress (TaP), a new DWP initiative aimed at increasing access to training opportunities for claimants, will see an extension to the length of time people can receive Universal Credit while undertaking work-focused study.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods across the UK, spending £352 billion on its package of support for affected businesses. This package includes grants, loans, and business rates relief, as well as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which has been used by 1.3 million employers to support 11.2 million jobs at a value of £53.8 billion. The CJRS has been extended to September 2021.

The Budget announced on 3 March 2021 also sets out how it will support a plan for recovery that focusses on backing business, improving skills, and creating jobs. As part of this support, businesses of any size will still be able to access loans and other forms of finance worth up to £10m via the new Recovery Loan Scheme which

launched on 6 April, replacing the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans scheme. The Restart Grant supports businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors with a one-off grant, to reopen safely as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

SME Brexit Support Fund

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the SME Brexit Support Fund will open to applicants. [[HL14373](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The SME Brexit Support Fund opened to applicants on Monday 15 March 2021.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the earliest date by which applicants can expect to receive funding from the SME Brexit Support Fund. [[HL14374](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The earliest date by which applicants can expect to receive funding from the SME Brexit Support Fund, following a successful application, is within 30 days of the valid claim for reimbursement being accepted.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether small and medium-sized enterprises (1) that were trading with the EU prior to 1 January, and (2) that trade with other countries, will be eligible for the SME Brexit Support Fund if they meet the criteria. [[HL14375](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Small and medium-sized enterprises that were trading with the EU prior to 1 January are eligible for the SME Brexit Support Fund if they were only trading with the EU and so need to adjust to new customs, rules of origin, and VAT rules.

If a small or medium-sized enterprise traded with the EU prior to 1 January and trades with other countries (i.e., non-EU countries), then they are not eligible for the SME Brexit Support Fund as they have no need to adjust to new customs, rules of origin, and VAT rules.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the maximum gross amount available to applicants through the SME Brexit Support Fund. [[HL14376](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The maximum gross amount available through the SME Brexit Support Fund is £2,000 per applicant.

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government when is the earliest date that applicants can expect to receive funding from the SME Brexit Support Fund. [[HL14430](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The earliest date by which applicants can expect to receive funding from the SME Brexit Support Fund, following a successful application,

is within 30 days of the valid claim for reimbursement being accepted.

*Asked by **Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits to businesses of receiving funding from the SME Brexit Support Fund (1) at any time, and (2) after the impending import process changes. [[HL14431](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has provided extensive guidance to businesses on VAT, excise, and customs processes to support them in their readiness for the UK leaving the EU. This guidance includes videos, webinars and step-by-step guides.

The announcement of the SME Brexit Support Fund followed extensive engagement with individual businesses, leading business organisations and trade associations from across the UK. Grants have been designed to cover a significant portion of the costs faced for basic customs training courses or professional advice on customs, rules of origin and the VAT aspects of imports and exports.

*Asked by **Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is provision for SME Brexit Support Fund grants to be applied retroactively to cover adjustments put in place by businesses before the funding became available. [[HL14432](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Applicants can only seek support for eligible expenditure on or after 11 February 2021, the date the scheme was announced.

Social Media: Offences against Children

*Asked by **Lord Gilbert of Panteg***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to facilitate the sharing of information on child abuse between social media companies; and whether such plans will include reforming data protection law. [[HL14220](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are working across Government and engaging industry to prevent all forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Government is continuing to engage with technology companies around the *Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, a framework of principles launched by the Five Country Ministerial partners in March 2020. These are a set of 11 actions tech firms should take to ensure children are not sexually exploited on their platforms, Principle 10 includes how companies should support opportunities to share relevant expertise, helpful practices, data and tools where appropriate and feasible.

The Technology Coalition brings together companies across the technology industry, including social media companies, and have announced their work on Project

Protect. Project Protect sets out their plans for technological innovation and sharing best practices across industry to prevent and eradicate child sexual exploitation and abuse. Government officials are engaging with the Technology Coalition on their priorities and upcoming work on this project.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has recently published a £2.4m Invitation to Tender for a new project to address barriers to data sharing and support innovation and competition in the detection of online harm, as part of the National Data Strategy. As part of the project, the provider will analyse the current data landscape and the economic and social benefits of opening up online harms data, and then test a number of potential practical solutions.

The Government and the Information Commissioner's Office keep legislation under constant review to ensure it keeps pace with technical and societal changes. There are powers in the Data Protection Act 2018, overseen by Parliament, to make changes using secondary legislation where appropriate.

Social Rented Housing: Electrical Safety

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce mandatory five yearly electrical safety checks in the social rented sector. [[HL14450](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: In the Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper published on 17 November 2020, we commit to consult on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety.

On the 9 March 2021, we announced the launch of a working group to inform the content of the consultation. The first meeting will take place on 29 March 2021, and the group will run until Summer 2021. Meetings will explore proposals to best protect social residents from electrical harm, including consideration of mandatory electrical safety checks.

Social Services: Minimum Wage

*Asked by **Lord Pendry***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Prime Minister on 8 July 2020 (HC Deb, col 964) that they will “invest massively in our care homes and in our care workers”, and further to the judgment in *Royal Mencap Society (Respondent) v Tomlinson-Blake (Appellant)* [2021] UKSC 8, what plans they have to legislate to provide that care workers are paid at least the national minimum wage for the entirety of a sleep-in shift. [[HL14530](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Supreme Court has upheld the Court of Appeal judgment. Workers on ‘sleep-in’ shifts are entitled to the minimum wage for the time they are awake for the purpose of working.

The Government is considering the implications of the judgement with care commissioners and providers to consider what action, if any, is needed. We therefore have no plans to bring forward legislative proposals to amend National Minimum Wage regulations at this time.

Solar Events

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to ensure that the UK is prepared for any impact resulting from a solar superstorm; and which department is responsible for those preparations. [HL14273]

Lord Callanan: This Government understands that good management of risk is essential for contingency planning, increasing the likelihood that the services we rely on day-to-day are available for citizens and ensuring that we can protect people's health and safety.

The Department is the Lead Government Department for the risk of a severe space weather event. BEIS is therefore responsible for coordinating a Cross-Government work programme to ensure that appropriate preparedness and mitigation measures are in place so that impacts from severe space weather are minimised. BEIS working closely with the Met Office, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, other Government Departments, and academic partners has taken significant steps to increase the UK's preparedness for major space weather events.

The Department will publish a new space weather strategy later this year, which will set out a five-year road map for how we intend to boost resilience and build on existing UK strength and capacity in this area, to continue to increase our preparedness for a severe space weather event.

South Sudan: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 12 March (HL13839 and HL13840), what plans they have to reduce the level of funding to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund in South Sudan; and what assessment they have made of the impact of changes to their conflict strategy on African countries in conflict, in particular South Sudan. [HL14341]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As announced to Parliament last year, the impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough, but necessary decision to temporarily reduce the Official Development Assistance budget. The FCDO is reviewing all individual country allocations as part of the Country Business Planning process, including specific implications for all spend in South Sudan. These will be communicated to Parliament in due course. The UK is steadfast in our commitment to supporting victims of

conflict worldwide. We will continue to press for full, inclusive implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement, which remains South Sudan's best chance for long-term peace and stability.

Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have issued guidance (1) to schools, and (2) to parents of children who were shielding because of health conditions and who have Education and Health Care plans, concerning the return of these children to school from 8 March. [HL14301]

Baroness Berridge: On the 18 March 2021 the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England confirmed that clinically extremely vulnerable people (CEV), including children and young people, will no longer have to shield from Covid-19 from 1 April 2021 as virus infection rates continue to fall. Those on the shielded patient list will receive letters with updated guidance on the steps they can take to reduce their risk. All CEV pupils and students should attend their school or college from this date unless they are one of the very small number of pupils or students under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend.

To support schools during the Covid-19 outbreak the government has published guidance available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance>. This contains advice for pupils and students who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable, including those with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). Additional guidance to support specialist settings has also been published throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

The government has also provided guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people, including those who are CEV or who have an EHCP, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19>. Additional guidance on mental health and wellbeing is also available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England on the 18 March 2021 released updated guidance for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance->

[on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19.](#)

Special Educational Needs: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that children with special educational needs in disadvantaged areas receive the required support. [HL14545]

Baroness Berridge: Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a priority for us, especially at this time.

The cross-government SEND Review is looking at ways to improve the SEND system across the country, including how to ensure better outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Our ambition is to publish proposals for public consultation in the spring.

We have already announced a major investment in special needs education, including an additional £730 million for those children and young people with high needs in the 2021-22 financial year, coming on top of the additional £780 million in the 2020-21 financial year, which means high needs budgets will have grown by over £1.5 billion, nearly a quarter, in just 2 years. The funding formula used for allocations of high needs funding includes factors designed to target more funding to disadvantaged areas.

We are also supporting local SEND services. On 10 February 2021, we announced over £42 million of funding for projects to support children and young people with SEND in financial year 2021-22. This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue their work to help strengthen local area performance, support families and provide practical support to schools and colleges. It will strengthen participation of parents and young people in the SEND system – ensuring they have a voice in designing policies and services and have access to high quality information, advice and support. It includes £27.3 million specifically to support families on low incomes raising children with disabilities or serious illnesses.

Finally, we recognise that the Covid-19 outbreak has had a particular impact on children and young people. We are committed to helping all pupils, including those with SEND, make up learning lost as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Sir Kevan Collins has been appointed as the Education Recovery Commissioner and is considering how schools and the system can more effectively target resources and support at pupils in greatest need. This includes £1.7 billion in funding to support education recovery. In June 2020 we announced a £1 billion catch-up package including a National Tutoring Programme and a Catch-up Premium for this academic year, and in

February 2021 we committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, expansion of our tutoring programmes and a Recovery Premium for next academic year. Funding will support pupils across early years settings, schools, and colleges.

State Retirement Pensions: Bermuda and Gibraltar

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government when reciprocal social security arrangements were made with (1) Bermuda, and (2) Gibraltar, whereby UK state pension holders resident in those territories receive the annual uprating of their state pensions. [HL14577]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The UK entered into a reciprocal social security agreement with Bermuda in 1969 and with Gibraltar in 1974.

State Retirement Pensions: British Overseas Territories

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress on implementing the request by the governments of British Overseas Territories during the December 2015 Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on the uprating of pensions for UK state pension holders residing in those territories. [HL14578]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The policy on up-rating UK State Pensions overseas is longstanding and has been supported by successive Governments for over 70 years. Annual index-linked increases are paid to UK State Pension recipients where there is a legal requirement to do so, for example where recipients are living in countries where there is a reciprocal agreement that provides for up-rating.

This Government continues to take the view that priority should be given to those living in Great Britain when drawing up expenditure plans for additional pensioner benefits.

State Retirement Pensions: Canada

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the request on 16 December 2020 by members of the Canadian Parliament to establish a reciprocal agreement on the uprating of pensions for UK state pension holders residing in Canada. [HL14579]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: A request has been received from the Government of Canada and, as indicated in my previous answer on 10 March 2021, the Government intends to respond to this letter in due course.

Students: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the attainment gap between ethnic minority university students and other university students. [HL14349]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: It is more crucial than ever before that we tap into the brilliant talent that our country has to offer, and make sure that university places are available to all who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so.

All higher education providers wishing to charge higher levels fees must have an access and participation plan agreed by the Office for Students (OfS), the regulator for higher education. These plans set out how they will support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups, including students from ethnic minority backgrounds, to access, participate, and succeed in higher education and to progress from it.

On 11 March the OfS published the access and participation data dashboard, which is used to identify gaps in access, continuation, attainment, and progression at English providers delivering undergraduate provision by different student characteristics. This is available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>.

A breakdown of attainment rates by ethnicity, comparing 2015/16 and 2019/20, is below. (Degree attainment in the 2019/20 academic year may have been affected by the pandemic as many providers adopted no-detriment policies for their students.)

Students achieving a first or upper-second class degree by ethnicity

English higher education providers

Academic years 2015/16 and 2019/20

Ethnicity	Percentage achieving a first or upper-second class degree				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Asian	67.90%	70.60%	71.90%	71.40%	78.80%
Black	55.20%	57.30%	58.90%	60.10%	68.20%
Mixed	73.40%	75.30%	78.00%	77.40%	83.00%
Other	66.40%	68.10%	68.80%	67.90%	76.60%
White	79.90%	81.10%	82.00%	82.20%	86.60%
All ethnicities	75.80%	77.30%	78.30%	78.20%	83.40%

Source: Office for Students Access and Participation Dashboard

The OfS has set itself and the higher education sector targets to address longstanding inequalities, including to eliminate the gap in degree outcomes between white and black students.

Prior attainment is a key determinant of participation in higher education. This is why we are asking universities to take on a more direct role in raising attainment in

schools, reaching out to people from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds to raise aspirations in schools.

Students: Loans

Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 22 March (HL14145), what plans they have to assess the annual cost of removing interest payments from the student loans of (1) health, and (2) social care, workers. [HL14576]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: There are no current plans to assess the annual cost of removing interest payments from the student loans of health or social care workers.

The student loans system is designed to protect borrowers, including those who are employed in health and social care. Repayments are made based on a borrower's monthly or weekly income, not the interest rate or amount borrowed. Only those who earn above the repayment threshold are required to make repayments. The repayment threshold is £27,295 per year from April 2021, or its monthly or weekly equivalent. Any outstanding debt, including interest accrued, is written off after 30 years with no detriment to the borrower.

The vast majority of students who do not fully pay back their loans (an estimated 75% of Plan 2 loans given out in the 2019/20 academic year) would see no reduction in their lifetime repayments, because this part of their borrowing is already written off: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/student-loan-forecasts-for-england/2019-20>.

Our income-based repayment system means that those who benefit the most from their education repay their fair share. The repayment system also helps to ensure that costs are split fairly between borrowers and the taxpayer. In total, the government subsidises around 50% of the overall cost of higher education, making a conscious investment in the skills and people of this country.

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the value of student loan debt for each of the past five years. [HL14581]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: It is not possible to provide the complete information requested within the body of the answer as this would exceed the word limit for responses. Please see the below links to the relevant reports. A copy of these reports will also be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

The valuation of the loan book is listed in the annual reports on GOV.UK, at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/df-e-annual-reports>. The note on loans under the 'Notes to Accounts' section lists both the carrying and face value of the loan book.

For the 2019-20 annual accounts, the details for the carrying value are on page 195 and the details for the face value of the loan book are on page 202: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932898/DfE_consolidated_annual_report_and_accounts_2019_to_2020_web_version_.pdf.

For the 2018-19 annual accounts, the details for the carrying value are on page 159 and the details for the face value of the loan book are on page 161: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906353/DfE_Consolidated_annual_report_2018-19_web.pdf.

For the 2017-18 annual accounts, the details for the carrying value are on page 147 and the details for the face value of the loan book are on page 148: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728074/DfE_annual_reports_and_accounts_17_to_18_-_WEB.pdf.

For the 2016-17 annual accounts, the details for the carrying value are on page 154 and the details for the face value of the loan book are on page 155: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630523/DfE_Consolidated_annual_report_and_accounts_2016-17_WEB.pdf.

For the 2015-16 annual accounts, the details for the carrying value are on page 177 and the details for the face value of the loan book are on page 178: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537425/bis-annual-report-accounts-2015-16-web.pdf.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what amount of student debt has been sold in each of the past five years; and at what value. [HL14582]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government has carried out 2 sales of student loans in the past 5 years. The first sale, completed in December 2017, achieved £1.7 billion from a cohort of loans with a face value of £3.5 billion. The second sale, completed in December 2018, achieved £1.9 billion from a cohort of loans with a face value of £3.9 billion.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the write off value of the sale of student loan debt in each of the last five years. [HL14583]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: A total of £8.1 million has been written off from the sold loan cohorts in the financial years 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what calculation they use to decide the level of write off of student loan debt. [HL14584]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government publishes its loan write-off rules, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/when-your-student-loan-gets-written-off-or-cancelled>. We estimate the proportion of loan outlay issued in each financial year that we do not expect to be repaid through a metric called the Resource And Budgeting (RAB) charge.

The RAB charge is calculated by taking repayment forecasts for income contingent repayment loans and discounting them back to the period that the loan is issued using the discount rate provided by HM Treasury (currently RPI+0.7%). This gives us a net present value (NPV) of the future repayments and the charge is the relative difference between the loan issued and the NPV of the repayments. Further details of the RAB charge calculation are provided in the annual student loan forecast publication methodology document, available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920992/Student_loan_forecasts_201920.pdf.

The RAB charge estimate is determined by earnings and repayment projections over the next 30-40 years, and therefore is inherently uncertain. Forecasts for the RAB charge are published each year, and are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/student-loan-forecasts-for-england/2019-20>.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of graduate earnings in their calculation of the write off of student loan debt. [HL14585]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The department's assessment of the earnings of student loan borrowers takes into account the latest Student Loan Company and Longitudinal Education Outcomes data, plus survey data from the Labour Force Survey and British Household Panel Survey, mortality statistics from the Office for National Statistics and macro-economic forecasts of earnings growth from the Office for Budget Responsibility. The assessment can be accessed here: <https://obr.uk/fsr/fiscal-sustainability-report-july-2020/>, in the document 'July 2020 Fiscal sustainability report - charts and tables: Chapter 2'. Detailed information on the assessment of graduate earnings is published in the Earnings forecasts section of the Student Loans methodology, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loan-forecasts-england-2019-to-2020>, in the document 'Student loan forecasts, England 2019 to 2020: quality and methodology information'. The next update to the student loan forecasts publication is announced for June 2021.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the UK's departure from the EU, what assessment they have made of the ability of (1) UK citizens to work in the EU, and (2) the earnings potential of graduates, in

calculating the write off of student loan debt. [HL14586]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Withdrawal Agreement protects the rights of UK nationals who were lawfully resident in the EU before the end of the transition period, meaning they can continue to live, work, study, and access benefits and services broadly as they did before the UK left the EU. Member states may require a visa and/or work permit from British citizens intending to work or provide a service there. British citizens should check with the embassy of the country where they plan to travel for work or to provide a service for what type of visa or permit, if any, they will need.

Regardless of the UK's departure from the EU, the assessment of the earnings of student loan borrowers continues to take into account the latest Student Loan Company and Longitudinal Education Outcomes data, plus survey data from the Labour Force Survey and British Household Panel Survey, mortality statistics from the Office for National Statistics and macro-economic forecasts of earnings growth from the Office for Budget Responsibility. The assessment can be accessed here: <https://obr.uk/fsr/fiscal-sustainability-report-july-2020/>, in the document 'July 2020 Fiscal sustainability report - charts and tables: Chapter 2'. Detailed information on the assessment of graduate earnings is published in the Earnings forecasts section of the Student Loans methodology, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loan-forecasts-england-2019-to-2020>, in the document 'Student loan forecasts, England 2019 to 2020: quality and methodology information'. The next update to the student loan forecasts publication is announced for June 2021.

Sustainable Development: Education

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide environmental training to primary and secondary school teachers to ensure they are equipped to teach sustainable development. [HL14296]

Baroness Berridge: The curriculum already includes a great deal about environmental and sustainability issues. From primary onwards, there is coverage of environmental matters in both the science and geography curricula. Under the key stage 2 non-statutory guidance for citizenship, pupils are taught about the wider world and the interdependence of communities within it. Pupils are taught that resources can be allocated in different ways and that these economic choices affect individuals, communities and the sustainability of the environment.

As the national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject, teachers have the flexibility and freedom to determine how they deliver the content in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. They can choose to cover particular topics in greater depth if they wish and as knowledge of sustainability develops,

teachers can adapt their school curricula for these subjects.

The department has made £4.84 million available for the Oak National Academy, both for the summer term of the 2019-20 academic year and for the 2020-21 academic year, to provide teachers with video lessons in a broad range of subjects for Reception up to year 11. These lessons and their accompanying resources include coverage of the environment, climate change and wider sustainability topics. To supplement their teaching, schools have access to a variety of resources on the teaching of science and geography.

Swimming: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work of the Black Swimming Association; and what steps they intend to take in response to the finding by Sport England's Active Lives Survey, published in October 2020, that (1) 95 per cent of Black adults, (2) 80 percent of Black children, (3) 95 percent of Asian adults, and (4) 78 per cent of Asian Children, in England do not swim. [HL14475]

Baroness Barran: The Government supports the efforts of groups helping to promote diversity and inclusion in sport, including the Black Swimming Association who are working to address inequalities in swimming participation levels. We are committed to these efforts, and our sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future' has diversity and inclusion at its heart.

In addition, Sport England have recently launched a new ten year strategy, "Uniting the Movement", reinforcing their commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion in grassroots sport and physical activity, including swimming. They have invested £12.62 million in Swim England to support and promote participation in swimming, including support for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We welcome the recent partnership announcement between Swim England and the Black Swimming Association, to further increase numbers of participation in aquatic activity.

Syria: Chemical Weapons

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Courage Foundation on the investigation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, Syria, published on 11 March; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL14200]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-Finding Mission's thorough and evidenced report on the incident in Douma on 7 April 2018. The Fact-Finding Mission concluded that a toxic chemical,

likely chlorine, was used as a weapon. We have confidence in the report's methodology and conclusions.

The Director-General of the OPCW has confirmed that that the OPCW Technical Secretariat took all views and evidence into account in reaching its conclusions. The Director-General answered fully questions put to him at sessions of the United Nations Security Council in December 2020, May 2020 and November 2019.

Syria: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 12 March (HL13797), whether the principle of 'do no harm' also applies to economic sanctions on Syria; and what assessment they have made of the statement by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on 7 August 2020 that sanctions "are bringing suffering and death" in countries like Syria. [HL14567]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK remains committed to supporting a political settlement to the conflict in Syria in line with UNSCR 2254. Sanctions remain a key lever to press the regime to engage seriously with the political process. We remain committed to the principle of 'do no harm' with sanctions in Syria and seek to minimise the impact of sanctions on ordinary Syrians. We carefully target specific individuals and entities who are part of a new wave of emerging elites that have profited from the conflict. We do not sanction medicine, medical equipment and medical assistance. Items required to fight the Covid-19 pandemic are not subject to direct restrictions on export, supply, financing or use in Syria.

The Assad regime and its backers blame 'Western' sanctions for the failing economy in Syria. In reality, the regime has devastated its own economy through cronyism, corruption and brutality and must be held to account.

The UK remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria and the region, and will continue to be so. We have now committed £3.7 billion to the Syria Crisis since 2012, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis

Teachers: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether teachers are prioritised to receive a Covid-19 vaccination regardless of age; and if not, what plans they have to prioritise teachers to receive such vaccinations. [HL14312]

Baroness Berridge: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the government on which vaccine/s the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered them. The JCVI advises that the first priorities for the Covid-19 vaccination should be the

prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from Covid-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age.

For phase 1, this will capture all those over 50 years of age and all those 16 years of age and over who are clinically extremely vulnerable or have certain underlying health conditions. This captures almost all preventable deaths from Covid-19 and will include thousands of staff in the education, childcare and children's social care workforce.

The JCVI has been asked by the Department for Health and Social Care to give its advice on the optimal strategy to further reduce mortality, morbidity and hospitalisation from Covid-19 disease for phase 2 of the vaccine rollout. The JCVI have advised that the second phase of vaccine prioritisation should continue to be based on age. They advise that an age-based approach remains the most effective way of reducing death and hospitalisation from Covid-19 and will ensure more people are protected more quickly. The second phase of the vaccine rollout will begin from mid-April and will aim to offer every adult aged 18 and over a first dose of the vaccine by 31 July 2021.

Teachers: Training

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) on what date they established the Review Group into Initial Teacher Training, (2) what is the membership of the Review Group panel, and (3) how the Review Group plan to (a) take evidence, and (b) consult on its findings. [HL14665]

Baroness Berridge: The department is making England the best place in the world to become a great teacher through giving every teacher access to world-class training and professional development opportunities throughout their career. Reforms to teacher training and early career support are key to the government's plans to improve school standards for all.

The review is focusing on how the initial teacher training (ITT) sector can provide consistently high-quality training, in line with the Core Content Framework (CCF), in a more efficient and effective market. The review is led by Ian Bauckham, chief executive officer (CEO) of Tenax Schools Trust and Chair of Oak National Academy. The review was announced, along with the Chair and expert group, on 2 January 2021.

The expert group support the Chair with gathering evidence and shaping recommendations. The department has appointed the following individuals to provide a cross-section of knowledge and expertise:

- Professor Samantha Twiselton, Director of Sheffield Institute of Education – Sheffield Hallam University.
- Richard Gill, Chair of the Teaching Schools Council, CEO of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership and Lead Ofsted inspector.

- Reuben Moore, Executive Director of Programme Development – Teach First.
- John Blake, Head of Public Affairs and Engagement – Ark.

The expert group are reviewing the available evidence on ITT, which includes published research commissioned by the department, as well as wider evidence from the sector. Department analysts, including social researchers, are feeding into the review to ensure that the evidence is interpreted accurately and will be used to inform any recommendations. As we did with the CCF and Early Career Framework, the review is considering international evidence alongside evidence from UK ITT markets.

Initially, the review team are conducting early work to better understand the issues and shape the direction of the work. They have held discussions with ITT representatives including the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers and National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers at this initial stage, with broader engagement planned from late spring.

Test and Trace Support Payment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all those eligible for a Test and Trace support payment receive such support. [HL12979]

Lord Bethell: Since the launch of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, the Government has taken a range of action to help ensure those eligible for the scheme receive the support that it provides. This includes providing more than £70 million of funding to local authorities to meet the costs of the scheme, with a further £39 million released at the end of February 2021; expanding the eligibility criteria to include individuals notified to self-isolate by the NHS Covid-19 app because they are a contact of someone who has tested positive; and increasing the window in which individuals can make a claim, by allowing applicants up to 28 days after their first day of self-isolation.

The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme will continue into the summer and will be expanded to cover parents who are unable to work because they are caring for a child who is self-isolating. The Government keeps all elements of its Covid-19 response under review, including the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

Theatres: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of regional and local theatres that have permanently closed since March 2020; and the number of areas that have lost their only performance venue since March 2020. [HL14261]

Baroness Barran: Government recognises the significant financial impact of Covid 19 on the performing arts sector and venues, and the important role theatres play in their local communities. 14% of theatres in the UK are directly operated by local authorities and many more are owned by and subsidised by local authorities. The Theatres Trust has provided details of six theatre buildings where the operator has either withdrawn from their operating contract or gone into liquidation, leaving them without an operator since the start of the pandemic. These theatres are not necessarily closed permanently as efforts are progressing to identify new operators. The Theatres Trust is aware of a small number of further closures, with more details to be published in due course.

The Government is investing an unprecedented £1.57 billion, the biggest ever one-off cash injection into UK culture, to tackle the crisis facing our most loved arts organisations and heritage sites through the Culture Recovery Fund. In the first round of funding, 462 awards were made to applicants whose main artform is 'theatre', with a value of over £183m. The number of awards to commercial theatres was 79, with a value of over £26m. This funding benefited a range of theatre organisations, from world-renowned institutions to those crucial to their local community.

The second round is in progress, and a further £300 million of support was announced by HM Treasury at Spring budget to continue to support key cultural organisations, bridge the sector as audiences begin to return, and ensure a vibrant future for the culture sector, including theatres, as the nation recovers from the pandemic.

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of councils to fund local and regional theatres as a result of Covid-19. [HL14262]

Baroness Barran: The funding of local theatres consists of a complex ecosystem of funding streams, and government funds remain active, so assessing the success of these interventions is challenging at this stage.

In January, the Chancellor announced £4.6 billion in one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring. This is in addition to £1.1 billion further discretionary grant funding for Local Authorities, and Local Restriction Support Grants worth up to £3,000 a month.

So far, more than £1 billion has been allocated to thousands of organisations including museums, music venues, independent cinemas, circuses, heritage sites and theatres. For reference, info on the local grants eligibility [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-additional-restrictions-grant) (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-additional-restrictions-grant) - a copy of the webpage is attached. In addition, over £10 billion of support has also been provided through unprecedented business rate holidays.

The Government is committed to supporting our world-leading cultural and entertainment sectors, demonstrated through £300m additional funding made available in the budget to support the Culture Recovery Fund, on top of the £1.57bn provided in July.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Check if you're eligible for the coronavirus Addit [Check if you're eligible for the coronavirus Additional Restrictions Grant - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-16/HL14262>

Tigray: Crimes against Humanity

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Ethiopia is removing evidence of human rights atrocities in Tigray; and what steps they are taking to enable international monitors access to investigate these reported atrocities. [HL14187]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since the conflict started the UK has consistently called for independent, international investigations into atrocities reported in Tigray, and for the Government of Ethiopia to ensure full access for human rights organisations. We have made this clear to the Government of Ethiopia. We note the statements by Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister at the UN Human Rights Council session, and from the Office of the Prime Minister on 26 February committing Ethiopia to independent investigations into allegations of human right abuses and violations.

Tigray: Cultural Heritage

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the International Council on Monuments and Sites on 5 March that Tigray's heritage is falling victim to fighting and "cultural cleansing". [HL14184]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the governments of (1) Ethiopia, and (2) Eritrea, about the need (a) to take immediate steps to prevent any further damage to the cultural sites of Tigray, (b) to safeguard and respect all cultural property in Tigray, and (c) to ensure that looted objects are restored to their communities. [HL14185]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by reports of violations of international law and international human rights law from Tigray, and have raised our concerns with Ministers in the governments of both Ethiopia and Eritrea, making clear the overriding need to protect civilians and adhere to international law and international human rights law. We are concerned by

reports from Tigray of attacks on places of worship as well as damage to cultural monuments and artefacts. Our Embassy in Addis Ababa has been in contact with the UNESCO offices in Addis, and is monitoring matters carefully. We are concerned by the growing weight of credible evidence of atrocities in Tigray, including looting. The Minister for Africa has called for the withdrawal of Eritrean forces. We welcome the announcement, on 26 March, of their withdrawal and call for this to be immediate and unconditional. We have clearly set out the need for independent, international, investigations into allegations of human right abuses and violations. We have also stressed the need for Ethiopia to safeguard its incredible diversity of faith and identity. Respect for cultural heritage is part of this, alongside freedom of expression and freedom of religion and belief.

Tigray: Refugees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Ethiopian army is preventing Tigrayan refugees from crossing the border into Sudan. [HL14186]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of refugees being unable to cross the border into Sudan. We have raised the need to prioritise the protection of civilians with all parties to the conflict, and made clear our expectation that the Governments adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We continue to provide support to tackle the humanitarian situation in Tigray and to the over 60,000 refugees that have fled the conflict into Sudanese refugee camps.

Trade Agreements

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK's trade deals since the UK's departure from the EU. [HL14487]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is committed to a trade policy that secures opportunities for people in every corner of the country.

Scoping Assessments are published to provide a preliminary assessment of the potential long run impacts of new Free Trade Agreements in advance of negotiations. We have already published Scoping Assessments for agreements with the United States, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. An impact assessment for the United Kingdom-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) – the first major trade deal that the United Kingdom has struck as an independent trading nation – has also been published.

That Impact Assessment shows the United Kingdom-Japan CEPA could increase British Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by £1.5 billion in the long run, compared to trading under World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms.

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of provisions in recent roll-over trade agreements that grant trading surpluses to partner countries rather than for UK exports; and what assessment they have made of the benefits to date of the UK's departure from the EU. [HL14651]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom has sought to reproduce the effects of trading agreements that previously applied, to ensure continuity for British businesses. The Department has published parliamentary reports for all such partner countries containing explanations of any changes or significant differences between these bilateral agreements and the previous EU trade agreements e.g.: [gov.uk/government/publications/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-canada-parliamentary-report](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-canada-parliamentary-report).

The United Kingdom's departure from the EU presents opportunities for us to do things differently and better. HM Government has already acted in a number of areas, for example, establishing the new 'Points Based System' on migration and replacing the Common Agricultural Policy. The United Kingdom can capitalise on new regulatory and policy freedoms, and the ability to find new ways to drive growth internationally, enabling us to deliver on the priorities of the British people.

Transport: Exhaust Emissions

*Asked by **The Earl of Dundee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what metrics they use to calculate the emissions from transport run on (1) hydrogen, (2) biomethane, (3) biogas, and (4) electricity, when allocating funding for transport infrastructure; and what plans they have to publish their methodology. [HL14381]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In general, emissions specifically from hydrogen, biomethane and biogas are not estimated when allocating funding for transport infrastructure, as they account for a very small share of the energy used by transport. However, the blending of biofuels in petrol and diesel is accounted for more generally, including in the emission estimates presented in the Department for Transport's TAG data-book, which is used for transport appraisal. Where the use of these fuels is important, for example funding to support their uptake, estimates of their g/CO₂e are based on the latest scientific analysis and evidence, including emissions across the well-to-wheel cycle wherever possible, as well as from indirect land-use.

There are no plans to publish further details on methodologies at this stage, but these will be shared alongside policy proposals where appropriate, and in the event that these were important to funding decisions.

Estimates of kg CO₂e/kWh from electricity used in transport are based on emission factors published by BEIS, and presented in the Department for Transport's TAG data-book.

Trapping

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prevent the deaths of (1) birds, and (2) non-target species, in glue traps; and what consideration they have given to a potential ban on the sale of such traps. [HL14428]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of the concerns around the use of glue traps, including the harm they can cause to captured animals and the capture of non-target species including birds. We are engaging with key stakeholders and exploring options to address these concerns.

This Government remains committed to high standards of animal welfare. We are in the process of developing a range of important animal welfare and animal-related measures to strengthen our position as a world leader in this field. This includes delivering our manifesto commitments to introduce new laws on animal sentience, to ban live exports, restrict the imports of trophies from endangered species and ban keeping primates as pets.

Travel: Concessions

*Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether disabled persons' (1) railcards, and (2) bus passes, are only valid for use after 9.30am; and if so, (a) why, and (b) what assessment they have made of the impact of such time restrictions on the use of those passes to commute to work. [HL14313]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Unlike most railcards, the disabled persons railcard can be used before 09.30am, with no peak time restrictions on its use.

With regard to bus travel, the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme offers concessionary pass holders free bus travel from 09.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends and on Bank Holidays. The times of the concession were set out in the Transport Act 2000. This allows pass holders to take advantage of the increased operational capacity available after the morning peak travel time.

Under the Concessionary Travel Act 2007, local authorities in England have the power to offer additional local concessions, such as extending the hours of the concession, and three quarters of authorities already do so. This policy area is kept under review.

Travel: Quarantine

*Asked by **Lord Balfe***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 8 February (HL12760), what is the weekly number of tests able to be carried out by NHS Test and Trace; what is the estimated number of tests required for the Test to Release for International Travel scheme; and

how testing as part of that scheme helps to "safeguard testing capacity". [[HL13353](#)]

Lord Bethell: Since 15 February, NHS Test and Trace has had the capacity to deliver around 750,000 polymerase chain reaction tests every day. According to Passenger Locator Form data, 61,193 individuals opted-in to Test to Release during the week 15 to 21 February. Testing for Test to Release is delivered only by private testing providers that meet a specific set of minimum standards, therefore the number of individuals that choose to opt-in to Test to Release does not impact on NHS Test and Trace's ability to deliver tests.

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 8 February (HL12760), why NHS Test and Trace tests do "not meet the minimum standards required to legally release a traveller from self-isolation upon providing a negative result"; and on what basis they are using lateral flow tests as part of the Test to Release International Travel scheme. [[HL13354](#)]

Lord Bethell: NHS Test and Trace tests are not being used for the Test to Release scheme as this is an optional scheme for international arrivals from non 'red list' countries to allow them to shorten their isolation period. NHS Test and Trace testing is for people who have symptoms of Covid-19 or who are clinically advised to take a Covid-19 test. Testing for Test to Release must be a polymerase chain reaction test purchased from a private testing provider.

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 8 February (HL12760), what plans, if any, they have to make tests carried out by NHS Test and Trace acceptable for the Test to Release for International Travel scheme; and what assessment they have made of the ability of the private sector to provide Covid-19 tests for that scheme. [[HL13357](#)]

Lord Bethell: NHS Test and Trace testing is not being used for the Test to Release scheme as this is an optional scheme for international arrivals from non 'red list' countries to allow them to shorten their isolation period. The private sector has successfully delivered tests for this scheme since its introduction on 15 December 2020.

Trident Missiles

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of lifting the cap on the number of Trident nuclear warheads the UK can stockpile on nuclear non-proliferation. [[HL14329](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The fundamental purpose of the UK's nuclear deterrent remains to deter other states' use of nuclear weapons. We would never encourage others to develop nuclear weapons in breach of their NPT obligations. We remain committed to multilateral disarmament and our shared long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of lifting the cap on the number of Trident nuclear warheads the UK can stockpile on negotiations at the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [[HL14331](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK will continue to work for a successful NPT Review Conference that continues to lay the groundwork and helps build the trust and confidence necessary for multilateral disarmament, as well as strengthening the non-proliferation and peaceful uses pillars of the Treaty. We will continue to play a leading role in developing nuclear disarmament verification, on which our ability to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons will depend. We will also continue to build trust and confidence amongst nuclear weapon states, and between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

As coordinator of the P5 Process in 2019 and 2020, we pushed forward work on transparency, leading the way with our consultation exercise on the UK's national implementation report that has now been taken up by others, and securing agreement to a presentation by the nuclear weapon states of their national nuclear doctrines at the Review Conference. We look forward to continuing these discussions and picking up other important issues such as strategic risk reduction.

As we approach the NPT Review Conference, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to all pillars of the NPT, including disarmament.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compatibility of lifting the cap on the number of Trident nuclear warheads the UK can stockpile with their obligations under Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and what effect they expect this action to have on nuclear disarmament. [[HL14444](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Maintaining and renewing elements of the UK's nuclear deterrent capability is fully consistent with our international legal obligations, including those under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The UK remains committed to the step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament under the framework of the NPT, and the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Turing Scheme

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of students likely to make use of the Turing scheme each year from its launch until 2030. [HL14366]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the financial aid available through the Turing scheme compares to that available through the Erasmus+ scheme. [HL14367]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Turing Scheme will be backed by £110 million to support international projects and activities during the 2021/22 academic year. This will provide funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges, and schools to go on placements and exchanges overseas, a similar number as under Erasmus+.

This was set out in a one year Spending Review, but the government has a clear aim to use this scheme as part of our long-term ambitions for a Global Britain. The benefits of the exchanges will be assessed and used to build on the scheme. Funding decisions for subsequent years will be subject to future spending reviews.

Grants available through the Turing Scheme are comparable with Erasmus+ for the most part, but there is also new support available for disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and disabilities which was not available through Erasmus+. All participating students will receive grants dependent on their destination country to contribute towards their cost of living. The grant support available under the Turing Scheme is currently slightly higher than that under Erasmus+. Under the Turing Scheme, we will provide a grant of £335–£380 per month, plus a disadvantaged supplement of £110 per month. With Erasmus+, under current exchange rates, students received a grant equivalent to £315–£360, with a disadvantaged supplement of £100. Students can continue to apply for student finance.

For schools and colleges, all participants will receive travel funding, whereas Erasmus+ only provided travel support to higher education participants who travelled to Partner Countries, which was around only 3% of UK participants. With the Turing Scheme, we are introducing funding for travel costs for disadvantaged higher education students to all destinations. Additionally, we are providing funding for visas, passports, and related travel insurance for disadvantaged participants in all sectors.

For participants with special educational needs and disabilities, the scheme will fund up to 100% of actual costs for support directly related to their additional needs, as Erasmus+ did, with the new addition of preparatory visits for staff to carry out risk assessments and ensure their students will be able to access and take part in all elements of a placement equally. More information on

funding available can be found at: www.turing-scheme.org.uk.

For all students participating in the Turing Scheme, we expect tuition fees to be waived by host institutions, as under Erasmus+. This is a matter for individual institutions to agree, and something that universities do as a matter of course when they form exchange partnerships with international providers.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Goldie on 23 March (HL Deb, col 811), what meetings they have had with the board of BA Systems to discuss the Type 26 frigate programme. [HL14607]

Baroness Goldie: Ministerial colleagues and Ministry of Defence officials have regular meetings with BAE Systems board members on a range of matters, including the Type 26 Frigate programme.

UK Border Force: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional support has been offered to Border Force officers in Northern Ireland during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL14489]

Lord Greenhalgh: The safety and health of the public and our staff in NI, as across the entirety of the UK is of the utmost importance and we are doing everything in our power to stop the spread of this deadly disease.

We have a robust Covid Safe System of Work in place across all our ports. Lead by national guidance, which is informed by the latest government guidelines in order to advise and lead officers in ensuring their own and the public's safety throughout this pandemic. This includes working closely with Public Health bodies in order to make sure that all staff members are provided with protective clothing and equipment. Supporting and shielding vulnerable staff members as well as ensuring that every Border Force office and workplace has implemented the guidelines to ensure a 'Covid secure' workplace.

UK Endorsement Board

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 26 April 2018 (HL7046), whether they will require the UK Endorsement Board to publish terms of reference that are (1) not subject to legal professional privilege, (2) developed independently of (a) current, or (b) former, advisers to accounting firms which have contributed to accounting standards. [HL14556]

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 26 April 2018 (HL7046), whether they will publish terms of reference for the UK Endorsement Board that are (1) not subject to legal professional privilege, and (2) developed independently of (a) current, or (b) former, advisers to accounting firms which have contributed to accounting standards. [HL14557]

Lord Callanan: The Terms of Reference for the UK Endorsement Board (UKEB) were set by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and agreed by the UKEB at their inaugural meeting on 26 March. A copy has been published on the UKEB's website (please see attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

The Terms of Reference for the UKEB [UKEB-Draft-Terms-of-Reference-Feb2021.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-24/HL14556>

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland*Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to applying the freedom of goods rules in the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 to Northern Ireland in full. [HL14216]

Lord Frost: The UK Government is unequivocal in its commitment for unfettered access for Northern Ireland goods moving to the rest of the UK market. The UK Internal Market Act 2020 put in place significant and robust protections for this regime for the long-term, prohibiting checks and controls on qualifying Northern Ireland goods moving to Great Britain, and enabling these goods to be placed on the GB market without additional requirements.

We have always recognised that there are some additional processes on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. In line with our pragmatic and proportionate approach, we have, and will, continue to give these effects in a way which takes full account of all flexibilities and discretion, maintaining the effective flow of goods on which lives and livelihoods rely.

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their policy of "seamless trade across the UK's Internal Market" as stated in the Policy Paper by the Business Secretary UK internal market, published in July 2020 (CP 278), as it relates to Northern Ireland. [HL14486]

Lord Callanan: The Government has consistently stated its commitment to the preservation of seamless trade across the whole of the United Kingdom's internal market, including between Great Britain and Northern

Ireland, within CP226 published in May 2020 and the White Paper published in July 2020.

The UK Internal Market Act 2020 implements these commitments compatibly with the Northern Ireland Protocol and in doing so protects Northern Ireland's place in the UK Internal Market.

In light of challenges in the first part of this year, temporary operational steps have been taken to minimise disruption, support the effective flow of goods and provide a period for businesses to plan, particularly in the current circumstances of a global pandemic. We continue to work very closely with businesses to look at any issues that do need to be addressed, and to offer any support that is required.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of consent granted by representatives of the people of Northern Ireland for the implementation of a regulatory border in the Irish Sea. [HL14628]

Lord Frost: The Protocol is explicit that it rests on the democratic consent of the people and elected representatives across Northern Ireland. All sides need to be sensitive to the social and political realities, including the reality that any arrangements involving Northern Ireland depend on cross-community confidence if they are to work successfully. We are listening carefully to the concerns of the people of Northern Ireland. Our actions are aimed at restoring that confidence and we have urged the EU to do the same.

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK-EU Trade Cooperation Agreement on the amount of revenue raised by UK manufacturers; and what steps they are taking in response any such impact. [HL14239]

Lord Callanan: The impacts on the UK economy of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement and our global trade deals will not be fully understood until the new processes and procedures are fully embedded. We have secured a Trade Deal that we believe will sustain the success of the UK manufacturing sector with 100% tariff liberalisation, and modern and appropriate rules of origin. This includes Product-Specific Rules of Origin tailored to the needs of UK businesses in manufacturing sectors such as automotive, aluminium, chemicals, machinery and food and drink.

UN Climate Conference 2021*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had on inviting Pope Francis to COP26. [HL14253]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: All parties of the UNFCCC are entitled to attend a COP. We are not in a position to confirm at this stage the attendance of specific leaders, but as the Holy See is a UNFCCC observer state, His Holiness The Pope will receive an invitation.

It is at the discretion of each party as to what level of representation they send.

Unitary Councils: Devon

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to establish a unitary local authority in Devon. [HL14643]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is clear that any reform of an area's local government is most effectively achieved through locally-led proposals put forward by those who best know the area, the very essence of localism to which the Government remains committed. The Government will not impose top-down Government solutions for restructuring and will continue to follow a locally-led approach for unitarisation.

Universities: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusion in the report by King's College London and the Harvard Kennedy School The China question: managing risks and maximising benefits from partnership in higher education and research, published on 9 March, that the UK has "poorly understood" risks of increasing collaboration between UK universities and China. [HL14361]

Lord Callanan: International collaborations are central to our position as a science superpower and create wealth and jobs within the UK. We cooperate closely with universities, funding bodies and industry in protecting our higher education and research sector from interference. This includes publishing "Trusted Research" and commissioning Universities UK to release comprehensive guidelines to encourage secure partnerships and promote our values. We are pleased to see the university sector addressing these challenges and we will continue to work with the sector on implementing the guidelines, promoting best practice, and responding to specific enquiries. We also share experience and best practice with our friends and allies overseas.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusion in the report by King's College London and the Harvard Kennedy School The China question: managing risks and maximising benefits from partnership in higher education and research, published on 9 March, that an increase in funding from China and collaboration with

Chinese researchers over the last two decades risks the autonomy of UK universities. [HL14362]

Lord Callanan: Her Majesty's Government carefully considers advice and analysis from a range of sources, including universities and think tanks, and is grateful for the scholarship which my Noble Friend the Rt. Hon. the Lord Johnson of Marylebone has provided in this report. We will continue to support the sector to make informed decisions when engaging in international research and other collaboration.

Universities are well-aware of the possible risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding, whether that is from a single organisation or from a single nation. A diverse recruitment base is key to avoiding this. The Government's International Education Strategy and recent update make clear that the internationalisation of our higher education sector cannot come at any cost – universities must ensure they have appropriate processes in place to manage risk.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusion in the report by King's College London and the Harvard Kennedy School The China question: managing risks and maximising benefits from partnership in higher education and research, published on 9 March, that "the UK's dependence on a neototalitarian technology power for the financial health and research output of its universities is now regarded as a particular point of vulnerability". [HL14365]

Lord Callanan: Universities are well aware of the possible risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding, whether that is from a single organisation or from a single nation. A diverse recruitment base is key to avoiding this. The Government's International Education Strategy and recent update make clear that the internationalisation of our higher education sector cannot come at any cost – universities must ensure they have appropriate processes in place to manage risk. Government has recently issued guidance to the Office for Students, requesting they monitor the financial sustainability of institutions and continue to support the sector to recruit sustainably.

USA: Belfast Agreement

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish a common understanding of the provisions of the Belfast Agreement with the government of the United States. [HL14277]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland are grateful for the deep interest in Northern Ireland shown by President Biden and the new United States Government. The steadfast US support for the Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement and the gains of the peace process is

undoubtedly one of the key reasons behind its enduring success.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland engages regularly with stakeholders from across the political spectrum in the United States on matters of importance to the Irish American diaspora, which includes a number of meetings over the past week. That is also the case for a number of colleagues across Cabinet and the British Embassy in Washington.

Veterans: Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of mental health support services provided for armed forces veterans. [HL14502]

Lord True: All of NHS England's commissioned services for veterans are evidence based, having been developed and delivered from intensive engagement with experts, members of the armed forces community and service charities. NHS England and NHS Improvement assesses need based on a variety of published data, research output and consultation and engagement exercises. As a result of these assessments, the Government and NHS England recently announced Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, which will ensure veterans know where to go for help. Op COURAGE combines three bespoke veterans' mental health services to provide a complete mental health care pathway for veterans, with individuals benefiting from personalised care plans, ensuring they can access support and treatment both in and out of hours.

For veteran specific mental health services, in 2020-2021 NHS England provided £16.5m, which will be increased to £17.8m for 2021-2022.

Service charities are supported by the Government through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, which benefits from £10m annually, and in both years an additional £10m has been allocated to support veterans' mental health needs. During 2020, the Covid-19 Impact Fund has provided nearly £6m in grants to over 100 Armed Forces charities across the United Kingdom. Of the charities awarded funding, 68% of grants sampled supported members of the Armed Forces and veterans' community for mental health and crisis support, and 77% for easing isolation and loneliness.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Collections

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the Victoria and Albert Museum about securing for the Theatre & Performance Collection (1) expert custodianship, and (2) continued safe access for (a) researchers, and (2) other members of the public. [HL14473]

Baroness Barran: The V&A Museum has a duty to protect its collections and make them available to the public. The responsibility to determine how to discharge this duty is delegated to the Museum, as an Arm's Length Body of Government. As such, the proposed restructure of the V&A's Curatorial, Research and National Art Library departments is an operational matter for the Museum.

As the sponsor department, we have a close working relationship with the museum and I am assured that - even after these changes are made - there will be no material impact on public access, including for research purposes, to the Theatre and Performance Collection, and that appropriate expertise will be retained when the new structure is in place.

Video on Demand

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of public concern about streaming services applying age ratings that may not reflect British Board of Film Classification ratings; and what steps they are taking to ensure that streaming platforms apply age ratings that (1) align with established ratings, and (2) maintain child protection. [HL14491]

Baroness Barran: The British Board of Film Classification's (BBFC) age ratings are used by a number of video on demand providers and although adoption is voluntary, we welcome their use. On 1 December 2020, we were pleased to see Netflix become the first video on demand platform to achieve complete coverage of their content under the BBFC's ratings.

The UK's Audiovisual Media Services Regulations 2020, which transposed the revised EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive, were made and laid in Parliament on 30 September 2020. Following Parliament's approval, the video sharing platform regime, for which Ofcom is the regulator, came into force on 1 November 2020. UK-established video sharing platforms must now take appropriate measures to protect the public, including minors, from illegal and harmful material.

Under this regime, video sharing platforms are not currently mandated to adopt BBFC ratings, nor is it expected that they will be mandated to do so. However, in order to comply with the regime, age assurance measures and measures such as age ratings and parental controls, may be adopted by video sharing platforms. Age assurance measures comprise a broad range of technical measures which can be used by a service to establish the age of their users. The BBFC is engaging actively with both Ofcom and video sharing platforms to share their expertise and discuss the applicability of content ratings on those platforms.

In line with the government's commitment to keep children safe online, the government is working at pace to

prepare the Online Safety Bill, which will be ready this year.

Vocational Education: Employment Schemes

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what schemes are available to students on vocational courses to assist them in gaining employment. [HL14604]

Baroness Berridge: The 'Skills for Jobs' white paper, published in January 2021, sets out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training. It is focused on giving people the skills they need, in a way that suits them, so they can get great jobs in sectors the economy needs and boost this country's productivity.

Building on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme, we are putting employers at the heart of the system so education and training meets their needs. By 2030, almost all technical courses will be on employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs.

A range of provision is already available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress, including Traineeships, which provide unemployed young people with employability training, work experience, English and maths.

We have also launched T Levels, which are a high quality technical alternative to A levels. With longer teaching hours and a meaningful industry placement of minimum 45 days, employer-designed T Levels will be excellent preparation for skilled work or further training.

In July 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a £500 million package of support to ensure young people can access the training, and develop the skills they will need to go on to high-quality, secure, and fulfilling employment including: incentive payments for employers to take on apprentices; tripling the number of Traineeships; and an additional £17 million in the 2020/21 financial year to support an increase in the number of sector-based work academy programme placements. This additional funding will enable unemployed individuals acquire the skills needed for local jobs.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also announced £375 million for the National Skills Fund in the Spending Review in November 2020. This includes £95 million funding for a new level 3 adult offer which includes over 400 technical and vocational courses available from 1 April 2021 and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Previously, only adults between the ages of 19 to 23 were eligible for full funding for their first full level 3, which is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or two full A levels. From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over who is looking to achieve their first full level 3 is now able to access a fully funded course which

will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market

We have also introduced Skills Bootcamps, which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Skills Bootcamps have the potential to transform the skills landscape for adults and employers. Skills Bootcamps are open to all adults aged 19 or over, who are either in work or recently unemployed.

Voluntary Service Overseas

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future funding of the Voluntary Service Overseas. [HL14221]

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 all individual programmes and partners, including Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Volunteers and volunteering organisations like VSO make an important contribution. We have offered VSO a short-term funding extension for the Volunteering for Development programme, while the review process continues.

Waste: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of waste associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL14657]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs has not been collecting data specifically on covid-related waste – waste classifications are determined by content rather than context. These figures are published on a regular basis.

We have been working closely with the local authorities and the waste industry to monitor the impact of the pandemic on their services. We have run a regular survey on the impacts of Covid-19 on local authority waste operations, including on levels of waste, the output of which can be found at www.adeptnet.org.uk. We also collected informal data through industry discussions and internal surveys across a range of areas such as waste arisings and throughputs.

West Bank: Water Supply

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about reports of the (1) blocking of a road, and

(2) destruction of a water line, serving two Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills. [HL14321]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on issues affecting Palestinians, including demolitions and restrictions on movement and access. Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv has raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities, most recently in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised his concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. The UK has raised Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the OPTs with the Israeli authorities and stressed the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank.

Wiltshire Police: Misconduct

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 16 March (HL Deb, col 168), what independent public scrutiny of Operation Conifer has been carried out. [HL14388]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Operation Conifer has been subject to scrutiny by its own Independent Scrutiny Panel, which checked and tested the decision-making and approach in the investigation; two reviews by Operation Hydrant in September 2016 and May 2017 which concluded that the investigation was proportionate, legitimate and in accordance with national guidance; and a review in January 2017 by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (as it then was) of whether the resources assigned to the investigation by the Home Office were being deployed in accordance with value for money principles. In addition, the Independent Office for Police Conduct has also considered specific allegations related to the former Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police.

Working Hours: EU Law

Asked by Lord Hannan of Kingsclere

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost of applying the EU's Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC). [HL14635]

Lord Callanan: In 2014, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills conducted a review of the impact on the UK labour market of the UK Working Time Regulations. These Working Time Regulations implemented the EU Working Time Directive into UK law. The report is attached, but can also be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-time-regulations-impact-on-uk-labour-market>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

EU Working Time Directive [bis-14-1287-the-impact-of-the-working-time-regulations-on-the-uk-labour-market-a-review-of-evidence.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-25/HL14635>

Wyelands Bank

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Bank of England has required Wyelands Bank to return all deposits or a category of deposits; if so, when; whether Wyelands remains an approved bank on the Bank of England list of banks; and if not, why this has not been publicly announced. [HL14527]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The PRA published a statement on its website on 3 March 2021, confirming that Wyelands Bank had been required to operationalise an orderly repayment of its deposits. Wyelands Bank has since published a statement on its website confirming that its deposit accounts have been closed and that depositors were repaid on 17 March. Wyelands have instructed any depositors who have not received their funds to contact their Customer Service team.

Wyelands remains authorised by the PRA and regulated by the PRA and the FCA; however, as shown on the Financial Services Register, its permission to perform regulated activities is subject to limitations.

Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to (1) peace builders, (2) women's rights organisations, and (3) human rights organisations, working in Yemen. [HL14580]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK fully supports the important role women can play in ending the conflict in Yemen. We are a global leader on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and the penholder on UNSCR 1325. Yemen is a priority country for our National Action Plan on WPS. We have supported the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (through UN Women), which aimed to increase female leadership and inclusion in the peace processes. The UK has also funded projects aimed at supporting the work of grassroots women leaders and civil society organisations in communities across Yemen. UK funding of two advisors in the UN Special Envoy's office has also supported the UN in consulting marginalised groups. Furthermore, on 25 February the Security Council adopted a UK-drafted resolution which sanctioned Houthi official Sultan Zabin for the use of sexual violence as a tool of war, the first such sanction in the Middle East. We will continue to support Yemeni women, youth and civil society to help create the conditions for an inclusive and durable peace in Yemen.

Zimbabwe: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Zimbabwe about the human rights situation in that country; and in particular, about (1) reports of corruption and abuse of state funds, and (2) the continued incarceration of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova. [[HL14446](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We regularly engage with the Government of Zimbabwe to urge their adherence to their human rights obligations and to respect the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution. The Minister for Africa spoke to the then Zimbabwean Foreign Minister, Sibusiso Moyo in June last year, and wrote to him again in August to raise specific human rights concerns, including over the treatment of opposition members Ms Mamombe, Ms Chimhiri, and Ms Marowa. The Minister for Africa has followed their cases closely, and tweeted on 5 February 2021 to register his concern over their most recent arrests.

On 1 February 2021, the UK announced new sanctions to hold to account those individuals responsible for human rights violations in Zimbabwe. We also continue to urge the Government of Zimbabwe and the Anti-Corruption Commission to take the necessary steps to address corruption and illicit financial flows. The UK Ambassador met the new Chair of the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission in December 2020 to reinforce these messages. Her Majesty's Government will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns and we will work alongside the international

community to support a better future for all Zimbabweans.

Zimbabwe: Political Prisoners

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Zimbabwe about (1) the release, or (2) the trial, of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova. [[HL14445](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the recently reported rearrests of Joanna Mamombe MP, Cecilia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova. We also understand that Ms Mamombe and Ms Chimhiri's applications for bail have been denied. When the Minister for Africa wrote to late Foreign Minister Moyo on 12 August 2020, following a telephone call with him on 8 June 2020, he raised specific human rights concerns, including the treatment of Ms Mamombe, Ms Chimhiri, and Ms Marowa. Our Ambassador in Harare reinforced these messages when she met representatives of the Government of Zimbabwe on 24 November 2020. On 5 February, the Minister for Africa tweeted urging authorities to focus on investigating the women's claims.

The UK will continue to monitor developments in the case of Ms Mamombe, Ms Chimhiri, and Ms Marova closely and continue to call on the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law. This includes respecting the Zimbabwean Constitution which clearly prohibits enforced disappearances, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. We admire the bravery of civil society activists in Zimbabwe who aspire to a better future for Zimbabwe.

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