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**Wednesday
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

HMRC: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS939]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-22.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £7,792,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £7,792,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Further requests to the Contingencies Fund may be made as necessary to fund Covid-19 activity delivered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

National Gallery Contingent Liability

[HLWS940]

Baroness Barran: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Caroline Dinenage MP, has made the following statement:

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of all members of this House to bring to their attention the Departmental Minute issued today that provides the House with notice of a small, short-term contingent liability created by my department. This is in relation to an exceptional exhibition arranged by the National Gallery in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute, and pertains to specialist indemnity insurance coverage protecting five artefacts from harm or damage, required throughout the period of transport and display. The National Gallery, an arm's length body of government sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, will be incurring the liability.

The National Gallery will on 17 May 2021 open its eagerly awaited exhibition *Conversations with God*, with Jan Matejko (1838-1893)'s epic painting of Astronomer Copernicus - a Polish National Treasure - at its heart.

Successive delays caused by Covid-19 have frustrated the schedule and logistics of this exhibition, the first devoted to Poland's national painter, whose works are very seldomly loaned.

The complexities of transporting fine art across Europe mid-pandemic, related pandemic stipulations, and works of particular national importance, are such that Polish lenders have requested an indemnity directly from National Gallery in the event any of the artworks suffered damage, in addition to the fine art coverage provided by the Government Indemnity Scheme. Despite the UK's Government Indemnity Scheme enjoying widespread recognition as the 'gold standard' amongst such schemes, the department has agreed to this additional layer of coverage - a particular lender requirement under Polish law - in view of the exhibition's exceptional content and timing. The indemnity would be in place for four months (May-September 2021), up to the consignment of artworks' total value of £5.6 million and therefore represents a contingent liability. The likelihood of the contingent liability crystallising is remote, furthermore a claim would be far more likely to fall at the lower end of the monetary scale provided for.

In the event that loss or damage to an object occurred, the lenders would have the right to request compensation directly from the Gallery, should it believe the Government Indemnity Scheme or a commercial insurance product to be inadequate or unduly inaccessible. The department is confident however that the risk is very low, given the comprehensive nature of Government Indemnity Scheme coverage and its excellent track record in meeting the rare claims brought by lenders. The department is further reassured by the rarity of 'total loss' cases, with only one such payout under the Government Indemnity Scheme in the past decade, and by the National Gallery's exceptional standards of care, which has submitted no claims under the Government Indemnity Scheme for at least the last twenty years.

A copy of the Departmental Minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Departmental Minute [DCMS Departmental Minute 28 April 2021, National Gallery.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-04-28/HLWS940/>

Written Answers

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Afghanistan: Interpreters

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) interpreters, and (2) members of interpreters' families, have been relocated from Afghanistan to the UK under the (a) ex gratia redundancy scheme, and (b) intimidation policy. [HL15283]

Baroness Goldie: A total of 448 locally employed staff and 910 family members have been relocated from Afghanistan to the UK, 1,358 in total. Of those, all but six were interpreters. Four were relocated under the Intimidation Policy, one under the new Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy which came into force on 1 April 2021, and the remainder under the Ex-Gratia Scheme.

The Intimidation Policy closed on 31 March 2021. It was replaced by the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy on 1 April 2021 and one relocation has taken place so far under that scheme.

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) interpreters, and (2) members of interpreters' families, have been accepted for relocation but have not yet been relocated under the (a) ex gratia redundancy scheme, and (b) the intimidation policy; and when they expect that they will be relocated. [HL15284]

Baroness Goldie: A total of 104 former locally employed staff are eligible for relocation under the Ex-Gratia Scheme and are still in the process of being relocated. All but two are interpreters. We cannot comment with certainty on the number of family members, because some of the eligible applicants are not yet at the stage of the process where this is known.

The Intimidation Policy closed on 31 March 2021. It was replaced by the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy on 01 April 2021. There are no outstanding relocations under the Intimidation Policy.

A total of 107 current and former locally employed staff are eligible for relocation under the new Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and are still in the process of being relocated. Most are interpreters. We cannot comment with certainty on the number of family members, because some of the eligible applicants are not yet at the stage of the process where this is known. I expect that these former and current locally employed staff and their families will be relocated before 11 September 2021.

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many locally employed civilian interpreters who (1) have previously

worked, or (2) currently work, for the UK Armed Forces (a) remain in Afghanistan, and (b) have fled to a third country. [HL15285]

Baroness Goldie: UK Armed Forces do not currently employ any locally employed civilian interpreters in Afghanistan. Of those locally employed civilian interpreters who previously worked for UK Armed Forces, we do not hold any information on how many remain in Afghanistan; it would be impossible to maintain such a record, as it would require regular updates from those who left employment with us between four and 20 years ago. Our locally employed civilian interpreters do not update us as to their whereabouts. Of those locally employed civilian interpreters who previously worked for UK Armed Forces, we are aware of 15 who are currently in a third country. Not all would be eligible for relocation even if they in Afghanistan.

Airports: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent significant delays for returning travellers arriving at airports in the UK. [HL14971]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are in a global health pandemic, and people should not be travelling unless absolutely necessary.

To protect the public and our vaccine rollout from new variants, Border Force checks every passenger has complied with current health measures when arriving at the border.

We are not going to abandon or compromise these vital public health measures and put the public at risk, and as long as these checks are necessary passengers should expect longer queues when arriving into the UK.

Queues and wait times will be longer if passengers have not completed the necessary requirements to enter the UK, and airlines are responsible for making sure that their passengers have completed all the necessary requirements.

We are, however, working hard to avoid extensive wait times, and every airport, has a responsibility to comply with social distancing and Covid measures on site.

Airports: National Policy Statements

Asked by *Baroness Scott of Needham Market*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 19 April (HL Deb, col 1639), what assessment they have made of the need to review the Airports National Policy Statement to bring it into line with domestic and international climate targets. [HL15188]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 16 December 2020, the Supreme Court overturned the earlier Court of Appeal decision and declared that the Airports National Policy

Statement is lawful. We are carefully considering the Court's judgement.

The Government have always been clear that Heathrow expansion is a private sector project which must meet strict criteria on air quality, noise and climate change, as well as being privately financed, affordable, and delivered in the best interest of consumers.

In the coming months, we will launch a consultation setting out the steps to reach net zero aviation emissions by 2050.

Apprentices: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that BAME communities receive apprenticeship outreach information. [[HL15122](#)]

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

We are working with some of the country's most influential employers through our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network, which consists of over 85 employers, to promote best practice in recruiting and supporting apprentices from diverse backgrounds. We are building on this work to ensure that we continue to see an improved representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds starting apprenticeships, especially in sectors that carry historic under-representation. The Network will report during National Apprenticeship Week 2022 on how to better reach out to target communities and improve on-programme retention.

To increase the outreach of information of apprenticeships to students of all backgrounds, we are promoting apprenticeships in schools through our Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme. This free service provides schools and teachers with resources and interventions to help better educate young people about apprenticeships.

The department is co-funding, along with the Home Office, a series of activity delivered by the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation. This work includes supporting young people, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds, into level 3 advanced technical digital apprenticeships using the Foundation's extensive network of contacts and partners. The Careers and Enterprise Company supports schools and colleges to connect with employers so that young people have opportunities to explore all available options. These interactions aim to increase their knowledge of a range of career possibilities and training options, including apprenticeships. We committed in our Skills for Jobs white paper to improve the careers information available to young people and adults by updating the National Careers Service website to bring together all information on learning and careers routes available, such as apprenticeships. We will

introduce interactive careers maps, which will show the occupations and careers options that technical or higher technical options can open the door to.

The Baker Clause requires all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out opportunities for providers of technical education – including taught courses and apprenticeships – to visit schools to talk to all year 8 to 13 pupils, and to make sure the statement is followed. In the Skills for Jobs white paper, we committed to introduce a 3-point-plan to enforce the Baker Clause. We will consult shortly on proposals to strengthen the legislation. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we plan to introduce these changes alongside tougher formal action against non-compliance and making government-funded careers support for schools conditional on Baker Clause compliance.

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers with school-age children are currently housed in contingency accommodation; and how long they expect it will be before such asylum seekers are allocated dispersal accommodation. [[HL14913](#)]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a list of requirements that dispersal accommodation must meet. [[HL14914](#)]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what requirements they have established with Migrant Help (1) to log and record every call made to the service by asylum seekers in contingency accommodation, and (2) to set a target time for responding to issues raised in these calls, as part of its contracts with that charity; and what assessment they have made of whether Migrant Help is fulfilling any such requirements in carrying out such contracts. [[HL14915](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Migrant Help provide a helpline available to asylum seekers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, service levels for the services they provide can be found in their contract at <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/028be8bb-3c69-494d-bfdd-59c2e1b34379?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08=>. Migrant Help performance is monitored during monthly Contract Management Groups and quarterly Strategic Relationship Management Boards.

Details of the accommodation requirements can be found online at www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk. A link to the contract for the North East, Yorkshire & Humber region is at:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/24c6a868-8e1a-4775-8d4f-ab750854d367>.

We do not publish data on the number of asylum seekers living in contingency accommodation. However, when a family is accommodated at a hotel, they are prioritised for dispersal to ensure the children can settle in more permanent accommodation and attend school.

Aviation: Finance

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of current support available for (1) the aviation sector, and (2) its supply chain. [HL15153]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry as a result of Covid-19 and businesses across the sector can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

In total, we estimate that by the end of April 2021 the air transport sector (airlines, airports and related services) will have benefited from around £7 billion of Government support since the start of the pandemic. This includes support through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The extension of Government-backed loans and furlough payments announced at the budget build on this and will help ensure this vital and vibrant part of the UK economy is ready to bounce back in the wake of the pandemic.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of business debt accrued during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL15185]

Lord Callanan: In February 2021, the stock of total loans outstanding, and held by monetary financial institutions, to UK non-financial businesses (seasonally adjusted), was £528 billion, up from £487 billion in February 2020 (Source: BoE Bankstats).

Within this, the stock of total loans outstanding owed by UK SMEs was £215 billion in February 2021, up from £167 billion in February 2020.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many financial institutions not approved by regulators have been accredited under loan schemes designed to support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL15187]

Lord Callanan: Details of lenders accredited to deliver the Covid-19 Loan Schemes were published on the British Business Bank's website while the schemes were in operation.

Providing a list would incur a disproportionate cost to the Department. Each lender's regulatory status is available on the relevant regulator's website.

Business: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by Nerdwallet on business managers and mental health, published on 24 March; and what steps they are taking to ensure that entrepreneurs have access to mental health support. [HL15121]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises the significant impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on both employers and employees, and their mental wellbeing.

In order to highlight available support around mental health for business figures including entrepreneurs, 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 and to 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 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.

Children: Gambling

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have that the requirement in the statutory guidance Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex

Education and Health Education, published in June 2019, that “pupils should know ... the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt” has assisted in reducing gambling among those under 18 years old. [HL15232]

Baroness Berridge: The statutory guidance for Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) was published in June 2019 and the subject has been compulsory since September 2020. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, some schools have only just started to deliver their RSHE curricula and others are planning to start theirs later this year.

Due to this, it is too early to assess the impact of the RSHE curriculum on pupils’ knowledge and skills, including gathering evidence of any link between teaching and a reduction in gambling among those under 18 years of age. However, the statutory guidance is clear that pupils should be taught about the risks related to online gambling, including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.

The department has published a one-stop page for teachers, including training modules developed by subject experts and teachers. This is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

In particular, ‘teacher training: internet safety and harms’ includes teaching about the risks related to online gambling. The module also covers the law in relation to gambling and that for many gambling activities the legal age is 18. Pupils are taught how to be resilient towards gambling, the signs of problem gambling, and how and where to access support, including for debt and gambling addiction. More information on this module is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-internet-safety-and-harms>.

The department is developing plans to monitor the implementation of RSHE over the coming years and will continue to build its evidence base to inform future RSHE policy, including by working with other government departments to access relevant data and influence research plans as appropriate.

China: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for blocking (1) the government of China, and (2) Chinese companies, from acquiring British infrastructure in view of that government's (a) oppression of the Uighur people in Xinjiang, (b) breaches of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, and (c) tactics in relation to Taiwan and elsewhere. [HL14876]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Integrated Review sets out, the UK as an open economy needs to engage with China. We will continue to pursue a positive

economic relationship while at the same time increasing protection of our critical national infrastructure, institutions and sensitive technology, and strengthening the resilience of our critical supply chains, so that we can engage with confidence. In November 2020, the Government introduced the National Security and Investment Bill to Parliament, which represents a significant upgrade to the UK's powers to intervene in transactions from any country that would undermine national security.

The UK has responded to China's actions in Hong Kong by creating a new immigration route for British Nationals (Overseas) and their eligible family members and dependents, suspending the extradition treaty with Hong Kong and extending the arms embargo applied to mainland China to include Hong Kong.

In respect of Xinjiang, the UK has announced measures to help ensure that no British organisations, whether government or private sector, deliberately or inadvertently, are profiting from or contributing to China's human rights violations in the region and, in March, we imposed Global Human Rights sanctions on four Chinese officials and an entity responsible for those violations, alongside the EU, US and Canada.

We are clear in our discussions with China that our longstanding policy on Taiwan has not changed: we consider the Taiwan issue one that should be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue. We have made clear our concern at any activity by China and Taiwan that risks destabilising the status quo.

Class Sizes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce school class sizes once restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted. [HL14949]

Baroness Berridge: The government has no plans to alter legislation on class sizes. Evidence does not show that smaller classes in the junior and secondary phases of education have an impact on attainment outcomes. Research has shown that smaller class sizes in the early years of school have a modest positive impact on attainment and behaviour. As such, legislation limits the size of an infant class to 30 pupils per teacher. Whilst there are limited exceptions to this rule, the average size of an infant class is 26.9 – well below the statutory limit.

The average size of all primary classes, including for infants, remains stable at 27.0 pupils, despite an increase of almost 800,000 pupils in the system since 2010.

There is no statutory limit to the size of secondary classes. It is up to secondary schools to decide on the organisation of such classes based on local needs and circumstances, ensuring they are consistent with raising attainment and helping pupils to achieve their potential.

Average secondary class size remains low at only 22.0 pupils.

Coastal Areas: Lincolnshire

Asked by Lord Taylor of Holbeach

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Environment Agency about actions they can take to support the development of coastal communities in the Greater Lincolnshire area. [HL14946]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In 2019 the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) received £370,000 for its project "Future Proofing Coastal Tourism Sector". The project provides support for local businesses in the Greater Lincolnshire area, via the creation of a Coastal Business/Provider Forum. In addition, a range of training courses will be delivered to employed and unemployed people, with the aim of upskilling them in preparation for employment. Coastal Champions will act as role models and link into the LEP Ambassador scheme.

The Coastal Revival Fund helps kick start regeneration of 'at risk' coastal heritage that are important to local communities and that have the potential to create opportunities for new economic uses or are facing neglect. As part of this fund, East Lindsey District Council received £50,000 towards the restoration of the Grade II listed Skegness Rockery Gardens.

The Environment Agency actively leads and supports partnership approaches that improve coastal communities across Greater Lincolnshire. This includes guiding planning policy and long-term investment strategies, to delivering high quality defences and a world class flood warning service. For example, the Environment Agency provides an annual beach nourishment scheme which reduces the risk of flooding to over 20,000 homes along the Lincolnshire coast, whilst also providing beaches to help attract visitors and support businesses.

The Lincolnshire Water Management Partnership has identified the coast as a priority, needing a long-term vision to ensure that it adapts to climate change. The Environment Agency is working with local government to develop an adaptation strategy that will optimise prosperity on the coast having regard to the challenge of climate change over the next 100 years. The purpose is to deliver a resilient pattern of spatial development tactically over the next 25 within a strategic view of the next 100 years.

The Environment Agency has also been engaged with the Boston, Connected Coast, and Greater Grimsby Town Deal Boards to help develop and advise on the investment plans and priority projects for the towns. The Town Deals announced in the March 2021 budget confirmed £91.2 million of Government funding for Greater Lincolnshire's coastal communities including £21.9 million for Boston, £23.9 million for Mablethorpe, £24.5 million for Skegness and £20.9 million for Grimsby.

The English coast has enormous potential and the Government is determined to see it thrive all year round. Our coastal communities support a range of sectors including tourism, fishing and renewable energy. We will support coastal communities to unlock barriers to their development and growth, and to strengthen their appeal as places to live, work and visit.

Coronavirus: Health Services

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they will provide to people suffering from long-Covid after the pandemic. [HL15179]

Lord Bethell: We are working with the National Health Service and wider scientific community to better understand the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 infection, including symptom severity, symptom duration and how best to support recovery. Over £30 million of funding has already been committed to 'long' COVID-19 research projects and a further £20 million is available for an additional research call announced on 25 March 2021.

Specialist NHS 'long' COVID-19 assessment services have opened across England and NHS England and NHS Improvement have announced that more than 80 clinics will be open by the end of April 2021.

Coronavirus: Monuments

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a national monument to commemorate those who have lost their lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL14940]

Lord True: Whilst the Government's immediate focus is on protecting the lives and livelihoods of the nation, building a fitting and a permanent memorial to the loved ones we have lost is something the Government is considering very carefully.

We will set out the Government's proposed approach to this important matter in due course.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that GP and hospital vaccination hubs are pausing vaccination programmes due to a lack of COVID-19 vaccination deliveries; and whether mass vaccination hubs in the same areas that GP and hospital hubs are pausing vaccinations, are experiencing similar delays. [HL12452]

Lord Bethell: Mass vaccination centres, general practitioners and hospital hubs are not pausing their vaccination programmes due to a lack of deliveries. NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health

England continue to work with sites across the United Kingdom to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of vaccines.

We met our 15 April target of offering the vaccine to all those in priority cohorts one to four, as identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 3 February (HL12379), without naming individual locations or the number of stockpiles held, how many COVID-19 vaccines have been administered at (1) mass-vaccination centres, (2) GP surgeries hubs, and (3) community pharmacies. [HL13021]

Lord Bethell: Data relating to COVID-19 vaccines administered through the different vaccine delivery models is currently in the process of being validated and is expected to be published shortly.

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide guidance to disabled people who have not been included in the first phase priority vaccination groups. [HL13470]

Lord Bethell: On 13 April, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation published their final advice for prioritisation of phase two of the vaccination programme, recommending an age-based approach which the Government has accepted. Phase two will therefore cover all remaining adults aged between 18 and 49 years old. This includes all those disabled people aged 18 years old or over who have not already been included in phase one.

Countryside: Access

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether payments made under the pilot Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme will reward initiatives to support public access to the countryside. [HL14921]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We are piloting the Sustainable Farming Incentive in order to test how it works in practice, learn from that and apply what we learn in future phases of the pilot and the full scheme offer from late 2024.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme is based on sets of standards covering different activities producing desired environmental benefits. In the first phase of the pilot we are working with the first 8 standards that have been developed and will add to these over the course of 3 years of piloting.

We are exploring the development of a standard covering public access to the countryside. The current Countryside Stewardship offer is open now to

applications and includes options supporting public access to the countryside.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the first date by which farmers can receive payments for improving public access and enjoyment of the countryside as set out in the Agriculture Act 2020. [HL14922]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Agriculture Act allows us to introduce schemes that reward farmers and land managers for providing public goods, including access to and engagement with the environment.

In addition to Countryside Stewardship, open now to applications for 2022, we are introducing three schemes that do this: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery scheme.

An early version of the Sustainable Farming Incentive is being progressively rolled out from 2022, with full offers of all three new schemes being available from 2024.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the farm trials taking place to prepare for the implementation of the Agriculture Act 2020 are focused on improving public access to the countryside. [HL14924]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: To support the development of the future environmental land management schemes, we are undertaking a number of tests and trials. We are working with a range of stakeholders to facilitate the tests and trials, including farmer groups, representative bodies and non-governmental organisations. Six tests and trials are focusing on access; details on each are provided below.

- *Kent Downs AONB, Enhancing access opportunities*

The Kent Downs AONB is working with two farmers and land manager groups to enhance access to landscapes and nature for public benefit and co-develop a template of practical ways that the future schemes can support better and more diverse access. Local trusted experts will be used to work with farmers and land managers and their representative organisations and explore existing best practice; experts in access health and wellbeing will be involved to understand benefits and barriers. This test will run until June 2021.

- *National Trust, Payments for Outcomes*

The National Trust have produced a manual of outcome-based measures, for a 'payments for outcomes' scheme. It focused on upland priority habitats, pollinator health and soil health. It reviewed and refined these measures considering lessons learned to date, drawing on current work on natural flood management, public access and historic and landscape features in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The test has now concluded.

- *Cuckmere and Pevensy Levels Catchment Partnership, Cuckmere and Pevensy Levels Land Management Pilot*

The Cuckmere and Pevensy Level Catchment Partnership is a well-established partnership which brings together 55 different farmers, the local authorities, the water board, artists, and other stakeholders in the area. The trial developed a landscape scale plan for the Cuckmere and Pevensy Catchment with a wide range of partners, including local planning authorities, farmers and the local community, aimed at delivering public goods including access. The plan was then used to develop farm holding management plans. The trial has now concluded.

- *The Trails Trust, How to incentivise green infrastructure access and biodiversity creation*

The Trails Trust is exploring the opinions and potential solutions to creating, upgrading and maintaining infrastructure networks. The trial will involve 50 farmers and land managers; facilitators will examine existing data to identify access opportunities on the farmers' holdings. The trial aims to identify barriers to delivering access; potential solutions, including incentives and mechanisms; what payment levels and mechanisms would be required to enable collaboration across holdings; how could access be included as part of a land management plan. The test is due to conclude in June 2021.

- *South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Farm Clusters*

The South Downs National Park Authority held a series of workshops to identify the format of land management plans; what outcomes should be prioritised; what advice farmers and land managers require; and what role farm clusters could play in scheme design and delivery. This test concluded in December 2019. In the final report, public access was cited as an area where farmers and land managers may require specialist advice.

- *Forestry Commission, Urban Woodland Creation*

The Forestry Commission's Urban Woodland Creation test seeks to develop and test a support package aimed at encouraging community woodland creation and the management of urban community woodland. The test will focus on establishing what public goods can be delivered by urban and peri-urban forestry; assessing the benefits of public engagement and access; and testing methods, activities and payment mechanisms for planting and managing trees and woodland in an urban and peri-urban setting. The test is due to conclude in May 2021.

Crown Dependencies: Finance

Asked by Lord Wallace of Saltaire

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last negotiated with each of the three Crown Dependencies the (1) financial, and (2) other, contributions they should make in return for the UK Government (a) ensuring their security, and (b) representing their interests abroad. [HL15233]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Crown Dependencies are self-governing jurisdictions and do not receive funding from the UK Exchequer. The UK is constitutionally responsible for their defence and international relations, in recognition of which the Crown Dependencies make contributions to the UK Government, either financially (directly and indirectly) or by providing personnel. These contributions are based on longstanding arrangements with the Crown Dependencies that were last amended in 1987 for the Bailiwick of Guernsey, 1994 for the Isle of Man and 1988 for the Bailiwick of Jersey.

The Crown Dependencies' contributions have not recently been reviewed and there are no plans to review them in the near future.

Cybercrime

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update the National Cyber Security Strategy, last published on 11 November 2016. [HL15021]

Lord True: The Government's Integrated Review set out an objective to cement the UK's position as a leading responsible and democratic cyber power. To support this, the Government intends to adopt a new comprehensive cyber strategy, considering the full range of our capabilities and critical cyber technologies, as well as international action to influence the future of cyberspace. Work is well underway to develop this strategy and it will be published later this year, succeeding the National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-21.

Dangerous Dogs

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of attacks by dogs on children and adults reported in each of the last five years in England; and how many dogs were ordered to be humanely destroyed in each of those years. [HL15114]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office collects data from police forces in England and Wales on the number of offences recorded by the police where an owner, or person in charge, allowed a dog to be dangerously out of control, injuring any person or assistance dog. Data for those forces in England able to supply data can be found below, for the most recent five years where full data is held (2015-2019).

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offences*</i>
2015	9729
2016	12406
2017	13675
2018	13808
2019	14478

*Excludes Humberside, Kent, Greater Manchester, and Wiltshire Police. The data has not been subject to the same level of quality assurance checks as data published by the Home Office.

The Home Office does not collect data on the number of dogs which were ordered to be humanely destroyed.

Darfur: International Assistance

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the recent violence in Darfur, and (2) any relationship between a reduction in international aid for people in Darfur and the risk of violence and instability in that region. [HL14903]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by recent violence in Geneina, West Darfur where at least 144 people have been killed and 232 injured since 3 April. More than 300,000 people have been displaced in Darfur due to conflict in 2021. There are many drivers of violence and instability in Darfur but tackling the root causes of conflict is essential if lasting peace and security is to become a reality. We therefore continue to encourage the Government of Sudan to implement swiftly their National Plan for Civilian Protection and the Juba Peace Agreement, particularly provisions relating to security arrangements. The UK remains one of the leading donors to Sudan, including on peace, open societies, humanitarian and economic support.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the annual UK financial contribution to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCU); and what assessment they have made of the statement received by Aid to the Church in Need from members of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's National Episcopal Conference of the Congo on 13 April that attacks on civilians are occurring "a few metres" from MONUSCU troops. [HL14904]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement received by Aid to the Church in Need from members of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's National Episcopal Conference of the Congo that alleged attacks on civilians by the Allied Democratic Forces in North Kivu and Ituri have led to (1) the displacement of three million civilians, (2) deaths, and (3) the forced conversion of civilians to Islam. [HL14905]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned about violence against civilians in the

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), including in North Kivu and Ituri. Last week the British Embassy Kinshasa issued a joint statement with international partners condemning the attacks perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Beni, North Kivu. We are saddened that violence has displaced over 100,000 this year, and that armed groups continue to forcibly recruit civilians.

The UK is committed to building stability in eastern DRC, reducing violence, and providing support to victims through our humanitarian and stability programmes. In 2020/21 we provided approximately £52 million and three military staff officers to support the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO. We are committed to ensuring that MONUSCO effectively protects civilians and tackles the ADF. That is why we supported mandating MONUSCO to reinforce its troops in Beni during the Mission's last mandate renewal. We continue to urge the DRC Government and the UN to work together to better protect civilians. The Minister for Africa discussed this with President Tshisekedi during his visit to DRC in November 2020 and again during a telephone call in March this year.

Department for Education: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Sharkey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidelines the Department for Education (1) has, and (2) follows, for the time taken in responding to communications from members of the House of Lords. [HL14941]

Baroness Berridge: In line with Cabinet Office guidance, ministers within the department aim to respond to hon. and right hon. Members of the House of Lords within 18 working days to a piece of written correspondence, written parliamentary questions within 14 days of receipt, and commitments in the House to write to hon. and right hon. Members within 10 working days or as soon as possible.

As you will understand, the department has been dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to the impact of COVID-19. The department ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. and right hon. Members are prioritised wherever possible and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

Department for Education: Departmental Responsibilities

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to give the Minister for Children and Families a position in Cabinet. [HL14953]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans the Prime Minister has to make a national address directed

at children and young people about their role in Build Back Better: our plan for growth, announced on 3 March. [HL14954]

Lord True: I refer the noble peer to the List of Ministerial Responsibilities which sets out the allocation of portfolios across government; the Secretary of State for Education has overall responsibility for children's services and education.

The programme of Her Majesty's Government, including our policies to champion the interests of children and young people, will be set out in the forthcoming Queen's Speech.

Domestic Premises (Energy Performance) Bill (HL)

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 18 March (HL13898), on what grounds they consider that the Domestic Premises (Energy Performance) Bill [HL] "would reduce flexibility in the way we approach greenhouse gas emission savings". [HL14916]

Lord Callanan: The Government remains fully committed to the aspiration set out in the Clean Growth Strategy for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, affordable and cost-effective. This is reiterated in 2020 Energy White Paper and we are taking action to achieve this, as evidenced in recent consultations on improving the energy performance of privately rented homes in England and Wales, and on improving home energy performance through lenders.

However, new innovative approaches, including technologies and processes, may be developed over the next 14 years. The Bill's proposal to introduce this aspiration onto statute could reduce flexibility in the way we approach greenhouse gas emission savings and potentially mean that more cost-effective savings receive less attention or support.

Our forthcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy will set out how we intend to meet our wider commitments and set us on a path to decarbonising homes and buildings by 2050.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 18 March (HL13898), what assessment they have made of (1) clause 2(1), and (2) clause 2(2), of the Domestic Premises (Energy Performance) Bill [HL]. [HL14917]

Lord Callanan: As set out in the answer I gave the noble Lord on 18 March to Question HL13898, our plan for supporting fuel poor households is set out in the recently published strategy, *Sustainable Warmth – supporting vulnerable households in England*. Our forthcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy will set out how we intend to meet our wider energy efficiency

commitments and set us on a path to decarbonising homes and buildings by 2050.

East Coast Railway Line: Fares

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the results of the trial of single leg pricing on the East Coast main line. [HL15228]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 2 January 2020 we launched a single leg pricing trial on LNER routes from London to Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh. Due to the pandemic, passenger numbers fell to 5% of usual demand. Once demand recovers and further data is collected, the trial will be evaluated and those findings used to inform the development of wider plans for improving fares.

EGNOS: Finance

Asked by Lord Davies of Gower

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial contribution the EU requested for the UK to continue to access to the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service Safety of Life service; how the request compared with the UK's previous contributions; how they assessed value for money in view of its impact on aviation; and what plans they have to renegotiate access to this service. [HL15095]

Lord Callanan: The UK sought to negotiate a service access agreement on the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) with the EU. However, the EU required participation in the programme along with the full associated costs of participation, as per previous years, for continued access to the EGNOS Safety of Life service. For all programmes under consideration, the Government was clear it would only participate where the terms were in the UK's interests, and in this case, it was not considered value for money.

Officials in the Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority have been working with the aviation sector on understanding the impact and ensuring any available mitigations are put in place. The UK is also developing a national strategy for resilient position, navigation and timing through a dedicated programme of work which will consider the aviation sectors' needs and requirements.

The negotiations on EGNOS concluded in December and given the clear position from the EU, there are no plans to reopen discussions on this matter.

El Sharq

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for national security of reports that the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated El Sharq television channel will relocate from Turkey to London. [HL15017]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government keeps under review the activities of those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament. The UK Government continues to assess the Muslim Brotherhood's activities when appropriate to ensure our position is based on the latest information available and we will consider action against the review's commitments if and where legal thresholds are met.

Broadcasting regulation is a matter for Ofcom, the UK's independent media regulator. Ofcom sets clear rules and conditions for broadcasters who apply for a license to broadcast in the UK. The Broadcasting Code places standards around harmful and offensive material, incitement of crime, disorder, hatred or abuse, and responsible religious programming.

Electricity Generation: Scotland

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are liable for any conditional financial obligations under the financing arrangements between the Scottish Government and Liberty Steel Dalzell Limited and related parties in connection with Lochaber and related power purchase agreements, following the investment made by the Scottish government in 2016. [HL14930]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It is for the Scottish Government to decide what financial guarantees it provides in devolved areas and for managing any associated costs from its overall resources as set out in chapter 8 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance.

Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the Energy White Paper Powering our Net Zero Future, published in December 2020, that "all rented non-domestic buildings will be EPC Band B by 2030, where cost-effective", whether they plan to introduce a similar requirement for domestic premises; and if not, why not. [HL14918]

Lord Callanan: In the Clean Growth Strategy, the Government set the aspiration that as many homes as possible to reach EPC C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable.

We recently consulted on raising the energy performance standards in the domestic private rented sector to EPC band C for new tenancies from 2025 and all tenancies by 2028. We are currently analysing the responses and will be publishing the Government response in due course.

Financial Services

Asked by Baroness Hayman

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 11 November 2020 (HL Deb, cols 1115–28) on the future of financial services, what plans they have to consult industry and other interested parties on the technical screening criteria for the UK's 'green taxonomy.' [HL14992]

Asked by Baroness Hayman

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the statement by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 11 November 2020 (HL Deb, cols 1115–28) on the future of financial services, what plans they have to publish details of the membership of the Green Technical Advisory Group; and when they estimate that Group will complete its work. [HL14993]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has announced that it will be launching a Green Technical Advisory Group to provide independent advice on how to effectively implement a Green Taxonomy in the UK. This group will be made up of experts drawn from taxonomy users, academia, science, and NGOs. The Green Finance Institute will act as the secretariat for this group. As a first step, the GFI will provide independent advice, in consultation with industry, on the group's membership and its work plan. We will provide more details on this in due course.

The Government is required to make Technical Screening Criteria (TSC) for climate change mitigation, and climate change adaptation no later than 1 January 2023. These TSC will be subject to appropriate, open consultation prior to making.

Forests

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the acreage of ancient woodlands lost in England in each of the last ten years. [HL14932]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The irreplaceable nature of ancient woodlands as a habitat is recognised in our 25 Year Environment Plan. We will also be publishing this spring our England Trees Action Plan, which will set out our long-term vision for trees, including ancient woodlands.

The Government is committed to protecting ancient woodlands. In 2016, the National Forest Inventory report "Preliminary estimates of the changes in canopy cover between 2006 and 2015" found that overall, in England the level of permanent ancient woodland loss to other land uses was 57 hectares or 0.02% between 2006-2015. A copy of the report is attached to this answer.

Natural England and the Woodland Trust have an active project to revise Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory to cover the whole of England. This will include mapping smaller ancient woodland between 0.25 and 2ha, as the original inventory only included woodlands above 2ha, to provide a better assessment of these irreplaceable habitats.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

National Forest Inventory canopy cover report
[Preliminary_estimatesofthechangesincanopycoverinBritishwoodlandsbetween2006and2015.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-04-14/HL14932>

Forests: Nature Conservation

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce further protections for the remaining areas of ancient woodland in England. [HL14933]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The irreplaceable nature of ancient woodlands as a habitat is recognised in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

We therefore strengthened the protection of ancient woodlands through the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance to planners. These outline that developments should be refused if they would lead to the loss and deterioration of ancient woodland and veteran trees, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and suitable compensation measures.

In 2019, we announced that the Government would give the Woodland Trust £210,000 to work with Natural England to update the Ancient Woodland Inventory (which identifies over 53,000 ancient woodland sites in England). Having an up-to-date inventory will make it easier for us all to protect this important habitat.

We will soon be publishing an England Trees Action Plan which will set out our long-term vision for trees, including ancient woodlands.

Fossil Fuels: Overseas Investment

Asked by Baroness Blackstone

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 25 February (HL13294), how the "very limited exceptions" by which some fossil fuel projects will be permitted are defined. [HL14906]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Guidance on how the government will implement its policy on support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas was published in March and is available on the gov.uk website (see link below). The guidance covers: what is exempt from the policy, guidance on how the policy will apply to specific areas and areas not covered by the policy. Publication of the

guidance follows a consultation process that ran from 12 December 2020 to 8 February 2021.

How the government will implement its policy on support for the fossil fuel energy sector.

Fraud: Email

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable operators of the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) to respond to individuals forwarding suspicious phishing emails to the service to confirm (1) the outcome of their investigations, (2) the actions taken, and which (a) phone numbers, (b) email addresses, and (c) web pages have been blocked as a result. [HL15057]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) was launched by the NCSC in April 2020 and allows anyone who suspects an email, text or other form of communication to report it to report@phishing.gov.uk or forward a text to 7726, free of charge. As of 31st March 2021, over 5,500,000 reports have been received from the public, leading to the removal of over 41,000 scams and 81,000 URLs.

The NCSC analyses the suspect email and any websites it links to and also use any additional information provided to look for and monitor suspicious activity. If any activity is discovered that they believe is malicious, they may:

- seek to block the address the email came from, so it can no longer send emails;
- work with hosting companies to remove links to malicious websites; and
- raise awareness of commonly reported suspicious emails and methods used (via partners).

Every report receives an automated email response. While the NCSC is unable to inform the reporter of the outcome of its review, they do act upon every message received.

The automated response also states that SERS is not to be used to report a crime. If a person thinks they have been a victim of fraud or cyber crime, it is important that they should report this to Action Fraud (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Police Scotland (in Scotland). Reports received are analysed by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and, where there is sufficient evidence, disseminated to an appropriate force for investigation. Action Fraud, as part of this process, also has the means to direct victims to specialist support organisations.

Greensill: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government how quickly after accreditation Greensill Capital disbursed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme funds. [HL15066]

Lord Callanan: We are unable to provide information relating to individual borrowers as it is commercially sensitive.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chilterns

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of (1) damage, or (2) pollution, to (a) the Mid Chilterns aquifer, (b) the River Misbourne, and (c) Shardeloes Lake, caused by HS2's work in the area. [HL15052]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd's construction activities in the area have been the subject of comprehensive and detailed risk assessments. This reflects HS2 Ltd's commitment to Parliament to protect the water environment. The risk assessments have been produced with oversight and advice of technical experts from the Environment Agency and Affinity Water. HS2 Ltd will not commence construction within the aquifer until the Environment Agency and Affinity Water are satisfied that required mitigation measures are in place for any identified potential risks.

Home Education

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases local authorities have brought against parents whose child has been deemed not to be in receipt of a suitable full-time education through home-schooling in each of the last five years. [HL14943]

Baroness Berridge: The information requested is not held centrally and cannot be derived from current data sources. The department also does not currently collect data on numbers of home educated children.

Parents are not required to register if they are home educating their children. Therefore, there is not a robust basis on which the department can reliably collect statistics on home education.

Local authorities are under a duty to take action if it appears to them that the home education provided to a child is unsuitable. The department issued revised and strengthened guidance to local authorities in April 2019, setting out how they can exercise their powers in this regard.

Homelessness: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the successful re-housing of homeless individuals and families during the pandemic, what steps they will take to support homeless individuals and families after the pandemic. [HL15181]

Lord Greenhalgh: We have taken unprecedented steps to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and by the end of January, we had supported over 37,000 people with over 11,000 in emergency accommodation and over 26,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.

To make sure rough sleepers don't return to the streets, we are funding 6,000 long-term move-on homes for rough sleepers by the end of parliament, with the majority becoming available this year.

The Government has committed over £750 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone, continuing the Government's work to meet our commitment to end rough sleeping and fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Horizon Europe: Finance

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government, having secured Associate Status to the Horizon Europe programme, whether they will fund participation in that programme in full; and whether there will be a consequential impact on the UK Research and Innovation budget. [HL15223]

Lord Callanan: Association to Horizon Europe will bring huge benefits to the UK. The Government has announced an additional £250 million in 2021/22 for Horizon Europe. An additional £400 million, earmarked at Spending Review for 2021/22 to help support government priorities, will help to pay for association to Horizon.

Government investment in R&D will reach £14.9 billion in 2021/22, its highest level in four decades. UK scientists will now have access to more public funding than ever before.

Hospices: Finance

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Sue Ryder charity, published on 31 January, on the funding challenges facing the UK hospice sector. [HL14192]

Lord Bethell: The Government recognises the funding challenges facing the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 2020 and March 2021 £280 million of additional funding has been made available to hospices to secure capacity and free up acute care as part of the National Health Service response to COVID-19. Alongside this, hospices have benefitted from the financial support offered by HM Treasury to all charities, such as paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan.

No assessment has been made of the financial viability of United Kingdom hospices. Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations that receive some statutory funding, mainly from clinical commissioning

groups (CCGs) for providing local services. CCGs are responsible for the planning and commissioning of high-quality services that meet the needs of their local population.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial viability of the UK hospice sector. [HL14193]

Lord Bethell: The Government recognises the funding challenges facing the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 2020 and March 2021 £280 million of additional funding has been made available to hospices to secure capacity and free up acute care as part of the National Health Service response to COVID-19. Alongside this, hospices have benefitted from the financial support offered by HM Treasury to all charities, such as paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan.

No assessment has been made of the financial viability of United Kingdom hospices. Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations that receive some statutory funding, mainly from clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) for providing local services. CCGs are responsible for the planning and commissioning of high-quality services that meet the needs of their local population.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prevent new homes from being built with a lower standard than Energy Performance Certificate band B. [HL15147]

Lord Greenhalgh: Improving the energy efficiency of all our buildings to reduce carbon emissions is a key part of reaching our net zero target and new build is an area where we can and must maintain momentum.

From 2025, the Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes are future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency to produce at least 75 per cent lower CO2 emissions compared to those built to current standards, which represents a considerable improvement in energy efficiency standards of new homes.

This year we will introduce an interim uplift to the energy efficiency standards that delivers a meaningful reduction in carbon emissions and provides a stepping-stone to the Future Homes Standard in 2025. This uplift will be expected to produce 31 per cent less CO2 emissions compared to current standards. This will deliver high-quality homes that are in line with our broader housing commitments and encourage homes that are future-proofed for the longer-term.

Iraq: Arms Trade

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the training provided to 120,000 soldiers in Iraq has extended to contributing arms and equipment from companies in the British defence industry; and, if not, whether it will in the future. [HL14960]

Baroness Goldie: Since September 2014, the UK alongside allies has been supporting Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against Daesh, as part of a coalition and at the invitation of the Government of Iraq. In addition to training, the UK supports the Iraqi Security Forces with supplies of military equipment. As a result, the UK, has gifted equipment to Iraq.

The equipment to the Iraqi Security Forces has been gifted either directly from the UK MOD, using stock surpluses or through procuring equipment from British Defence Industry. For instance, in 2015 the UK MOD gifted C-IED equipment from surplus stock and more recently the UK gifted outdoor clothing, personal load carriage and chest rig equipment, which was procured from a British Defence Company.

Future provision of support to Iraq will be determined by many factors including the type of equipment required and its availability. Any request for such equipment is judged on a case-by-case basis.

For further details on the equipment gifted to Iraq, please refer to the UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Reports available on gov.uk.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what basis ad hoc meetings of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation may be called; and who is responsible for making this decision. [HL15058]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government who provides secretariat services to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation; and how far in advance of meetings are papers circulated to its members. [HL15059]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) individuals, and (2) organisations, have been commissioned to provide advice to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. [HL15060]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has (1) considered, and (2) circulated, the Sars-CoV-2 for

Cancer Patients (SOAP) study; and, if so, what assessment they have made of it. [HL15061]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has commissioned a review of the Sars-CoV-2 for Cancer Patients (SOAP) study. [HL15062]

Lord Bethell: Ad-hoc meetings of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are determined by the Chair, in consultation with the secretariat and Department. Ad-hoc committee meetings are called at key timepoints for the development of advice to the Department, outside the usual meeting schedule. Public Health England (PHE) provides the secretariat for the JCVI. Meeting papers are circulated as far in advance as possible. Given the frequency of meetings at this time, papers may be circulated around one to two days prior to the meeting.

The JCVI does not commission research or organisations. Data have been provided to the Committee from a variety of organisations, including OpenSAFELY, QCOVID, University of Oxford, industry representatives and PHE. Published or pre-publication academic research is also considered by the committee. The SARS-CoV-2 for Cancer Patients study has been provided to the JCVI's members. The JCVI is considering this paper and other academic research into immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines. The JCVI has not commissioned an external review of this paper. Their considerations and advice will be published in the minutes of the meetings and in the Green Book: Immunisation against infectious disease, in due course.

Local Government: Inspections

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the inspection into the governance of Liverpool City Council, what assessment they have made of the need to strengthen the (1) audit, and (2) scrutiny, arrangements for local councils. [HL15118]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Secretary of State published the Best Value Inspection report into Liverpool City Council on 24 March. He will take a final decision on his proposed response, following consideration of any representations received from the Council, after 24 May.

The Government remains committed to strengthening the local audit system. Our 17 December response to the Redmond review sets out how the Department, in partnership with key organisations, will act to strengthen and support the local audit market.

The Department updated the statutory guidance for local and combined authorities on overview and scrutiny in May 2019. Effective scrutiny is vital to ensure that councils can be properly held to account for their decisions, and councils running executive arrangements

must put in place overview and scrutiny committees to ensure this takes place.

As with all government policy, we keep the audit and scrutiny arrangements for local government under review.

Males: Health Services

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement on 6 March of a call for evidence in support of a new Women's Health Strategy, whether have they assessed the merits of developing a men's health strategy. [HL15156]

Lord Bethell: We have made no such assessment.

Marriage and Religion

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, published on 14 March 2018, what progress they have made on exploring "the legal and practical challenges of limited reform relating to the law on marriage and religious weddings". [HL15092]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: As the Government has made clear, this is a difficult issue which requires careful consideration. The Law Commission is separately looking at aspects of the problem through their review of the law governing legal marriage ceremonies. The Law Commission has now consulted with a wide range of groups with an interest and is considering the responses received. The Government looks forward to receiving the Law Commission's final report and recommendations later this year and will give them careful consideration.

The Government is aware that a separate Nuffield Foundation study, launched in September 2020 and due to report later this year, is investigating why marriage ceremonies occur outside of the legal framework for weddings in England and Wales. The Government will also wish to consider its findings.

Any proposals affecting how religious groups are permitted to conduct marriages must be thoroughly assessed for their fairness.

Marriage: Humanism

Asked by Lord Low of Dalston

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take further to the High Court's judgment in *Harrison v Secretary of State for Justice & others*, published on 31 July 2020; and what consideration they have given to introducing legislation to recognise humanist marriages in England and Wales. [HL15225]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct 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 it 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 in light of the Law Commission's recommendations.

Migrants: Detainees

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been held for 28 days or longer in immigration detention in the last year. [HL14981]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes statistics on length of detention of people in detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Data on length of detention of people in detention on the last day of each quarter are published in table Det_03c. Data on the length of detention of those leaving detention throughout the year, are published in Table Det_04b of the 'Detention summary tables' (See attached copy of the Detention Summary and Detention data sets).

Further breakdowns can be found in the Immigration detention detailed datasets Returns and detention datasets - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Figures on people in detention at the end of March 2021 will be published on 27 May 2021.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. immigration - Research and statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Detention Data Sets [detention-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx]

Detention Summary Tables [Copy of detention-summary-dec-2020-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-04-15/HL14981>

Motorways: Safety

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government when approval was granted for the introduction of smart motorways. [HL15203]

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Office of Rail and Road assessed the safety of smart motorways when they were introduced. [HL15204]

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport on 20 April of new safety measures for smart motorways, (1) how these measures will be funded, and (2) what impact there will be, if any, on other road safety schemes. [HL15205]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Since 1995, with the first Controlled Motorway, smart motorways have been progressively introduced to the Strategic Road Network (SRN). After a trial commissioned in 2001, the first Dynamic Hard Shoulder (DHS) motorway opened in 2006 and the first All Lane Running (ALR) motorway opened in 2014.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) was given the responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the performance and efficiency of Highways England in April 2015, after the development of all three forms of smart motorway. The latest safety evidence drawn from data and analysis of the 2019 STATS19 official statistics is contained in Highways England's *Smart Motorways Stocktake First year progress report 2021*, published on 20 April 2021. The Secretary of State has commissioned the ORR to independently review the data to provide further analytical assurance and ensure that the conclusions arrived at are robust.

The Transport Secretary has committed £500 million to smart motorway safety through the improvements set out in the Stocktake Action Plan, published in March 2020. Highways England is accelerating measures through existing contracts and final costings are yet to be confirmed, as they continue to plan and develop the programmes. No investment in smart motorway safety threatens funding to make roads safer on other parts of the road network.

NHS: Negligence

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many clinical negligence cases brought against the NHS in England were funded by (1) a conditional fee agreement, (2) legal aid, or (3) by some other form of funding, in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many cases in each of these categories resulted in a compensation payment. [HL15043]

Lord Bethell: The following table shows the number of cases notified in each of the previous five years under NHS Resolution's clinical negligence indemnity schemes. This data excludes those cases falling under the Existing Liabilities Scheme for General Practice as this scheme mainly covers inherited liabilities.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Conditional fee agreement	8,283	8,389	8,444	8,303	8,760
Legal Aid	305	234	157	148	118
Other funding	2,377	2,063	2,067	2,221	2,750

Information on the number of cases in each category which then lead to a compensation payment is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Ocean Wave 97

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many ships were included in the Ocean Wave task group of 1997. [HL15272]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many countries were visited by ships from the Ocean Wave task group of 1997. [HL15273]

Baroness Goldie: A total of 18 ships were included in the Ocean Wave task group of 1997. Ships from the task group visited 30 countries and three British Overseas Territories during the deployment.

Offenders: Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have for the police in England and Wales to follow the reported approach of Police Scotland of recording male perpetrators of rape or attempted rape who self-identify as female, as female on relevant police systems. [HL15056]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government takes all forms of sexual violence extremely seriously, regardless of between who it takes place or the profile of the perpetrator. Whether it is committed by a woman or a man, sexual violence in any situation, is completely unacceptable.

A total of 162,936 sexual offences were recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2020.

More details on the prevalence of sexual offences can be found at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesprevalenceandtrendsendlandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>.

It is an operational matter for the police to determine what relevant information should be recorded to assist in their investigation of individual crimes.

Home Office statisticians work with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) on the quality of data from the police. The OSR have issued guidance on the collection and reporting of data about sex in official statistics which informs on-going conversations the Department has with policing partners on the issue of data:

<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/draft-guidance-collecting-and-reporting-data-about-sex-in-official-statistics/>

Office for Students: Standards

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Office for Students (OfS) has taken since the Secretary of State for Education wrote to it on 8 February stating that "the OfS should not hesitate to use the full range of its powers and sanctions where quality of provision is not high enough". [HL15226]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: We want all higher education students, regardless of their background, to benefit from high quality, world-leading higher education. The letter of 8 February from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, sets out guidance to the Office for Students as the regulator for higher education, and strategic priorities for the next year and beyond. One of our highest priorities and an important manifesto commitment is to drive up quality and standards in higher education, which is a fundamental part of the levelling up agenda.

The letter of 8 February supports the Office for Students' consultation on regulating quality and standards, which aims to introduce a more rigorous and effective quality regime and to raise the bar on quality and standards in higher education. The Office for Students has concluded the first stage of its consultation. The Office for Students will shortly consult on the detail of how the quality and standards framework will work, including on how it will identify and take action against poor quality provision.

The government has made it clear that we expect the Office for Students to make rapid progress to ensure that an enhanced regulatory regime is in place, supported by effective and meaningful enforcement action, as soon as possible.

OneWeb and SpaceX: Satellites

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of the risks to low-earth-orbit spacecraft,

following the reported near miss between a OneWeb Satellite and a SpaceX satellite in April. [HL15161]

Lord Callanan: The UK is committed to ensure increasing level of commercial activity in space is carried out sustainably. We are working with industry to develop regulatory frameworks that promote safety and helping to facilitate international consensus on responsible behaviours in space.

Alongside our partners from the space sector, the Government are working with the UN and the European Space Agency to improve sustainability guidelines and to develop new ways of reducing the risk of collisions in space and removing space debris and have raised space sustainability as an issue for discussion at this year's G7 meeting.

OneWeb: Satellites

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what engagement they have had with (1) the Royal Astronomical Society, (2) the European Southern Observatory, and (3) other relevant stakeholders, about the planned increases in the number of OneWeb satellites in the sky. [HL15160]

Lord Callanan: OneWeb has met with the Royal Astronomical Society as well as representatives from the UK Space Agency and European Space Agency to discuss the potential impact of its operations on astronomy.

BEIS and the UK Space Agency will continue to support the UK science and astronomy community.

The community is working with colleagues from the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS), the European Astronomical Society and the International Astronomical Union to clarify what actions could be taken to mitigate interference for the UK community and our international partners.

Out-of-school Education: Islam

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 4 February 2020 (HL646) and 13 February 2020 (HL1377 and HL1414) and by Baroness Berridge on 12 March 2020 (HL2002), and in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what plans they have, if any, to allow Ofsted to inspect madrassas in the UK which provide teaching for fewer than 18 hours per week. [HL15177]

Baroness Berridge: As indicated in my answer to Question HL2002 on 12 March 2020, madrassas are generally considered to be out-of-school settings, which are not captured by a single dedicated regulatory framework, and therefore are not subject to inspections by Ofsted or the department.

However, as explained previously, the department is taking forward a package of measures to enhance safeguarding in out-of-school settings, safeguarding

children from all forms of harm, including extremism and terrorism.

The main phase of this work concluded in March 2020. We are currently considering how the outputs can be used to help inform best practice on how existing legal powers, held by local authorities, the police, Ofsted and other departments and agencies, can best be used to address safeguarding and welfare concerns. We are also looking into what more we might need to do at a national level.

In addition to this, we have also published a voluntary code of practice for out-of-school setting providers, such as madrassas, to support them in understanding what they need to do to run a safe setting. This is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>. Accompanying guidance for parents and carers is also available to help them make more informed choices when considering out-of-school settings for their children, including the red flags to look out for and what steps to take where they might have concerns.

As indicated in my previous answer, if the department became aware of a setting where children were at risk of harm, we would work closely with relevant agencies, such as the local authority, Ofsted or the police to take action.

Pancreatic Cancer

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in each month since January 2020; and what percentage of those diagnoses have been at Stage (1) 1, (2) 2, (3) 3, and (4) 4, respectively. [HL14983]

Lord Bethell: The number of diagnoses of pancreatic cancer by stage of diagnosis in 2020 is not yet available. The stage group by cancer type for diagnoses in 2020 is expected to be published in 2022.

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many pancreatic cancer surgeries have been cancelled in each month since January 2020. [HL14984]

Lord Bethell: The data requested on cancelled surgery is not collected centrally.

Pets: Travel

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards ensuring the unfettered movement of pets within the UK. [HL14919]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The health and documentary requirements for pet travel to the EU are set out under the EU Pet Travel Regulations. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU rules also apply to the non-commercial movements of pets into Northern Ireland from Great Britain.

We will continue to press the European Commission in relation to securing Part 1 listed status, recognising that achieving this would alleviate some of the new requirements for pet owners and assistance dogs users travelling to the EU and to Northern Ireland. We are clear that we meet all the animal health requirements for this, and we have one of the most rigorous pet checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity.

The Government is engaging with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to explore means to streamline pet travel between Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognising the high standards of animal health that we share. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has also written to the European Vice-President seeking to ensure that an agreement can be made to address the barriers imposed on pet travel between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Northern Ireland-based pets and assistance dogs returning to Northern Ireland from Great Britain can continue to use a Northern Ireland-issued EU Pet Passport to re-enter Northern Ireland and will not need an animal health certificate. Current guidance on pet travel to Northern Ireland is available on DAERA's NIDirect website.

We are proactively engaging with relevant stakeholders on the impacts on pet and assistance dog movements from Great Britain to Northern Ireland and also the EU.

Planning

*Asked by **Baroness Scott of Needham Market***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 19 April (HL Deb, col 1639), what discussions have been held by (1) ministers, and (2) civil servants, about the role of planning policy in helping the UK to meet legally binding (a) domestic, and (b) international, (i) climate, and (ii) biodiversity, targets. [HL15191]

Lord Greenhalgh: Ministers are regularly involved in cross-Government discussions about domestic and international climate and biodiversity targets, and how to meet them. Civil servants across departments and arm's-length bodies also meet regularly to discuss these issues and the relationship between planning policy and meeting our environmental goals. This involves targets such as net zero emissions by 2050 and delivering biodiversity net gain.

Tackling climate change is a top priority for the Government, and in the Planning for the Future White Paper, we committed to ensuring the planning system supports our efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits. Our response to the White Paper will be published in due course.

Civil servants from across Government engage with stakeholders including the Local Government Association and local authorities to ensure that planning policy can

support our domestic and international climate and biodiversity targets. This includes discussions between ministers, stakeholders and officials as to how planning policy can be a vehicle for achieving our biodiversity targets.

Primary Education: Admissions

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and (2) the COVID-19 pandemic, on demand for primary school places. [HL15123]

Baroness Berridge: Between 2010 and 2020, the primary school population grew 17%. The latest national pupil projections show the primary population being projected to decrease steadily throughout the next period.

It is too early to know what impact the COVID-19 outbreak or the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) may have on demand for primary school places. National offer day for primary school entry in September 2021 was on 16 April 2021 and application preference data is currently being collected from schools and local authorities for publication in June 2021. This will be the first application data collected following the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the COVID-19 outbreak.

The School Capacity Survey 2021 will take place later in the year. This will ask local authorities for pupil forecasts for the next five years. This year, additional guidance has been provided to help local authorities take account of EU Exit and COVID-19 effects, such as migration. Our advisors work closely with local authorities using this data to address capacity shortfalls and surpluses in schools.

Prostate Cancer

*Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many GP referrals there were for prostate cancer from 1 March to 1 December (1) in 2020, and (2) in 2019. [HL15103]

Lord Bethell: This data is not available in the format requested. Referrals for prostate cancer are recorded within the urology specialty but not recorded by urological cancer type.

*Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the number of urology specialist nurses treating prostate cancer. [HL15105]

Lord Bethell: Specialist clinical nursing workforce working in urology and prostate cancer is a post-registration qualification and it is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure they have the staff available to provide clinical services.

The Spending Review 2020 provides £260 million to continue to increase the National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including continuing to take forward the Cancer Workforce Plan - Phase One commitment to expand education and training to increase the number of clinical nurse specialists and develop common and consistent competencies.

Pupil Premium

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial impact on schools of the decision to base pupil premium allocations for the 2021–22 academic year on the October 2020 school census. [HL15124]

Baroness Berridge: The January 2021 census will be used to determine pupil premium eligibility for alternative provision and pupil referral units for the 2021-22 financial year. Pupil premium eligibility for mainstream and special schools will be based on the October 2020 census. Per pupil funding rates will be the same as in the 2020-21 financial year, which is expected to increase pupil premium funding from £2.4 billion in 2020-21 to more than £2.5 billion in 2021-22 as more children have become eligible for free school meals (FSM).

Separate to the pupil premium, we also intend to change the date for the Ever 6 FSM factor in the national funding formula (NFF). Without a change in dates, the Ever 6 factor in the 2022-23 NFF would be based on January 2020 census data. With the change to October, the intention is for the October 2020 census data to be used instead. This will shorten the Ever 6 funding lag in the NFF by 9 months and increase the amount of funding allocated through the Ever 6 factor in 2022-23, as FSM eligibility increased significantly between January and October last year.

In addition to this the government announced a further £302 million for a one off Recovery Premium which will be allocated to schools based on the same methodology as the pupil premium. In this way, schools with more disadvantaged pupils will receive larger amounts.

The department will confirm pupil premium allocations for the 2021-22 financial year in June 2021. This will provide the public with information on the specific amounts that regions, local authorities, and schools are receiving through the pupil premium for 2021-22. Data on the number of pupils who would have become eligible for the pupil premium if we had not changed the census data is not yet available.

The department publishes information on pupil premium allocations and the number of pupils eligible annually. The most recent publicly available figures can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

Religious Practice: Islam

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 8 April (HL14593), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, (1) what assessment they have made of any Islamist teaching in (a) mosques, and (b) madrassas, in the UK, (2) what assessment they have made of the number of Imams in the UK who cannot speak English, and (3) what plans they have to require services in mosques in the UK to be conducted in English. [HL14977]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We look at and assess all evidence of those that radicalise others though their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives.

HMG has made no assessment of the number of Imams present in the UK as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST, nor of their language skills.

HMG has no plans to mandate English language in any religious service as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Everyone has a right to freedom of religion under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act and is one of the fundamental rights that we will always protect in this country.

As outlined in our previous response, the Immigration Rules governing T2 Minister of Religion roles require applicants to demonstrate a strong command of the English language in order to qualify for a visa.

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. We remain of the view that the propaganda used by Islamist extremists is a distortion of true Islam.

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what plans they have, if any, to require services in mosques in the UK to be conducted in English. [HL15175]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: HMG has no plans to mandate English language in any religious service as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Everyone has a right to freedom of religion under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act and is one of the fundamental rights that we will always protect in this country.

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what discussions, if any, they have had with Islamic faith leaders to discuss the language in which services in mosques are conducted. [HL15176]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: HMG has no plans to mandate English language in any religious service as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Everyone has a right to freedom of religion under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act and is one of the fundamental rights that we will always protect in this country.

Research: Career Development

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability of early career researchers to continue in their research career. [HL15096]

Lord Callanan: We are aware of the enormous pressures that the pandemic has had on researchers and doctoral student's ability to conduct their research. The Government has made available £280 million of funding to sustain UKRI and National Academy grant-funded research and fellowships affected by COVID-19 through costed grant extensions and other measures.

UKRI has made over £62 million of financial support available to students most impacted by the pandemic. It is estimated that this funding is available for up to 12,000 students. This will go some way in ensuring students at the beginning of their academic career will obtain their doctorates in good time and stead.

Most research environments have now adapted to the pandemic, adjusting data-collection plans for their projects, and also operating in a covid-safe way for staff on site. We understand some researchers have been disrupted more than others, and we expect institutions and funders to work with them on a case-by-case basis.

We will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and UKRI continues to listen and respond carefully as the situation evolves.

Research: Finance

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government which projects have had their grant funding from UK Research and Innovation reduced in 2021–22 following the reduction in its Official Development Assistance allocation; and what is the size of the reduction for each of these projects. [HL15197]

Lord Callanan: 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 to all impacted award holders setting out the next stage of the review of ODA funding this year, and to explore options for individual programmes. Full details have been published on the UKRI website.

Retail Trade: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage consumers to support independent high street businesses. [HL14952]

Lord Callanan: We have extended opening hours for retail from 7am to 10pm until the 21st of June 2021, giving people greater flexibility to avoid peak times and easing transport pressures.

In order to support hospitality businesses, the temporary pavement licence provisions introduced in the Business and Planning Act 2020 create a quicker and cheaper process for businesses to obtain a licence to place outdoor furniture, including tables, chairs, and stalls outside their premise. The Government intends to extend the temporary pavement licence provisions for 12 months until September 2022, subject to Parliamentary approval.

In order to make sure that businesses can make the most of the summer, businesses such as pubs and restaurants, including where these premises are in listed buildings, will be allowed to use their land more flexibly to set up marquees and provide more outdoor space for diners as restrictions ease, allowing them to serve more customers and recover from the effects of the pandemic. They can be kept up for the whole summer rather than the 28 days currently permitted.

We are also providing a £56 million Welcome Back Fund which will help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces, and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets, and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives.

Rights of Way: Registration

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the deadline of January 2026 for the registration of new public rights of way under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. [HL14923]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra intends to lay legislation this year to streamline the process of recording and changing rights of way. A deadline for recording unrecorded historic rights of way will be brought into force which will finalise the legal record of rights of way. This will bring about certainty for users and landowners about where rights of way exist.

Whilst the cut-off date is currently 2026, this could be extended by regulation for a maximum of five years. Defra is working closely with stakeholders to understand different views and will take these views, along with the delays which this project has experienced, into account when reaching a decision.

After the cut-off date it will still be possible to record newly created rights of way on to the definitive maps.

Royal Family: Taxation

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Memorandum of Understanding on Royal Taxation, published in March 2013, whether inheritance tax will be payable on any bequests from HRH The Prince Philip to (1) HM Queen, (2) HRH The Prince of Wales, and (3) other members of the Royal Family. [HL15090]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government does not comment on the tax affairs of individuals. The tax affairs of the late Prince are entitled to the same strict confidentiality as those of any other person. The Memorandum of Understanding on Royal Taxation sets out the tax position for the Sovereign and The Prince of Wales. The normal inheritance tax rules will apply to other individuals.

Rwanda: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) plans, and (2) objectives, they have for the 2021 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting due to take place in Rwanda in June; and whether UK ministers and officials will attend that meeting physically. [HL14910]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is actively participating in preparations for the upcoming 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). We are working closely with the Government of Rwanda (who will host the CHOGM and take over from us the role of Commonwealth Chair-in-Office), the other member states and the Commonwealth Secretariat. We are looking to secure outcomes which build on the commitments and aspirations of the London CHOGM in 2018, and which respond to new shared challenges. Priority areas include, for example, climate change, sustainability, education and health. We hope that Commonwealth leaders will take the opportunity to boost momentum towards COP26. On education, we are encouraging Leaders' reaffirmation of their commitment to ensure that all girls and boys get 12 years of quality education. Ministers and officials plan to attend CHOGM in person.

Schools: Standards

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Ofsted ratings on the ability of a school to (1) attract, and (2) recruit, teaching staff. [HL15150]

Baroness Berridge: The department does not hold data to assess the impact of Ofsted ratings on the ability of a

school to attract and recruit teachers. However, the number of teachers remains high, with over 453,000 working in schools across the country, which is over 12,000 more than in 2010. This academic year (2020/21), we have provisionally recruited over 41,000 new trainee teachers – 23% more than last year (2019/20). The proportion of schools now rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding has also risen from 68% in 2010 to 86% in 2020.

We are moving forward with implementation of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy which the government published in January 2019. This includes commitments to reduce teacher workload, improve continuing professional development, and provide greater opportunities for flexible working.

Whilst delivering on these commitments will support all schools, we recognise that some schools and local areas face greater challenges with recruitment and retention than others. To supplement the national strategy, we are delivering targeted programmes to support recruitment and retention in challenging areas, including funding a range of regionally targeted initiatives.

The government is also committed to supporting leadership development for schools in challenging contexts so that all pupils receive equal access to excellent teaching. Over £40 million of scholarships funding has been made available between 2017 and 2020 to support teachers and leaders in the areas of the greatest need to take up a National Professional Qualification (NPQ). This funding has successfully supported many more people to access NPQ courses than originally intended, including those in some of our most challenging schools.

Schools: Technology

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the reported digital learning divide; and what plans they have to increase funding for technology within schools. [HL15120]

Baroness Berridge: As part of the government's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people. To date, over 1.29 million laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, trusts, local authorities and further education providers.

The department has also partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help disadvantaged children to have online access as well as delivering 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

We are building on the foundations of the department's significant investment in technology and exploring future options, which we will set out in due course.

Sheffield City Region: Finance

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have received a request from the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region (1) to increase the borrowing requirement of that Region, and (2) to use future share gain as a way of paying back debt; and what assessment they have made of any such request. [[HL14982](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Sheffield City Region Combined Authority is currently able to borrow in relation to its functions as a transport authority. The ability to borrow in relation to all functions is subject to the agreement of a debt cap with HM Treasury, which Sheffield City Region have requested following the full implementation of their devolution deal. These borrowing capabilities are consistent with those available to other Combined Authorities.

HM Treasury will make an assessment of Sheffield City Region's borrowing plans to inform discussions on any debt cap.

Small Businesses: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support small businesses owners who commit to investing in their businesses in 2021. [[HL14948](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government aims to make the United Kingdom the best place to start, grow and run a business. Support for small businesses to grow and invest comes on top of the Government's existing plans to support growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation – as set out in 'Build Back Better – our plan for growth', published alongside the Budget.

From April 2021 until the end of March 2023, companies can claim 130% capital allowances on qualifying plant and machinery investments. The super-deduction is the biggest two-year business tax cut in Modern British history - supporting British enterprise in leading us to the post-pandemic economic recovery. Under the super-deduction, for every pound a company invests, their taxes are cut by up to 25p. The super-deduction cuts the tax bills of companies that invest and the more they invest the less tax they will pay.

In order to help smaller firms improve business practices and productivity we are developing a new world-leading SME management training offer, Help to Grow: Management, aiming to directly upskill 30,000 business leaders helping them realise their potential. The Government will also launch a new online platform where businesses can access impartial advice on software, and a voucher to reduce the costs of buying that software through the Help to Grow: Digital scheme.

Our new Recovery Loan Scheme launched on 6 April, provides additional finance and further support to protect businesses and jobs, ensuring businesses continue to

benefit from Government guaranteed finance throughout 2021. The new scheme will enable businesses of any size to continue accessing loans and other kinds of finance from £25,001 up to a maximum of £10 million per business as they grow and recover from Covid-19 related disruption. Invoice and asset finance from £1,000 is also available.

For those starting a new business or for businesses which have been trading for up to 24 months, the Start Up Loans Company provides loans of between £500 to £25,000 at a competitive rate of 6%. In addition to finance, every loan recipient is offered a dedicated mentoring service and access to a free expert business mentor for 12 months to help them with every aspect of setting up a business. The Start Up Loans programme, operated by the British Business Bank, has issued loans to businesses in every Local Authority and UK parliamentary constituency since 2012.

The Government continues to provide a range of support and information for small businesses, including on starting and running a business, through our online services on GOV.UK. Support and advice is also available via the Business Support Helpline on FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098, and via the network of 38 local Growth Hubs in England.

South Sudan: Famine

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people at risk of (1) famine, or (2) severe food insecurity, in South Sudan in the next 12 months. [[HL14901](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK uses analysis published by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) to assess levels of food security in South Sudan. The latest IPC report for South Sudan was published in December 2020 and projected that from April-July 2021, 7.2 million people (ca. 60 per cent of population) will experience high levels of acute food insecurity. Of these, an estimated 108,000 people are projected to face catastrophic famine-like conditions. Data collection to inform analysis beyond July 2021 is currently underway.

St Vincent and the Grenadines: Volcanoes

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what urgent steps they are taking in response to the volcanic eruptions in St Vincent and the Grenadines. [[HL14934](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruptions.

To address immediate needs, on 12 April we pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to help address the humanitarian impact of the eruptions. Urgently needed

technical experts will support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities, such as water, health, agriculture and electricity. We have provided technical advice from the UK Government Office of Science (GO Science) and the British Geological Survey on how to deal with the significant ash fall (including on its impact on livestock).

The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have allocated \$1m in response to the eruptions in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The UK is a longstanding supporter of the CERF. In 2020, the UK was one of the largest donors to the Fund, providing £66m (\$88.6m) to support responses to humanitarian need across the globe.

Finally the UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

I spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. I discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption.

We will continue to work with CDEMA and other appropriate agencies to scope further UK support following assessment of needs.

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how, and through which channels, they have coordinated the international response to the volcanic eruptions in St Vincent and the Grenadines. [HL14935]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which is directly supporting the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) of St Vincent and the Grenadines, to help address the humanitarian impact of the eruptions. Urgently needed technical experts will also support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities, such as water, health, agriculture and electricity.

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The UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

We will continue to work with CDEMA, the UN Agencies, and Red Cross Societies to provide further support if required.

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have (1) offered, and (2) provided, to engineers in St Vincent and the Grenadines to help with (a) the restoration of water and electricity supplies, and (b) the construction of shelters for evacuees, following the volcanic eruptions. [HL14936]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruptions.

Urgently needed technical experts will support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities, such as water, health, agriculture and electricity. UK funding of £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is helping fund such work. We will continue to work with CDEMA the UN Agencies, and Red Cross Societies to provide further support if required.

The UK stands ready to extend further technical support to St Vincent and the Grenadines as it grapples with the longer-term impacts of the eruptions.

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) humanitarian assistance, and (2) emergency supplies, they have provided to St Vincent and the Grenadines following the volcanic eruptions. [HL14937]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruptions.

To address immediate needs, on 12 April we pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to help address the humanitarian impact of the eruptions. Urgently needed technical experts will support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities, such as water, health, agriculture and electricity. We have provided technical advice from the UK Government Office of Science (GO Science) and the British Geological Survey on how to deal with the significant ash fall (including on its impact on livestock).

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Finally the UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

We will continue to work with CDEMA and other appropriate agencies to scope further UK support following assessment of needs.

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with non-governmental organisations and churches in St Vincent and the Grenadines which are supporting evacuees following the volcanic eruptions. [HL14938]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

I spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. I discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption.

We will continue to work in partnership with the authorities and our trusted humanitarian partners, including the Red Cross Societies and UN Agencies, to ensure that the basic needs of the affected communities are met.

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution they have made to UK non-governmental organisations to support those organisations to provide assistance to those affected by the volcanic eruptions in St Vincent and the Grenadines. [HL14939]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has pledged an initial £200,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to help address the humanitarian impact of the eruptions.

The UK is also a contributor to the International Federation of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of some £209,000 to the St Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross response.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, spoke to the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and his High Commissioner to the UK on 14 April. They discussed initial and ongoing UK support for the recovery following the volcanic eruption.

We will continue to work in partnership with the authorities and our trusted humanitarian partners, including the Red Cross Societies and UN Agencies, to ensure that the basic needs of the affected communities are met.

Suez: Veolia Environment*Asked by Lord Fox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had about possible anti-trust issues following Veolia's agreement to acquire SUEZ Group. [HL15041]

Asked by Lord Fox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Competition and Markets Authority following Veolia's agreement to acquire SUEZ Group. [HL15042]

Lord Callanan: Competition investigations into mergers are a matter for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which is an independent non-Ministerial department. In the normal course of an investigation, the CMA may reach out to relevant stakeholders, including other regulators or relevant government departments to assist in its understanding of the market. The CMA is currently considering whether to refer Veolia's acquisition of a minority shareholding in Suez and Veolia's proposed public takeover bid for the remaining share capital of Suez for an in-depth review. The CMA will publish updates on its review of this transaction on its website.

Swinderby Railway Station*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 21 April (HL14705), what assessment they have made of the impact that additional stops at Swinderby train station will have on journey times between Lincoln and (1) Leicester, (2) Derby, and (3) Birmingham; and whether they consider reducing those train journey times to make them competitive with the equivalent journeys by car to be a strategic priority. [HL15243]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The maximum impact of additional services calls at Swinderby is 2 minutes onto the journey times; Midlands Connect are currently developing a proposal for line speed improvements between Lincoln and Nottingham, as part of their role in promoting strategic transport investment across the Midlands region. This aims to reduce journey times for passenger services by up to two minutes between Lincoln and Newark, although even with these journey time savings and the removal of Swinderby calls, the relative competitiveness of journeys by train versus car would remain broadly unchanged.

Taiwan: World Health Assembly*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to work with international partners to ensure that Taiwan is included at the forthcoming World Health Assembly on 24 May, and (2) to sanction any official of the government of China who attempts to exclude Taiwan from that Assembly. [HL14909]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has been consistently clear that it supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations where statehood is not a prerequisite. This includes at the WHA, where Taiwan can make a valuable contribution. We

remain in regular contact with our closest partners and the Taiwanese authorities, and continue to work to find a constructive solution.

Teachers: Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of current teacher workload on future retention rates. [HL15084]

Baroness Berridge: The government recognises the pressure that teachers and leaders in schools and colleges are under and is enormously grateful to them for their continued efforts, resilience, and service throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

The department is committed to ensuring that we continue to attract, retain and develop the high-quality teachers we need to teach the next generation. We are continuing the delivery of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, published in January 2019. This includes commitments to reduce teacher workload, improve continuing professional development, and promote greater opportunities for flexible working.

The department recognises that workload is consistently cited as one of the main reasons given by teachers for leaving the profession. We have taken action to address teacher workload, working with the profession, to tackle longstanding issues as well as the current challenges presented by the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have published a range of resources to help reduce unnecessary workload. For example, the successful school workload reduction toolkit, which helps leaders identify and tackle the drivers of unnecessary workload. The toolkit is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reducing-school-workload>.

We have seen encouraging examples of schools identifying and addressing workload challenges by using the toolkit, as shown in the report of a project run by the department and the Education Development Trust, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-education-development-trust-report>.

The department is continuing to work with teaching unions, teachers, and Ofsted to challenge and remove unhelpful practices that create unnecessary workload, to support the school recovery period.

Tigray: Sudan

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of UK aid to the Tigray region is being distributed in Sudan. [HL14902]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The conflict in Tigray has had significant consequences and displaced hundreds

of thousands of people, as well as impacting those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia and Sudan. Over 62,000 people have crossed from Ethiopia to Sudan as a result of the conflict (an additional 7,179 people have arrived in Blue Nile State as the result of separate conflict in the Benishangul Gumuz region of Ethiopia).

During his visit to Khartoum in January, the Foreign Secretary commended Sudan's leaders for their efforts to press for a peaceful resolution to the situation and support to refugees entering Sudan from Ethiopia. The UK has provided £6.1 million in funding to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Danish Refugee Council to address urgent needs arising from the Tigray crisis in Sudan. This additional funding is separate to the £15.4 million support specifically provided to help those affected by the conflict who are in Ethiopia.

Tourism: Training

Asked by Lord Ravensdale

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to invest in skills, training and educational opportunities for people of all ages working in the tourism industry. [HL15071]

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 all sectors, including the tourism industry.

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 in their chosen careers, including traineeships, which provide unemployed young people with employability training, work experience and English and mathematics skills.

We have also launched T Levels, which are a high-quality technical alternative to A levels. With longer teaching hours and a meaningful, 45 day minimum industry placement, employer designed T Levels will be excellent preparation for skilled work or further training.

Through the Plan for Jobs, we are investing £1.6 billion to scale up employment support schemes and training to ensure young people have the skills and training to go on to high-quality, secure and fulfilling employment. This funding is delivering real change on the ground, including through the new Kickstart scheme providing 6-month jobs for young people furthest from the labour market, incentive payments for employers taking on new apprentices, the largest ever expansion in traineeships and considerable growth in the number of sector-based work academy programme placements, to enable unemployed individuals to acquire the skills needed for local jobs.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, also announced £375 million for the National Skills Fund at the Spending Review in November 2020. This includes £95 million funding for a new level 3 adult offer and £43

million for skills bootcamps, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Currently, adults between the ages of 19 and 23 are eligible for full funding for their first full level 3 qualification, which is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or 2 full A levels. From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over who is looking to achieve their first full level 3 qualification will be 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, and are open to all adults aged 19 or over, who are either in work or recently unemployed.

Apprenticeships are available to individuals of all ages and backgrounds providing opportunities to earn whilst learning the skills and knowledge required to work in the tourism industry.

There are 600 high-quality apprenticeship standards to choose from that have been designed by employers to meet their skills needs. Employers in the tourism sector can take advantage of standards in a number of occupational routes. Within the hospitality and catering route for example, standards include hospitality team member, hospitality supervisor and hospitality manager. Other available standards include travel consultant and cabin crew. The full list of standards can be found here: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/?routes=Catering-and-hospitality>.

To help employers in all sectors, including tourism, to offer new apprenticeships we have increased the level of incentive payments. Employers can claim up to £3,000 for each apprentice they take on as a new employee between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 under the government's Plan for Jobs.

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government why a UK citizen officially resident in the European Union is not permitted to travel from the UK under COVID-19 regulations to be united with close family, but close family members are permitted to travel to the UK for this purpose. [HL15200]

Lord Bethell: A United Kingdom citizen who is officially resident in the European Union and who is in England temporarily would have a reasonable excuse to leave the UK, including where they are travelling to be reunited with close family.

Travel to the UK is not permitted if an individual has visited or passed through a country where travel to the UK is banned in the last 10 days, unless they are a British national, an Irish national or anyone with residence rights in the UK. This system allows those who live in the UK

to return to their home country but manages the risk of importing new COVID-19 cases.

Travel: Forms

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the declaration form for international travel from England does not allow a British citizen to provide an overseas address. [HL15235]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The travel declaration form is designed for the passenger to state who they are and why they are departing England to travel overseas. The details on the form including the address are not captured or recorded centrally. If a police officer has a reasonable belief that a passenger is travelling without a reasonable excuse, a separate process of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice is commenced which includes recording the residential address of the passenger for enforcement purposes.

We will amend the way the address is requested on the form to make it easier to complete for passengers with non-UK addresses.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extra costs to businesses in the UK of trading within the UK as a result of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL14911]

Lord Frost: The Protocol has had a direct impact on businesses moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. That is why we have provided extensive support to such businesses, including the Trader Support Service (TAS) - which has supported over 400,000 consignments since 1 January, the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS) - to support traders with new requirements for moving agri-food goods and, in due course, a new Digital Assistance Scheme to support supermarkets and their suppliers.

The TSS and MAS not only assist traders with any relevant paperwork but also cover the related costs, including the costs of any veterinary inspections, required for Export Health Certificates.

We continue to engage intensively with businesses to understand the challenges faced and find solutions.

UK Trade with EU: Greater London

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 and Cooperation Agreement on the level of trade experienced by businesses based in London. [HL14950]

Lord Frost: On 13 April, the Office for National Statistics released the latest statistics on EU-UK trade

which show a welcome growth in the value of trade with the EU, with goods exports close to the average 2020 level.

The vast majority of traders and hauliers have adapted well, and our focus now is on making sure that any business that is still facing challenges gets the support they need to trade effectively with the EU. We are continuing to monitor and assess the situation, including any potential change in trade patterns.

As the Office for National Statistics notes, it is premature to make any firm judgments on the long term impacts of our new trading relationship with the EU, especially with the pandemic still ongoing.

Universal Credit

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Universal Credit applications there have been since 21 March 2020. [HL15136]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The total number of new Universal Credit claims made between 21 March 2020 and the latest published date available, 14 January 2021, was 4,242,453. A small minority of people submitted more than one claim and therefore the number of unique individuals who have made a new claim to Universal Credit during the same time period was 4,063,276.

These statistics are published, by day of claim, every three months on Stat-Xplore and the next publication on 18 May 2021 should include daily claims data to 8 April 2021.

Universities: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a delayed return to in-person attendance at universities on the mental health of students. [HL15193]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: We recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Protecting the wellbeing of higher education students is vital, and it is important that students can continue to access the mental health and wellbeing support that they need, both whilst learning remotely and when they return to in-person teaching.

We expect higher education providers to continue to support their students, which has included making support services accessible from a distance and reaching out to those students who are likely to be more vulnerable. We encourage students to stay in touch with their provider's student support and welfare teams, as these services are likely to continue to be an important source of support.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has engaged with universities on this issue and has written to Vice Chancellors on numerous occasions, outlining that

student welfare should remain a priority. She has also convened a working group of representatives from the higher education and health sectors specifically to address the current and pressing issues that students are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

My hon. Friends, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families and the Minister of State for Universities, have also convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group. The group will drive action to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as they return to educational settings and will provide enhanced support for transitions between educational settings in the autumn.

We have worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to provide Student Space, which has been funded by up to £3 million by the OfS. Student Space is a mental health and wellbeing platform designed to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation. It is designed to work alongside existing services and provides dedicated, one-to-one telephone, text, and web chat facilities as well as a collaborative online platform providing vital mental health and wellbeing resources. The platform has been extended to cover the whole 2020/21 academic year.

We have also worked with the OfS to clarify that universities and other higher education providers can draw upon existing funding from the student premium to increase their hardship funds for students. We have made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Furthermore, we have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22, through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities grant funding, to help address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university, given the increasing demand for mental health services. This will target those students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable groups and hard-to-reach students.

As part of the mental health recovery action plan, the government has provided an additional £13 million to ensure that young adults aged 18 to 25, including university students, are supported with tailored mental health services.

Students struggling with their mental health can also access support via online resources from the NHS, Public Health England via the Every Mind Matters website and the mental health charity Mind: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/> and <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/student-mental-health-during-coronavirus/>.

Wills: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all wills requiring probate are required to be made available for public inspection; if not, what plans they have to make this a requirement for all wills, including those of

members of the Royal Family; and, further to the Wills Act 1837, whether the last will and testament of HRH The Prince Philip will be made available for public inspection. [HL15091]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Where an application is made to the Probate Service (part of the Family Division of the High Court) for a grant of probate in respect of a will, the general rule is that the will is attached to the grant of probate and made public. However, under Section 124 of the Senior Courts Act 1981, this is “subject to the control of the High Court and the probate rules”. Rule 58 of the Non-Contentious Probate Rules 1987 makes provision for the Court to determine that a will shall not be open to inspection if “such inspection would be undesirable or otherwise inappropriate”.

The Government has no current plans to change these rules. It is for the Court to determine, on an application by the personal representatives of the testator, whether any will should be closed to public inspection.

Working Hours

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposed three-year pilot project for a 32-hour working week in Spain; and what plans, if any, they have for a similar pilot project to be conducted in the UK. [HL14996]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the Prime Minister of New Zealand's request to businesses in that country to consider a four-day week; and what plans, if any, they have to make a similar request to UK businesses. [HL14997]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the debate by Japanese politicians over proposals for a three-day weekend to address 'karoshi' (death by overwork); and what consideration they are giving to the introduction of a three-day weekend. [HL14998]

Lord Callanan: The Government currently has no plans to introduce a mandated four-day working week in the UK.

The UK has one of the most flexible labour markets in Europe and this flexibility enables workers to participate in the labour market in a way that suits their circumstances. Working hours are ultimately a contractual matter to be agreed between a worker and their employer, and our existing legal framework provides a statutory right for all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service to request flexible working, where employees can request a change to their hours, working patterns or working from home.

Young People: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the briefing paper by the UCL Institute of Education The darkest hour? New evidence of the learning experiences, well-being and expectations of youth during the third national lockdown in the UK, published on 2 April; and what steps they are taking to increase the acquisition of work skills through education. [HL14951]

Baroness Berridge: *Education Recovery*

Many young people have lost a significant amount of learning during the COVID-19 outbreak. We recognise the importance of supporting this group of young people to help them catch up. This is especially critical for those young people moving from school into further education. We introduced catch-up funding to support those disadvantaged 16-19 students whose studies have been disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak, allocating up to £96 million to provide small group tutoring activity. We have extended this with further investment of £102 million into the 2021/22 academic year.

We are investing a further £102 million to continue the 16-19 Tuition Fund in the 2021/22 academic year. As a result, hundreds of thousands of young people will be eligible for valuable tuition to help them recover lost learning caused by COVID-19-related disruption. Within the eligible cohort, providers will have discretion to target those students who need support most. As further evidence emerges, we will consider if refinements to eligibility for future funding are needed to maximise its value and impact in providing catch-up support for 16-19 students.

Wellbeing & Disadvantage

Further education (FE) providers provide mental health support to students in their wrap around, pastoral offer. This includes a number of initiatives supported by the Department for Education, including the 'Wellbeing for Education Return' - an £8 million scheme funding expert advisers and training in every local authority area to support wellbeing recovery as children and young people returned to school and FE from September 2020 and the £5.4million College Collaboration Fund helping colleges to develop new ways to support student and staff mental health and wellbeing, details of which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-collaboration-fund-ccf-projects/resources-college-collaboration-fund-ccf>.

As part of the £350 million tutoring support funding announced in June 2020, we made available a one-off, ring-fenced 16-19 Tuition Fund of up to £96 million for the academic year 2020/21. The 16-19 Tuition Fund is specifically for FE and sixth form colleges, school sixth forms and other providers of 16-19 education, to support disadvantaged students.

Skills

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.

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 and 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.

We recognise the vital role that further education plays in supporting our labour market and productivity, as well preparing young people for higher education.

Through the Plan for Jobs, we are investing £1.6 billion to scale up employment support schemes and training to ensure young people have the skills and training to go on to high quality, secure and fulfilling employment. This funding is delivering real change on the ground, including through the new Kickstart scheme providing six-month jobs for young people furthest from the labour market, incentive payments for employers taking on new apprentices; the largest ever expansion in Traineeships; and considerable growth in the number of sector-based work academy programme placements to enable unemployed individuals to acquire the skills needed for local jobs.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has announced £375 million for the National Skills Fund at Spending Review in November 2020. This includes £95 million funding for a new level 3 adult offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Currently, adults between the ages of 19 to 23 are 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 will be 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.

Higher Education

For students in higher education (HE), following the review announced in the Roadmap of when all higher education students can return to in-person teaching, the government confirms that remaining students on non-practical courses should return to in-person teaching alongside step 3 of the Roadmap which will be no earlier than 17 May.

We understand the difficulty that this further delay will create for students and their families, as well as providers and staff both financially and in terms of mental wellbeing. The government is making a further £15 million of additional student hardship funding available for this academic year 2020/21.

In total we have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship. This is on top of the £256 million of government funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on towards student hardship funds for this academic year 2020/21. Alongside this, we have worked with the Office for Students to launch the online mental health platform Student Space, worth up to £3 million, in addition to the £15 million we have asked them to allocate to student mental health initiatives next year.

Education and skills lie at the heart of our national mission as we recover from the disruption caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. It is critical, not only for this generation of young people, but also for the economic and social health of the nation.

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