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**Thursday
20 May 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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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
Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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
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

Thursday, 20 May 2021

Britain's Railways

[HLWS40]

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

Today, 20 May 2021, we are announcing our plan for the transformation of Britain's railways. The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail fully reflects the independent recommendations of Keith Williams, to whom the government is grateful for his thorough work since 2018. Williams identified serious issues facing the railways before Covid struck; the pandemic has exacerbated some of these and added more. The government has provided unprecedented support to keep the railways running during the pandemic. Now, we look to the future – today we are setting out an ambitious plan to ensure that the system is ready to meet these challenges.

Today's railway is fragmented – numerous bodies with different incentives lead to a lack of joined-up thinking. No single organisation is accountable for integration, planning and leadership across infrastructure, passenger services and freight operations.

Even before Covid, the franchising model for passenger services had become unsustainable, with multiple failing franchises, delayed competitions and dwindling market confidence. East Coast and Northern had already failed and the government had to step in.

To meet these challenges this government is introducing the biggest reform to the railway in three decades. We are committed to delivering a rail system that is the backbone of a cleaner, greener public transport system, offering passengers a better deal and greater value for money for taxpayers. That means getting the trains to run on time, providing a better quality of service and having a firm control of the sector's costs.

To bring about change on the scale that is needed:

- We will end three decades of fragmentation by bringing the railways back together under a new public body with a single, national leadership and a new brand and identity, built on the famous double arrow. Great British Railways (GBR) will run and plan the network, own the infrastructure, and collect most fare revenue. It will procure passenger services and set most fares and timetables.
- We will make the railways easier to use by simplifying fares and ticketing, providing more convenient ways to pay with contactless, smartphone and online, and protecting affordable walk-on fares and season tickets. Rail services will be better coordinated with each other, and better integrated with other transport services such as trams, buses and bikes.
- We will keep the best elements of the private sector that have helped to drive growth. GBR will contract

private partners to operate the trains to the timetable it sets. These contracts will include strong incentives for operators to run high-quality services and increase passenger demand. The contracts are not one-size-fits-all, so as demand recovers long-distance routes will have more commercial freedom to attract new passengers. Freight is already a nimble, largely private sector market and will remain so, while benefitting from the national coordination, new safeguards, and rules-based access system that will help it thrive.

- We will grow, not shrink, the network, continuing to invest tens of billions of pounds in new lines, trains, services and electrification.
- We will make the railways more efficient. Simpler structures and clear leadership will make decision making easier and more transparent, reduce costs and make it cheaper to invest in modern ways to pay, upgrade the network and deliver new lines. The adversarial blame culture will end, and everyone across the sector, including train operators, will be incentivised to work towards common goals, not least managing costs.

These changes will transform the railways for the better. They will also make the sector more accountable to taxpayers and government. Government ministers will have strong levers to set direction, pursue government policies and oversee delivery to ensure the railways are managed effectively and spend public money efficiently. Great British Railways will be empowered – a single, familiar brand with united, accountable leadership.

These reforms represent a bold new vision for passengers – of punctual and reliable services, simpler tickets and a modern, green and innovative railway that meets the needs of the nation. In summary our ambitious rail transformation programme will deliver 10 key outcomes:

- A modern passenger experience;
- A retail revolution;
- New ways of working with the private sector;
- Economic recovery and financial sustainable railways;
- Greater control for local people and places;
- Cleaner, greener railways;
- Bold, new opportunities for rail freight;
- Increased speed of delivery and efficient enhancements;
- Skilled, innovative workforce; and
- A simpler industry structure.

This is not renationalisation, which failed the railways, rather it is simplification. While Great British Railways acts as the guiding mind to coordinate the whole network, our plan will see greater involvement of the private sector – private companies will be contracted to run the trains, with stronger competition to run services. Our reforms will also unleash huge new opportunities for the private

sector to innovate in areas such as ticket retailing and data that can be used by passengers to better plan their journeys.

We look forward to building this new vision for Britain's railways in collaboration with the sector. We are proud to set out plans to support our railways and serve our country with a system that is efficient, sustainable and run in the public interest.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

British Railways Williams Shapps [(CP 423) - Great British Railways Williams.Shapps.Plan for rail.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-05-20/HL.WS40/>

European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks Report

[HLWS41]

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

I am today laying before Parliament a report: 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 December 2020 to 25 March 2021'.

I am laying this report because it is a legal requirement under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 for quarterly reports to be made to Parliament on the progress of the work to develop Common Frameworks.

The report is available on GOV.UK and details the progress made between the UK Government and devolved administrations regarding the development of Common Frameworks.

This report details progress made during the eleventh 3-month reporting period and sets out that no 'freezing' regulations have been brought forward under Section 12 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act.

A copy of the 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 December 2020 to 25 March 2021' report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The publication of the report reflects the Government's continued commitment to transparency.

Government Consulting Hub

[HLWS42]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I am pleased today to formally launch the new Government Consulting Hub, a centre of expertise for Her Majesty's Government on management consultancy.

As the Minister for Efficiency and Transformation in the Cabinet Office and Her Majesty's Treasury, I am aware of the enormous potential that the Civil Service has, and I am committed to ensuring that the work of the Civil Service offers public value and upholds the highest standards of performance.

As our centre of excellence for consultancy, the Government Consulting Hub will establish new approaches to knowledge generation and sharing and to training in partnership with the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit. It will drive up capacity and the capacity to work jointly across departments to reuse thinking and work, and to be our own experts where it is reasonable to do so.

These core elements will provide the Civil Service with a powerful resource, helping to reduce the amount spent on consultancy, maximise value where consultants are needed, and support the growth and use of the Civil Service's internal capability to deliver consultancy-type work and to deploy consultancy type skills.

This is not just a savings exercise. This is a real opportunity to invest in the future of the Civil Service, to build capability, skills and experience, and to have a much greater impact in the work that is delivered. An overview of the work of the Government Consulting Hub has been published today on GOV.UK.

Written Answers

Thursday, 20 May 2021

Armed Forces Covenant: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Armed Forces Covenant is fully implemented in Northern Ireland. [HL172]

Baroness Goldie: The Armed Forces Covenant applies throughout the U.K. but delivery is shaped by local and regional factors and jurisdictions. The Government is making good progress in delivering the Covenant in Northern Ireland, where unique circumstances require a different approach to be taken from the rest of the U.K.

For example, last year Danny Kinahan was appointed as Northern Ireland's first Veterans Commissioner, to act as a voice and advocate for veterans; additional funding has been secured for the Veterans' Support Office in Northern Ireland to assist in delivery of the Covenant at ground level; and projects in Northern Ireland received over £1.6 million last year from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's £10 million per year fund for initiatives across the U.K. that support the Armed Forces Community.

The Ministry of Defence's review into the Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish (Home Service) Aftercare Service (NI ACS) has begun. It is currently considering whether the remit of the Service should be widened to cover all Her Majesty's Forces veterans living in Northern Ireland with service-related injuries and conditions. The review is due to conclude in March 2022.

Finally, the Government is further incorporating the Armed Forces Covenant into law, in the Armed Forces Bill 2021, and this will apply across the U.K., including in Northern Ireland.

Change and Innovation in the Unsecured Credit Market Review

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to implement the recommendations made by the Financial Conduct Authority in The Woolard Review - A review of change and innovation in the unsecured credit market, published on 2 February. [HL90]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has welcomed The Woolard Review - A review of change and innovation in the unsecured credit market. The review will contribute to the evidence base to inform the Government's future decisions in relation to this market.

The review made recommendations to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), including many calling for the FCA to work closely with government. The FCA has stated that it supports the recommendations directed to the FCA and will build these recommendations into their

forthcoming Business Plan, as one driver of their priorities for 2021-22.

While many of the recommendations are for the FCA and are, as the review acknowledges, longer-term recommendations there was one recommendation relating to Buy-Now-Pay-Later which required urgent Government action.

We have already responded to this recommendation. On 2 February the Government announced it would legislate to regulate interest-free Buy-Now-Pay-Later agreements, and these agreements will be regulated by the FCA. On 17 March, the Government tabled an amendment to the Financial Services Bill to provide the Government with the powers to ensure a proportionate approach to this regulation. The Government will bring forward secondary legislation to bring currently unregulated Buy-Now-Pay-Later products into regulation when Parliamentary time allows. The final approach to regulation will be determined following public consultation.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 test kits manufactured in China have been purchased for use in the UK; what those kits have cost; and what capacity there is in the UK for the production of such kits. [HL132]

Lord Bethell: As of 14 May 2021, more than 1 billion self-test and assisted lateral flow devices (LFDs) manufactured in China have been purchased for use in the United Kingdom. We are unable to provide the cost of these kits as this information is commercially sensitive. A gradual increase in the proportion of UK-produced self-test LFDs is anticipated by the summer.

Debts: Advisory Services

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the findings in the Christian's Against Poverty's Our Story, Client Report 2021, published in April, that 45 per cent of clients did not initially know where to access help to manage their debts, what plans they have to better (1) signpost, and (2) raise awareness of, debt advice services as part of the recovery from COVID-19. [HL93]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises that some people are struggling with their personal finances as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold. The Government is committed to helping people access the support they need to get their finances back on track. This is why it has agreed to maintain record levels of debt advice funding for the Money and Pension Service (MaPS) in 2021/22, bringing the budget for free debt advice in England to £94.6 million, an increase of over 70% compared to 2019/20 levels.

Support from MaPS is available to all online, and the website includes a debt advice locator tool to help people find local free advice services. MaPS also launched a Money Navigator Tool last year, promoted via various channels, which helps people navigate their finances during the pandemic and avoid financial issues worsening in future.

To ensure that people are signposted to the help they need, MaPS services are referenced in the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) guidance, which is issued to all financial services lenders regulated by the FCA. Further, MaPS-funded free-to-client debt advice service providers have been pro-actively reaching out to customers during the pandemic, including by using video-calls and webchat to offer broader ways for clients to engage.

In addition, the MaPS-led Pilot of Adviser Capacity and Efficiency (PACE) was launched in March 2019, offering a new route into debt advice. This pro-actively engages people by working closely with creditors, who introduce those who are missing payments to the service and promote the benefits of seeking help. In addition to creditor referrals, MaPS launched a self-referral route into PACE in November 2019 to engage with customers directly. The pilot's evaluation is ongoing, and MaPS will move successful elements of the work to full-scale from this Autumn.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many civil servants at the Department of Health and Social Care support the work of the Joint Committee on Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI); which teams those staff are in; who they are managed by; and how they filter information they provide to the JCVI. [HL68]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what qualifications in (1) medical, and (2) scientific, areas the civil servants at the Department of Health and Social Care who support the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation possess. [HL69]

Lord Bethell: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is supported by 4.5 full time positions as secretariat to the committee. The secretariat are based in the Immunisation Division in the National Infection Service of Public Health England (PHE) and managed by the Head of Immunisation in PHE.

The secretariat gathers information from a range of sources, including from academic research, PHE and from industry sources. Decisions on information to be shared with the JCVI are made by the secretariat in consultation with consultant epidemiologists, the Head of Immunisation and the Chair of the Committee. Members

may also share information with the secretariat or the JCVI. The secretariat are educated to degree level or higher in biological sciences disciplines and are supported by the Head of Immunisation in PHE and a number of consultant epidemiologists and scientists.

Merchant Shipping: Communication

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a contingency plan in place for British Ship Owners in the event of war or disaster causing the total loss of communications with British merchant shipping. [HL121]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport routinely assesses and monitors the risks posed to British-flagged shipping worldwide, using intelligence assessments and reporting from a range of HMG partners. Guidance and advice is updated and shared with industry on a regular basis; emergent risks and associated advice are distributed through a resilient communications system.

In the event of war or disaster, causing the total loss of communications with British-flagged vessels, appropriate contingency plans and proven structures are in place to ensure ship owners have access to the required guidance and full range of support available from HMG.

National Tutoring Programme: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the National Tutoring Programme targets financially disadvantaged pupils. [HL111]

Baroness Berridge: The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is currently available for schools during the 2020-21 academic year. Schools can access tuition support from approved Tuition Partners. For further information, schools can visit the NTP website: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/>.

The NTP is a key part of the government's COVID-19 catch-up response and provides additional, targeted tuition support to disadvantaged children and young people who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Our delivery partner, the Education Endowment Foundation, has provided a guide to schools to ensure that they can make the most of the provision: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/resources>.

The programme is intended to support disadvantaged children who are eligible for pupil premium funding, but we recognise that the COVID-19 outbreak has affected many children's lives in many ways and there are different indicators of disadvantage to take into consideration. That is why teachers and head teachers have the flexibility to exercise their professional judgement to identify the

pupils most likely to benefit from additional support. In addition to the support offered by Tuition Partners, we have placed over 1,000 Academic Mentors directly into some of our most disadvantaged schools to provide in-house tuition.

The Tuition Partners offer a good blend of national and regional providers that can offer support to schools across all regions in England. The programme ensures that support has been particularly targeted to regions with the largest numbers of disadvantaged pupils and in regions where access to tutoring has historically been low.

We continue to engage directly with head teachers, local networks of schools and national stakeholders to ensure that NTP support reaches as many disadvantaged pupils as possible.

Schools: Mental Health Services

Asked by Baroness Tyler of Enfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Department for Education press release 'Schools and colleges to benefit from boost in expert mental health support', published on 10 May, what is the percentage of schools that will benefit, by the end of the 2021-22 academic year, from (1) the accelerated roll-out of Mental Health Support Teams, (2) the new training for senior mental health leads, and (3) both of these initiatives. [HL113]

Baroness Berridge: The government estimates that around 400 Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), covering an estimated 3 million children and young people (around 35% of pupils and students in England), will be in place in schools and colleges by 2023. Over 180 MHSTs have already been established across the country covering approximately 15% of the pupil and student population in England, and we expect teams to reach 20-25% coverage by the end of financial year 2021/22 – a year earlier than originally planned.

A grant for senior mental health lead training will become available at the start of the new academic year 2021/22, enabling up to 7800 schools and colleges (approximately a third of all schools and colleges) to access training to help them implement a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing before 31 March 2022. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>. Funding beyond 1 April 2022 is subject to future government spending decisions and as schools and colleges are yet to apply for a senior mental health lead training grants, no data is available on the percentage of schools and colleges receiving both MHST support, and senior mental health lead training.

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 27 April (HL14861), whether the statistics provided include those aged over 80 who received no State Pension; and, if not, as of March 2021 how many (1) women, and (2) men, living in the UK aged over 80 were receiving no State Pension. [HL201]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: I can confirm that the figures provided in HL14861 only include those aged over 80 that are currently in receipt of a State Pension.

The Department does not hold the information to answer how many individuals are not in receipt of State Pension.

Taxation: Treaties

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the tax treaty between the UK and Canada overrides the legislation and HMRC guidance which advises that MPs and peers should be domiciled in the UK for tax purposes. [HL52]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The tax treaty between the UK and Canada does not override the provision of UK law that treats members of the House of Commons and House of Lords as domiciled in the UK for tax purposes.

UK law also treats members of the House of Commons and House of Lords as resident in the UK for tax purposes. Where an MP or peer was also resident in Canada for tax purposes under Canadian law, a tie-breaker in the tax treaty would determine the state in which the member was considered to be resident for the purposes of applying the tax treaty.

Unemployment: Young People

Asked by Baroness Sherlock

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the £90 million programme to help tackle inequalities in youth unemployment, announced on 19 March 2018, was distributed in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, (3) 2020 and (4) 2021. [HL103]

Baroness Barran: In 2018, the government announced that £90m of dormant assets funding would be used to tackle inequalities in youth unemployment. This was allocated in full to the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF), an independent organisation established in 2019 to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. YFF draw down their funding

according to need and have so far received £55.86m of the £90m allocated to them: (1) £125,000 in 2018, (2) £45.7m in 2019, and (3) £10m in 2020. As an independent organisation, the government has no control over the timings of any onward distribution of this money.

USA: Unidentified Flying Objects

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have had any role in the government of the United States' Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force; if they had no such role, what contact and information exchange they have had with that Task Force; and whether that government has contacted the UK Government about a report being prepared by the US Director of National Intelligence on this issue. [\[HL139\]](#)

Baroness Goldie: Her Majesty's Government does not have a role in the United States' Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force. Whilst the Ministry of Defence is aware of the planned report, it has not contributed to it and would be unable to provide any comments on the report ahead of its official release by the US Government.

War Widows: Pensions

Asked by Lord Craig of Radley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have found a solution to the problem of War Widows pensions, as referred to in the letter from Baroness Goldie to Lord Craig of Radley dated 11 March 2020 and placed in the Library of the House. [\[HL211\]](#)

Baroness Goldie: The Government recognises the unique commitment that service families make to our country and remains sympathetic to the circumstances of those who remarried and cohabited before 1 April 2015. The Ministry of Defence is exploring options that ensure consistency with established Government convention that such payments are not made retrospectively. The issue remains a priority for the Department, though it remains very complex. The Defence Secretary has taken a personal lead in this matter and wrote to Mrs Mary Moreland, the former Chair of the War Widows Association. The Department is ensuring that the necessary time and resource is committed to examine every reasonable option that remains possible.

World Heritage Sites: Liverpool

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Historic England's view that (1) the Liverpool Docks are the largest and most complete system of docks anywhere in the world, and (2) the infill of the West Waterloo Docks would harm Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage status. [\[HL106\]](#)

Baroness Barran: The Government recognises the importance of protecting Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage status, and the outstanding universal value for which the Liverpool Docks and the rest of the site were inscribed in 2004. We continue to value the advice of Historic England on all aspects of the United Kingdom's implementation of the World Heritage Convention. We note Historic England's opposition to the proposed development at West Waterloo Docks and will continue to work with all parties to protect the heritage of Liverpool.

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