

**Session 2021-22**  
**No. 10**



**Thursday**  
**27 May 2021**

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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 27 May 2021

## Bovine TB

[HLWS57]

**Lord Benyon:** My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (George Eustice) has today made the following statement:

I am updating the House on today's publication of the Government's response to a consultation and call for views on a range of proposals to help eradicate bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in England by 2038. This is a step towards some of the key priorities that this Government set out in response to Charles Godfray's independent review of our bTB eradication strategy in March 2020.

BTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. In the last year, over 27,000 cattle in England were compulsorily slaughtered to tackle the disease. This causes devastation and distress for hard-working farmers and rural communities and is damaging our reputation as world leaders in high standards of animal health and welfare. Tackling bTB in England is costing taxpayers over £100 million each year.

The bTB eradication strategy, published in 2014, is making progress, with sustained reductions in the number of new cases and proportion of cattle affected by the disease in the highest incidence areas. However, to achieve bTB free status for England by 2038, we need to build on this momentum.

The consultation focused on proposals to transition away from the current badger control policy and improve diagnostic testing to root out bTB more effectively. Badger culling is one of the most contentious and divisive policies within our bTB eradication strategy and our latest consultation has continued to attract scrutiny.

We should continue to proceed with the transition to non-lethal wildlife controls as set out in the consultation and striking a timely balance for this transition will be crucial. Current policy enables four-years of intensive culling in defined areas, with scope for a further five years of supplementary culling. I intend to stop issuing intensive cull licences for new areas post 2022 and enable any new licences issued from 2021 to be cut short if the Chief Veterinary Officer considers this acceptable based on the evidence available at the time. Supplementary cull licences will be limited to two years and no further such licences will be issued in any areas in which supplementary culling has previously been licensed. We will develop a monitoring system to track the badger population and disease in badgers in former culling areas to monitor any trends. This data will be published, thus supporting any future decision making.

The consultation also put forward proposals for targeted changes to our cattle testing policy to ensure we root out the disease in herds with sustained problems, whilst

further helping to protect low risk bTB areas. I am committed to introducing these policy changes as soon as is practicable. The parallel call for views included longer term options for further changes and improvements to bTB testing, supporting responsible cattle movements and rewarding low risk cattle purchasing behaviour. It also discussed ways we can continue to adapt how we pay compensation or indeed, reward farmers for "best practice". We are considering the evidence submitted through consultation responses to determine next steps here.

I am committed to accelerating work to deliver a deployable cattle vaccine by 2025. This will be a powerful additional tool in the fight against bTB and will support the staged transition away from culling in ways which will help to protect gains made and ensure incremental progress continues to be made towards disease eradication. Field trials are expected to commence in June.

There is no single solution to the scourge of bTB and we must continue to deploy a range of policy interventions. New industry initiatives, such as the CHECS TB entry-level membership, have launched. The successor to the TB Advisory Service will also provide the practical help many herd owners need.

Working together, I have full confidence that we can continue to turn the tide on this terrible disease and achieve our long-term objective of eradicating it in England by 2038.

## Empowering British Citizens Overseas to Participate in our Democracy

[HLWS59]

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

As we move to the new chapter in our nation's history and embrace the global opportunities it presents, we must ensure that the voices of our citizens across the world are heard. As committed to in the Government's 2019 manifesto, we will be bringing forward measures in the upcoming Elections Bill to scrap the arbitrary 15-year limit on the voting rights of British expatriates and make it easier for more British citizens living overseas to vote in UK Parliamentary elections.

### *Delivering Votes for Life*

In an increasingly global and connected world, modern technology and accessible air travel has strengthened the ability of our expatriates to retain deep ties to the United Kingdom. Many still have family here, a lifetime of hard work in the UK behind them and some will have even fought for our country. What's more, decisions made in the UK Parliament on foreign policy, defence, immigration, pensions and trade deals directly affect British citizens who live overseas. It is therefore right that they have a say in General Elections and are well supported to do so.

Currently, to register as an overseas elector, British citizens need to have been registered to vote in UK Parliamentary elections in the UK within the last 15 years. This arbitrary and anachronistic time limit will be removed in changes to be brought forward in the Elections Bill, enabling British citizens who were previously registered or resident in the UK to vote in UK Parliamentary elections, no matter how long ago they left.

Being previously registered to vote or having previous residence in the UK denotes a strong degree of connection to the UK and so this extension of voting rights sets a sensible boundary for the overseas franchise while maintaining consistency with the existing system.

#### *Improving participation for British citizens living overseas*

The registration period for overseas electors will be extended from one year to up to three years and changes will be made to enable electors to reapply or refresh their absent vote arrangements (as appropriate) at the same time as renewing their registration. This will make it easier for them to remain on the register with an absent vote arrangement in place ahead of elections.

Improvements will also be made to the registration process. Changes to the current identity verification processes for overseas electors will bring this part of the registration process in line with the process for domestic electors and make it easier for overseas electors to have their identity verified. We will also put in place clear rules regarding the address under which an overseas elector may register, ensuring that the individual continues to have a demonstrable connection to a UK address. This will also have the advantage of maximising continuity with the existing registration system, which electors and administrators are familiar with.

Together, these changes will help to ensure that overseas electors are able to participate in our democracy and provide extra assurance for them to have an

appropriate absent vote arrangement in place ahead of elections.

#### *Ensuring British citizens can have their say*

The Government's Elections Bill will place British citizens' participation at the heart of our democracy and its broad range of measures give voters the confidence to have their say in a truly Global Britain - no matter how, or where, they choose to cast their votes.

In addition to opening our democracy to British citizens living overseas, the Elections Bill will also: improve access to voting for electors with disabilities; tackle electoral fraud by post, proxy, in polling stations or through intimidation and undue influence; prevent foreign interference by hostile actors; and increase transparency and accountability within our elections.

### **Service Complaints Ombudsman's 2020 Annual Report on the Service Complaints System**

[HLWS58]

**Baroness Goldie:** My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Leo Docherty MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to lay before Parliament today the Service Complaints Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2020 on the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Service complaints system.

This report is published by Mariette Hughes – her first as Ombudsman - and covers the fifth year of operation of the reformed Service complaints system and the work of her office in 2020.

The findings of the Report will now be considered fully by the Ministry of Defence, and a formal response to the Ombudsman will follow once that work is complete.

# Written Answers

Thursday, 27 May 2021

## A400M Aircraft and C17 Aircraft

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) A400M, and (2) C17, aircraft are currently in service in the Royal Air Force. [HL507]

**Baroness Goldie:** There are currently a total of 20 A400M Atlas and eight C-17 Globemaster aircraft in RAF service.

## China: Private Military and Security Companies

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Executive Order 13959 from the President of the United States on Addressing the Threat from Securities Investments that Finance Communist Chinese Military Companies; and whether they plan to enact a similar policy. [HL454]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has put in place a framework to ensure that the UK has clean, transparent and safe markets, overseen by high quality independent regulators. The UK is well known as a global financial centre with high standards.

The Government has powers in place to ensure it can tackle financial threats to UK national security, for example under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act, and the National Security and Investment Act.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on financial services policy or regulation in other jurisdictions.

## Colombia: Politics and Government

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the escalation of anti-government protests in Colombia, what assessment they have made of the political situation in the country. [HL219]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK remains concerned about ongoing protests in Colombia. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed. We call on all actors to continue to engage in dialogue in order to deescalate tensions.

We have raised our concerns with the Colombian government on several occasions during the past two weeks. Most recently, Minister Morton spoke with acting Foreign Minister Adriana Mejía on 14 May, where she welcomed the Colombian Government's commitment to

transparent investigations into allegations of excessive use of force, and their commitment to continued dialogue.

## Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether will release the proposal sent by the Treasury to supply chain financiers to be incorporated in the Covid Corporate Financing Facility fund, as referred to by Rt Hon David Cameron in evidence to the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee on 13 May. [HL293]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** HM Treasury has provided both the call for evidence document which it circulated seeking views on a potential adjustment to the CCFF for supply chain finance and the feedback statement provided after the consultation closed to the Treasury Committee, and they have been published here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5758/documents/66074/default/>.

## Developing Countries: Famine and Humanitarian Aid

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which are the "42 countries with populations one step from catastrophe or famine" referred to in the policy paper G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact, published on 5 May; and how decisions will be made about the amount of relief funds to be allocated to each of those 42 countries from the initial \$7 billion fund. [HL202]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The 42 countries are those with populations one step from catastrophe or famine which are in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 4 emergency levels, the gold standard for food security data and analysis. The initial \$7 billion committed in the Compact is the G7's collective contribution to ensuring humanitarian funding reaches those most acutely food insecure. It is for individual G7 Member States to decide how they will allocate their own contributions throughout the calendar year.

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss the policy paper G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact, published on 5 May, at the G7 meeting in June; and what procedures have been put in place to ensure timely and effective delivery of the funding commitments in the paper. [HL203]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The new G7 Compact of commitments to prevent famine and humanitarian crises was discussed and agreed by Foreign and Development Ministers in May and annexed to their formal Communiqué on gov.uk. Tackling the risk of famine and humanitarian crises is a priority of the UK's G7 Presidency. We aim to use the Leaders' Summit in June to

build on the successful agreement of the Compact in May and the second meeting of the Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting plans to assess how far the outcomes have been implemented. The G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Panel will also ensure a continuous monitoring of the Compact commitments throughout 2021.

### Digital Technology: Training

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase collaboration between universities and technology companies regarding digital skills training. [HL377]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** The Institutes of Technology programme, backed by £290 million of taxpayer funding from Her Majesty's Government, is helping to increase collaboration between universities and technology companies in the delivery of key science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills, including digital skills training. Institutes of Technology have universities and employers at the heart of their leadership. Many of the 12 Institutes of Technology that we have already announced are specialising in digital skills, involving major employers such as Microsoft. We plan to establish a comprehensive network of 20 Institutes of Technology nationwide and launched a 'wave 2' competition in October 2020 open to all regions of the country currently without an Institute of Technology. We will announce the outcome of the competition later this year.

### Driving Licences: France

*Asked by Baroness Redfern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to sign a reciprocal agreement on driving licences with the government of France. [HL300]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department for Transport has successfully agreed arrangements with France for the mutual recognition of photocard licences. As such, visitors with UK photocard licences will not need to carry an additional International Driving Permit when driving in France. We have also secured interim arrangements with the French authorities which will allow UK licence holders resident in France, to continue to use their valid UK licence until 1 January 2022. We are working with the French Government to finalise a permanent licence exchange agreement as soon as possible.

### Events Industry: Insurance

*Asked by The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of providing an indemnity for live music events following the Step 4 lifting of COVID-19

restrictions; and whether they will place the results of any such assessment in the Library of the House. [HL563]

**Baroness Barran:** This Government recognises the importance of the UK's live events sector and has provided significant financial support to cultural organisations, particularly through the Culture Recovery Fund.

As the Secretary of State made clear at the DCMS Select Committee on Thursday 13th May, the government is aware of the wider concerns around securing indemnity for live events and we continue to assess options to provide further support to the sector within the public health context, engaging with relevant stakeholders as necessary.

We need to be confident that any intervention would lead to an increase in activity, and that insurance represents the last barrier to events reopening. The government's first priority is to remove remaining barriers (such as social distancing) by reaching Stage 4 of the Roadmap.

### Financial Services: Technology

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve technical visa access for fintech services. [HL321]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** At the 2021 budget and in Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth the government announced a set of targeted high skilled visa reforms to build on the new points-based immigration system to create an internationally competitive visa system for high skilled, globally mobile talent from around the world.

This included creating a new fast-track visa process for UK scale-ups, including fintech services, to recruit high-skilled migrants. Those with a job offer at the required skills level from a recognised UK scale-up will be able to qualify for a fast-track visa. The government is continuing to work closely with industry representatives and businesses to build this new route. We will provide further details on the scale-up visa by July and the route will launch by March 2022.

In addition to our plans for high-skilled visas the government will continue to implement reforms to streamline and simplify the sponsorship system. The government has already taken significant steps to reform the system and we will publish a delivery roadmap in the summer setting out our plans for further reforms. These changes will benefit business across the UK and in all sectors.

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to introduce a Fintech Growth Fund; or, if they are not taking any such steps, what plans they have to fill the funding gap in the fintech industry. [HL322]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The UK is the leading destination for fintech investment in Europe. In 2020 the sector raised \$4.1bn - more than the next five European countries combined. The Government recognises that access to growth capital will be key to ongoing sector growth and therefore encourages industry to take forward the recommendation made by the Kalifa Review of UK Fintech for a £1bn Fintech Growth Fund.

The UK is also continuing to take steps to attract investment, including through the British Business Bank's lending and equity programmes. These have supported nearly £8 billion of finance to almost 100,000 smaller businesses, including UK fintechs. British Patient Capital, established in 2018 within the British Business Bank with £2.5 billion of investment, will crowd in an additional £5 billion of private investment over 10 years and increase the overall supply of funding for companies at later stages of their growth, where capital needs are higher.

Government is also looking at other ways to unlock capital for UK scale-ups including by removing operational and regulatory barriers to Defined Contribution pensions schemes being able to invest into illiquid assets, such as Venture Capital. Removing these barriers could help to ensure savers access a broader set of asset classes, higher returns and benefit from the growth of the next generation of innovative UK businesses.

In a further boost for innovative companies seeking to raise money in the UK, the Government has also published plans on how we are taking forward the recommendations in the UK listings review, with the FCA also looking to bring forward rule change consultations by the summer, including on Dual Class Share Structures.

## Foreign Exchange

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to implement full foreign exchange price transparency by financial institutions. [HL249]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Since April 2020, provisions of the amended Cross Border Payments Regulation (also known as CBPR2), which require transparency of currency conversion fees and charges for certain payments, have applied in the United Kingdom. This regulation is intended to enable consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing currency conversion services. Amendments to this regulation were made by the Securities Financing Transactions, Securitisation and Miscellaneous Amendments (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.

The FCA is the relevant regulatory authority with responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the requirements of the onshored UK legislation. Should the FCA have concerns regarding firms' compliance with the requirements, it will take appropriate action as necessary.

## Furniture: VAT

*Asked by Lord Turnbull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, if a UK resident buys furniture in the UK and takes it abroad, they will have to make a second VAT payment if the furniture is returned to the UK after three years. [HL326]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Goods imported into the UK, including furniture, are subject to customs duties and import VAT unless any relief applies.

The Returned Goods Relief (RGR) is a long-standing measure which relieves goods from customs duty and import VAT where the owner exports the goods from the UK and returns these within three years. This period can be extended on a case by case basis in exceptional circumstances.

Under transitional rules, goods which had been transported from the UK to the EU more than three years ago and were located in the EU at the end of the transition period, can also benefit from RGR provided these return to the UK by 30 June 2022.

## Gambling Act 2005

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to announce the result of their review of the Gambling Act 2005; and what plans they have to introduce primary legislation in this parliament in response to that review. [HL212]

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in advance of any steps they intend to take following their review of the Gambling Act 2005, they will use their existing statutory powers to prohibit advertising by gambling companies in or near sports venues. [HL213]

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in advance of any steps they intend to take following their review of the Gambling Act 2005, they will encourage the Gambling Commission to pursue urgently the development of new licence conditions which will require operators to conduct strict affordability checks before accepting bets. [HL214]

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in advance of any steps they intend to take following their review of the Gambling Act 2005, they will encourage the Gambling Commission to make it a licence condition that gambling operators should not contract with affiliates unless the affiliates themselves are licensed. [HL215]

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in advance of any steps they intend to take following their review of the Gambling Act 2005, they will encourage the Gambling Commission to amend the social responsibility codes of practice to prohibit licensees from offering bet to view inducements [HL216]

**Baroness Barran:** Our Review of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched on 8 December 2020 with a wide-ranging Call for Evidence, including on issues around advertising, marketing and the relationship between sport and gambling. The department received c.16,000 submissions in response, which are currently being carefully considered. We aim to publish a white paper by the end of the year outlining our conclusions and policy proposals.

The Gambling Commission's consultation and call for evidence on Remote Customer Interaction (including on issues to do with affordability) closed on 9 February and received over 13,000 responses. The Commission is reviewing that evidence and intends to publish an interim update on progress and to set out next steps in due course. The Commission's consultation findings may inform its advice to the government for the Act Review.

**Government Assistance: Coronavirus***Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Women's Budget Group Gender Differences in Access to Coronavirus Government Support, published on 19 April; and what assessment they have made of the reliance of women, in comparison to men, on government COVID-19 support. [HL323]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government is committed to ensuring a fair recovery for all. During the crisis we have rolled out unprecedented levels of support to protect jobs for both women and men.

The continuation of measures to respond to the impact of COVID-19, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, has demonstrated the support for women during the pandemic, with more than half of jobs that have been furloughed since July being held by women. Women in low income households will also benefit from the additional support provided through the extension of the temporary £20 per week uplift to the Universal Credit standard allowance. Women account for 52% of Universal Credit claimants as of February 2021.

The Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has provided support for many of the 1.7 million self-employed women in the UK. The Future Fund was committed over £1 billion to support 1140 high growth companies across the country, of which 77% have mixed-gender management teams - compared to the Female Founders report which found that only 10% of venture capital was going to mixed-gender teams in 2019.

The Treasury carefully considers the impact of its decisions on those sharing protected characteristics, in line with both its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and in line with its strong commitment to promoting fairness.

**House of Lords Chamber: Coronavirus***Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are for members to return to normal rules of debate for those who are physically present in the Chamber. [HL448]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The House of Lords Commission, which has responsibility for setting the strategic direction in this area, met on 25 May and had a preliminary discussion of these matters. The Commission discussion was informed by the debate on hybrid proceedings held in the Chamber on 20 May and was followed by a meeting of the Procedure and Privileges Committee, on 26 May, at which an initial consideration of procedural implications was undertaken. Proposals and options will be developed ahead of further anticipated deliberation at June meetings of the House of Lords Commission and Procedure and Privileges Committee. Decisions will continue to be informed by the latest Government guidance and advice from Public Health England. Finally, and most importantly, the House will be invited to consider motions in due course to agree procedures, including those relating to the rules of debate, moving forwards.

**House of Lords: Coronavirus***Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are to resume physical-only proceedings in (1) the Chamber, and (2) select committees, once the majority of members and Administration staff have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. [HL439]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The House of Lords Commission, which has responsibility for setting the strategic direction in this area, met on 25 May and had a preliminary discussion of these matters. The Commission discussion was informed by the debate on hybrid proceedings held in the Chamber on 20 May and was followed by a meeting of the Procedure and Privileges Committee, on 26 May, at which an initial consideration of procedural implications was undertaken. Proposals and options will be developed ahead of further anticipated deliberation at June meetings of the House of Lords Commission, Procedure and Privileges Committee and Liaison Committee. Decisions will continue to be informed by the latest Government guidance and advice from Public Health England. Finally, and most importantly, the House will be invited to consider motions in due course to agree Chamber and Grand Committee procedures moving forwards.

## Immigration Controls: EU Nationals

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many EU citizens have been denied entry to the UK at the border since 1 January; and, of those denied entry, how many were detained. [HL238]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** EU citizens are our friends and neighbours and we want them to stay in the UK, which is why we launched our ground-breaking EU Settlement Scheme. Those who do not have status under the EUSS, can enter the UK for up to six months as visitors, visa free. However, now freedom of movement has ended, those coming to work or study must prove they meet our entry requirements. We urge people to check the requirements before travelling.

Border Force treat all arrivals with respect and consider each passenger's situation on an individual basis to check that everyone entering the UK has the right to do so.

We have issued instructions to our officers to reinforce the principle that in all cases there exists a presumption in favour of bail.

The Home Office published data on port returns and passengers initially refused entry which include Data on refusals on EU nationals.

The latest information include date up to December 2020 can be found at: [passengers Initially refused Dec 2020 & returns data](#).

The next publication, which includes data for the first quarter of 2021 will be published on the 27 May 2021.

## Infrastructure: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the National Infrastructure Commission about infrastructure development projects in Northern Ireland, apart from meetings concerning the Union Connectivity Review; and whether they will list the topics discussed. [HL336]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The National Infrastructure Commission is responsible for economic infrastructure across six sectors: transport, energy, digital, water, floods, and waste management. Responsibility for most of these areas, excluding digital connectivity and nuclear energy, is devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Commission will engage with stakeholders in Northern Ireland on these issues as it prepares its second National Infrastructure Assessment. The Commission's first National Infrastructure Assessment can be found at:

<https://nic.org.uk/studies-reports/national-infrastructure-assessment/>.

## Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of concerns expressed by non-governmental and humanitarian organisations on the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. [HL217]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May. As the Prime Minister has made clear, leaders in the region must now work to find a durable solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence, and delivers a sustainable and just peace based on a two state solution.

It is also important now for Israel to facilitate rapid humanitarian access in and out of Gaza. The UK will provide £3.2m of UK aid to the UN agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, responding to UNRWA's emergency flash appeal, launched on 19 May. The funding will help provide food, water, and emergency shelter to Palestinians affected by the recent escalation in violence in Gaza.

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to recent clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants, (1) what action they are taking to encourage restraint on both sides; and (2) what discussions they have had with the government of the United States on how to de-escalate the situation. [HL218]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza on 20 May. As the Prime Minister has made clear, leaders in the region must now work to find a durable solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence, and delivers a sustainable and just peace based on a two state solution. We continue to fully support Egyptian and UN mediation efforts.

The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and ensure Israel's status as a Jewish, democratic state.

Ministers and Ambassadors throughout the Middle East are also engaging regional partners, including Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, while we remain in close contact with the US administration.

## Jerusalem: Palestinians

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel concerning

the eviction of Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. [HL240]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 8 May Minister Cleverly communicated our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, anti-Semitic incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

### Members: Correspondence

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to respond to the letter from Lord Pearson of Rannoch to Baroness Williams of Trafford dated 31 March. [HL230]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I thank Lord Pearson for his question, a response is being drafted after careful consideration and will be sent out shortly.

### Nuclear Weapons

*Asked by Baroness Blower*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what studies they undertook to inform the decision to increase nuclear warhead numbers as announced in the policy paper, Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published on 16 March. [HL208]

**Baroness Goldie:** While undertaking the Integrated Review, the Government engaged with a variety of stakeholders with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity, and the global challenges the UK will face over the coming years. These included allies, partners, civil society organisations and businesses.

We remain committed to maintaining the minimum destructive power needed to guarantee that the UK's nuclear deterrent remains credible and effective against the full range of state nuclear threats. This judgement includes an assessment of the decision-making processes of future potential aggressors, and an analysis of the defensive measures that they might employ. Therefore, in recognition of the developing range of technological and doctrinal threats the UK will increase the overall nuclear weapon stockpile ceiling from no more than 225 to no more than 260 warheads, an increase of 15 per cent.

### Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

*Asked by Lord Norton of Louth*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answer by Lord McFall of Alcluith on 23 January 2018 (HL4602), what is the estimated cost to the public purse for the repair and maintenance of the Palace of Westminster in each year from 2022/23 to 2026/27; and what is the estimated risk of a catastrophic failure within the Palace during that period. [HL296]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The forecast cost of repair and maintenance of the Palace of Westminster in each year from 2022/23 to 2024/25, as per the most recent Medium Term Financial Plans, is set out in the table below. This includes the forecast spend on both maintenance and major projects on the Palace. There is not yet a reliable forecast for repair and maintenance beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Planned preventative & Reactive maintenance	£7,821,724	£8,156,641	£8,134,727	£8,218,493
Minor projects	£2,212,473	£2,212,473	£2,212,473	£2,212,473
Maintenance team	£5,013,950	£5,013,950	£5,013,950	£5,013,950
Maintenance and Minor projects	£15,048,146	£15,383,063	£15,361,149	£15,444,916
Major projects	£102,393,805	£140,357,071	£98,586,481	£23,504,834
<b>Total</b>	<b>£117,441,951</b>	<b>£155,740,134</b>	<b>£113,947,630</b>	<b>£38,949,749</b>

The risks of failure relating to the physical condition of the Palace of Westminster are reviewed and mitigated as part of the operation and maintenance of the Parliamentary Estate. These risks include fire, hitting uncharted underground services, unexploded ordnance, and failure of legally required services, all of which have mitigation plans in place to reduce the risk of failure. The table below shows the current assessment of the likelihood of the top five risk events in relation to catastrophic failure.

<i>Top 5 Risk Events in relation to Catastrophic Failure</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>
Fire during construction work	Low
Collapsing structures	Very Low
Uncharted underground services	Very Low

<i>Top 5 Risk Events in relation to Catastrophic Failure</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>
Unexploded ordnance (UXO) or other hazardous materials	Very Low
Failure of legally required services (e.g. water)	Medium

Source: In-House Services and Strategic Estates Health and Safety & maintenance team risk registers.

### **Palestinians: Elections**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have had made (1) to representatives of the government of Palestine, and (2) to President Abbas, regarding the decree on 29 April postponing the 22 May legislative elections and the 31 July presidential elections. [HL220]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are disappointed that elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been postponed. The Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy their democratic rights - and Israel must allow voting for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, in line with the Oslo Accords. Elections are long overdue and we urge the swift setting of a new date.

### **Parliamentary Estate: Visits**

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether the Parliamentary Estate will remain closed to visiting members of the public until September; if so, (1) for what reasons, and (2) what consideration he has given to the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions in England on 17 May in respect of the accessibility of the Estate; and what plans there are to resume normal catering services in the House. [HL231]

**Lord Touhig:** The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf.

Changes affecting the operation of Parliament as a whole, such as non-passholder access to the estate are decided jointly with the House of Commons Commission. Both Commissions agreed that business-related non-passholder access should resume from 17 May to reflect changes in government guidance. This is limited to one person, where the meeting cannot take place virtually. Access for the public will remain limited due to the need to control the overall number of people on the Parliamentary Estate to prevent crowding and control the risk and spread of the virus on the estate. Further changes to access may occur after step 4 following further consideration by the House of Lords Commission.

Changes to House of Lords catering services were made on 17 May, including the re-configuration of outlets in line with the 'rule of six'. The following Lords catering

venues are now open: River Restaurant and Terrace, Peers' Dining and Guest Room, Long Room Bar, and the Millbank House 'Coffee pod'. All outlets are operating within government guidance. Catering services in the House will be kept under review in the light of demand and the number of passholders on the estate.

### **Railways: Fares**

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the loss of fare revenue arising from the recent withdrawal from service of some Hitachi trains; and who will bear the cost of that loss of revenue. [HL308]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Disruption has been most significant on the Great Western Railway (GWR) network on Intercity services, as well as some London North Eastern Railway (LNER) and a small number of TransPennine Express services.

We anticipate less than £1m each day may need to be refunded for GWR services. On LNER services, and despite a smaller disruptive impact to the operation of services, the operator has reported to the Department that it processed on average £60,000 per day of Delay Repay claims last week.

The agreements in place to use the affected trains contain provisions that protect the taxpayer and we are currently assessing all available options to ensure taxpayers are protected.

### **REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool**

*Asked by Lord Teverson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what safeguards exist to ensure the secretariat of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals Independent Scientific Expert Pool is independent from the rest of the Health and Safety Executive. [HL242]

*Asked by Lord Teverson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the (1) number, and (2) composition, of experts that will be recruited to the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals Independent Scientific Expert Pool. [HL243]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** As set out in the statement on use of independent scientific knowledge and advice ([Agency statement on transparency and the use of independent scientific knowledge and advice \(ISA\)](#) ([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))) the secretariat for the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP) will be provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). However, the work of this secretariat is limited to organisation, and support of RISEP experts in administration and protocol matters. Agendas and notes of Challenge Panels involving RISEP members will be made public, with accredited stakeholders also in attendance to ensure transparency.

In establishing independent scientific knowledge and advice within the UK REACH system, experts from HSE (as the Agency with UK REACH) and the Environment Agency (EA) used experience and “hands-on” knowledge of their work within the EU REACH scientific expert process (on the Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) and the Committee for Socio-Economic Analysis (SEAC)). This enabled HSE to define the skills and experience necessary to ensure robust independent scrutiny and challenge to produce high-quality opinions, to inform decisions by the Secretary of State for Defra with the consent of Ministers for Wales and Scotland. The REACH SI mandates the Agency to include information about the qualifications or relevant experience that are suitable in order to provide knowledge and advice to the Agency within the statement produced on the use of independent scientific knowledge and advice ([Agency statement on transparency and the use of independent scientific knowledge and advice \(ISA\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)).

The actual composition of experts used to help the Agency produce specific opinions will be dependent on the type of dossier – for instance for an environmentally driven restriction any Challenge Panel would be made up of more independent environmental scientists than human health. All opinions will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. We have not set a minimum number of experts, but as a contingency we have ensured that we are able to co-opt members of other committees should we need to so. However, due to the large response we have had to the recruitment it is thought that this will not be required.

HSE was also able to use discussions with stakeholders and prioritisation exercises with Defra, and officials from the Scottish and Welsh governments to inform decisions around the number of experts required within the process on the basis of estimates of the numbers of restrictions and applications for authorisation expected.

### **Sailing Boats: VAT**

*Asked by Lord Turnbull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they are imposing a VAT charge on boats and yachts bought in the UK which are taken abroad and returned after more than three years. [\[HL325\]](#)

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Goods imported from another customs territory, including boats, are chargeable to import VAT and customs duties unless any relief applies. This is to help ensure a level playing field between goods purchased in the UK and goods purchased overseas.

The Returned Goods Relief (RGR) is a long-standing relief which provides relief from customs duty and import VAT for goods exported from the UK and returned within three years. The UK RGR provisions from 1 January 2021 also include transitional rules which allow goods which had been transported from the UK to the EU, and were located in the EU at the end of the transition period, to return to the UK by 30 June 2022. HMRC can also use discretion to waive the normal three-year return

requirement in exceptional circumstances. Such requests have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Seabed: Bomb Disposal**

*Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are taking any steps to advance the use of environmentally considerate methods of clearing unexploded ordnance from the sea floor. [\[HL239\]](#)

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Defra recognises the significant impact underwater noise from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance by detonation can have on vulnerable marine species. Many UXOs lie in areas designated for planned windfarm projects, on cable routes and in areas used by other marine industries, and must be removed to allow safe working conditions.

The Government is aware of, and is investigating, a number of alternative methods to remove UXOs from the seabed. However, these methods have not yet been scientifically proven to be effective in the marine environment and could disturb the ordnance but not fully detonate it, posing health, safety and environmental concerns. Our priority is to ensure any new methods are effective in the marine environment, adhere to relevant health, safety and environmental considerations and are based on robust evidence.

The Government is working closely with scientists, industry and regulators to collect the necessary evidence to enable the safe use of these alternative methods in the marine environment. Once sufficient evidence is available, and on the advice of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, the Marine Management Organisation (as the regulatory authority) will be able to make licensing decisions around the use of such techniques.

The Environment Secretary recently met Joanna Lumley and the StopSeaBlasts Campaign, who advocate for the use of alternative UXO clearance methods, to discuss ways in which we can work together to reduce the impact that clearing unexploded bombs can have on marine mammals.

### **Social Security Benefits**

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that compensation payments to survivors of historical institutional abuse living in Great Britain do not affect means-tested welfare payments. [\[HL273\]](#)

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Existing powers to disregard redress payments for the purposes of means-tested benefits, which are provided for by the Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2019, only cover claimants living within Northern Ireland.

The Government is currently considering how best to address this issue for those who happen to live elsewhere in the UK.

### Telecommunications: Infrastructure

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the publication of the report from the Telecoms Diversification Task Force on 20 April, what plans they have (1) to incentivise, and (2) to encourage, UK Mobile Network Operators to invest in Open Radio Access Networks. [HL415]

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to invest in large-scale urban Open Radio Access Network trials in 2022, in order to assess whether Open Radio Access Networks can be successfully deployed in a dense urban environment. [HL416]

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to attract, and (2) to incentivise, Open Radio Access Network suppliers to establish an operational base within the UK. [HL417]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government continues to work with mobile operators and suppliers to build an open, flexible, and diverse telecoms supply market, following the recommendations of the Diversification Taskforce, published on 20 April. The Taskforce recommendations are helping to guide our approach to delivering the Diversification strategy, including its core pillar of accelerating the development and deployment of interoperable solutions, such as Open RAN, into the UK's 5G network.

Our engagement with both operators and suppliers continues to be constructive and we are delighted with moves made by industry so far that support our aims. The announcement of numerous Open RAN R&D facilities in the UK is a positive sign that our direction of travel is the right one, and we are working at pace to develop targeted actions to ensure that interoperable technologies are ready to deploy in more resilient network infrastructure. The Government is designing a programme of targeted R&D support, building on existing Open RAN trials, such as the SmartRAN Open Networks Interoperability Centre (SONIC), to level the playing field for smaller suppliers, and we continue to consider all options. This will need to support performance demonstration, such as with large-scale urban trials, as well as product development and testing.

### Trident Missiles

*Asked by Baroness Blower*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the last Trident D5 missile test took place; and how many Trident D5 missiles the UK has. [HL206]

*Asked by Baroness Blower*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Trident D5 missiles will be on each Dreadnaught class submarine when this class of submarine enters service. [HL207]

**Baroness Goldie:** The last Trident D5 missile test took place as part of the Demonstration and Shakedown Operation with HMS Vengeance in 2016. The UK has sufficient Trident II D5 missiles for its needs.

The Dreadnaught Class submarines will begin to enter service from the early 2030s. As announced in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy we will no longer give public figures for our deployed missile numbers.

### UNICEF: Finance

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they used to decide to reduce UK funding to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) by 60 per cent; what assessment they have made of the statement by UNICEF of 1 May criticising this decision; and whether they consulted with (1) UNICEF, and (2) other international donors to UNICEF, (i) before, and (ii) after, taking this decision. [HL222]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have prioritised our aid to be strategic, and remain a force for good across the world. Following a thorough review, the FCDO's aid budget has been allocated in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial climate caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK remains an important donor to UNICEF and the UN, Ministers and officials have been engaging directly with UNICEF. The FCDO will be maintaining all its assessed contributions to the UN, including upholding our share of the UN Regular Budget, the UN Peacekeeping Budget, and payments to the budgets of UN specialised agencies of which we are a member.

We are also working with partners to help them assess and manage the impact of UK funding reductions on individual programmes and we will share further details on this in due course. We continue to look to UN leadership in finding multilateral solutions to global challenges, including poverty, insecurity, girls' education, climate change, and pandemics. Our continued leadership on COVAX with the WHO and other partners is evidence of our multilateral approach.

### Wyelands Bank

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to hold an inquiry into (1) the granting of a banking licence to Wyelands Bank, and (2) its subsequent supervision by the Prudential Regulation Authority. [HL292]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Since the financial crisis, we have implemented sweeping reforms to financial regulation. Through the Financial Services Act 2012, we dismantled the failed tripartite system, and replaced it with a set of regulators with clear objectives and responsibilities, with the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) responsible for the prudential supervision of the UK banking sector, and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for ensuring proper conduct in line with UK financial regulations.

Wyelands Bank remains authorised by the PRA and regulated by the PRA and the FCA; however, as shown on the Financial Services Register, its permission to perform regulated activities is subject to limitations.

Although HM Treasury does not comment on supervisory matters, we continuously monitor risks across the financial sector and escalate our response where appropriate in coordination with the independent financial authorities – the FCA, PRA and Bank of England – as well as relevant government departments.

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