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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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| <b>Baroness Berridge</b>                      | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade                |
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| <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, 10 June 2021

## Annual Fisheries Negotiations

[HLWS82]

**Lord Benyon:** My Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Farming, Fisheries and Food) (Victoria Prentis) has made the following Statement:

The UK and EU have now reached an agreement on fishing opportunities for the current fishing year. This concludes all annual fisheries negotiations for 2021. This has been a landmark year with the UK negotiating as an independent coastal State for the first time in over 40 years.

Throughout the negotiations we have worked as a UK team with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Governments to take advantage of our new status as an independent coastal State. The outcomes secured by the UK team will enable us to improve the sustainable management of our fish stocks in support of the whole of the UK fishing industry in the short and long term.

Collectively, from all the negotiations, the UK has secured agreement on the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 87 stocks.

### *UK-EU Agreement*

The agreement we have just reached with the EU, for 70 EU-UK TACs, results in a total value of fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 of approximately 160,000 tonnes, worth approximately £333 million. This is around 26,000 tonnes more than in 2020, with an estimated value of £27m.

On non-quota stocks, due to the late conclusion of negotiations this year and the need to provide our respective industries with clarity, the UK and EU agreed that, exceptionally, tonnage limits would not be applied in 2021.

The UK and EU have instead agreed to work together through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries to develop multi-year strategies for managing non-quota stocks as a priority, as well as addressing challenges in mixed fisheries management, particularly in the Celtic Sea and on implementing a longer-term exchange system for quota.

Exchanges of quota with the EU, as part of annual negotiations, were not possible this year. However, the agreement includes a commitment to quickly develop an interim basis for exchanging fishing quota ahead of a longer-term exchange system to be decided by the Specialised Committee on Fisheries. The UK expects that quota exchanges would be part of future annual negotiations, as provided for in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

We have also agreed changes for 2021 on seabass to reduce wasteful discarding, without increasing fishing mortality.

### *UK-EU-Norway Agreement*

The trilateral negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway concluded on 16 March 2021, and set TACs for the six North Sea jointly-managed stocks. Three of these stocks were set consistent with independently assessed sustainability levels.

The agreed TACs resulted in catch reductions for North Sea cod, plaice, saithe and herring compared with 2020, whilst there were increases for haddock and whiting.

The UK and Norway also committed to several priority work areas including a review of the management of North Sea herring.

### *UK-Norway and UK-Faroes bilateral negotiations*

Since the beginning of the negotiations, we have been very clear that the UK's overriding priority in all negotiations is to agree a balanced deal in the best interests of the entire UK fishing industry. We worked hard to find a way to reach an agreement between the UK and Norway and the UK and Faroes this year, and regret that we concluded that we were too far apart.

In these negotiations, the UK sought to secure fishing opportunities for the UK industry, whilst at the same time addressing the historic imbalance between fishing opportunities taken in UK waters by other coastal states compared to those the UK took in theirs. In 2019 Norway landed approximately eight times higher value of fish from UK waters than UK vessels landed from Norwegian waters.

Whilst negotiations were constructive, neither Norway nor the Faroes were willing to provide appropriate compensation for access to fish in UK waters, without which the relationships would have been left significantly weighted against the UK. Neither coastal State was willing to conclude an agreement with the UK solely on quota exchanges.

### *Other International Negotiations*

This year the UK also participated, and reached agreement, in a number of other international negotiations. This included multilateral negotiations on TACs not covered under the EU-UK and trilateral negotiations, such as mackerel, blue whiting, Atlantic-Scandian herring, and redfish. We also took part in negotiations in several Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.

## EEA Citizens and Right to Work and Rent Schemes

[HLWS79]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration Compliance and Justice (Chris Philp) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The UK has left the European Union (EU) and the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020 ended free movement law in the UK on 31 December 2020. On 1 January 2021, a grace period of six-months began, during which time relevant aspects of free movement law have been saved to allow eligible EEA citizens and their family members resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. This period ends on 30 June 2021.

We have committed to providing parity between EEA and non-EEA citizens under the new immigration system. All migrants residing and coming to the UK will be required to obtain the correct immigration status, regardless of their nationality. From 1 July 2021, EEA citizens and their family members require UK immigration status to evidence their rights and entitlements in the UK, in the same way as other foreign nationals, such as their right to work or right to rent.

The Right to Work and Right to Rent Schemes (the Schemes) were introduced as part of a suite of measures designed to tackle and deter illegal immigration. They are intended to prevent individuals without lawful immigration status in the UK from taking up employment or accessing accommodation in the private rented sector; and to support efforts to tackle those who exploit vulnerable migrants, often in very poor conditions.

Employers and landlords are required to carry out simple checks, applicable to everyone, including British citizens, to ensure the individual has lawful status in the UK before they employ or let a property to an individual.

Today, I have laid before Parliament the Immigration (Restrictions on Employment and Residential Accommodation) (Prescribed Requirements and Codes of Practice) And Licencing Act 2003 (Personal and Premises Licences) (Forms) Order.

The Order seeks to amend the Schemes' lists of acceptable documents which demonstrate a right to work or a right to rent, by removing EEA passports and national identity cards. It provides the following additions to the lists: an Irish passport or passport card, Frontier Worker Permit, Service Provider of Switzerland visa, and documents issued by the Crown Dependencies EU Settlement Schemes.

From 1 July, employers and landlords will undertake right to work and right to rent checks on EEA citizens, who have been issued with digital evidence of their UK immigration status using the Home Office online services. We have already begun this journey, with employers being able to use the online right to work service since January 2019. Since the launch of the optional online right to work service, there have been over 1.3 million views by individuals and over 390,000 views by employers carrying out right to work checks digitally. The online right to rent checking service went live in November 2020, and since then, there have been over 36,000 profile views by individuals, and over 6,500 views by landlords carrying out right to rent checks digitally.

The online services make it simpler for employers and landlords to carry out the checks, as they do not need to see or check documents. The checks can be carried out by video call, as the individual's immigration status information is provided in real time directly from Home Office systems. The service is secure and free to use.

However, we recognise that some individuals are anxious about navigating a digital system. Therefore, users will be supported to adapt through clear guidance, with direct support available for those who are less digitally confident, ensuring they are not disadvantaged due to any inability to access or use digital services, including where they have no access to a device or the internet.

The Order also enables employers and landlords to confirm via the Home Office Employer or Landlord Checking Service a Certificate of Application or document issued by the UK, Bailiwick of Jersey or Bailiwick of Guernsey EU Settlement Schemes, which confirms an outstanding application made by the 30 June deadline. This will ensure that EEA citizens can continue to evidence their eligibility to work and rent until the application is finally determined.

The Order also amends [The Immigration \(Residential Accommodation\) \(Prescribed Requirements and Codes of Practice\) Order 2014](#) by extending the list of those granted status as a visitor who can prove their right to rent using the combination of a national passport, plus proof of their arrival within the last six months (for example a physical or electronic air/sea/rail ticket or boarding pass) to EEA citizens.

Finally, the Order amends and updates the existing statutory codes of practice to reflect these important changes which will improve the operation of the Schemes. It also makes consequential amendments to the Licensing Act 2003 (Personal licences) Regulations 2005 and the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005, and the Illegal Working Compliance Order Regulations 2016, to align with the changes in this order in relation to right to work check.

## Hong Kong: Six-monthly Report

[HLWS83]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The latest Six-monthly Report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2020. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>). I commend the report to the House.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

48th Hong Kong Six-monthly Report [48th Hong Kong Six-monthly Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-06-10/HLWS83/>

## Learning Disability Mortality Review Programme: Fifth Annual Report

[HLWS78]

**Lord Bethell:** My Hon. Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Care) (Helen Whately), has today made the following written ministerial statement:

I would like to acknowledge today the publication of the fifth annual report of the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme, now known as 'Learning from lives and deaths – People with a learning disability and autistic people' by the University of Bristol. A copy will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Sadly, as set out in today's report, we know that some people with a learning disability have died from COVID-19, and this report provides moving, personal stories of some of those who lost their lives. My deepest sympathies are with their families and loved ones.

This annual report recommends that the needs of people with a learning disability should be built into the national policy response by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in the case of future emergency health situations. This is absolutely essential, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken action to protect people with a learning disability and used emerging evidence to inform our policy response. For example, in October, we added adults with Down's syndrome to the clinically extremely vulnerable list following the identification of an elevated risk of severe outcomes for this group of people. And the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation added people with severe and profound learning disabilities to group 6 for the vaccine, and people with Down's syndrome to group 4.

We value the insight that the LeDeR programme has brought us during the challenging time we have all faced over the past year. We have been able to use data from the LeDeR COVID-19 report to inform our response to the pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at the University of Bristol for their invaluable work over the past years on the LeDeR programme. Past reports have prompted action across the health and care sector, including the trialling of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training in learning disability and autism.

Today's report makes several recommendations for Government and its system partners to help to improve the care of people with a learning disability. We remain absolutely committed that people with a learning disability should, and must, receive high quality care which will in turn reduce preventable deaths and health inequalities.

NHS England has published its Action from Learning Report alongside the fifth LeDeR report, which sets out a range of work taking place to improve the safety and quality of care to reduce early deaths and health inequalities. We welcome the ongoing invaluable work by NHS England, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, in this area.

The Government's focus in 2020 was on the COVID-19 response, and our priority was to protect people's lives. We will publish a response to both the fourth and fifth reports in late summer/autumn of this year, to allow time for us to fully consider the recommendations for the Department, and agree actions, including those on COVID-19 related issues and on mandating reporting to the LeDeR programme.

This report also highlights the disparities experienced by ethnic minority people with a learning disability. It is vital that we continue to work with our partners to tackle the poor outcomes experienced by ethnic minority people with a learning disability.

Based on the evidence from completed LeDeR reviews, the fifth annual report makes ten recommendations for the health and care system, as follows:

1) *Recommendation 1.* LeDeR reviews to be undertaken through the lens of greater racial awareness. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement).

2) *Recommendation 2.* Local Authorities to ensure that Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) collect and publish local data on the health needs of children and adults with learning disabilities, capturing any characteristics that relate to specific ethnic groups. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), and their commissioned Primary Care Networks to take actions to reduce any disparities between people from different ethnic groups when planning local services for people with learning disabilities and their families. Accountability for this to be monitored at regional level, and by NHS England. (Audience: Local Authorities, NHS England and NHS Improvement, ICSs, NHS Race and Health Observatory).

3) *Recommendation 3.* A nationally endorsed standard resource is required, with local flexibility, that provides information for people with learning disabilities and their families about their legal rights and entitlements, national services available and how to access them, and local sources of support. Mechanisms must be in place for its effective distribution, particularly to people from minority ethnic groups. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement).

4) *Recommendation 4.* Strategically planned, long-term, targeted, joint investment is needed to strengthen partnerships with local communities and provide support for peer-to-peer networks, to build on and future-proof existing contacts and structures within local communities and increase trusted word-of-mouth communication and information sharing. (Audience: Local Authorities, ICSs, Primary Care Networks).

5) *Recommendation 5.* Local systems, including commissioning, to be responsive and develop strategic plans that address the longstanding needs of people with learning disabilities and their families that the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated, including the availability of specialist learning disability teams in acute, primary and community care. (Audience: ICSs).

6) *Recommendation 6.* From the outset of any future public health emergency, the needs and circumstances of people with learning disabilities must be considered and built into national policy and guidance by the National Institute for Health Protection and the Department of Health and Social Care. A data collection tool should be established to capture emerging evidence relating to people with learning disabilities, which would trigger adjustments to policy, guidance, systems and processes as required. (Audience: National Institute for Health Protection, Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement).

7) *Recommendation 7.* Commissioning guidance for NHS 111 services to include a requirement for the provision of specifically tailored training to NHS 111 staff about how to respond appropriately to calls about people with a learning disability or from people with a learning disability and their families. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement).

8) *Recommendation 8.* A LeDeR representative should routinely and as of right be involved with the child death review meeting/process for children with learning disabilities, in order to ensure that necessary information is collected and transferred into the wider LeDeR programme. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement).

9) *Recommendation 9.* NHS England to collect and collate evidence about the needs and circumstances of people who have been subject to mental health or criminal justice restrictions and use this to inform appropriate, personalised service provision for this group of people. While waiting for this evidence, robust after-care support (as required by S117 of the Mental Health Act) must be provided. (Audience: NHS England and NHS Improvement, Local Authorities).

10) *Recommendation 10.* Progress on actions in response to previous recommendations about minimising the risk of aspiration pneumonia in people with learning disabilities needs to be published. (Audience: NICE, Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement).

Whilst we have taken urgent action during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the lives of people with a learning disability, we know that there is more to be done as we begin to move out of the pandemic. We will continue to work with partners to ensure improvements are made, and to address the recommendations in the reports.

## Liverpool City Council

[HLWS80]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 24 March 2021, I announced to the House that I was minded to appoint Commissioners to take over functions associated with highways, regeneration, property management, together with associated audit and governance arrangements at Liverpool City Council (“the Authority”). I also announced that I was minded to appoint Commissioners to take over functions associated with the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers.

At the same time, I also announced proposals to introduce electoral changes, in particular:

- to make an Order using my powers in the Local Government Act 2000 to provide for whole council elections in 2023 and every fourth year thereafter; and
- to direct the Authority to consider and consult upon a new submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the current boundary review, which includes consideration of a proposal to reduce the number of Councillors to those consistent with elections on a single member ward basis, and be approved by the Commissioners.

These proposals followed the publication of the independent Best Value Inspection Report, led by Max Caller CBE, which concluded that the Authority had failed to comply with its Best Value Duty over a number of years. The Report did not comment on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, on Mayor Steve Rotheram, or other councils in Merseyside.

The main finding of the Report, as set out in the Inspector’s covering letter, is that: “Liverpool City Council itself, under the officer leadership of Tony Reeves, has started to make some of the improvements necessary. However, the burden of the police investigation, the pandemic, and the legacy of past actions by the Council has prevented speedy progress. At political level, the Council needs a reset, until that happens and the work that is currently being undertaken is continued at pace and embedded, I cannot be confident about continued progress.”

As part of my announcement in March, I invited the Authority to make representations about my proposals on or before 24 May 2021. The Authority and two advocacy groups made representations, as did 13 members of the public. Most representations were supportive of the intervention and the proposal to appoint Commissioners. However, a number expressed concern about aspects of the electoral reforms which I had proposed, specifically in relation to the proposal to introduce single member wards and to reduce the number of Councillors for the City.

*Best Value Intervention in Liverpool City Council*

Following consideration of these representations, and further consideration of the Inspector's Report, I have decided to proceed with the proposals that I announced on 24 March, with the following modifications:

- The Commissioners' functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers are expanded to include the role of Assistant Director Governance, Audit and Assurance. This modification is to reflect what was proposed in the Inspection Report and has been accepted by the Authority;
- The Direction to the Council to consider and consult upon a new submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), as part of the current boundary review, is clarified to include consideration of a proposal to reduce the number of Councillors to those consistent with elections on the basis of predominantly single member wards, that is single member wards across the whole Council area save where the LGBCE consider a multi member ward is essential to balance their statutory duties of delivering electoral equality, reflecting interests and identities of local communities, and of promoting effective and convenient local government. This modification is in response to the representations I received; and
- As part of my intention to make an Order using my powers in the Local Government Act 2000 to achieve the fresh start the Authority requires by providing full Council elections from 2023, I am now setting out my intention that the Order specifically provides for:
  - Liverpool City Council to hold all-out elections every four years from 2023 and to adjust retirement dates for existing councillors accordingly;
  - Postponement for one year of the May 2022 elections of one third of Liverpool City councillors and extend terms of office accordingly; and
  - The movement of the next election for Liverpool City's mayor to 2023 from 2024 and shorten the term of office accordingly.

I am mindful that the lessons from past interventions suggest that once Commissioners are in post additional issues can arise[1]. I have therefore asked Commissioners to specifically have regard to:

- the Council's LGBCE submission;
- the Council's governance referendum;
- the financial position of the Council; and
- broader service delivery insofar as they raise concerns for the Council's wider improvement journey.

I will write to the Lead Commissioner asking him to provide assurance to me on these issues as well as to work with and support the Council to minimise the risk of further intervention.

*Rationale for whole council elections in Liverpool City Council*

These modifications will help address the Inspection Report recommendation of ensuring as much stability as possible during a period of significant change. Going forward, the city mayoral and council elections will take place in the same year every four years. The Order will be subject to the negative resolution procedure and will be made as soon as practicable and well in advance of the local government elections currently scheduled for 2022. Following the making of the Order, the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England will be able to undertake their electoral review, with its necessary legislation, subject to Parliamentary approval.

My decision to make an Order providing for Liverpool City Council to have whole council elections reflects not only the recommendations in the Best Value Inspection Report but also our past experience of the merits of whole council elections. The absence of such elections is often a consistent feature of under-performing councils and a common thread through many council interventions[2]. I of course recognise that there are many excellent councillors up and down the country performing their duties effectively with elections by thirds or other patterns. But holding elections three years out of four, or every other year, risks creating a culture of perpetual electioneering in a council where there is little focus on the strategic, an inability to address longer term challenges and leadership which can lack the stability needed for a high performing authority.

In contrast, holding whole council elections every fourth year can facilitate stable, strategic local leadership, delivering a clear programme for which it can be held to account by the electorate, and having the time to tackle some of the longer term issues its communities might face. Whole council elections can thus add a higher degree of accountability, and the stability they can bring can help effective partnership working and give greater confidence to the business community in their dealings with the council. Whole council elections are also more cost effective than holding elections say three years out of four, and hence I am clear they represent better value for money for local taxpayers.

Accordingly, for all these reasons I would like to take this opportunity strongly to urge all those councils still not holding whole council elections to consider using the powers which Parliament has given them to switch to such elections. I believe this could lead to councils providing stronger, more accountable local leadership better able to serve their communities, promote local economic growth, and drive forward the levelling up of opportunity and prosperity across the country. If councils which still elect by thirds or halves now take the opportunity to switch to whole council elections, this could significantly strengthen local government and its ability to serve local people. It is an opportunity I hope all other councils will take in due course.

*Appointing Commissioners for Liverpool City Council*

I have decided to appoint four Commissioners forming a team with a proven record in adherence to the rule of law, leadership and delivering cultural change, together with specific expertise relevant to their functions:

- Mike Cunningham QPM (Lead Commissioner) – Has been involved in policing for more than 30 years, most recently as Chief Executive of the College of Policing from 2018 – 2020, the standards setting body for policing in England and Wales. Formerly one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, inspecting forces in the north of England and Northern Ireland, and the national lead inspector for the development and implementation of inspections into police efficiency, legitimacy and leadership, and Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police.
- Joanna Killian (Local Government Improvement Commissioner) – Has more than 30 years of experience in the public sector delivering transformational change and service improvement. Since March 2018 she has been Chief Executive of Surrey County Council. Prior to this Joanna worked at KPMG and was also Chief Executive of Essex County Council for 9 years.
- Neil Gibson (Highways Commissioner) – Former Executive Director of Transport Economy and Environment for Buckinghamshire County Council, where he also acted for a time as Interim Chief Executive. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and former President of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.
- Deborah McLaughlin (Regeneration Commissioner) – Extensive experience working in Regeneration and Housing for over 30 years across public and private sectors, including as Director of Housing at Manchester City Council, regional director for the North West at Homes England and Director of Capita's real estate business. Also worked at the Audit Commission as a Best Value Inspector and auditor.

The Commissioners have been appointed for the period from 10 June 2021 to 9 June 2024 or such earlier or later time as I determine. I am clear that the Directions should operate for as long, and only as long, and only in the form, as necessary.

I want to be clear that most decisions will continue to be made by the Council; the intention being that Commissioners will only use their powers as a last resort if they are dissatisfied with the Council's improvement processes.

The Government will continue to work closely with the political, the business and the cultural leadership of the city and with the wider region, including with Steve Rotheram, the Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.

*Conclusion*

We will do all that we can to support Liverpool, as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to give confidence to those who want to invest in the city to contract with the Council, and to do business in the city.

I have published the Directions and Explanatory Memorandum associated with this announcement on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/inspection-into-the-governance-of-liverpool-city-council>.

[1]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-cultural-and-governance-failings-in-local-authorities-lessons-from-recent-interventions>

[2]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-cultural-and-governance-failings-in-local-authorities-lessons-from-recent-interventions>

## Patient Safety Commissioner for England: Consultation

[HLWS77]

**Lord Bethell:** My Hon Friend the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health (Nadine Dorries) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

I would like to inform the House of the launch of a public consultation on proposed legislative provisions governing the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner for England.

As my colleagues will be aware, on 14 December 2020, the Government tabled an amendment to the Medicine and Medical Devices Bill to establish an independent Patient Safety Commissioner for England. The Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 (MMD Act) achieved Royal Assent on 11 February 2021 and on 11 April established the Commissioner position and its main duties and powers.

The introduction of a Patient Safety Commissioner also acts on the second recommendation of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, First Do No Harm, published in July 2020 by Baroness Cumberlege.

The Patient Safety Commissioner will add to and enhance the existing work that has been done to improve patient safety by acting as a champion for patients. Listening to our patients is integral to our healthcare system and the Commissioner will help to make sure patient voices are heard.

The core duties of the Commissioner are to promote the safety of patients in the context of the use of medicines and medical devices and to promote the importance of the views of patients and other members of the public in relation to the safety of medicines and medical devices.

Under the MMD Act 2021, (paragraph 6 of Schedule 1) the Secretary of State is able to make legislative provisions about the appointment and operation of the Commissioner, for example the terms of office, finances and other support for the Commissioner. As is required by the MMD Act 2021, the department has launched a public consultation to gather views from interested persons on the detail on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner. Consultation responses will be carefully

considered and will feed into the required secondary legislation.

This consultation will help to ensure that the provisions governing the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner are as comprehensive as needed, so that the Commissioner will be able to work for, with and in the best interests of patients.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure the House that the Government continues to prioritise work on this initiative. The launch of this consultation represents good progress in setting up of the Commissioner.

The consultation can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-appointment-and-operation-of-the-patient-safety-commissioner>.

### Student Loans: Interest Rates

[HLWS81]

**Baroness Berridge:** My honourable friend The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan) has made the following statement:

On 9 June I announced a temporary reduction in the maximum student loan interest rate following the recent decline in the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured personal loans.

In accordance with the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, where the Government considers that the student loan interest rate is higher than the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured loans, we will take steps to reduce the maximum student loan interest rate.

The Government regularly monitors the interest rates set on student loans against the interest rates prevailing on the market for comparable loans.

Following a decline in the prevailing market rate, on 9 June I laid legislation to cap the maximum Post-2012 income contingent repayment undergraduate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate in line with the prevailing market rate. The cap will come into effect from 1 July 2021 and last for a period of three months.

The reduction will be 0.3 percentage point on the maximum student loan interest rate to reflect the average market rates during the preceding monitoring period.

Student loan interest rates are updated each year to take account of changes in the Retail Price Index (RPI). The updates are applied annually at the start of each academic year, 1 September. To take into account this annual change in the ordinary student loan interest rates, two separate caps will be implemented, one for the period 1 July to 31 August and one for the period 1 to 30 September.

The maximum Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 5.3% between 1 July and 31 August.

The maximum Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 4.2% between 1 September and 30 September.

From 1 October 2021, the Post-2012 undergraduate and Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rates will revert to the standard rate +3%.

Further caps may be put in place should the prevailing market rate continue to be below student loan interest rates.

### UK Second-Generation Search and Rescue Aviation Programme: Invitation to Tender

[HLWS76]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Robert Courts) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency plays a vital role in saving lives, and the Government's second-generation search and rescue aviation programme called UKSAR2G has now reached a pivotal point. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency announces today the shortlisted companies that will be invited to tender for the provision of the next decade of Coastguard aviation.

The UKSAR2G Programme will procure services that will provide the next generation of Coastguard search and rescue helicopters, planes and remotely piloted drones. New technology will enable the Coastguard to find people who need help even more quickly.

Data has been used extensively to enable aviation operators and manufacturers to put forward innovative solutions that meet the complex demands of all the emergency services and the other Government Departments that benefit from Coastguard aviation long into the future. The programme will build upon the success of the current contracts which provide search and rescue helicopters and reconnaissance planes.

Like the arrangements it replaces, UKSAR2G will be a pan-Government aviation service that supports not just Her Majesty's Coastguard, but also UK policing in the search for lost and missing people as well as the Health Services in the transfer of critically ill people between NHS hospitals. This will also continue to support the work of our colleagues in other law enforcement bodies in an even more collaborative fashion than today. The scale of this collaboration is seldom seen in Government procurement. The MCA should be commended for thinking beyond requirements to maximise the value from its investment in aviation services.

The UKSAR2G Invitation to Tender will be issued today to shortlisted bidders to provide their responses by the end of August 2021. Following negotiation, the MCA expects to award the contract in mid-2022. This will allow time for the successful bidder or bidders to establish operations before commencing service from 2024 for at least 10 years.

Since 2013, the UK search and rescue helicopter service has been delivered by Bristow Helicopters Ltd, with planes being provided by 2Excel. All existing aviation services currently under contract to the MCA will be replaced once the new contract commences.

The transition out from the current contracts will start 30 September 2024 and runs through to 31 December 2026, to guarantee a smooth transition of aviation services.

# Written Answers

Thursday, 10 June 2021

## Agriculture and Food: Vacancies

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 labour shortages in the agricultural and food processing sectors; and what steps they are taking to reduce any such shortages. [HL641]

**Lord Benyon:** Defra is working closely with industry to help our world-leading farmers and food businesses access the labour they need, and to ensure that our sectors are appropriately supported both this year and in the future.

On 22 December 2020, the government extended the Seasonal Workers Pilot into 2021, with up to 30,000 visas available, granted for workers to come to the UK, from EU or non-EU countries, for a period of up to 6 months to pick and package fruit and vegetables on our farms.

Defra is leading on a review of automation in horticulture, which will cover both the edible and ornamental sectors in England. The review will work alongside the newly extended and expanded Seasonal Workers Pilot - and Defra's efforts to attract more UK residents into agricultural work – to support the overall aim of reducing the sector's dependency on seasonal migrant labour.

On 1 January 2021 free movement ended and was replaced with the UK's points-based immigration system. Alongside this, agri-food businesses will also be able to recruit those who come to the UK through our youth mobility schemes, dependents of skilled workers, plus those who arrive through other routes, such as our humanitarian protection ones, who have free access to the UK labour market.

Some of the measures in our new points-based immigration system represent a significant change for some businesses.

Defra is working with industry and the Department for Work and Pensions to raise awareness of career opportunities within the food and farming sectors among UK workers. We will also explore the potential for automation to meet future labour demands of the sector.

In 2021 and beyond, agricultural and food businesses will continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status. Over 4.9 million EU citizens and their families have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and the application deadline is 30 June 2021.

For the longer term, the Government is encouraging all sectors to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options, wage increases and to invest in increased automation technology.

## Air Pollution

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the coroner's reports relating to the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah and the prevention of future deaths, published on 20 April, whether they have accepted the recommendation that the UK's legal limit for particulate pollution should be halved to bring it in line with WHO guidelines; and what steps they have taken (1) to improve public warnings on air pollution levels, and (2) to improve awareness among medical staff of the need to provide more information to patients on the health impacts of air pollution. [HL632]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Our thoughts continue to be with Ella's family and friends. We are carefully considering the Prevention of Future Deaths Report published by the Coroner on 21 April and we will respond in due course.

We know that air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health, and although air pollution has reduced significantly over the last decade, there is more to do. In 2019, we published our Clean Air Strategy which recognised the need for comprehensive action on air pollution for the primary and crucial purpose of protecting people's health.

Our landmark Environment Bill delivers key aspects of our Strategy. The Bill establishes a legally binding duty to set at least two new air quality targets, through the environmental targets framework. We recognise the need to take action to reduce people's exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> and in proposing a dual target approach, we are putting health at the centre of our target setting. This approach will ensure action is taken at pollution hotspots and continuous improvement will be driven across the country. We will take into account WHO guidance when setting these targets

Defra makes air pollution information available through a range of channels, such as the UK-Air website and more recently working with Global Action Plan to deliver the Clean Air Hub. We also provide information to a network of charities (e.g. the Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership, British Heart Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis Trust, British Thoracic Society and others) when air pollution levels are forecast to be elevated to ensure information reaches the most vulnerable.

The Department for Health and Social Care continues to engage with organisations such as Health Education England and the Royal Colleges to ensure that healthcare professionals are equipped to provide information and advice to those vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution. The Chief Medical Officer has also discussed this matter with the Royal Colleges during a recent meeting. This will allow patients and their carers to take steps to reduce their exposure to air pollution and give them greater power to manage their condition.

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to improve asthma outcomes for children and young people. The

Children and Young People's Transformation Programme has asked local systems to prioritise local improvements in asthma care. This will include supporting clinicians to discuss the short and long-term adverse effects of air pollution in children with asthma and any mitigation strategies.

## Animal Welfare

*Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 12 April (HL14638), when they intend to publish the Review of the Evidence for Sentience in Decapod Crustaceans and Cephalopod Molluscs; and whether the date of publication will allow its findings to be incorporated into the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill [HL]. [HL617]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** There is clear evidence that animals with a backbone (vertebrates) are sentient and this is reflected in the Government's Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill introduced to the House of Lords on 13 May 2021. However, the Bill also gives the Secretary of State a power to extend the recognition of sentience to particular invertebrates in future on the basis of evidence.

Defra has commissioned an independent review of the available scientific evidence on sentience in decapod crustaceans such as crabs and lobsters, as well as sentience in the class, Cephalopoda, which includes octopus, cuttlefish and squid. The review will report shortly. We look forward to receiving its conclusions, which we will respond to as part of our ongoing work to protect the welfare needs of animals.

## Antisemitism

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many anti-Semitic attacks were reported during May in (1) England, and (2) London; and what steps they are taking to address such abuse. [HL663]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** There is no place in our society for antisemitism. The Home office do not release monthly statistics – these will be published in due course. However, the recent figures from the Community Security Trust have recorded 267 antisemitic incidents between the 8th and the 24th of May. Of those, 115 were registered in London specifically.

This Government takes hate crime against any community very seriously and are clear that victims should be supported and the individuals who carry out these heinous crimes must be brought to justice. We are providing £14 million this year to the protective security grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings. We were also the first country to take the important step of adopting the international holocaust remembrance alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism in

2016; and, following our encouragement, over 3/4s of local councils have adopted the definition, along with many other organisations, including the Premier League and over 80 Universities – demonstrating their willingness to support the Jewish community.

## Azerbaijan: Gender-Based Violence

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International Azerbaijan: Gender-Based Reprisals Against Women Must Stop, published on 12 May. [HL613]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government has made no assessment of this report. However, during her recent visit to Azerbaijan the Minister for the European Neighbourhood met with representatives of Civil Society, including survivors of domestic violence, and during her meeting with President Aliyev she urged signature of the Istanbul Convention. We continue to urge the Government of Azerbaijan to sign the convention and encourage thorough investigations into allegations of violence against women.

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan about (1) fulfilling its obligations under international law to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women, (2) providing adequate protection and effective legal measures and redress for survivors, and (3) ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. [HL614]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** During her recent visit to Azerbaijan the Minister for the European Neighbourhood met with representatives of Civil Society, including survivors of domestic violence. During her meeting with President Aliyev she urged ratification of the Istanbul Convention alongside implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The UK Government will continue to urge Azerbaijan to sign and ratify the appropriate conventions to provide safeguards for women.

## Care Homes: Visits

*Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether visitors to care homes will need to be tested for COVID-19 after 21 June 2021. [HL620]

**Lord Bethell:** Testing is crucial to help protect the people who are the most vulnerable to COVID-19 by identifying those who may unknowingly have the virus - enabling those who test positive and their contacts to self-isolate and break the chain of transmission.

To support effective infection prevention and control in care homes, care home visitors should continue to test, using rapid lateral flow tests in line with the current policy and produce a negative COVID test prior to their visit. In accordance with the roadmap, further announcements on policy from 21st June will be made in due course. Infection prevention and control measures, including testing, will continue to be important for protecting care home residents while ensuring we allow as much visiting as possible.

### Carers

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the forthcoming Health and Social Care Bill will make provision relating to unpaid carers. [HL586]

**Lord Bethell:** We recognise the vital role all unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period and are committed to supporting carers to provide care as they would wish, and to do so in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing and other life chances.

The Health and Social Care Bill provides an opportunity to create a health and care system that is more accountable and responsive to the people that use it. We are committed to ensuring that the voices of unpaid carers and those who access care and support are properly embedded in the design and development of Integrated Care Systems.

### Coronavirus: Research

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to investigate the origins of COVID-19, and (2) to call for a stronger multilateral investigation on the topic, following the announcement of such plans by the President of the United States of America. [HL661]

**Lord Bethell:** We have been clear that a transparent, independent and science-led investigation is an important part of the international effort to understand how Covid-19 started and how it spread. Phase one of the World Health Organisation-convened COVID-19 origins study reported on 30 March and was always meant to be the beginning of the process, not the end. Our priority now is to ensure a timely, transparent, evidence-based, and expert-led Phase Two study.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the participant requirements for the COV-BOOST trial were decided; and why the exclusion criteria for the COV-BOOST trial includes immunosuppressed people. [HL520]

**Lord Bethell:** It is recognised that individuals with immunosuppression may not have a full immune response

to vaccination. To fully understand how COVID-19 vaccines respond as a booster dose they must first be studied in people with fully functioning immune systems. However, there is a breadth of research activity being undertaken, including by the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation, on COVID-19 vaccine responses in groups of immune suppressed individuals under the National Core Studies' Immunity and Data and Connectivity programmes.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to study the effect of COVID-19 booster vaccines on immunocompromised groups. [HL521]

**Lord Bethell:** As part of the National Core Studies Immunity Programme (NCSi), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is providing initial funding of £1.8 million for 12 months towards the OCTAVE study. The OCTAVE study will examine the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups and will help to inform planning for the booster programme. This includes COVID-19 vaccine responses in patients with certain immunosuppressed conditions, including those with inflammatory disorders, high risk cancer patient groups and patients with severe kidney and liver disease.

Studies into the specific effect of a COVID-19 booster vaccine on certain groups have not yet been established. However, UKRI is providing £3 million towards a new research call to support projects examining one or both of the following areas - the nature and quality of COVID-19 vaccine responses, the mechanisms of immune failure that lead to either COVID-19 re-infection or vaccine breakthrough.

*Asked by Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what scientific evidence they have on the effectiveness of the (1) Pfizer, and (2) Astra Zeneca, vaccines in reducing (a) hospitalisations, and (b) symptomatic infections, linked to the B1.351 COVID-19 variant; and what plans they have to publish this evidence. [HL581]

**Lord Bethell:** Public Health England (PHE) is researching the effectiveness of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines against the B1.351 variant. PHE will publish advice in the weekly COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report once sufficient data is available.

### Domestic Abuse: Children

*Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the NHS England Domestic Abuse Action Plan will advise clinicians that they can request that previous NHS waiting times are taken into consideration when making referrals for (1) physical, and (2) mental, healthcare for children fleeing domestic abuse. [HL608]

**Lord Bethell:** Existing NHS policy is clear that access to NHS treatment is based on clinical need. Clinicians are

expected to consider trauma, such as domestic abuse. The individual circumstances of children and young people seeking help will form part of local clinical judgement.

Alongside this the Government is focused on addressing the pressures caused by the pandemic as a priority and we are working with the National Health Service to tackle long waiting lists and bear down on waiting times. At the Spending Review (SR) we invested £1 billion to kickstart elective recovery throughout 2021-22, incentivising providers to address backlogs and tackle long waiting lists.

### **Electric Scooters: Accidents**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many accidents involving e-scooters that required medical treatment have been reported since July 2020. [HL665]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Data on personal injury road accidents is collected via the STATS19 system of accidents reported by the police. Although e-scooters are not currently one of the designated vehicle types in STATS19, guidance has been issued to police forces to identify them using the free text field for other vehicles.

Data for 2020 are currently being collated and validated. Subject to the data recorded in the free text field being of sufficient quality, we intend to publish data on e-scooters and other vehicle types which can be reliably identified from the free text field alongside the annual Reported Road Casualties Great Britain statistics publication in September 2021.

### **Eritrea: Religious Freedom**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of religious freedom in Eritrea; and what representations have they made to the government of Eritrea about the ongoing house arrest of Abune Antonios. [HL633]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain concerned about the human rights situation in Eritrea, including the arrests of religious figures such as Patriarch Abune Antonios of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewadho Church who has been detained for over 15 years. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief raised Patriarch Abune Antonios' case with the Eritrean Ambassador on 20 May, and our Ambassador in Asmara tweeted to call for the Patriarch and others detained for their faith to be released.

The UK Government takes every opportunity to voice our concern about arbitrary arrests and detentions in Eritrea on the basis of religion or belief, and has called for the release of such worshippers. We have done so directly with the Government of Eritrea and publicly through our annual reporting on human rights and at the UN Human Rights Council. The UK raised Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Eritrea in a statement by the UK's

International Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, at the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council. We also encouraged Eritrea to make progress on their commitment to the Universal Periodic Review process including the promotion of FoRB. Eritrea remains a priority country under our annual human rights reporting, and we will continue to monitor the situation there. The Minister for Africa raised human rights when he met the Eritrean Ambassador to the UK on 16 March.

### **Football: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on junior football leagues; and in particular, the refusal of some local authorities to allow pitches to be used after the normal date for the season to end. [HL435]

**Baroness Barran:** Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the best opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity. Our Sporting Future strategy sets out how important it is for all children to have a good experience of sport and physical activity while they are young. We want all young people to be healthy and active.

Government has made a £10.1m investment to open school facilities outside the school day to be spent in the Summer term. This is being delivered by Sport England and county-level Active Partnerships. This includes helping schools to make partnerships with local sports providers.

Local authorities have devolved powers and therefore can decide how best to use their land and facilities depending on their assessment of the needs of their local communities.

### **Freehold and Leasehold: Human Rights**

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the claims by some large freeholders and hedge funds that the abolition of (1) ground rents, and (2) marriage value, will breach their human and property rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. [HL685]

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the application of the European Convention on Human Rights to the rights of freeholders. [HL686]

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will take into account the European Convention on Human Rights when assessing their proposals for comprehensive leasehold reform, including the abolition of marriage value. [HL687]

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to seek a derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights in order to achieve comprehensive leasehold reform. [HL688]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service.

Under the current system, too many leaseholders find the process for extending their lease or buying their freehold (a process known as enfranchisement) too complex, lacking transparency and prohibitively expensive.

We will reform the process of enfranchisement valuation that leaseholders must follow to calculate the cost of extending their lease or buying their freehold. The Government will abolish marriage value, cap the treatment of ground rents at 0.1% of the freehold value, and prescribe rates for the calculations at market value.

These changes to the enfranchisement valuation process will result in substantial savings for some leaseholders, particularly those with less than 80 years left on their lease. Our reforms to enfranchisement valuation also ensure that sufficient compensation is paid to landlords to reflect their legitimate property interests.

In line with usual practice, the Government's intention would be to publish an impact assessment and a section 19(1)(a) Human Rights Act 1988 statement on our leasehold reforms as part of taking primary legislation through Parliament.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rents) Bill, introduced into Parliament on 12 May, will make homeownership fairer and more transparent for thousands of future leaseholders, by legislating to prevent landlords under new residential long leases from requiring a leaseholder to pay a financial ground rent.

The Government considers the provisions of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Specifically, we consider that the Bill engages with the following ECHR rights: Article 6: right to a fair trial; and Article 1 of Protocol 1: protection of property, that the proposals are compatible with the ECHR, and that any interferences can be justified.

**Global Partnership for Education: Finance***Asked by Baroness Sugg*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain their position as the top bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education. [HL638]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in London in July 2021. As co-hosts, it

is our policy to use all the means at our disposal to host a successful Summit. A well-funded GPE will be central to delivering the two ambitious global objectives endorsed by G7 Foreign and Development Ministers in London on 5 May of getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years.

As the Foreign Secretary has previously confirmed, we plan to increase our next contribution to GPE, details of which will be announced in due course.

**Israel: Palestinians***Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the sustainability of their position in support of a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and (2) the impact on that sustainability of recognising Palestine as a state. [HL636]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May. During his visit the Foreign Secretary met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution as the best way to permanently end the occupation, deliver Palestinian self-determination and preserve Israel's security and democratic identity.

The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue. We continue to work closely with international partners to advocate for a two-state solution and encourage a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

**Lone Parents: Coronavirus***Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Gingerbread Caring without Sharing, published in May; and what steps they are taking to provide financial support to single parents once the furlough scheme ends. [HL590]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** No assessment has been made by the Department.

Single parents who become unemployed may be eligible for Universal Credit (UC). UC provides help with childcare costs and a dedicated Work Coach. The Government considers that, where possible, it is in the best interests of children to be in working households, and we are committed to helping lone parents into a job which fits in around their caring responsibilities. Jobcentre Plus staff can help parents to find work that fits around childcare responsibilities and provide intensive support to lone parents. Claimants with children will benefit from a work allowance, and Universal Credit pays up to 85 per

cent of childcare costs, compared to 70 per cent in legacy benefits, and can be claimed up to a month before starting a job.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to protect lives and people's livelihoods, through its economic response.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £112 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

We introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme providing funding to Local Authorities in England to help the most vulnerable children and families stay warm and well fed during the coldest months, now the Covid Local Support Grant, with a total investment of £269 million.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. We are investing over £30 billion in our ambitious Plan for Jobs which is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country.

## Music: Higher Education

*Asked by The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) gross amount, and (2) the amount per student, which will be paid by the Office for Students to universities for students studying music courses under the CAH25-02-02 code for (a) the 2020–21 academic year, and (b) the 2021–22 academic year, under current proposals. [HL609]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Strategic Priorities Grant, formerly referred to as the Teaching Grant, plays an important role in supporting providers and students to develop the skills and knowledge needed locally, regionally, and nationally to support the economy.

We have asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Grant for 2021–22. These reforms include the reallocation of high-cost subject funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology, and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs.

One of our proposals is for a 50% reduction in the rate of high-cost subject funding, which is one element of the wider Strategic Priorities Grant, for some subjects in order to enable this reprioritisation.

Under current proposals, outlined in the OfS' consultation on recurrent funding for 2021/22, the high-cost subject funding rate for students on music courses (CAH25-02-02) will be set at £121.50 in 2021/22, down from £243 in 2020/21. This fall is equivalent to a reduction of around 1% in combined funding from a

£9,250 tuition fee and OfS funding. Music students will also attract other elements of OfS funding, such as funding for student access and success, which is unrelated to the subject they study.

The OfS' methodology for calculating funding allocations, which are done at subject price group-level rather than on an individual subject basis, means that the total amount of high-cost subject funding cannot be calculated for individual subjects such as music. However, illustrative modelling performed by the OfS on funding allocations, which accompanied their consultation, calculated that the total amount of funding for C1.2 subjects, which includes performing arts, creative arts, media studies and archaeology, decreased from £36 million in academic year 2020/21 to £19 million in academic year 2021/22. We have asked the OfS to invest an additional £10 million in our world-leading specialist providers. Many of these specialise in arts provision such as the Royal College of Music or the Royal Academy of Music which are both world-leading institutions for music education. We want to ensure that our specialist providers receive additional support, and that grant funding is used to effectively support students.

## Neurology

*Asked by Baroness Gale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of the NHS neurological workforce to meet the care needs of those living with neurological conditions. [HL36]

**Lord Bethell:** No assessment has been made. It is the responsibility of individual National Health Service trusts to have staffing arrangements in place that deliver safe and effective care.

## Overseas Aid: Drugs and Surgery

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases Our open letter on the UK cuts: A tragic blow for 'global Britain' and the world's most vulnerable people, published on 29 April; and in particular its findings that (1) most of the 770 million medicines donated by pharmaceutical companies will not be delivered, and (2) 180,000 disability preventing surgical operations will not now go ahead, because of cuts in Overseas Development Assistance. [HL596]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to make tough but necessary decisions, including exiting from some programmes such as Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) programme. The UK has made a significant contribution to global efforts to protect hundreds of millions of people from NTDs. Our programmes have

delivered NTD treatment, care, and strengthened health systems to deliver these services going forward. We are currently working with partners, drug companies, donors, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to mitigate impacts, and to exit the programme as responsibly as possible within financial constraints. We continue to distribute drugs to fight NTDs, and perform surgeries in the most urgent cases.

Global health remains a top priority for UK ODA, and we will continue to be a major contributor in leading international action to strengthen global health security, and help build more resilient health systems. Departmental cross-government allocations of ODA spend for 2021/22 were laid out in a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament on 21 April, and the Foreign Secretary has highlighted that the FCDO will spend £1,305 million on global health, which means we will remain among the most generous international donors.

### Overseas Aid: Malaria

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether cuts in Overseas Development Assistance will compromise their ability to support the eradication of malaria. [HL597]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to make tough but necessary decisions, including reducing our malaria spend. Although we are moving away from a fixed spending target, we will continue to be a major donor to malaria, as part of our wider ambition to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children.

The UK has made a significant contribution to global efforts to drive down malaria cases and deaths, and lay the foundations for eradication. We are proud of what the UK and partners have done to address the burden of malaria in developing countries. The UK remains committed to a high level of funding for malaria, including our sizeable £1.4 billion commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. We will also continue to invest in health systems strengthening and universal health coverage, which are vital for continued progress on malaria and for addressing other health needs broadly and sustainably. Global health remains a top priority for UK ODA. We will continue to be a major contributor in leading international action to strengthen global health security through our support to the WHO and multilateral global funds such as Gavi and bilateral support for health programmes within countries.

### Overseas Students: Remote Education

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the current arrangements which enable universities to sponsor overseas students to study remotely into the next academic year until international

travel restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic are eased. [HL628]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Throughout the pandemic, the Government has operated a wide range of concessions to support international students and their sponsors, and these have been kept under regular review.

There is no requirement for students overseas who begin a course by remote study to hold a Student visa or to be sponsored by a licensed Student sponsor for study undertaken overseas.

Students who begin a course remotely are able to make an application for a visa once they intend to begin face-to-face learning in the UK. The simplified Student route allows for an application to be made up to 6 months in advance of the start date for study in the UK. This is increased from the 3 month period allowed under the former Tier 4 route, and formerly a Covid-19 concession which we have formalised in order to provide assurance to students who plan to travel to the UK for their course.

### Overseas Workers: EU Countries

*Asked by The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are planning to hold, if any, with the EU on mobility issues affecting UK industries undertaking activities in the EU; whether these discussions will incorporate (1) the service sector, and (2) the creative industries; and, if so, what is the timetable for any such discussions. [HL610]

**Lord Callanan:** The UK and EU are committed to supporting all industries on mobility issues, including services sectors and the creative industries.

With respect to the creative industries in particular, the Government has established that some touring activities are possible without needing visas or work permits in at least 17 out of 27 Member States. This includes France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and many more. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are speaking to their ministerial counterparts in a number of key Member States. They have already spoken to Portugal and Austria, and will shortly speak to other Member States including Spain and Italy. These conversations are covering the reopening of our respective cultural and creative industries post Covid, and the importance of touring.

### Palace of Westminster: Business

*Asked by Lord Mann*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many private businesses operating using facilities within the Palace of Westminster have been granted COVID-19 business support; and given that support based on business rates is not applicable, on what criteria money was allocated. [HL625]

**Lord Vaux of Harrowden:** The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Finance Committee, to respond on his behalf. There are a number of private businesses that operate using facilities within the Palace of Westminster, including the Gym, Creche and Hairdressers, none of which have requested or received financial support from the House of Lords Administration. As these are private businesses, we are not aware of the extent to which they might have sought or received Government provided COVID-19 business support.

### Paramedical Staff: Training

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why (1) paramedic science degrees are excluded from the Equivalent or Lower Qualifications exemption list, and (2) paramedic science students with previous degrees are denied access to student finance; and what assessment they have made of whether this exclusion is consistent with the inclusion of paramedics on the list of allied health professionals who are eligible for NHS grant funding. [HL615]

**Baroness Berridge:** As part of the reforms to healthcare education funding, we provided an exemption from equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) rules for new students starting undergraduate pre-registration nursing, midwifery and certain allied health profession courses from academic year 2017/18 to allow students to receive support for these courses as a second course.

Paramedic science courses were not included in the reforms noted above as they were not previously part of the NHS bursary system (paramedic science students were already part of the standard student finance system) and therefore they were not included in the list of allied health professions exempt from the ELQ rules.

### Parliamentary Archives: Location

*Asked by Lord Mann*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how much additional accommodation or other facility space will become free once the parliamentary archives are removed from Victoria Tower; and on what date the completion of the removal is anticipated. [HL626]

**Lord Touhig:** The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf. The Parliamentary Archives will be removed from the Victoria Tower by the beginning of September 2025. The Victoria Tower occupies seven percent of the Palace of Westminster. Future use of the space is yet to be determined.

### Peers: Training

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what was the cost to the taxpayer of producing the film made for use

in the Valuing Everyone training sessions for Members of the House of Lords. [HL668]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The video made for use in Valuing Everyone training sessions for Members of the Lords cost £6,000.

In feedback following an earlier version of the training sessions, the course providers were explicitly asked by Members to make the video scenario more directly reminiscent of situations that have arisen in the Lords, rather than the previous and more generic video about a female employee and her manager which was used when the sessions were attended by a mixture of MPs and Peers.

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many Members of the House of Lords have so far completed the Valuing Everyone training sessions; how many of these Members submitted feedback on the sessions; and of these responses, how many overall were (1) favourable, and (2) unfavourable. [HL669]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** As at 9 June, 763 Members of the House of Lords have completed Valuing Everyone training. Of these, 492 completed an evaluation form. In response to the question 'Would you recommend the course to others?', 460 Members out of 485 (95%) answered 'yes'. In response to the question 'Please rate your level of confidence calling out unacceptable behaviour AFTER the course', 447 Members out of 485 (92%) answered 'very good' or 'good'.

### Poverty: Families

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Public Policy Research No Longer Managing, published on 26 May; and what steps they are taking to support families out of poverty. [HL642]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Institute for Public Policy Research's report 'No Longer Managing' makes an assessment of poverty figures based on relative poverty. This Government believes, and has always believed, that absolute poverty is a better measure of living standards than relative poverty which can provide counter-intuitive results. In particular, relative poverty tends to fall when median income shrinks, such as during economic downturns, which is particularly relevant in the current circumstances.

The report also highlights the challenges caused by Covid-19, especially for those in work. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect family incomes by spending £407 billion to protect jobs, keep businesses afloat and help families get by. This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending an estimated £111 billion on welfare support for people of

working age in 2020/21. This has included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

Local Housing Allowance rates were boosted by almost £1 billion in 2020/21 providing 1.5 million people with an average increase of £600 over the year. These increases have been maintained this year so that claimants who benefitted from the increase can continue to do so.

We introduced our Covid Winter Grant Scheme, now the Covid Local Support Grant, providing funding to Local Authorities in England to help the most vulnerable households, with a total investment of £269 million.

As we look towards economic recovery, our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. A child living in a household where every adult is working is about 5 times less likely to be in absolute poverty than a child in a household where nobody works.

We are investing billions in our ambitious Plan for Jobs which is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes the Kickstart Scheme, the Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme. Additionally, the In-Work Progression Commission will report shortly on the barriers to progression for those in persistent low pay and recommend a strategy for overcoming these.

## Prisoners: Rehabilitation

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in prison (1) enrolled, and (2) completed, an offending behaviour course in each year since 2000. [HL604]

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in prison serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence (1) enrolled, and (2) completed, an offending behaviour course in each year since 2005. [HL605]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** National data on all prisoner enrolments (starts) and completions of prison delivered accredited offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) is collected and published annually. The latest available data goes up to and includes March 2019. Data up to and including March 2020 is due to be published shortly by the Ministry of Justice. This data will include some individuals who may have attended more than one accredited programme over time. Data on starts and completions before 2010 is not available, and the data available does not break-down information further by those currently in custody, or by sentence type.

Data shown in the tables below identify the number of enrolments (starts) in Table 1 and the completions each year over the same period in Table 2. The data shows a general maintained level of sexual offending programmes delivered over time. However, for other accredited

offending behaviour programmes there has been a reduction in the volumes delivered.

Accredited programmes have significantly changed over time from a range of shorter programmes to more intensive specialist programmes which take longer to deliver and target prisoners with a medium and higher risk of reoffending. In 2011, responsibility for commissioning substance misuse programmes moved to the NHS resulting in a reduction in delivered volumes of accredited programmes. The changes have decreased the volume of places available, but places are better aligned to demands and the evidence base which suggests accredited programmes are most effective when targeted at cohorts with medium and higher risk of reoffending.

*Table 1: Number of starts for OBPs in custody between the years ending March 2010 and March 2019, England and Wales*

| Year | Offending Behaviour Programmes | Sexual Offender Treatment Programmes | Substance Misuse Programmes | TOTAL  |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 2010 | 8,209                          | 1,153                                | 10,166                      | 19,528 |
| 2011 | 8,752                          | 1,189                                | 8,901                       | 18,842 |
| 2012 | 8,607                          | 1,162                                | 7,330                       | 17,099 |
| 2013 | 7,977                          | 1,077                                | 3,320                       | 12,374 |
| 2014 | 7,179                          | 934                                  | 882                         | 8,995  |
| 2015 | 6,937                          | 1,056                                | 724                         | 8,717  |
| 2016 | 6,373                          | 1,113                                | 458                         | 7,944  |
| 2017 | 6,185                          | 1,141                                | 362                         | 7,688  |
| 2018 | 4,979                          | 1,022                                | 147                         | 6,148  |
| 2019 | 4,504                          | 1,154                                | 169                         | 5,827  |

*Table 2: Number of completions for OBPs in custody between the years ending March 2010 and March 2019, England and Wales*

| Year | Offending Behaviour Programmes | Sexual Offender Treatment Programmes | Substance Misuse Programmes | TOTAL  |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 2010 | 7,339                          | 1,130                                | 7,630                       | 16,099 |
| 2011 | 7,757                          | 1,191                                | 6,968                       | 15,916 |
| 2012 | 7,692                          | 1,166                                | 5,943                       | 14,801 |
| 2013 | 7,374                          | 1,034                                | 2,708                       | 11,116 |
| 2014 | 6,390                          | 877                                  | 749                         | 8,016  |
| 2015 | 6,047                          | 947                                  | 597                         | 7,591  |
| 2016 | 5,545                          | 1,144                                | 368                         | 7,057  |
| 2017 | 5,479                          | 1,150                                | 331                         | 6,960  |
| 2018 | 4,403                          | 993                                  | 122                         | 5,518  |
| 2019 | 3,958                          | 1,114                                | 145                         | 5,217  |

Table note: As with any data derived from large-scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

Source:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/873346/accredited-programmes-prisons-2018-19-march-2020-update.XLSX](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873346/accredited-programmes-prisons-2018-19-march-2020-update.XLSX).

The Government's primary responsibility is to protect the public. Accredited programmes aim to protect the public and reduce reoffending and are part of a range of rehabilitation opportunities available. HM Prison and Probation Service remains committed to supporting the progression of those serving IPP and life sentences in custody, so that the Parole Board may direct their release as soon as it is safe to do so.

## Professional Qualifications Bill (HL)

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why higher education institutions and other providers of training for professional qualifications are not listed as stakeholders affected in the impact assessment for the Professional Qualifications Bill; whether higher education institutions or others providing such education and training were consulted on the proposals in that Bill; and if not, (1) why not, and (2) what plans they have to consult such providers in the future. [HL675]

**Lord Callanan:** The impact assessment considers the costs and benefits of provisions in the Professional Qualifications Bill. The proposals in the Bill do not affect the UK qualifications or experience required to practise a profession.

The Government ran a Call for Evidence on the recognition of professional qualifications and the regulation of professions between August 2020 and October 2020, which was open to anyone with an interest in professional qualifications. We received 417 responses, of which 26 responses were from educators who provide training and higher education institutions.

Officials have met representatives from Universities UK to discuss proposals in the Professional Qualifications Bill and will continue to pursue an active programme of stakeholder engagement.

## Teachers: Citizenship

*Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many teachers specialising in citizenship education completed their training in (1) 2016, (2) 2017, (3) 2018, (4) 2019, (5) 2020, and (6) 2021. [HL499]

*Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many teachers self-identified as citizenship education teachers

in (1) 2016, (2) 2017, (3) 2018, (4) 2019, (5) 2020, and (6) 2021. [HL500]

**Baroness Berridge:** The number of teachers in state funded secondary schools in England, who are recorded as teaching one or more lessons of citizenship per week, are shown in the table below. The latest information gives the situation in November 2019. Information for November 2020 will be published in June 2021. Information for 2021 will be collected via the School Workforce Census later this year.

| <i>As at<br/>November<br/>2019</i>                       | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Headcount of teachers teaching citizenship               | 4,826 | 4,451 | 4,241 | 4,257 |
| As a % of all teachers in state funded secondary schools | 2.2%  | 2.0%  | 1.9%  | 1.9%  |

The majority of teachers of citizenship also teach other subjects.

The number of trainees who successfully completed training in citizenship education from the 2015/16 to the 2018/19 academic year inclusive is summarised in the table below:

| <i>Academic<br/>Year</i>                               | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Postgraduate trainees awarded qualified teacher status | 78      | 45      | 37      | 31      |

The data on numbers of postgraduate trainees awarded qualified teacher status, for the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 is not yet available. Due to a change in the recording of subjects in the Initial Teacher Training data, we will not be able to specifically identify Citizenship trainees for the academic year 2019/2020 onwards.

## Travellers: Caravan Sites

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research by Katharine Quarmby 'Systemic Racism within a Rigged System', published in Byline Times on 24 May, on the risks to health and wellbeing on 242 authorised Gypsy and traveller sites; and what steps they will take in response. [HL644]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) which was published alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in 2012 recognises the differing needs and land use of travelling communities and encourages improved site provision.

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out that authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally ensuring that (amongst other matters) policies provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of travellers that may locate there.

The Government remains firmly committed to delivering a cross-government strategy to tackle the inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

## Universal Credit

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expand Universal Credit accessibility for those who are ineligible due to (1) their partner's earnings, (2) savings, or (3) migration status. [HL539]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Universal Credit is a means-tested system of welfare support. Where claimants have income available to meet their household's everyday living costs, such as through a partner's earnings or savings, their entitlement to Universal Credit is adjusted accordingly, we have no plans to change this.

While we keep the Universal Credit capital limit, and those which apply to other means tested benefits under review, we have no plans to change them. In doing so the Government has to strike a balance between the value of increasing the capital limit and focussing resources on other priority areas such as helping people to return to work.

Non-UK nationals and family members who are issued with a residence permit with a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition are not eligible to access taxpayer-funded benefits, including Universal Credit, for the duration of their leave. Public funds do not include contributions-based benefits and the State Pension. The Department has no powers to award taxpayer-funded benefits to an individual whose Home Office immigration status specifies no recourse to public funds.

## Universal Credit: Carers

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the commitment made in their response to the report from the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, published on 16 July 2019 (CP 137), what steps they have taken to review the effectiveness of the policy to encourage Universal Credit claimants to nominate the main carer's bank account for payment. [HL56]

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the source of the statistic that around 60 per cent of Universal Credit payments go to the main carer, which is stated in their response to the report from the Joint Committee on

the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, published on 16 July 2019 (CP 137). [HL57]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Since Summer 2019, the online claim process has featured messaging that encourages joint claimants to select the bank account of the main carer when choosing where Universal Credit payments should be paid to. This seeks to balance encouragement of positive financial management behaviours, whilst also allowing claimants to choose how to best manage their own finances.

It is not currently possible to reliably identify whether payment has been made to the main carer in couples with children. While we have analysed data on payments to male and female members of couples (as below), we cannot yet confidently identify the main carer. It has not been possible to draw robust conclusions based on this limited evidence. Further work is planned.

The 'Universal Credit Statistical Ad Hoc: Gender of bank account holders on Universal Credit', published January 2019, shows that for couple claimants where the gender of the account holder could be identified, 59% of accounts are held by a female with 41% held by a male. This is the source of the statistic stated in the Government's response to the report from the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, that 'around 60 per cent of Universal Credit payments go to the main carer, usually a woman', although I regret that response should more accurately have said that 'around 60 per cent of Universal Credit couple payments go to the woman, usually the main carer.'

## Universities: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Bull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of sustaining PCR testing and sequencing at scale in universities as a means of identifying and understanding new variants; and what plans they have to fund support for such testing and sequencing. [HL268]

**Lord Bethell:** No specific assessment has been made. The regular testing offered at universities is with lateral flow devices (LFDs) rather than polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. In line with wider national policy, all positive LFD tests are followed by a confirmatory PCR test. The intention is for 100% of viable positive samples from PCR tests to be presented for sequencing to identify and understand new variants. PCR testing and sequencing are provided and funded by NHS Test and Trace.

## Youth Futures Foundation: Reclaim Fund

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the application by the Youth Futures Foundation to the Reclaim Fund specified the geographical regions in

which any money it was allocated would be spent. [HL714]

**Baroness Barran:** Reclaim Fund Ltd is the Dormant Assets Scheme's administrator. It is responsible for managing dormant assets and transferring surplus funds to The National Lottery Community Fund, to be spent on social or environmental purposes. This funding is apportioned between the four nations with broad distribution decisions taken at a devolved level.

The Youth Futures Foundation is an independent organisation focussing on removing barriers for those furthest from the labour market. £90 million of the English portion of funding has been allocated to the Youth Futures Foundation for initiatives in England.

### Zimbabwe: Political Prisoners

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Zimbabwe about the (1) arrest, and (2) alleged abuse, of Joana Mamombe, Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova; and what steps they have taken to ensure their immediate release. [HL612]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Minister for Africa has followed the cases of Joanna Mamombe, Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova closely. He wrote to the Zimbabwean Minister of Home Affairs about their cases on 10 May 2021 urging for them to be treated in line with the constitution. On 30 April, our Ambassador to Zimbabwe met with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to discuss their case. On 5 May, the Minister for Africa welcomed the granting of bail for Joanna Mamombe and Cecilia Chimbiri. We are relieved that all three women are no longer in custody, but we urge the authorities to focus on investigating their original claims.

We remain clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law and the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution; safeguarding human rights; and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. Her Majesty's Government will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns and we will work alongside the international community to support a better future for all Zimbabweans.

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