

Session 2021-22
No. 20



Tuesday
22 June 2021

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Launch of Accession Negotiations

[HLWS103]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liz Truss MP) has today made the following statement:

The UK will today launch negotiations with 11 countries belonging to a free trade area, in a landmark moment for the UK as an independent trading nation. Joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) hitches the UK to some of the world's biggest current and future economies populated by half a billion people and with a joint GDP of £9 trillion.

It would secure our businesses and British exports superior access to these dynamic markets, with 65% of the world's 5.4 billion middle class consumers expected to be in Asia by 2030. UK exports to CPTPP nations would increase by 65% (£37bn) until 2030 and, in addition to this growth, comparative static analysis shows an additional increase in trade by £3.3bn as a result of UK accession.

Membership of CPTPP would build on the FTAs we have now signed with 67 countries plus the EU, and opens new markets for our services sectors, lowers tariffs on goods like cars and whisky, and creates new opportunities for UK farmers. The historic trade deal agreed in principle with Australia on 15 June will mean iconic British products will be cheaper to sell into Australia, boosting UK industries that employ 3.5 million across the country. This agreement, and others with CPTPP members including Japan, Singapore and Mexico, is a gateway into the fast-growing Indo-Pacific region and will boost our bid to join CPTPP.

CPTPP members represent 13% of global GDP, growing to 16% if the UK joins. Joining CPTPP would put the UK at the heart of this dynamic group of countries, deepening our ties with some of the world's biggest and fastest-growing countries, as the world economy increasingly centres on the Pacific region.

Joining CPTPP is expected to boost this growth even further, and that means supporting even more UK jobs. It is an advanced and ambitious agreement which goes deep in areas of UK interest such as services and digital trade.

The Indo-Pacific is the world's growth engine: home to half the world's people; 40% of global GDP; and some of the fastest-growing economies that are at the forefront of new global trade arrangements. By entering into a free trade agreement with these countries, the UK can benefit from this growth. Acceding to the CPTPP would help the UK engage more deeply with the region, and help us secure increased trade and investment opportunities,

diversify our trading links and supply chains, and embed open trade.

As part of CPTPP, our analysis shows that every nation and region of the UK is expected to benefit. Each region of the UK already exported over £1 billion worth of goods to CPTPP members in 2019, including £3.1 billion from the East Midlands, £2.4 billion from Scotland, and £2 billion from the North West. Membership could deliver a £1.8bn boost to UK GDP in the long run and to increase take-home pay for British workers by £800 million.

Accession could see 99.9% of UK exports being eligible for tariff-free trade with CPTPP members. Joining would secure lower tariffs for exports such as whisky and cars, which are in high demand in the Pacific region; 65% of the world's 5.4 billion middle class consumers are expected to be in Asia by 2030.

CPTPP also greatly benefits the UK as the world's second-largest services exporter. It makes travel easier for business-people moving between CPTPP countries, and goes further in areas of key UK interest, with advanced provisions that facilitate digital trade, modern rules on data that would help the UK's cutting-edge tech sector go global and enable more financial and professional services markets to be opened up.

CPTPP also sets modern rules for digital trade across all sectors of the economy, supporting UK businesses seeking new opportunities in member markets. Digitally delivered services from the UK to CPTPP, such as making online international bank transfers, selling an e-book from an online marketplace or giving legal advice over Zoom, were worth £18.7 billion in 2019.

The more CPTPP expands, the greater the benefits to the UK. Economies including the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, and Republic of Korea have all expressed interest in joining. By having a seat at the table as the first new member, the UK can help shape CPTPP's future development as it grows.

Today, the Department for International Trade has published four documents, copies of which have been placed in the House library:

- 1) Our outline approach to negotiations, setting out our objectives for the negotiations
- 2) A response to the public consultation on membership of CPTPP, setting out how it has informed our policy
- 3) Our geostrategic vision for trade with the region
- 4) A scoping assessment, providing a preliminary economic assessment of the impact of membership

On Wednesday 2nd June, CPTPP nations agreed to the UK's bid to begin the accession process to join CPTPP. The UK will continue to work closely with Japan, as this year's chair of the CPTPP commission, alongside the other CPTPP nations to progress negotiations as quickly as possible. As in all negotiations, we are committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in our negotiations with CPTPP member states, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

CPTPP has high standards in areas including the environment and labour. Its rules commit members, for example, to protecting the minimum wage, freedom of association, the elimination of forced and child labour and, crucially, enforcing their own laws in these areas. CPTPP also affirms the UK's right to regulate in our national self-interest, rather than forcing harmonisation on its members, complementing the UK's system of strong rule of law coupled with the freedom to set our own regulations.

This government is committed to transparency and will ensure that parliamentarians, UK citizens and businesses have access to information on our trade negotiations. The Written Ministerial Statement of 7 December 2020 set out our transparency and scrutiny commitments, including regular updates to parliament and engagement with Select Committees, which will apply to the UK's process of accession to CPTPP.

COVID Local Support Measures

[HLWS102]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My Right Honourable Friend, The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey MP) has made the following Written Statement.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, this Government has provided an unprecedented package of support for individuals, families, communities and businesses who need financial help at this critical time.

The Covid Local Support Grant (previously known as the Covid Winter Grant Scheme) has enabled Local Authorities in England to support families across the country who are struggling with the cost of food and utility bills as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The scheme has run from 1st December, with a total investment of over £269m so far. Between 1st December and 16th April, Local Authorities had made almost 6.3m awards under the scheme.

The Covid Local Support Grant arrangements will be extended for a final time, with a further investment of £160m, to cover the period up to 30th September. This temporary support is being extended beyond the planned ending of restrictions, to help families get back on their feet as the economy recovers and the vaccine rollout continues. Well-paid work is the best route out of poverty and that is why we have a Plan for Jobs.

The Covid Local Support Grant is in addition to the £220m Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which has been scaled up to cover the whole of England across the major school holidays in 2021 – including this summer. The HAF will provide disadvantaged children across the country with healthy meals and enriching activities.

Draft Health and Care Data Strategy

[HLWS106]

Lord Bethell: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

I would like to inform the House that the draft strategy '*Data Saves Lives: Reshaping health and social care with data*' has been published today by NHSX and builds on the ground-breaking use of data during the pandemic.

Over the last 18 months, when facing this country's greatest public health emergency for generations, one of the most powerful tools at our disposal has been the power of data. Data helped us to identify those who are most vulnerable to Coronavirus and ask them to shield; the NHS COVID-19 data store we set up was pivotal to our day-to-day response; and it powered vital research that helped us discover new treatments that saved lives across the world.

Under these proposals to deliver truly patient-centred care, everyone in England will be given better access to their own healthcare records and detailed information about exactly how they are used. Patients will be able to access test results, medications, procedures and care plans from across all parts of the health system. They will be able to have confidence that health and care staff have up-to-date information, regardless of the care setting, so they will no longer have to repeat details unnecessarily. By improving their access to data, people will also be able to manage appointments, refill medications and speak remotely, not just face to face, with health and care staff when needed.

This strategy not only seeks to bring people closer to their data, it will also support the NHS in creating a modernised system. The public need to be confident to share their data with the NHS, which will hold it securely on their behalf. These protections reflect the strict parameters for the use of data and security standards set out by the National Data Guardian for Health and Care. Today's new strategy commits the NHS to going even further with a commitment to publish the first transparency statement setting out how health and care data has been used across the sector by 2022. Modern use of patient data saves lives and maintains the highest levels of privacy. The two goals are complimentary, not contradictory.

We are publishing this today in draft form so that we have the opportunity to engage with the public and right across the health and care system. The learning from this will be included in a final version to be published in the early Autumn.

I will deposit a copy of the draft strategy in both Libraries.

Indemnity for the Independent Review into the Issues Raised at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

[HLWS105]

Lord Bethell: My Hon. Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar), has today made the following written ministerial statement:

It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Minister concerned to present a departmental Minute to Parliament giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from incurring the liability until fourteen parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency.

I have today laid a departmental Minute proposing the provision by NHS England and NHS Improvement of an indemnity that is necessary in respect of an NHS England and Improvement non-statutory, independent review into whistleblowing at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. This review follows widely reported events arising from an anonymous letter that was sent in October 2018 to the relative of a patient who had died at the Trust. The purpose of the review is:

- to consider the appropriateness and impact of the actions taken in response to the issues raised by/connected with the October letter by the Trust and other relevant bodies; and

- to produce advisory recommendations and learnings.

The indemnity will cover any sums (including any legal or other associated costs) that members of the review team are liable to pay in relation to legal action brought against them by a third party in respect of liabilities arising from any act done, or omission made, honestly and in good faith, when carrying out activities for the purposes of the review. The indemnity will apply to any work carried out from the commencement of the review to its completion in 2021, in accordance with the review Terms of Reference. The indemnity will cover the contingent liability of any legal action in the run up to and following the publication of the review report, and for two years after that date. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

The Treasury has approved the proposal in principle. If, during the period of fourteen parliamentary sitting days beginning on the date on which this Minute was laid before Parliament, a member signifies an objection by giving notice of a Parliamentary Question or by otherwise raising the matter in Parliament, final approval to proceed with incurring the liability will be withheld pending an examination of the objection.

I attach a copy of the departmental Minute.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Departmental Minute West Suffolk NHS FT [Departmental Minute-Indemnity for the Independent Review into the issues raised at the West Suffolk NHS FT.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-06-22/HLWS105/>

Report of the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill

[HLWS104]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Leo Docherty) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Ministry of Defence welcomes the Select Committee's report on the Armed Forces Bill (HC 1281). I am grateful for the Committee's support of the endeavours to improve the lives of our Service personnel, veterans and their families. I will address the Committee's recommendations in turn. I look forward to engaging with Members across the House as the Bill makes progress.

Beginning with the Committee's recommendation that Select Committee scrutiny should continue to be the convention for Armed Forces Bills, I believe that the appointment of a Select Committee, with its ability to produce a report and to make recommendations, ensures transparency and proper scrutiny of the Armed Forces Bill and the legislation in question. I therefore thank the Committee for their work and report and readily welcome the Committee's recommendation.

I note the Committee's recommendation that more time be allocated for the conduct of its business. The Government is committed to giving select committees adequate time to undertake their work, however, the timing available for primary legislation is ultimately a matter for the Business Managers. The primary purpose of Armed Forces Bills is for the quinquennial renewal of the legislation that governs the Armed Forces. Armed Forces Bills must reach Royal Assent before the Armed Forces Act 2006 would expire. Additional time for the Select Committee could compress the time available for other stages of the Bill, impact the wider Parliamentary programme and delay the Bill's passage, placing undue pressure on the deadline to renew the Armed Forces Act 2006. Furthermore, time is also given for further scrutiny of the Bill, as it is considered by a Committee of the whole House as well as by the Select Committee.

The Committee's keen interest in the Armed Forces Covenant reflects members' universal support for our Service personnel both regulars and reserves, veterans and their families. While there remains a difference of view on some issues, I welcome the Committee's assertion that questions in the annual Continuous Attitude Surveys would help to ascertain whether the Covenant has had a positive or negative impact on the defence community. For that reason the Armed Forces, and Families Continuous Attitude Surveys already include a Covenant-related question on whether the Service person or Service

family feels advantaged or disadvantaged compared to the general public in specific areas, such as housing, education and healthcare. This provides a measure of whether Service life is having a positive or negative impact and is therefore of use as a measure of the Covenant.

I acknowledge the Select Committee's concern over how the duty to have 'due regard' would function in practical terms and its recommendation that the Government should conduct a review of this after 24 months of operation. We recognise the importance of understanding the impact of the new duty and how that can be measured will form an important part of our ongoing work in helping our Covenant stakeholders as they begin to implement the new Covenant duty. We are always happy to work with the House of Commons Defence Committee, and the Government will of course continue to report on the progress of the Armed Forces Covenant, including the new duty, annually to Parliament. As part of the Armed Forces Act, the new Covenant duty would also be subject to the quinquennial parliamentary renewal process.

Further, I thank and appreciate the Committee's conclusions on our efforts to reform the Service Justice System. The Bill addresses a small part of that work and we are implementing a number of recommendations following the Service Justice System Review that will ensure the Service Justice System is more effective, efficient and provides a better service to those who use it, in particular victims and witnesses. A key means of underpinning that assurance will be the establishment of a Defence Serious Crime Capability. We are making progress to build a stronger, more effective and collaborative approach to policing across Defence, building a means of maintaining the capability and skills of the Service Police along with further joint working with the civilian police forces.

On another note, I thank the Committee for welcoming Defence's efforts to speed up the Service Complaints process, though the Committee still has concerns as to possible delays to appeals and has suggested that priority should be given to implementing all the recommendations of the Wigston review within 6 months. However, let me reassure the Committee that Service Complaints Reform aims to tackle the main areas of delay in the Service Complaints system, through increased efficiency and other measures aimed to increase confidence in the system. The ability to set a reduced appeal timeframe where it is appropriate to do so will further align the SC system with other public sector and MOD's civilian grievance system timeframes. Regulations will continue to ensure that those who need extra time due to the unique elements of service life will continue to have access to the system, by allowing extra time where it is just and equitable to do so. We will work closely with the Service Complaints Ombudsman on the detail of the regulations that will be brought forward.

Defence is committed to delivering the Wigston recommendations. As set out in the Gray review, out of

the 36 Wigston recommendations, 34 had either been implemented or were in progress. The remaining are in progress and being prioritised, with some linked to the reform of the Service Complaints system and implementation dependent on the AF Bill being passed.

I welcome the Committee's finding that the experience of people in the Armed Forces with protected characteristics has improved. I also recognise there is more to be done. While the Committee recommends that a metric be added to the Annual Report on the Armed Forces Covenant to report on the experience of those with protected characteristics, we report on this in other ways. I wish to assure the Committee that we continue to explore how better to identify the issues affecting our people and this remains a central issue for Defence. The recent Defence Command Paper set out our intent to tangibly, rapidly and significantly improve the lived experience of all those working in Defence, including those with protected characteristics. The MOD already reports progress against this intent through departmental Performance and Risk Reporting processes, as well as mainstream Defence feedback mechanisms and regular localised Climate Assessments, all of which is subject to regular review by the Chief of Defence Staff and the Permanent Secretary. Diversity is a source of strength for the Armed Forces and we welcome and encourage absolutely a more diverse Armed Forces.

I welcome the Committee's recommendation that the Government urgently sets out how it plans to meet targets for the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service, Complex Treatment Services and Improving Access to Psychological Therapy. The Government remains wholly committed to its ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan to expand and transform mental health services in England and to investing an additional £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023-24. This will give 380,000 more adults access to psychological therapies by 2023-24. All but one of the four regional areas are meeting or exceeding targets for the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service, and activity is already in hand to further improve performance in those few areas where targets are not yet being met. The number of days that a patient waits from initial referral to being offered an assessment for referral in 2020-21 (up to the end of January 2021) was on average 12 days, which falls within the 14-day target. All four regional areas are meeting this target and it is an improvement from the waiting times in 2019-20. Following an assessment, a patient is offered an initial clinical appointment, if the outcome of the assessment is to be seen within the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service. The target for this is also 14 days and in England on average so far in 2020-21 this target is being met. Only one regional area is not currently meeting the target but has seen a reduction in average wait of 11 days since 2019-20.

Launched in 2017, the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service and the Complex Treatment Services, and more recently the High Intensity Service, has been offering support to Serving personnel, veterans, and their

families, dealing with complex mental health issues. These services have now been brought together under the collective name Op COURAGE, providing a single point of entry for veterans looking to access support for their mental health needs.

We are doing our utmost to ensure that our mental health services are there for everyone who needs them during the pandemic. Talking therapies are being made available remotely so people can access help safely from home. And the NHS is working to ensure the option of face-to-face support is provided to people with serious mental health illnesses across all ages where it is clinically safe to do so.

This leads me on to the Committee's next recommendation that further work must be done to ensure that the principle of "priority treatment" is better understood by both veterans and service providers. In 2018, the MOD/UK Department of Health's Partnership Board established the Priority Treatment Working Group. The group's membership is made up of both patient and clinical representatives from all four nations, MOD, Office for Veterans' Affairs and the Service Charities sector. The group continues to meet to share best practice of priority treatment and will discuss the action from the Committee – to address the lack of clarity and understanding amongst veterans, family members, and service providers and develop methods to improve understanding.

Within its report the Committee has recommended that work be undertaken to minimise variation in the level of services across the UK, with specific reference to Northern Ireland to deal with the challenges faced by veterans attempting to access mental health services there. We believe that by improving awareness and understanding of the Covenant among public bodies, our proposed legislation, will help to reduce disadvantage to the Armed Forces Community and minimise variation in service across UK.

The unique circumstances in Northern Ireland mean delivery is approached in a different way from the rest of the UK. The Government is making good progress in delivering the Covenant in Northern Ireland. For example, the first Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner has been appointed and will jointly chair (with the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Reserve Forces & Cadets Association) a Mental Health Committee, bringing together key statutory and third-sector providers of mental health services and support. The Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office, which has been provided with additional funding by Her Majesty's Government to assist in delivery of the Covenant, continues to work directly with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to ensure that all funding programmes in support of Veterans' mental health are fully promoted and accessible to the widest range of eligible, trusted organisations, in order to enhance those services available statutorily.

The Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish (Home Service) Aftercare Service includes provision of mental health support. The Government has committed, as set out

in the New Decade New Approach agreement, that the MOD will consider whether this should be widened to cover all Veterans living in Northern Ireland. In addition, projects that benefit the Armed Forces Community in Northern Ireland received over £1.6 million last year from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

I turn to the recommendation of the Committee that work should be undertaken to improve data collection with regard to the numbers of serving personnel and veterans requiring treatment for addiction and other mental health illnesses. I wish to reassure the Committee that the MOD is committed to the mental health and wellbeing of its Service personnel and provides dedicated and comprehensive services, including support for alcohol, drugs and gambling related disorders. Serving personnel requiring any form of healthcare, including treatment for drug and alcohol addiction, are cared for within the Defence Medical Services establishment.

For those accessing Defence Medical Services care, we already collate and publish statistics on those accessing specialist mental healthcare for substance abuse (alcohol and drugs). These figures are published annually in the mental health official statistics where we make specific reference to those assessed with alcohol-related substance abuse.

In the Strategy for our Veterans, the Government committed to improve the collection and analysis of data on veterans' needs and experiences to inform future policy and services. The Government is developing a veterans' data strategy which will achieve this across a wide range of topics, such as veterans' health and wellbeing, mental health, employment, housing and relationships.

Wherever they live in the UK, all Veterans are able to receive specialist support if they need it. Each Devolved Administration provides support in a way that best suits their region. The majority of Veterans access the same healthcare support as the general population through NHS services. In England, each part of the country now has specialist mental health services designed for Service leavers, ex-Service personnel, Reservists and their families through the recently launched Op COURAGE - the Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. This is the new overarching name for the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service, Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service and Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service. Op COURAGE provides a single front door to dedicated services for Veterans and make it easier for Veterans and their families to get help.

Further, I observe the Committee touched upon the area of Service housing and in its conclusions felt that the Government may wish to consider adding Service accommodation to the list of functions to which the duty of due regard under the Armed Forces Covenant applies. Whilst I thank the Committee for its well-intended suggestion, we feel this is unnecessary. The purpose of the Covenant duty is to raise awareness among providers of public services relating to housing, education and

healthcare of how Service life can disadvantage the Armed Forces Community in accessing those key public services. MOD is fully aware of the issues impacting the Armed Forces Community and works with other Departments and Devolved Administrations to raise awareness across all service providers. Accommodation forms part of the Secretary of State's annual statutory report to Parliament on the Covenant and is included in the Armed Forces, Reserves and Families Continuous Attitude Surveys conducted each year.

The provision of high-quality subsidised accommodation remains a fundamental part of the overall MOD offer to Service personnel and their families and is supported by annual improvement programmes and 24/7 repair and maintenance services. Over the last decade, £1.2 billion has been invested on construction and upgrades of MOD Service accommodation. There is continued investment in a range of new-build and renovation projects. All accommodation at the point of occupancy meets the Decent Homes Standard as a minimum with the vast majority exceeding this. In addition, we are developing the Future Accommodation Model to give Service personnel more choice over where, with whom and how they can live, reflecting modern family life, with entitlement based on need not rank. This model is currently being piloted at three sites. We recognise that many service personnel seek stability for their families. A key part of this is helping personnel buy their own home. The Forces Help to Buy Scheme, first launched in 1 April 2014, is open to new applicants until 31 December 2022.

Sale of Cabinet Office Stake in Axelos Ltd

[HLWS107]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP), has today made the following written statement:

Introduction

I am pleased to announce that Cabinet Office has conditionally agreed to sell its 49% stake in AXELOS Limited to PeopleCert International Limited, a member of the PeopleCert group. This is part of a joint sale with Capita of the whole of AXELOS. Subject to the timely satisfaction of conditions the sale is expected to complete in July.

Sale of the Cabinet Office stake will generate cash proceeds of approximately £175 million. Cabinet Office has also received cash dividends of approximately £10.7 million this year making total cash receipts of some £185.7 million.

As part of the sale Cabinet Office will also receive accelerated settlement of outstanding deferred consideration (currently worth some £24 million) owed to it by AXELOS dating from the formation of the joint venture.

The sale values the business at £380 million on a cash free, debt free basis.

AXELOS staff and senior management will be transferring with the business.

Rationale and Timing

The AXELOS joint venture was established with Capita in 2013 to commercialise certain best practice methodologies (principally ITIL and Prince2) previously developed by HM Government. The Cabinet Office chose to retain a 49% stake on the formation of the business with a view to delivering better value for money through a future sale.

The sale followed a strategic review triggered by Capita's desire to sell its majority stake. Cabinet Office concluded that a joint sale was likely to attract greater interest and generate a higher price per share than a separate sale of Cabinet Office's 49% stake; it also offered the opportunity to share in the premium typically available on the sale of a controlling stake.

The sale was conducted through a public auction process and the sale proceeds exceed Cabinet Office's retention value.

Contingent Liability

The sale terms include standard sale indemnities and an indemnity by Cabinet Office for 49% of AXELOS' share of the deficit in the Capita Group's defined benefit scheme, calculated on the basis set out in Section 75 Pensions Act 1995, to the extent that it exceeds the allowance already made for it. Any liability under the indemnity is not expected to exceed £300,000 and is expected to be settled during this financial year.

On this occasion, due to the sensitivities surrounding the commercial negotiation of this sale, it was not possible to notify Parliament of the particulars of the contingent liability in advance of the sale announcement. Instead, the Cabinet Office notified the chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

More information on this contingent liability has been set out in a Departmental Minute that has been laid before the House alongside this statement.

Fiscal Impacts

The impact on the fiscal aggregates, in line with fiscal forecasting convention, are not discounted to present value. The net impact of the sale on a selection of fiscal metrics are summarised as follows:

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Sale proceeds	£175 million
Hold valuation	The price achieved is above retention value
Public Sector Net Borrowing	The sale reduces public sector debt. All else being equal, the sale will reduce future debt interest costs for government.

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Public Sector Net Borrowing	The reduction in government's shareholding means it will not receive future dividend income that it would otherwise have been entitled to through these shares.
Public Sector Net Debt	Improved by £213.9 million
Public Sector Net Liabilities	Improved by £50.5 million
Public Sector Net Financial Liabilities	Improved by £50.5 million

Written Answers

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

Africa: BBC World Service

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the UK's diplomatic soft power of the BBC World Service in Africa. [HL865]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO strongly values the work of the BBC World Service and its independent and impartial broadcasting, which helps to promote UK values overseas. We support the BBC's mission to bring high quality and trusted news to African audiences, including where free speech is limited. FCDO investment into the BBC World Service via the World2020 programme has seen six new language services launch across Nigeria, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and has contributed to an increase of over 40% in weekly audience since 2016.

Ambulance Services

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average cost for an NHS Ambulance emergency response. [HL812]

Lord Bethell: The information is not held in the format requested as there is no single type of National Health Service emergency ambulance response.

Animal Welfare

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which parts of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill would not have been allowed had the UK remained a member of the EU. [HL852]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill goes further than Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU in a number of ways. In particular The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill introduces a proportionate accountability mechanism, involving the Animal Sentience Committee. It applies to all policy areas and has no exemptions.

Asylum: Deportation

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals were on board UK deportation flight Esparto 11; and to which countries they were deported. [HL890]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Operation Esparto 11 returns charter flight departed on 12 August 2020. Fourteen people in total were returned under the Dublin Regulation to Germany and France on this flight.

The Government's efforts to facilitate entirely legitimate and legal returns of people who have entered the U.K. through illegal routes are too often frustrated by last minute challenges submitted hours before a scheduled flight. These claims are very often baseless and entirely without merit, but are given full legal consideration, leading to removal being rescheduled.

This Government's priority is keeping the people of this country safe, and we make no apology for seeking to remove dangerous foreign criminals and other immigration offenders.

Asylum: Finance

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of delays in the issuing of the Aspen payment cards to asylum seekers. [HL893]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The PrePaid Financial Services (PFS) solution is a well-established Mastercard pre-paid card used by organisations across the UK as well as abroad and has undergone over 5 months of rigorous testing to integrate with Home Office systems.

Service users were notified of the transition in advance and a significant majority of service users have received their Aspen card and successfully activated. The service is functioning as expected for those who have activated their card. The cards are fully working, withdrawals and purchases are being made and the automated IVR activation line is operating well.

Transitions of this nature are complex, and plans to mitigate anticipated issues were, and remain, in place. Cash payments were made available in emergencies. We will continue to work with the remainder of service users to activate their cards and ensure they are supported throughout.

Our main focus is to ensure all remaining service users have an activated card so the new service can be accessed and support payments received.

As part of our management of service contracts continuous improvement assessments will be factored in throughout the contract term and implemented accordingly.

Babies: Screening

Asked by *Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve (1) the Newborn Screening Programme, and (2) the diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases. [HL1055]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) regularly reviews over 100 conditions, including some rare diseases, to ensure that we continue to offer a world class screening programme. In the Newborn Screening Programme, the UK NSC has recently reviewed Adrenoleukodystrophy and is in the process of reviewing 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome to assess its suitability for a population-based screening programme. It is important that the addition of any new conditions to the newborn blood spot programme or any population screening programme, is supported by robust peer-reviewed evidence.

The UK Rare Diseases Framework provides the high-level direction for rare diseases including improving diagnosis rates. The Framework's priorities will be implemented through nation-specific action plans which will outline the specific commitments from each UK nation.

Broadband

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to implement the recommendations of the Final Report by the Gigabit Take-up Advisory Group, published in June. [HL1191]

Baroness Barran: The Advisory Group's June 2021 final report made a number of recommendations aimed at Government, Ofcom, industry and trade bodies to encourage the take-up of gigabit broadband services. The Government welcomes the Advisory Group's report.

Action is already planned by the respective bodies to whom some of the recommendations were directed at. Ofcom plans to work with industry to improve the consistency of broadband terminology in the market, and to develop information to help consumers understand the benefits of gigabit broadband. BDUK plans to develop a 'Gigabit toolkit' to support local bodies in raising awareness and understanding of the benefits of gigabit connectivity among local residents and businesses. BDUK plans to work closely with local bodies and other key sector stakeholders.

We are considering the wider recommendations in the report and will continue to look at what more can be done to best support take-up of gigabit services.

Cameroon: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States' State Department about its "announcement of visa restrictions on those undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the anglophone regions of Cameroon", published on 7 June; and what plans they have to take similar action. [HL826]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has discussed with the US Government their decision to introduce visa restrictions with regards to the North-West South-West crisis in Cameroon, and we will monitor the impact of this announcement.

Cancer: Research

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of spending on cancer research services in England in (1) 2019–20, and (2) 2020–21. [HL925]

Lord Bethell: The Department invests in health research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR's expenditure on cancer research was approximately £138 million in 2019/20. Expenditure for 2020/21 is currently being validated and will be published at the end of 2021.

Care Homes and Hospices: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many NHS patients discharged from hospitals into (1) care homes, and (2) hospices, subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 in each month since February 2020. [HL768]

Lord Bethell: Data on the number of National Health Service patients discharged from hospitals into care homes who subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 is not currently held in the format requested. Data on the number of patients discharged into hospices who subsequently tested positive is not held centrally.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect individuals who are immunocompromised and therefore cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19; and whether they plan to offer those individuals plasma from people who have either (1) recovered from COVID-19, or (2) been fully vaccinated. [HL1032]

Lord Bethell: All immunocompromised people have been offered a COVID-19 vaccination. We continue to monitor vaccine efficacy to identify groups, such as the immunocompromised, who may require additional support. Immunocompromised individuals are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals and repurposed compounds.

It is not yet possible to determine the exact cohort of patients who may benefit from these treatments, as this will depend on results released by ongoing trials as they conclude, licensing approval from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and deployment planning. We are taking steps to ensure supply of

treatments in the event that they are found to be effective. We are developing options for further clinical trials where necessary.

Convalescent plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 was found to not provide a clinical benefit in hospitalised patients in the RECOVERY clinical trial. However, we keep the evidence under review for all neutralising antibody therapies including convalescent plasma. The NHS Blood and Transplant study C-VELVET will provide information on the levels of antibodies produced by patients post vaccination and could support further research and development of antibody therapies.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what personal data is held on the database of people who have received a COVID-19 vaccination; and who can that data be shared with. [HL891]

Lord Bethell: Within NHS Digital, information is held on people who have received a COVID-19 vaccination including their name, postcode, date of birth, National Health Service number, gender, date of COVID-19 vaccination, type of vaccine received and batch number. The data can be shared with the person's general practitioner practice, Public Health England, the Joint Biosecurity Centre, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling. The data can also be shared with organisations or individuals via NHS Digital Data Access Request Service, subject to them being able to meet strict data governance standards and having an appropriate legal basis.

Covid-19 Antivirals Taskforce

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made with the establishment of their COVID-19 Antivirals Taskforce, announced on 20 April. [HL814]

Lord Bethell: On 28 May 2021 it was announced that Eddie Gray will be the Chair of the Antivirals Taskforce. Significant work has been conducted in recent months to identify suitable antiviral candidates and engage with clinical and industry experts.

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the (1) remit, and (2) powers, of the COVID-19 Antivirals Taskforce; to whom will the Chair of the Taskforce report; and by what date. [HL815]

Lord Bethell: The Antivirals Taskforce was launched on 20 April 2021 with the aim of having two effective oral antiviral treatments which are deployable by autumn/winter 2021 to be taken in an outpatient setting.

The role of the Chair is to oversee the work of the Taskforce, ensuring it meets its core objectives and to work with a range of stakeholders to meet this ambitious

timescale. The Chair also leads and is supported by the Antivirals Expert Advisory Group, which provides advice and recommendations to the Chair on various activities within the Taskforce. This is not a statutory appointment and there is no power to confer functions directly on the Chair. The Chair reports to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

DNACPR Decisions

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients who died in NHS hospitals in England between 1 April 2020 and 31 March were subject to Do Not Attempt Resuscitation orders. [HL1043]

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients who died in NHS hospitals in England between 1 April 2020 and 31 March and whose death certificate gave COVID-19 as the cause of death were subject to Do Not Attempt Resuscitation orders. [HL1044]

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients who were subject to Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) orders and died in NHS hospitals in England between 1 April 2020 and 31 March, had the option "unknown" marked next to the "name of the relevant other" on the DNAR form. [HL1045]

Lord Bethell: The information requested is not held centrally.

Due to the concerns raised at the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic around the application of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions, the Department asked the Care Quality Commission to review how these decisions were made. Their report was published in March. The Department has established a Ministerial Oversight Group that will be responsible for the delivery and required changes of the recommendations of this report, to ensure adherence to guidance across the system on how DNACPRs are used.

Dogs: Theft

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make the theft of pet dogs a specific criminal offence. [HL892]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government recognises the distress pet theft causes and will consider the evidence and what more could be done to prevent these cruel crimes. That is why we launched the Pet Theft Taskforce on 8 May. The Taskforce will:

- Work with police, law enforcement, and experts to understand and tackle pet theft.
- Consider the issue from end to end, including causes, prevention, reporting, enforcement and prosecution.

- Make clear and timely recommendations on ways to reduce pet theft.

Further information about the Pet Theft Taskforce, including its full terms of reference, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/taskforce-launched-to-investigate-reported-rise-in-pet-thefts>.

Ectopic Pregnancy

Asked by *Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 23 April (HL14837) in which he said that the Department of Health and Social Care had made "no assessment" of the ability to screen for ectopic pregnancies via telemedicine abortion services, how they are ensuring that the clinical guidance set by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is sufficient to prevent ectopic pregnancies from going undiagnosed. [HL1129]

Lord Bethell: It is the role of clinical experts such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to set clinical practice and ensure that it includes appropriate guidance on identification of ectopic pregnancies.

Electric Scooters: Crime Prevention

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) local authorities, and (2) police forces, to prevent the illegal (a) purchase, and (b) use, of e-scooters in England. [HL873]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Legislation was amended in July 2020 to allow for rental e-scooter trials around England which will run for 12 months with the trial period beginning in each area as and when e-scooters become available to the public. It remains illegal to use privately owned e-scooters on the road as they do not meet the requirements of stringent construction regulations, registration, road tax, insurance and MOT testing.

It is not illegal to sell an e-scooter as they can be used legally on private land. However, under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, there is a general obligation for traders to give consumers sufficient information about goods and services at the point of sale, so consumers are not misled.

Electric scooters have to abide by the same road traffic legislation as mopeds and motorcycles. To drive or ride any motor vehicle without permission onto a footpath, common land, moorland or land of any description that does not form part of the road is an offence under section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. To drive or ride a powered scooter on a pavement, as with pedal cycles, is an offence under section 72 of the Highway Act 1835.

Enforcement of road traffic laws on the illegal use of e-scooters is an operational matter for individual Chief

Officers who will decide how to deploy available resources, taking into account any specific local problems and demands. Where e-scooters amount to anti-social behaviour, then local authorities make byelaws/injunctions and Anti-Social Behaviour orders to curb the misuse of vehicles.

Extradition

Asked by *Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK citizens that have been arrested following extradition requests from other nations were extradited to the country of their arrest in each year since 2018. [HL945]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It may assist if the following is explained.

- The Home Office processes extradition requests from non-EU territories for individuals believed to be in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland under Part 2 of the Extradition Act 2003.
- The Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service processes requests for individuals believed to be in Scotland.
- The National Crime Agency processes extradition requests from EU Member States under Part 1 of the Extradition Act 2003 and data relating to these requests is published annually on the NCA website.

Thus, the arrest of an individual sought for extradition would take place in the territory to which a request has been sent. If extradition is to proceed, after the legal process has concluded, and extradition is to proceed, the individual will be extradited to the territory which made the request. As such, the question has been interpreted to reflect those provisions and the response relates only to those extradition requests received by the Home Office.

Twenty British nationals have been extradited to the requesting territory since 2018, eight of whom were dual nationals.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number extradited</i>	<i>Territory</i>	<i>Number of dual nationals</i>
2021	1	India	N/A
2020	6	USA, the Falkland Islands	3
2019	8	Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, USA	4
2018	5	Albania, Antigua & Barbuda, USA, Peru	1

All figures are from local management information and have not been quality assured to the level of published National Statistics. As such they should be treated as provisional and therefore subject to change. As implied above, the figures do not include arrests made in Scotland.

Homicide: Reoffenders

Asked by *Lord Tebbit*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been killed by someone who has previously been found guilty of homicide, imprisoned, and subsequently released, for the years for which figures are available. [HL904]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The table below provides the number of people killed by offenders who were at the time on licence for an earlier homicide offence, for which they had served a prison sentence and been released. As they were on licence, when they were charged with a new offence of killing [homicide], it would have generated a formal serious further offence (SFO) notification to HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), and the number in each calendar year reflects the year in which HMPPS received the notification. The answer interprets homicide to include offences of murder, manslaughter, death by dangerous driving and death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

Data are not available on offenders with a previous conviction for homicide who had completed their sentence and associated statutory probation supervision by probation and then went on to commit a further homicide.

SFOs are rare. Fewer than 0.5% of offenders under statutory supervision are convicted of serious further offences. Nonetheless every single serious further offence is taken extremely seriously, and in all cases a review is carried out to identify any lessons for the better management of future cases.

<i>Year SFO notification received</i>	<i>Total number of people killed in a SFO by someone convicted of homicide offences at both index offence and SFO</i>
2009	5
2010	3
2011	3
2012	0
2013	3
2014	3
2015	3
2016	0
2017	3
2018	3
2019 ^[1]	0

1) We will publish SFO conviction data for 2019/20 in October 2021, therefore data for 2019 can only be provided for January, February and March.

2) Figures are based on conviction data that was produced in September 2020.

3) Data are derived from the date of SFO notification to HMPPS

4) This figure only includes convictions for serious further offences that have been notified to the national SFO Team, HMPPS.

5) The data provided are provisional figures subject to change when any outstanding cases are concluded at court.

6) The data also includes cases where the offender committed suicide or died prior to the trial, where a Court has subsequently ruled that they were responsible.

Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Human Trafficking: Organised Crime

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to tackle gangs involved in people smuggling and organised immigration crime. [HL928]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government stands resolute in its commitment to tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC). We continue to pursue the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) who facilitate illegal travel to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations.

In March 2021, the Government published the New Plan for Immigration which contains provisions to establish legislation to deter illegal entry into the UK, thereby breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger. We continue to work at pace to bring this legislation forward so we can crack down on the despicable criminal gangs behind people smuggling.

The Government has taken steps to tackle OIC on social media platforms, reducing the space in which OCGs operate. In March 2021, the Immigration Compliance and Justice Minister met with the National Crime Agency and senior representatives from social media companies to discuss how they can more effectively tackle OIC online. As a result, all partners agreed to develop a joint action plan to tackle content advertising illegal OIC services. This action plan is currently awaiting agreement before implementation.

Reinforcing this commitment to tackle OIC activity online, in June 2021 the Home Secretary wrote to CEOs of key social media companies urging them to do substantially more to proactively identify and remove posts promoting OIC, particularly illegal Channel crossings.

We continue to take steps to tackle highly dangerous entry methods facilitated by these OCGs. As a result of our efforts, more than 4,000 people have been prevented from making the Channel crossing to the UK so far this

year. In June 2021, the Government bolstered this effort by utilising the UK G7 Presidency, calling for firmness amongst member states in dealing with ruthless criminality that puts lives in danger and poses a risk to our border security.

The Government will continue to work tirelessly to stop the criminal networks facilitating OIC and protect the lives of those they wish to exploit.

Imports

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential use of import substitution in the UK. [HL989]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government has made no formal assessment of the potential use of import substitution in the UK. However, this Government pursues a free trade policy that is open and fair and is a strong supporter of the rules-based international system.

Iraq: Turkey

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they have made to the government of Turkey about the attack on Maxmur Refugee Camp and villages in northern Iraq on 5 June. [HL861]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are following the situation closely. We reiterate the need for dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. We welcome recent discussions between Iraqi and Turkish Defence Ministers regarding Ankara's military operations against the PKK in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports (1) that the government of Israel has removed health insurance benefits from Palestinian prisoners on their release from custody, and (2) that such persons have been deported from East Jerusalem and banned from the city; and what representations they made to that government about such reports. [HL859]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We have a regular dialogue with Israel, including on the treatment of Palestinian prisoners. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to prison conditions and detention practices, including the provision of essential healthcare services upon release. In instances where there have been accusations of ill-treatment, we advocate swift, transparent investigation.

Kickstart Scheme

Asked by Baroness Wilcox of Newport

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they contract any company (1) to run part of, or (2) to approve applications for, the Kickstart Scheme; if so, what are the names of those companies; what are their roles and responsibilities; and how much are the contracts worth. [HL1140]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No companies are contracted to run part of, or approve applications for, the Departments' Kickstart Scheme.

Asked by Baroness Wilcox of Newport

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money in total they have paid to employers through a Kickstart Scheme grant. [HL1141]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Information relating to Kickstart grants will be published by the Cabinet Office on the Government website in due course, as is standard practice for all Government general grants. This information is normally published about a year after the financial year end and includes grant value and recipients.

Land: Contamination

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of the contamination of land on two dairy farms in Cumbria after the application of liquid fertiliser, what assessment they have made of the frequency of such incidences of contamination; and what plans they have to take regulatory action to prevent further such contaminations. [HL839]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: An Environment Agency (EA) investigation into the matter is currently ongoing and has included analysis of water samples. Enquiries remain ongoing on what appears to be a localised incident involving a specific liquid that was used as a fertiliser. From the information that was reported in January 2021, it is the EA's understanding that the last known application of the fertiliser was in March 2019.

Legal Aid Scheme: Domestic Abuse

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the adequacy of support provided through the legal aid system for victims of domestic abuse. [HL882]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and we are determined to protect and support the victims of abuse and their children and bring perpetrators to justice.

The legal aid scheme is designed to target funding at those that need it most, and this government has always been clear that publicly-funded legal advice is available to

victims of domestic abuse in private family proceedings and for specific domestic abuse injunctions, subject to certain criteria being met.

Legal aid is and remains available for the purpose of obtaining urgent protection, such as non-molestation orders, without any evidence requirements and the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) has the power to waive all upper financial eligibility limits. This means victims can receive legal aid even if they would not otherwise pass the means test, though they may have to pay a financial contribution towards their legal costs.

We recently widened the evidence requirements for domestic abuse victims, making it easier for victims to obtain and provide the evidence they need to access legal aid.

We are currently conducting a review of the means test, where we are specifically considering the experiences of victims of domestic abuse. The review is scheduled to conclude in Autumn 2021, at which point we will publish a full consultation paper.

Legal Opinion: Low Incomes

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to address so-called "legal advice deserts". [HL885]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We continue to work to ensure that civil legal aid advice remains accessible to those who need it. The Legal Aid Agency keeps market capacity under continual review to ensure adequate provision across England and Wales. Wherever you are in England and Wales, legal advice is available through the CLA telephone service.

We are currently considering the sustainability of the civil legal aid market broadly, looking at a range of factors, from the current remuneration rates, to the pipeline into a career in legal aid, as well as the ability of providers to offer legal aid services into the future. We intend to continue working very closely with stakeholders to increase our understanding of the challenges currently faced by the whole sector.

Legal Aid is central to access to justice, but it is only one part of a broader picture. We know that early intervention is key to help people resolve their legal problems as swiftly as possible, potentially without the need to receive legally aided advice or attend court at all. We are delivering pilots for early resolution of legal problems and to test what works. This includes looking at how we can improve signposting and enhance access to existing online and in person legal support services, and a targeted expansion of funding for early legal advice in a specific area of social welfare law to test its impact.

Charities in the advice sector play a crucial role to help people resolve their legal problems across England and Wales, which has been vital throughout Covid-19. MoJ has provided £5.4m in funding for not-for-profit providers of specialist legal advice. £3m was given to Law Centres

and the remaining £2.4m to the Community Justice Fund administered by the Access to Justice Foundation. In 2020, we launched the two-year, £3.1m Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant. We're delighted to be working in partnership with the Access to Justice Foundation to deliver the grant, which is designed to fund services provided at local, regional and national levels with the aim of understanding more about how they can combine to help people.

Medical Equipment

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the definition of a health institution as defined in the Guidance on the regulation of In Vitro Diagnostic medical devices in Great Britain, published in January, differs from that in the MHRA guidance on the health institution exemption (HIE) – IVDR and MDR (Northern Ireland), published on 1 January. [HL731]

Lord Bethell: The Northern Ireland Protocol has resulted in the European Union Medical Device Regulation (MDR) (2017/745) and the EU In Vitro Diagnostic Regulation (IVDR) (2017/746) taking direct effect in Northern Ireland on 26 May 2020 and 26 May 2022 respectively. In its guidance on the application of EU MDR and EU IVDR in Northern Ireland, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has included the definition of a 'health institution' as determined by the EU.

The UK Medical Devices Regulations 2002 (as amended) does not define 'health institution'. As a result, the MHRA has provided its own interpretation, which was set out in MHRA guidance on in vitro diagnostic medical devices when it was first published in August 2013. The MHRA continues to rely on this interpretation of the definition for Great Britain and this has not been altered in subsequent updates. However, this issue will be considered during the review of medical devices regulation taking place later this year.

Medical Equipment: Innovation

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a separate budgeting and adoption process for medical devices designated as innovative products. [HL855]

Lord Bethell: The NHS Long Term Plan committed to accelerate the uptake of selected innovative medical devices, diagnostics and digital products by developing the MedTech Funding Mandate, which was launched on 1 April 2021. While local commissioners and providers decide how to allocate their resources in light of local priorities, the MedTech Funding Mandate will ensure specified National Institute for Health and Care Excellence approved, cost saving innovations are available to patients and funded locally.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to follow the approach of the government of the United States' Food and Drug Administration in adapting regulatory requirements by putting clinical evidence into the post-market approval phase and improving the introduction of medical innovation devices. [HL856]

Lord Bethell: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is will conduct a public consultation this summer on the future medical device regulatory regime. This consultation will inform future amendments made to the United Kingdom Medical Device Regulations 2002 as required under the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021. The public consultation will cover various aspects of the medical device regulations, including requirements relating to clinical investigations and evidence. The MHRA is committed to ensuring that both pre- and post-market standards are enhanced to protect UK patients whilst supporting innovation with greater alignment with international standards for pre-market clinical data. This will ensure that the domestic medical devices regime remains fit for purpose in an evolving public health environment and facilitates a sector that embraces innovation.

Medical Records: Databases*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will list the projects using the NHS data store. [HL1081]

Lord Bethell: The projects using the National Health Service data store are as follows:

- Data Integration and Analytics Capability for Self-Service;
- Strategic Decision-Makers Dashboard;
- Recovery of Critical Services;
- Early Warning System;
- Supply Management Capability;
- Immunisation and Vaccination Management Capability;
- Workforce Analytics Capability;
- Adult Social Care Dashboard Capability; and
- Integrated Planning Tool.

Mental Health Services*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average cost for an NHS community-based mental health session. [HL810]

Lord Bethell: The information requested is not held centrally.

Ministry of Defence: Civil Proceedings*Asked by Lord Tunnicliffe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many civil claims against the Ministry of Defence have been rejected so far as a result of Part 2 of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Act 2021. [HL1187]

Baroness Goldie: No civil claims against the Ministry of Defence have been affected by Part 2 of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel & Veterans) Act 2021, as this part of the Act has not yet come into force. Commencement Regulations relating to the Act were made by the Secretary of State on 7 June 2021, and the substantive provisions of the Act, including Part 2, will come into force on 30 June 2021.

Myanmar: Politics and Government*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to begin negotiations with representatives of the National Unity Government (NUG) in Myanmar with a view to giving it official recognition; how they intend to respond to the request sent by the NUG to the Prime Minister requesting (1) engagement with the NUG as the representative of Myanmar, (2) aid to assist in that country, and (3) intensifying financial and diplomatic pressure on the current government; and what plans they have to raise the issues in Myanmar at the G7 Summit. [HL830]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are clear in our condemnation of the coup and stand in solidarity with those calling for a return to democracy. We welcome the formation of the NUG to push for an inclusive, democratic future for Myanmar. They are an important voice for many in Myanmar. On 9 April, the UK convened an Arria-formula meeting at the UN Security Council to discuss the issue of Myanmar and invited Daw Zing Mar Aung, from the NUG, to address participants. On 20 April, the Minister for Asia met with Dr Sasa, a key figure in the NUG, and reiterated the UK's support for their ambitions for a federal democracy.

The UK is one of the largest humanitarian donors in Myanmar. UK aid provides life-saving humanitarian assistance to conflict affected and displaced people in Myanmar. We have carried out a review of our aid programme in Myanmar to ensure that we focus on the most vulnerable people. We are closely monitoring the ongoing impacts of the military coup with our partners, including ethnic civil society organisations, so that our support continues to reach those most in need and can respond to new needs. On 17 May, the UK imposed sanctions on Myanmar Gems Enterprise, a State Owned Enterprise responsible for all gems activity in Myanmar, a key source of revenue for the military. We have also sanctioned Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (MEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), the two

largest military conglomerates. These sanctions directly target the military's financial interests. Working with partners, including the US and Canada, we have sanctioned 9 military officers, including the Commander-in-Chief, for their role in the coup.

We have also welcomed the Five Point Consensus on Myanmar and ASEAN's unique role in addressing the crisis and supported ASEAN's call for an end to violence, for restraint, and for a peaceful resolution, in line with the purpose and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. As was made clear in the communique after the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting on 5 May the military must implement this plan without delay.

NHS: Drugs

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure medicines licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), through Orbis and the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP), are promptly reimbursed by the NHS. [HL753]

Lord Bethell: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is committed to publishing draft guidance on new medicines at the time of licensing, with final guidance published within three months of licensing wherever possible. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, NICE and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working together to ensure that there is an integrated, timely approach to supporting access for National Health Service patients to products licensed through Project Orbis and the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway. Interim access arrangements may be considered where NICE's guidance is not anticipated to be published in line with the three month timeframe.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the legality of reducing the percentage of Gross National Income spent on Official Development Assistance without introducing new legislation to do so. [HL951]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on official development assistance when the fiscal situation allows. The Government is acting in line with the International Development Act 2015, which explicitly envisages that there may be circumstances where the 0.7% target is not met.

The Act also provides for the Secretary of State's accountability to Parliament through the requirement to lay a statement before Parliament and, if relevant, make reference to economic and fiscal circumstances. The Foreign Secretary has already committed to doing that.

Penally Camp

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Penally Training Camp is now being used; and what discussions they have had, if any, with the Welsh Government about this camp. [HL889]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Penally site was last used to accommodate asylum seekers on 19 March 2021.

The site was handed back to the MOD on 13 May 2021.

Pension Credit

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in England they estimate to be entitled to pension credit who are not claiming it, as a percentage of those eligible. [HL1171]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested is not available.

Data related to Pension Credit is published at Great Britain level. The latest estimates were published in October 2020 and relate to the financial year 2018/19 and can be found in the "Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up" publication in the statistics section of gov.uk.

Phlebotomy: Pay

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the pay banding scales for phlebotomists in the NHS. [HL1078]

Lord Bethell: In the National Health Service, pay arrangements for phlebotomists fall under the national Agenda for Change pay structure. Staff are placed in one of nine pay bands on the basis of the knowledge, responsibility, skills and effort needed for the job, rather than their job title.

Prisoners' Release

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people serving a life sentence were released at their first eligible parole date in each year since 2000. [HL845]

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people serving an imprisonment for public protection sentence were released at their first eligible parole date in each year since 2005. [HL846]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The information needed to provide a comprehensive answer to each question could be provided only at disproportionate cost as central data was not stored in a way that it can be filtered by the

required fields to obtain the information, until 2009. As a result, the tables below provide data for each year from 2009.

The Government is committed to the protection of the public and the effective management of offenders. By law, prisoners serving indeterminate sentences who have completed their tariff will be released only when the independent Parole Board concludes that the risk they present to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community under probation supervision.

The total number of prisoners serving a life sentence who were released at their first eligible parole date in each year since 2009, is shown in the following table:

<i>Outcome year</i>	<i>Count of release decisions at first eligible parole date</i>
2009	81
2010	86
2011	82
2012	86
2013	101
2014	71
2015	76
2016	96
2017	121
2018	127
2019	115
2020	122

The total number of prisoners serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection who were released at their first eligible parole date in each year since 2009, is shown in the following table:

<i>Outcome year</i>	<i>Count of release decisions at first eligible parole date</i>
2009	45
2010	37
2011	77
2012	72
2013	81
2014	58
2015	61
2016	69
2017	66
2018	59
2019	30
2020	25

Notes for all tables:

1. These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database and Prison-NOMIS held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any

large scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

2. The figures in these tables do not include recalled indeterminate-sentence prisoners.

Statistics on the indeterminate sentence population in prisons are routinely published as part of the Quarterly Offender Management Statistics on Gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>.

Prisoners' Release: Females

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to ensure women prison leavers supported by the Ministry of Justice's temporary accommodation service are supported into permanent accommodation. [HL850]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing this Summer. It will be in operation during the financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally.

The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Probation Practitioners, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks' emergency accommodation.

In 2020, Hestia Battersea was changed from a male to female Approved Premises to give better geographic spread of AP provision for women, becoming the first AP for women in London since 2008.

In addition, Eden House, the first new AP in over thirty years, will open in this month supporting female offenders.

HMPPS will work in conjunction with MHCLG's announced funding to support both male and female prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rental tenancies. Funded schemes to support women will be developed to recognise their specific needs and will be part of plans to secure settled accommodation by the end of the 12 weeks' temporary accommodation provided by HMPPS.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure women prison leavers supported by the Ministry of Justice's temporary accommodation service are supported into permanent accommodation. [HL862]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing this Summer. It will be in operation during the financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally.

The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Probation Practitioners, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks' emergency accommodation.

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HMPPS will work in conjunction with MHCLG's announced funding to support both male and female prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rental tenancies. Funded schemes to support women will be developed to recognise their specific needs and will be part of plans to secure settled accommodation by the end of the 12 weeks' temporary accommodation provided by HMPPS.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure no woman is released from prison to homelessness. [HL871]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are committed to doing all we can to address the issues around female offending. It is vital that we do so to better protect the public and deliver more effective rehabilitation. This includes supporting women when they are leaving prison.

In June 2018, the Government published the Female Offender Strategy. This set out a programme of work to improve outcomes for female offenders and make society safer by tackling the underlying causes of offending and reoffending. Its publication was the start of a new and significant programme of work to deliver better outcomes for female offenders that will take some years to deliver. We recognise the important role that the women's community services play in supporting female offenders. We have invested some £7m in the sector since 2018 and announced a further £2.5m funding on 11 June 2021.

As part of our commitment to tackling the issues female offenders face, we have a Reducing Re-offending lead

specifically for the Women's Estate which allows us to make sure that we are focused on the outcomes specifically from within the women's prisons. As part of our commitment to eliminate rough sleeping, we are working across Government with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Welsh Government and Other Government Departments, to address the barriers offenders face in securing suitable accommodation.

We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing in Summer. It will be in operation during the next financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally, though the Spending Review 2021 will set out the approach for future years.

The service will take account of the needs of women, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Offender Managers, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers with complex needs receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks' emergency accommodation.

We are introducing and testing a new specialist housing advisor role in twenty prisons, including within the female estate. The new role will seek to strengthen links between prisons, through the gate teams and local authorities to improve accommodation outcomes for those at risk of homelessness. Subject to evaluation, the intention is to scale up and roll-out nationally across all resettlement prisons.

In 2020, Hestia Battersea was changed from a male to female Approved Premises to give better geographic spread of AP provision for women, becoming the first AP for women in London since 2008.

In addition, Eden House, the first new AP in over thirty years, will open in this month supporting female offenders.

Following a comprehensive review, the 'Subsistence Payment' (currently known as the Discharge Grant) will be updated from £46 to £76 to reflect increases in the UK's Consumer Prices Index (CPI). This is planned to come into effect during Summer 2021. Going forward, the Subsistence Payment will be increased year on year in line with the CPI until 2024/25.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure women prison leavers supported by the Ministry of Justice's temporary accommodation service are supported into permanent accommodation. [HL872]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. Initially launching in five national probation regions, the service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing this Summer. It will be in operation during the financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally.

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Prisoners: Females

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their Safety in custody quarterly: update to December 2020, published on 29 April, what steps they are taking to address self-harm in women's prisons. [HL884]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We recognise that the level of self-harm in the women's estate is too high and are determined to reduce this. A task force was set up in April 2020 in response to our increasing concerns about the level of self-harm in the women's estate. We know that many of the drivers and protective factors linked to women's risk of self-harm in prisons have been affected by Covid-19 and the restricted regimes that have been put in place to control the spread of infection.

The task force worked to introduce a number of specific interventions to counteract the impact of Covid-19 on the women's estate, including bespoke well-being checks, increased phone credit and more access to video calls with family and friends.

We have prioritised women's prisons for the roll out of the revised version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) multi-disciplinary case management system used in prisons to support people at risk of suicide and self-harm. We also introduced the Offender Management in Custody model in the female estate in April. This will provide each woman with a dedicated key worker or equivalent who will be able to better support them and identify concerns at an early stage so that women can receive the right support at the right time.

We have produced a range of products to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate risks and promote wellbeing. We have developed new guidance for staff on understanding and supporting someone who is self-harming. We continue to make the Samaritans phone service available and are working with this charity to ensure that the Listener peer support scheme continues to function effectively.

Importantly, we have also invested £5m in alternatives to prison, including new women's centres which help people address issues such as alcohol or drug addiction which leads them to crime.

Prisons: Equality

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many prison service staff have attended intersectionality courses, (2) what is the cost of any such courses, and (3) how the courses help prison officers deal with prisoners. [HL840]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: There are no courses on intersectionality but Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) had a package on intersectionality as part of its 'Let's Talk' series.

Involvement in the 'Let's Talk' series was not mandatory. As a result, HMPPS does not collect or hold data on the number of staff who have participated. All HMPPS diversity and inclusion training is developed internally as part of wider learning and development activity, and so no additional cost was incurred for any of the 'Let's Talk' toolkit.

Probation: Nationalisation

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the restoration of the probation service in England and Wales to public ownership and control. [HL887]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are on track to launch a new unified Probation Service for England and Wales on 26 June this year. The new Service will bring together staff from the previous National Probation Service (NPS) and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and will strengthen public protection by bringing together

management of offenders of all levels of risk into one organisation.

The new unified service will strengthen rehabilitation by delivering unpaid work and behavioural change programmes in England and Wales. Specialist organisations will continue to play a role in the probation system, delivering resettlement and rehabilitative services such as education, training and employment and accommodation and other rehabilitative interventions. 110 contracts are now in place for these commissioned services. We are also in the final stages of the estates and digital transfers needed to support transition.

Once we have completed transition to the new organisation, we will begin implementing the new operating model for the unified service. We have already recruited a record 1,000 new trainee probation officers in 2020/21 and plan to recruit a further 1,500 in this financial year.

Our progress in delivering these crucial reforms will ensure a joined up and improved Probation Service to cut crime and reduce reoffending, meet the needs of our communities, offer more support in rehabilitating offenders and protect the public from crime.

Refugees: Children and Females

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings published by Together With Refugees on 1 June that two-thirds of women and children currently accepted by the Government as refugees would be deemed inadmissible under their New Plan for Immigration, published on 24 March. [HL895]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I do not recognise the figures presented in the Together with Refugees publication of 1 June regarding women and children. Some mention is made in the report of illegal entry figures quoted in the New Plan for Immigration policy statement, and to wider published data, but neither support the specific conclusions made in the publication.

In drawing its conclusions, Together with Refugees states: "The new rules would mean that all those who claim asylum after arriving in the UK through an irregular route would face removal to a third country, with their asylum claim only progressing if removal is not possible..." That is not how the current policy operates, nor how we intend the future process to operate.

Our current policy is clear that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, not rigidly or en masse. Irregular entry is not the sole criterion or even a necessary criterion on which inadmissibility processes operate. Inadmissibility applies only where someone has a connection to or has been present in a safe third country before coming to the UK.

There are many circumstances where the inadmissibility rules would not be applied, including: to an unaccompanied child; to someone who has had no

opportunity to claim asylum in the safe third country, for instance, because they were under the control of traffickers; to someone who demonstrates that in their particular case, return to the third country would place them at risk of harm; and to someone who demonstrates that in their specific circumstances there are reasons under the Human Rights Act why they should remain in the UK.

There will be instances where the inadmissibility rules will apply to families. We know that some people, including women with children, reach safe EU countries where they have the opportunity to claim asylum and obtain the protection they need, but then as a matter of preference, choose to make further unnecessary and dangerous journeys to the UK. Such actions from people who have already reached safety exposes not only the claimants themselves to significant danger, but also their children and the individuals involved in their rescue.

Our inadmissibility rules aim to deter anyone thinking of making a dangerous journey to the UK when already in a safe country, and make it clear that those who could and should have claimed asylum in the first safe country they enter may not have their claims determined in the UK.

Refugees: Resettlement

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to resume resettlement programmes for refugees. [HL894]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Parliament was informed by Written Ministerial Statement on 18 March that the new global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) commenced on completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

(<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-03-18/hcws855>).

We are committed to welcoming vulnerable refugees through resettlement in the months and years to come, as well as through other safe and legal routes such as Refugee Family Reunion. Since 2015 we have resettled over 25,000 refugees through our resettlement schemes, in addition to granting over 29,000 Refugee Family Reunion visas in the last 5 years. As set out in the New Plan for Immigration we will continue to strengthen our resettlement offer as a safe and legal route to the UK for refugees in need of protection.

Reoffenders

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what changes they plan to make to the prison and probation systems to reduce re-offending. [HL883]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: This Government is committed to reducing crime by tackling reoffending, which accounts for around 80% of cautioned or convicted crime. We are committed to keeping the public safe by addressing the complex issues that lead to offending, while also strengthening the supervision of offenders in

the community and monitoring them more closely after they are released from prison to protect the public. Prison and probation provide an opportunity to address the complex drivers of reoffending which is why we will continue to not only recover from the pandemic but use this opportunity to reform and build back safer.

As announced in the Spending Review last year, we have committed over £4 billion funding to make significant progress in delivering 18,000 additional prison places across England and Wales, which forms a major part of our plans to transform the prison estate. These new prison places will provide safe, decent and secure environments to support the delivery of effective interventions to reduce reoffending.

Funding announced in January also demonstrates this Government's commitment to tackling some of the underlying causes of reoffending. It comprised:

- £70 million investment to enhance the Department's Approved Premises, provide transitional accommodation to those leaving prison who would otherwise be homeless, and to test new innovative approaches to ensure offenders resettle back into the community and turn their backs on crime.
- £80m on expanding drug treatment services in England to address offenders' substance misuse issues, divert them on to effective community sentences and reduce drug-related crime and deaths.

As part of the £70 million package we are working collaboratively with 16 prisons to design, implement and test new processes and initiatives across accommodation, education, employment and substance misuse treatment. This is in addition to fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitments around increasing the number of DWP prison work coaches and development of the Prison Education Service focused on employment and skills. By supporting people into a job, a home and treatment for substance misuse, we can help them escape the vicious cycle of crime and prevent victims.

Our reforms to probation, starting with the launch of the new unified Probation Service for England and Wales on 26 June this year, also aim to strengthen our approach to reducing reoffending. It will strengthen how offenders are supervised and supported to desist from offending through investment in more probation officers and better learning and development. It will improve how we address offending behaviour by bringing together and investing in behavioural change programmes and interventions. Probation regions will also be able to refer offenders to a range of organisations commissioned to deliver specialist rehabilitative services, such as accommodation support, education, training and employment, and support to address other issues such as access to mental health services or managing complex family relationships. 110 contracts are now in place across England and Wales to deliver these services from 26 June.

Together these important steps demonstrate this Government's commitment to build back safer, fairer and stronger by reducing crime and tackling reoffending to protect the public.

Sexual Offences: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the anonymity of victims of sexual assault. [HL886]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Complainants in rape and sexual offence cases are protected by automatic reporting restrictions, which impose a lifetime ban on publishing any matter likely to identify a victim, from the moment the offence is reported. Anyone who publishes such material is liable to a fine.

Interfering with the administration of justice and publicly commenting on a court case on social media or other channels may lead to a charge for the more serious offence of contempt of court, for which the maximum penalty is 2 years' imprisonment.

Shipping: Flags

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) environmental, and (2) economic, impact of the use of flags of convenience by ships, in (a) UK waters, and (b) globally; and what steps they plan to take with international partners to reduce the (i) use, and (ii) any negative impact, of such flags. [HL835]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: All ships, irrespective of their flag State, must comply with relevant international conventions for safety and environmental protection, depending on their size and area of operation. Requirements are regularly reviewed by the Member States at the United Nations' International Maritime Organization and recommendations to improve safety and environmental standards must then be implemented by those States.

Ships that are not on the UK Ship Register but are operating in UK waters or calling at UK ports, can be inspected by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency under the port State control regime of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (Paris MOU). Individual ships are targeted for inspection on a risk-based approach, which takes into consideration factors such as age of ship, previous inspection history, company performance and its flag State.

Ships of all countries (irrespective of ratification of international conventions) will be subject to inspection in a UK port, to verify compliance with the requirements of conventions ratified by the UK under the principle of no more favourable treatment. Any ship that does not meet

the minimum standards, may be detained and the reasons noted on the Paris MOU database for other maritime administrations to see.

Her Majesty's Government has not carried out a bespoke environmental or economic impact assessment.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of small businesses that will be unable to retain current staff numbers after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends; and what steps they are taking to financially support small businesses after September 2021. [HL900]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Throughout this pandemic, our Plan For Jobs has supported jobs and businesses with over £400 billion of economic support – one of the most generous and comprehensive packages in the world.

At the Budget, the Chancellor announced a generous extension of economic support to reflect the easing of restrictions and enable the private sector to bounce back as quickly as possible. As the Chancellor put it in his Budget speech: “we're going long, extending our support well beyond the end of the Roadmap to accommodate even the most cautious view about the time it might take to exit the restrictions”.

Eligible businesses and employees across the United Kingdom are benefitting from the extension of the CJRS until the end of September, with employees receiving 80% of their salary for hours not worked, up to £2500 per month. From July, employers will contribute 10% of costs of unworked hours, followed by 20% in August and 20% in September. Many other countries have already done the same (Denmark, Netherlands, France, Spain), and economy-wide schemes have ended in Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, the economy now is in a stronger position than it was last autumn, when businesses also contributed up to 20 per cent of wage costs. And lastly, the labour market is in a stronger position, with 5.5 million fewer people on furlough than in April 2020 and hiring intentions and job vacancy levels in June around 29 per cent above February 2020 levels.

As restrictions have been lifted, it is right that we ask employers to contribute more to strike the balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work.

The delay of Step 4 is accommodated by the continuation of the Government's package of economic support for businesses, which can continue to benefit from extensions to the furlough scheme; a UK-wide recovery loan scheme; business rates relief; enhanced Time to Pay for taxes; and support for paying deferred VAT.

Trade Agreements: Australia

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a trade agreement with Australia on agriculture in Less Favoured Areas. [HL1114]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The UK produces high quality, premium produce that is globally sought after and this Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will create new export opportunities for British farmers and businesses.

The Scoping Assessment, carried out before negotiations began, found that Wales and Scotland and all English regions benefit in all modelled scenarios from a UK-Australia FTA. A full impact assessment will be published prior to implementation of the agreement.

Defra and the Department for International Trade are working in lockstep with partners like the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the Food and Drink Federation to deliver tailored support on the ground for these farmers and food producers through schemes such as our Open Doors programme, helping them to capitalise on the enormous global demand for British food and drink and benefit from new trade deals.

Travel: Quarantine

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) initial, and (2) subsequent, checks on (a) the standard of ventilation, and (b) risks of ventilation systems transmitting COVID-19, were conducted in facilities used for travel quarantines during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL599]

Lord Bethell: Ventilation requirements within the Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) hotels have been identified and agreed with Public Health England. Mechanical ventilation systems should be maintained in line with manufacturers' instructions and should use a fresh air supply and not recirculating indoor air. This is to prevent airborne transmissibility and is an essential specification within hotel contracts. We ensure these are being met as part of the initial site visit undertaken by MQS staff and security. Each hotel should ensure that air-conditioning, ventilation, fire alarms and sprinkler systems are working properly. We are encouraging hotels to meet the guidance given by the Federation of European Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Associations.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether people quarantining in hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic are permitted to order take-away food; and if so, what precautions are in place for the bio-secure delivery of that food. [HL601]

Lord Bethell: Additional food and drinks can be ordered and delivered to the hotel main reception. All deliveries are left outside the guest's room and staff should have no contact with the guest.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that people required to self-isolate in hotels on arrival back in the UK do so. [HL866]

Lord Bethell: We have designated certain airports for managed quarantine arrivals and individuals should ensure they return via one of these locations. The carrier has responsibility to deny persons boarding if they are travelling to a port which cannot receive passengers from 'red list' countries. On arrival, individuals are met at passport control and guided through baggage reclaim and customs to the dedicated hotel transport.

At ports, Border Force officers issue fixed penalty notices to individuals who do not comply with booking managed quarantine packages and complete a Passenger Locator Form in advance of travel. Once checked in at the designated hotels, individuals are required not leave their rooms except in exceptional circumstances or with permission from the security staff.

Tunisia

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Tunisian representatives regarding further initiatives to support and ingrain parliamentary democracy in Tunisia. [HL738]

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss initiatives to support parliamentary democracy in Tunisia at the G7 Summit in June. [HL739]

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support (1) democracy, (2) the economy, and (3) measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, in Tunisia. [HL740]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly MP, was in Tunisia 7-9 June to co-chair the inaugural UK-Tunisia Association Council with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Ali Nafti. Bolstering trade,

furthering good governance, and supporting Tunisia to develop its economy are all key aspects of our engagement that will enhance Tunisia's resilience and stability.

The UK is also working with the World Bank to support macro-economic reforms and will continue to work with Tunisia and our partners to support sustainable growth and prosperity.

Tunisia: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support parliamentary democracy in Tunisia. [HL737]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly MP, was in Tunisia 7-9 June to co-chair the inaugural UK-Tunisia Association Council with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Ali Nafti. Bolstering trade, furthering good governance, and supporting Tunisia to develop its economy are all key aspects of our engagement that will enhance Tunisia's resilience and stability.

The UK is also working with the World Bank to support macro-economic reforms and will continue to work with Tunisia and our partners to support sustainable growth and prosperity.

West Bank: Construction

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel has issued a ban on the further construction of Palestinian developments near Yatta; and what assessment they have made of the impact of such a ban on any possible peace process in the region. [HL860]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are looking into these reports. The UK and international partners will continue to call bilaterally, and in international fora, for Israel to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. These issues are complex. They will only be resolved via dialogue and agreement between the parties. We will continue to encourage all parties to try and find a sustainable solution through discussion.

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