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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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Written Statements

Monday, 12 July 2021

Qualifications in 2021-22: Consultations on Alternative Arrangements

[HLWS165]

Baroness Berridge: Today, my right honourable friend the Minister for School Standards (Nick Gibb) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Today, Ofqual and the Department for Education published joint consultations outlining detailed proposals for alternative arrangements for awarding general qualifications in 2022 and vocational and technical qualifications in academic year 2021/22.

These consultations, outlined in ‘[Proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022](#)’ and ‘[Arrangements for the assessment and awarding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications and Other General Qualifications in 2021 to 2022](#)’, will end on 1 August for GCSEs, AS and A levels and on 26 July for vocational and technical and other general qualifications. These changes will be for one year only.

The government has made clear its intention that exams and other assessments should go ahead in the academic year 2021/22. In order to ensure that they can go ahead fairly, however, we must recognise that students in the 2021/22 cohort have experienced significant disruption to their education, and we are proposing that exams and assessments in 2021/22 should be adapted to take this into account.

For GCSEs, AS and A levels we are proposing a package of measures that includes four elements: in those GCSE subjects where it is possible to do so without undermining the assessment, a choice of topics on which students will be assessed; advance information about how exams will be focused for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level subjects; reducing the burden of non-exam assessment in some subjects; and allowing students to have access to support materials in the exam room in a small number of subjects.

For vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications, the consultation sets out a suite of proposed measures for those qualifications that are included in performance tables including adaptations such as streamlining assessment, early banking of assessments and providing revision guidance. The consultation focuses

on the impact of the measures proposed and updating the existing Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework to reflect our aim that exams and assessments should go ahead in 2021/22.

The consultation seeks the views of students, parents and carers, teachers, school and college leaders, FE colleges and universities, employers and others before decisions are made on final arrangements. We intend to announce decisions for GCSEs, AS and A levels early in the autumn term and for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications in early August.

As well as these proposed adaptations, Ofqual is considering how best to grade qualifications in 2022 in a way that is as fair as possible to students in that year, those who took qualifications in previous years, and those who will take them in future. Ofqual has statutory responsibility for the maintenance of standards and for public confidence in qualifications, while taking account of government policy. Ofqual will make a decision once 2021 results are known, and will announce its decisions in the autumn.

We are also continuing to work with Ofqual on contingency plans in case it does not prove possible for exams to go ahead safely and fairly in 2021/22.

Employment and Support Allowance

[HLWS164]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Justin Tomlinson MP) has made the following Written Statement.

I am pleased to confirm that the exercise to correct past Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) underpayments and pay arrears, following conversion from previous incapacity benefits is now complete. All cases have been considered, reviews completed where the information has been provided, and arrears paid where due¹.

As set out in the [final statistical publication](#) published on GOV.UK, as of 1 June 2021:

- 600,000 cases have completed the review process; and
- 118,000 arrears payments totalling £613 million have been made.

1. Completion rate is 100%, rounded to the nearest 1%. Fewer than 100 cases were outstanding as at 1 June 2021.

Written Answers

Monday, 12 July 2021

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Coaker**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK-based armed forces personnel are currently infected with COVID-19. [[HL1631](#)]

Baroness Goldie: As at 5 July 2021, 433 Armed Forces personnel have had a positive Covid-19 test result recorded in the UK in the last 10 days.

Arms Trade

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish a list of the 39 countries that were classified as "not free" by Freedom House to which the UK exported arms in the last 10 years. [[HL1493](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK operates one of the most robust export licensing systems in the world. We publish quarterly and annual statistics on all our export licensing decisions, including details of export licences granted, refused and revoked. Data on licences issued since 2008, including end user destinations, are published as official statistics on GOV.UK.

Her Majesty's Government takes its strategic export control responsibilities very seriously. We will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Assets: Local Government

Asked by **Lord Birt**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 16 June (HL706), what plans they have to review whether strategic assets of wide economic value are best owned by local authorities. [[HL1445](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Under the current system of local government finance, local authorities are free to determine their own capital strategies to deliver local services, on the principle that they are best placed to make the decisions needed to support their local communities and to ensure local accountability.

Bees: Disease Control

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the transmission of disease through (1) imported, or (2) internally traded, bumblebees and bumblebee hives. [[HL1416](#)]

Lord Benyon: The Government is committed to preventing pests and diseases reaching our borders. We are promoting biosecurity internationally, at UK borders and inland.

Imports of bumblebees are only accepted from approved countries. Consignments must be produced in a controlled environment which is supervised by the competent authority in the exporting country. They must be checked before dispatch. They are accompanied by health certificates that guarantee the bees are free from notifiable pests and diseases. The bees may be subject to checks at destination (for EU bees) or at a border control point (for bumblebees from other countries).

There are no restrictions on movements of bumblebees from one area of GB to another.

Boats: Accidents

Asked by **Lord Hay of Ballyore**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many accidents involving private leisure craft were caused by the consumption of alcohol in the last three years. [[HL1525](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There is no obligation for leisure craft owners to report accidents directly to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) so the data provided to answer this question cannot be considered complete.

Further, unless the accident was fully investigated, it is only possible to state that alcohol was a factor in the accident, not that it was causal.

In the last three years, the MAIB have been notified of eight accidents where alcohol was a factor, none of these accidents required a full investigation.

Broadband: Low Incomes and Social Security Benefits

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that broadband internet access is affordable for people in receipt of low incomes and benefits. [[HL1727](#)]

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to monitor the effectiveness of social tariffs offered by broadband providers. [[HL1728](#)]

Baroness Barran: A range of broadband social tariff packages are now available in the market to support those on low incomes or who receive specific benefits. BT, for example, recently launched a Home Essentials package which will provide fibre and voice services to those on Universal Credit starting at £15 per month. Virgin, Hyperoptic and other providers are offering similar packages to assist households on low incomes. Between

them, these products are available to 99% of households across the country.

The Government continues to encourage more fixed-line providers to introduce a social tariff and we will continue to monitor the provision in the market. We will also continue to work with Ofcom, which has a statutory duty to review the affordability of telecommunication services, to do this.

In December, the Government strengthened Ofcom's consumer protection rules, to ensure that consumers can access the right information to make informed decisions about new services, have stronger contract rights, and switch providers more easily. Ofcom also published its Vulnerability Guide in July 2020, setting out how the sector should support vulnerable households struggling to pay their bills.

Business: Investment

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of business investment for (1) the remainder of 2021, and (2) 2022. [HL1527]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As well as addressing the immediate challenges of COVID-19, the Government recognises the importance of acting now to create the conditions for an investment-led recovery driven by private sector growth.

Stimulating private sector investment will create jobs, drive innovation, and revitalise local areas and regions across the UK. This is central to the Government's plan to secure a strong recovery and the Budget announced a package of measures to achieve this, including the new super-deduction to support business investment.

The Office for National Statistics, as part of the Quarterly National Accounts, published revised outturn figures for business investment in Q1 2021. In real and seasonally-adjusted terms, business investment fell by 10.7 per cent (£5.4 billion) in Q1 2021 compared to the previous quarter, or by 16.9 per cent (£9.2 billion) compared to Q1 2020.

At Spring Budget 2021, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), which produces forecasts on the economy and public finances, revised upwardly the medium-term business investment outlook, expecting a return to its pre-crisis level in Q2 2022.

In the March 2021 Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the OBR highlighted the potential impact of the super deduction:

"As a temporary measure, it provides companies with a very strong incentive to bring forward investment from future periods to take advantage of the temporarily much more generous allowances. We assume that at its peak in 2022-23, this will raise the level of business investment by around 10 per cent (equivalent to around £20 billion a year) as spending is brought forward."

Cash Dispensing: Older People

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that vulnerable elderly individuals continue to have access to cash. [HL1502]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises that cash is important to the daily lives of millions of individuals and businesses across the UK, particularly to those who may be in vulnerable groups.

Therefore, the Government has committed to protecting access to cash for those who need it and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

The Government made legislative changes via the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase, which will allow shops and other businesses to offer a new form of cash withdrawal service to local communities.

On 1 July the Government published a consultation on broader legislative proposals to protect access to cash. These proposals seek to ensure that people only need to travel reasonable distances to pay in or take out cash, and that the right regulatory oversight for cash access is in place for the future. The consultation is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/access-to-cash-consultation>.

Channel Four Television

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how Channel 4's current (1) ownership model, and (2) commissioning strategy, is affecting its performance as a public service broadcaster. [HL1623]

Baroness Barran: Channel 4 has delivered on its remit successfully and helped grow the UK's independent production sector. It has also done an excellent job in managing the recent uncertainty in the market. However, the government is concerned that its current public ownership model presents challenges to its ability to grasp opportunities and keep pace in the future.

Further detail regarding the government's assessment is provided in the government's recent publication, "Consultation on a potential change of ownership of the Channel 4 Television Corporation", copies of which have been placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have commissioned to inform their consultation on the future of Channel 4. [HL1688]

Baroness Barran: On 6 July, the Government launched its public consultation on the future of Channel 4, including what ownership model and remit will best support the broadcaster to thrive for decades to come.

Views and evidence gathered from a broad range of stakeholders in response to the consultation will inform our policy making and final decision.

Details about the Government's assessment of the challenges facing Channel 4 are provided in its recent publication, "Consultation on a potential change in ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation", copies of which have been placed in the House of Commons Library, and are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-a-change-of-ownership-of-channel-4-television-corporation>.

Channel Four Television: Economic Growth and Employment

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure that, irrespective of the outcome of the consultation on the future of Channel 4, the broadcaster will be able to continue to support growth and jobs outside of London. [HL1689]

Baroness Barran: Channel 4 makes an important economic and social contribution across the whole of the UK through its investment in regional production, its national HQ in Leeds, and its creative hubs in Glasgow and Bristol.

Any options we decide to pursue following the public consultation would need to consider how to ensure Channel 4 continues its role in supporting levelling up across the UK.

The Government is seeking views from a broad range of stakeholders to inform our policy making. That is why we published a public consultation on 6 July 2021, which will run for 10 weeks, closing on 14 September 2021.

Channel Four Television: Privatisation

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the board of Channel 4 about the desirability of privatisation before announcing a review into private ownership of the channel. [HL1624]

Baroness Barran: Government Ministers meet members of the Channel 4 board and executive team regularly to discuss a range of issues.

The government intends to consult on a potential change in ownership of Channel 4 on the basis that an alternative ownership model (but one where it keeps a public service remit) may be better for the broadcaster and its ability to contribute socially, economically and culturally in the decades to come.

The public consultation was published on 06 July 2021. It will run for 10 weeks, closing on 14 September 2021. The Government is seeking views from a broad range of stakeholders to inform its policy making.

Charities: Churches

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the excepted status for church charities will end in March 2031. [HL1673]

Baroness Barran: DCMS officials will work with the Charity Commission and representatives of the excepted church charities to develop a comprehensive plan to phase the excepted church charities onto the register of charities in a manageable way over the extension period, which will end in March 2031.

Charities: Religion

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to prevent religious organisations that promote intolerance and harmful messages from becoming registered charities. [HL1674]

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to prevent religious organisations that promote misogyny from becoming registered charities. [HL1675]

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to removing the advancement of religion as a charitable purpose. [HL1676]

Baroness Barran: To be registered as a charity, institutions, including religious organisations in England and Wales, must meet the legal test for charitable status set out in the Charities Act 2011. This requires the institution to have a wholly charitable purpose for the benefit of the public. The advancement of religion has long been recognised as a charitable purpose.

The requirement for public benefit has to be demonstrated with evidence. Any benefits that the charity provides must be weighed against any detriment and harm. An example of activity by an organisation which would be considered as detrimental or harmful includes encouraging or promoting violence or hatred towards others, or unlawfully restricting a person's freedom. An organisation's public benefit will be affected where there is evidence of significant detriment or harm from what the organisation proposes to do, or practises, which outweigh the benefits of the organisation carrying out its aims.

The Charity Commission, as the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is responsible for assessing if an institution meets the legal test for charitable status. The Charity Commission takes a robust approach to registration, demonstrated by the fact that it registered on average 60% of applications received in 2020-2021.

There are currently no plans to change the legal test for charitable status.

Children: Coronavirus

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist children who have not returned to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL1397]

Baroness Berridge: Since 8 March, school attendance has been mandatory for all pupils and the usual rules on school attendance apply again. It is vital for all pupils to attend school to minimise the longer term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education, wellbeing, and wider development.

The Department understands that some pupils, parents, and households may be reluctant or anxious about attending school. Schools are encouraged to discuss any concerns with parents and explain the measures they are putting in place to reduce any risks. Schools should work closely with other professionals, where appropriate, to support school attendance. Some local councils also have teams that help parents improve their child's attendance at school.

When any child is withdrawn from a school, schools are obliged to make the reason for withdrawal known to the local authority. When the reason is for elective home education, all local authorities have procedures in place to identify whether the education received is suitable to the child's needs, age, and ability.

Local authorities have powers to intervene when they cannot establish if a suitable education is being provided. In April 2019, the Department published revised guidance for local authorities and parents on the oversight of home education. The guidance has been substantially strengthened to set out the steps that a local authority can take when they believe the education provided by parents is unsuitable, including when there are safeguarding concerns. Local authorities may also provide support and guidance to families who are home educating should resources allow and families wish to receive it.

Children: Food Poverty

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are (1) monitoring, and (2) addressing, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child food poverty. [HL1559]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We take the issue of food insecurity seriously, which is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 19/20 and these questions remain in the survey for 20/21.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

Our Covid Local Support Grant is ensuring that families across England get help with food and essential utility bills. We have now extended this temporary scheme for a final time with an additional £160 million in funding between 21 June and 30 September, taking total funding under the scheme to £429 million. This funding recognises that while restrictions are planned to end in July, families might need additional help to get back on their feet as the vaccine rollout continues and our economy recovers.

Our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. Our ambitious Plan for Jobs is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes new schemes such as the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, the £2.9 billion Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme.

Children: Poverty

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent estimate they have made of the levels of child poverty in England. [HL1557]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication.

In the three years to 2019/20, the absolute child poverty rate, before housing costs, in England was 18 per cent, down 3 percentage points since the three years to 2009/10.

Civil Servants: CCTV

Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances they can give to civil servants that CCTV footage from their workplace is held securely. [HL1479]

Lord True: I refer the Noble Lord to my [answer](#) of 29 June 2021. Any use which is made of CCTV is for the protection of the government estate and individuals working there.

Each Department is accountable for the way in which security is maintained within Departments, which includes the provision of closed circuit television cameras.

Confiscation Orders

Asked by **Lord Browne of Belmont**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much debt is outstanding under confiscation orders obtained by the Crown Prosecution Service; and what assessment they have made of how much of the debt is recoverable. [HL1512]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: The responsibility of paying a confiscation order remains with the defendant. Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) is responsible for the enforcement of all domestic confiscation orders, while the CPS will assist in some enforcement processes – for instance, by requesting mutual legal assistance from overseas jurisdictions in respect of assets located abroad.

As of the end of the last financial year (31 March 2021), the outstanding debt on CPS obtained confiscation orders was £1.3bn (excluding interest). Of these, the CPS is assisting HMCTS on enforcement action in relation to £600m, of which £170m has been assessed as being recoverable. There is no data held by the CPS in relation to the recoverable debt on confiscation orders that are being enforced solely by HMCTS.

The CPS set up a dedicated enforcement unit in their Proceeds of Crime Division in 2018 to specifically address the issue of enforcement. Where the CPS can take money from those who have profited from crime, they will not hesitate to do so. In 2019/20 over £100 million was recovered on CPS confiscation orders, stopping hundreds of criminals benefitting from their ill-gotten gains.

Cultural Heritage: Investment

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will list all of the organisations in England that will benefit from the £60 million national heritage investment announced on 3 July; and how much funding each organisation will receive. [HL1735]

Baroness Barran: The DCMS Press Release published on 3 July lists the twenty organisations set to benefit from this latest investment, as well as the sums awarded, and can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/60-million-to-protect-our-national-heritage>

Driving Licences

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many paper applications for (1) the renewal of a driving licence, and (2) renewal of a driving licence for persons aged over 70, remained unprocessed in each week in June. [HL1684]

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of delays in renewing driving licences; what steps they are taking to reduce such delays; and what advice they are giving to applicants renewing their driving licence by paper application, who need their licence for hiring a motor vehicle either in the UK or abroad. [HL1685]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) online services have been available throughout the pandemic and are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day which must be dealt with in person. Ongoing industrial action by members of the Public and Commercial Services union, along with fewer operational staff being on site to allow for social distancing in line with Welsh Government requirements has led to delays in dealing with paper applications. The DVLA has leased an additional building to accommodate more operational staff.

The number of paper applications awaiting processing fluctuates daily as driving licences are issued and new applications received. The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found on GOV.UK.

Drivers who need to hire a vehicle and have sent their licence to the DVLA for renewal, can view and share their driving licence information with a car hire company by generating a share code online at GOV.UK.

East Coast Railway Line

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter to the Chief Executive of National Rail from the Department for Transport on 8 October 2020 commissioning a review of the way capacity is allocated on the East Coast Main Line, when they will publish this review; what are the reasons this review has not already been published; and whether the review offers timetable options for (1) passengers, and (2) taxpayers, that are preferable to those proposed in London North Eastern Railway's 2022 timetable consultation. [HL1510]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Chief Executive of Network Rail has provided a draft final report which is under review and contains commercially sensitive information that was provided in good faith by private companies on condition that it is not published. The report considers the full range of passengers and markets along the East Coast route and identifies two key options. Once finalised we will request that the main findings be published.

Education: Standards

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by New Schools Network and Onward Lost Learning: Why we need to Level Up Education, published on 25 June; and what plans they

have to offer teachers a fixed stipend to work in schools in areas of underperformance. [HL1501]

Baroness Berridge: The department would like to thank New Schools Network and Onward for their report 'Lost Learning: Why we need to Level Up Education'. The government will be responding to the report's recommendations and conclusions in due course.

Levelling Up is at the heart of the government's agenda to build back better after the COVID-19 outbreak and to deliver for citizens across the UK. The government will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper later this year, setting out new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunity in all parts of the UK.

The department is currently piloting several retention payment schemes for teachers, including early career payments, teacher student loan reimbursement, and the mathematics and physics teacher retention payments. These schemes are targeted towards disadvantaged areas to encourage teachers to work in schools in these areas. The department is conducting evaluations to assess the effect of these pilot schemes, and we will consider our future retention offer in light of the evaluation findings.

Electric Cables: Seas and Oceans

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what licensing requirements network operators need to have for repair solutions when landing cables in the UK and going under UK waters. [HL1507]

Lord Callanan: Offshore renewable projects are required to hold a Marine License for the repair and maintenance of subsea cables, except when undertaking emergency works.

There are no licensing requirements on other electricity infrastructure operators for the maintenance and repair of subsea cables.

Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that UK nationals will have parity with non-UK nationals regarding in person right to work checks from September. [HL1499]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Employers are required to conduct right to work checks on all prospective employees including UK nationals. From 1 September, right to work checks will revert from the COVID-19 adjusted measures to face-to-face and physical document checks for those who cannot use the Home Office online checking service.

We are currently evaluating the potential for introducing the option for employers to use specialist technology, including identity document validation technology, to support right to work checks. At the same

time, we must ensure we maintain the security and integrity of our system in the long-term.

Environmental Land Management Scheme

Asked by Lord De Mauley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the area under certain environmental schemes on agricultural land under ELMs could count towards the Government's objective of protecting 30 per cent of terrestrial land by 2020; and if so, under what circumstances. [HL1453]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Our new environmental land management schemes will support the delivery of our ambitious national targets and commitments for the environment, including the Government's commitment to protect 30% of the UK's land by 2030. We are exploring the potential contribution that the three schemes could make to the achievement of this commitment. This contribution could include: management of farmland in an environmentally sustainable way; supporting local nature recovery and delivering local environmental priorities; management of designated sites; and encouraging collaboration between farmers, including through landscape-scale habitat creation and restoration, or securing long-term management and protection for wildlife-rich habitats.

France: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of France about the recognition of proof of vaccine status against COVID-19 issued by the NHS, in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland. [HL1481]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We work closely with French partners through the British Embassy in Paris and with the French Embassy in London to ensure that all travel restrictions are communicated to UK nationals, including on the recognition of vaccine status. As of 9 June, travellers from the UK to France who are fully vaccinated do not need to justify an essential reason for travel or self-isolate upon arrival. France accepts proof of vaccination status via the NHS App or an official NHS letter. Full information is available on our FCDO Travel Advice pages, which we update regularly.

France: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the British ambassador to France is appointed to serve the United Kingdom or Great Britain. [HL1480]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Ambassador to the French Republic is formally approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of State of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

As an official of Her Majesty's Government, a British Ambassador therefore represents the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Gambling

*Asked by **Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Economic Assessment of Selected House of Lords Gambling Reforms, prepared by NERA Economic Consulting for the Peers for Gambling Reform and published on 26 May. [[HL1667](#)]

Baroness Barran: We are considering the report by NERA Economic Consulting carefully, along with the large amount of evidence we have received in connection with our Review. We aim to publish a white paper by the end of the year, setting out our conclusions and next steps for the Gambling Act Review.

Gambling Commission

*Asked by **Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to strip the Gambling Commission of its power to impose affordability checks on vulnerable consumers. [[HL1666](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Gambling Commission received over 13,000 responses to its consultation and call for evidence on Remote Customer Interaction (including on issues to do with affordability) and has published an interim update on its website outlining next steps. It intends to publish a full report this summer.

The government remains in close contact with the Commission as its work progresses and the Commission is sharing key evidence with the Department on affordability and other topics where it could be relevant to our Review of the Gambling Act 2005. We are considering all evidence submitted to our Review, and any proposed changes will be led by that evidence.

Gambling: Video Games

*Asked by **Lord McNicol of West Kilbride***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Dr James Close and Dr Joanne Lloyd Lifting the Lid on Loot-Boxes, published by GambleAware in April; and what steps they are taking to ensure that the use of loot boxes by children does not lead to future gambling addiction. [[HL1607](#)]

*Asked by **Lord McNicol of West Kilbride***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to regulate loot boxes under the Gambling Act 2005, as recommended by the Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry. [[HL1608](#)]

*Asked by **Lord McNicol of West Kilbride***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of recovering gambling addicts relapsing as a result of loot boxes in video games. [[HL1609](#)]

Baroness Barran: Ensuring that video games are enjoyed safely by players, including children and vulnerable people, is a priority for the Government. That is why the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport launched a call for evidence in September 2020 to examine concerns relating to loot boxes, including evidence of potential harms.

We continue to evaluate the full scope of the evidence gathered from over 30,000 responses received. Potential solutions and preferred actions, including considerations around regulatory proposals, will be set out in the Government's response to the call for evidence. The response will be published in the coming months and we stand ready to take action should the findings from the call for evidence support taking further measures. Officials continue to monitor the emergence of new research around loot boxes, including reports published by organisations such as GambleAware as the Government response is developed.

Gaza: Israel

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use by the government of Israel of semi-autonomous machine-gun robots to guard the border with Gaza. [[HL1497](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of these reports. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties.

Huawei: Telecommunications

*Asked by **Baroness Merron***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total cost of removing Huawei from the telecommunications network by 2027. [[HL1725](#)]

Baroness Barran: As the Secretary of State set out in his statement to the House of Commons on 14 July 2020, we estimate that implementation of the advice to remove Huawei 5G equipment from the UK's telecom network will cost up to two billion pounds.

The estimated cost breakdown is set out in the impact assessment published for the Telecommunications (Security) Bill.

Immigration Controls: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness McGregor-Smith

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether passport scans at UK airports will reveal the vaccinated status of UK citizens; and if so, (1) how this information has been obtained, and (2) how the permission of UK citizens has been obtained to allow this information to be shared. [HL1435]

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Government has signalled an intention to reduce health measure requirements for inbound passengers who have received two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

How evidence of this status is declared and shared by the individual is still being assessed.

Immigration: EU Nationals

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will consider implementing a secure QR code system for proof of settled status for EU citizens resident in the UK. [HL1450]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We continue to welcome feedback on how we can improve our services.

Home Office officials have met with the 3million group to discuss the use of a QR code system and are now considering the feasibility of the suggested approach.

Inland Waterways: Phosphates

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the amount of phosphates entering English watercourses is declining or increasing. [HL1484]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Environment Agency monitoring data show dramatic reductions in phosphorus concentrations in English rivers over the last 25 years. Average concentrations now are about one-fifth of those in the mid-1990s.

The Environment Agency has also assessed the loadings of phosphorus entering rivers from water company sewage treatment works nationally. From 1995 to 2020 the phosphorus loadings were reduced by 66 percent.

The amounts of phosphorus applied to land as fertiliser have also reduced significantly over the last 25 years and livestock numbers have fallen leading to less manure production.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the primary sources of phosphates present in English watercourses are from (1) agricultural activities, (2) water industry discharges, or (3) other activities. [HL1485]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The overall largest source of phosphorus entering English rivers is effluent from water industry sewage treatment works, contributing about 70% of the total phosphorus loading. 25-30% of phosphorus entering rivers comes from agriculture. For lakes, agriculture tends to be the largest contributor.

Other sources of phosphate are relatively small (less than 5%) at a national scale but can sometimes be important at a local level. These include effluent from septic tanks, road/urban runoff, leaking sewers and storm overflows.

Insects: Conservation

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether the rate of loss of flying insects due to artificial light at night is increasing or decreasing. [HL1437]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In 2019 Defra published an evidence review of the status and risks to UK pollinating insects, developed with leading academics supporting our National Pollinator Strategy.

This review did not identify artificial light as a driver of insect trends. However, we are aware of recent scientific studies that have identified impacts of artificial light on the behaviour and physiology of some insect species. Generally, these studies highlight the need for further research to understand the significance of these impacts.

Defra has published or contributed to a range of assessments of the impact of artificial light on insects and wider biodiversity, as well as global and national assessments of the drivers of biodiversity loss more generally, and will continue to work with our academic partners so that emerging evidence is kept under review.

We have measures in place to mitigate the impacts of artificial light, through the planning system, the statutory nuisance regime, and where possible with improvements to street lighting.

Additionally, we are investing in pollinator monitoring to better understand populations trends and continue to take the right action to support recovery.

International Assistance

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to reinstate spending of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on international aid. [HL1478]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on official development assistance as soon as the fiscal situation allows.

The economic situation is difficult to predict. We are therefore monitoring the situation and planning accordingly.

Israel: Arrests

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 23 June (HL970), what assessment they have made of the extent to which their representations to the government of Israel are effective in ensuring that (1) Israel's investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive, and (2) Israeli security forces provide appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. [HL1496]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has an active dialogue with Israel on legal issues related to the occupation and we remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to prison conditions and detention practices. We continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive and to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by **Baroness Janke***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 June (HL766), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what assessment they have made of the proportionality of the government of Israel's recent military actions in Gaza. [HL1471]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest.

*Asked by **Baroness Janke***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the offer by the government of Israel to the Palestinian Authority of vaccines that were shortly due to expire in exchange for vaccines that had yet to be delivered. [HL1472]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Cooperation is key to tackling this Covid-19 and we continue to urge both parties to coordinate on vaccine access. We welcome initiatives for vaccine sharing which result in a greater number of Palestinians being vaccinated. We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene, to the fullest extent of the

means available to it, including in relation to combating the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). We also recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17).

*Asked by **Baroness Janke***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported policy of the government of Israel of demolishing the homes of Palestinians, but not Israelis, accused of acts of violence. [HL1473]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions and forced evictions of Palestinian families from their homes with the Government of Israel. The Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

*Asked by **Baroness Janke***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Amnesty International on 24 June that Israeli police target Palestinians with "discriminatory arrests, torture and unlawful force". [HL1474]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to prison conditions and detention practices. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we urge the Government of Israel to conduct swift and transparent investigations. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli forces blocked or destroyed the roads linking villages in the Masafer Yatta area on 23 June. [HL1498]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on issues affecting Palestinians, including restrictions on movement and access, and stress the impact of these measures on ordinary Palestinians who rely on these fundamental rights. An official from the British Consulate Jerusalem visited Masafer Yatta on 30 June.

Levelling Up Fund

*Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult on their White Paper on Levelling Up. [HL1458]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government which department leads on their Levelling Up strategy; and what consultations they will be undertaking with local government on that strategy. [HL1459]

Lord True: The Levelling Up unit has been established to produce the Levelling Up White Paper, working closely with Neil O'Brien MP (PM's Levelling Up adviser) and departments.

Strengthening the Union is at the heart of this agenda and the White Paper will be informed by engagement across the UK nations, working with departments, including the Territorial Offices. The Unit has and will continue to engage with representatives from the local government sector and with all other relevant stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors.

Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland Executive

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are having with the Northern Ireland Executive about the white paper on the Levelling Up strategy. [HL1456]

Lord True: The Government will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper later this year, setting out bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunity in all parts of the UK. This will be informed by engagement across the UK nations and, to fulfil our ambitions, the UK Government will engage with representatives from the devolved governments, including the Northern Ireland Executive, and with all other relevant stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors.

Libya: Freezing of Assets

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which the government of Libya has complied with UN Security Council Resolutions pertaining to the freezing of Libyan assets, to justify a release of some or all of those assets. [HL1422]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011) decided that all Member States shall freeze assets owned or controlled by individuals or entities listed by the Libya Sanctions Committee. The aim of the Libya asset freeze is to ensure that the frozen funds are preserved until such a time as they can be made available to, and for the benefit of, the people of Libya. Any amendments to the asset freeze will require consensus at the UN and will be judged against this goal.

Libya: IRA

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in seeking compensation from the government of Libya for the victims of Libyan-supplied semtex used by the IRA. [HL1420]

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the matter of compensation for the victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism was raised during their meeting with the interim Prime Minister of Libya on 24 June; and if so, what response they received. [HL1421]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to press the Libyan authorities to address the Libyan State's historic responsibility for the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA, and has raised this issue at the highest levels.

Madeleine McCann

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 June (HL709), what are the arrangements for overseeing the Metropolitan Police's Operation Grange to ensure the proper use of public funds and value for money. [HL1446]

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the National Audit Office last reviewed (1) financial, and (2) other records, held by the Home Office on Operation Grange. [HL1447]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has a dedicated team assigned to Operation Grange which regularly liaises with the Metropolitan Police investigation team to assess progress and challenge the use of funds as necessary. In addition, as part of the Special Grant funding framework, all operations receiving Police Special Grant are subject to periodic review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that they are using funding in a way that is reasonable and proportionate.

The National Audit Office conducted enquiries with the Home Office concerning the provision of funding for Operation Grange in the summer of 2019. They determined that the oversight and governance of Operation Grange was effective and that the operation was compliant with the principles of Managing Public Money.

Migrants: Deportation

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK still participates in the EU's return and readmission agreements with (1) Albania, (2) Bosnia and

Herzegovina, (3) Republic of Northern Macedonia, (4) Georgia, (5) Hong Kong, (6) Macau, (7) Moldova, (8) Montenegro, (9) Pakistan, (10) Russia, (11) Serbia, (12) Sri Lanka, (13) Turkey, and (14) Ukraine. [HL1461]

Lord Greenhalgh: Since 1 January 2021 the UK has not participated in EU Readmission Agreements with third countries. We are no longer party to these agreements. Where appropriate we are looking to transition to new bilateral agreements with third countries.

Musicians: Visas

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Frost on 24 June (HL Deb, col 389), what are their reasons for considering that the music industry's proposal for a visa waiver arrangement is not "consistent with our requirement to retain discretion over our own immigration requirements". [HL1418]

Lord Greenhalgh: UK citizens going to the EU for short stays and EU, EEA and Swiss citizens visiting the UK are already visa free. Musicians and performers can already undertake short-term touring without visas and permits in at least 17 Member States.

EU visa waiver agreements are also subject to the provisions of Article 6 (3) of REGULATION (EU) 2018/1806 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL which sets out an individual Member State may still decide to require a visa for short stays for people carrying out a paid activity during their stay.

The EU's draft text for the TCA included a visa waiver agreement, which would have prohibited the parties from introducing visas on visitors from the other party unless those visitors were carrying out a paid activity (i.e. service supply or performance) during their short-stay visit. In the event they were carrying out a paid activity individual Member States could apply a visa requirement to this category of service suppliers. The ability of the UK to apply visas would have been restricted only to reciprocating by applying a visa requirement to the same category supplier for the individual member state.

The EU's proposal would also have prevented the UK from introducing or maintaining visit visas on any future EU Member State, not just on existing ones. In effect handing to the European Union the ability to make a country a non-visa national for travel to the UK without the consent or approval of the UK.

The Government is now focusing on bilateral engagement with Member States to encourage them to more closely align with the UK's generous regime.

National Audit Office: Email

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Audit Office have the power to access

the private emails of either (1) civil servants, (2) special advisers, or (3) ministers, if these have been used for government business relating directly to their investigations. [HL1536]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Under the National Audit Act 1983, the Comptroller and Auditor General has a right of access to all documents in the custody or under the control of a department that he reasonably requires for carrying out National Audit Office value for money examinations. There is a similar provision in the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 in relation to examinations by the Comptroller and Auditor General of a documents relating to a department's accounts.

The 2013 Cabinet Office *Guidance to departments on the use private email* is clear that the originator or recipient of a communication should consider whether the information contained in private emails amounts to substantive discussions or decisions generated in the course of conducting government business, and take steps to ensure the relevant information is accessible (e.g. by copying it to a government email address).

National Flagship

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) costs, and (2) benefits, of the proposed new Royal Yacht. [HL1466]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made for the annual cost of the proposed new Royal Yacht. [HL1468]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the Noble Lord to the reply given by my right hon. Friend Ben Wallace MP (Secretary of State for Defence) to Question 13199, answered on 16 June 2021 in the House of Commons.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

National Flagship Procurement [UIN 13199.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-06-28/HL1466>

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allocate additional finance to the Ministry of Defence to pay for the costs of the proposed new Royal Yacht. [HL1467]

Baroness Goldie: The capital costs of building the National Flagship will accrue over a number of years and will be met from the Defence Budget.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution they expect the proposed new Royal Yacht to make to the UK's defence capability. [HL1470]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the Noble Lord to the reply given by my right hon Friend, Ben Wallace MP (Secretary of State for Defence) to Question 10179, answered on 16 June 2021 in the House of Commons.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

National Flagship [UIN 10179.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-06-28/HL1470>

National Flagship: Procurement

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether their intention to build a new Royal Yacht breaches WTO rules. [HL1469]

Baroness Goldie: The decision to build the National Flagship in the UK does not breach our obligations under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). The WTO GPA contains a number of exemptions to open competition.

Ofcom: Finance

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much additional funding will be provided to Ofcom to support the costs of monitoring and compliance with the new powers for that body in the Telecommunications Security Bill. [HL1721]

Baroness Barran: Ofcom's budget for telecoms security this financial year has been increased by £4.6 million, to reflect its enhanced security role under the Telecommunications (Security) Bill. This is in addition to its current security budget of £2 million.

Off-payroll Working

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that businesses understand how to use the online 'Check Employment Status' tool in regard to IR35 status. [HL1571]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC developed the Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) tool to help organisations and individuals determine employment status for tax and decide whether the off-payroll working rules apply.

CEST is a free service which was developed working closely with tax specialists, contractors and other stakeholders. It was tested rigorously against known case law and settled cases, and HMRC stand by its results if the tool is used in accordance with HMRC's guidance.

HMRC have published detailed guidance^[1] on using the CEST tool and have recently launched a 'webchat'^[2] function which allows users to seek advice from HMRC

as they are using the tool. This is in addition to the dedicated off-payroll working helpline, which offers customers a full run-through of the CEST tool and a CEST specific webinar run by HMRC.

HMRC are continuing to help businesses get determinations right. HMRC set up dedicated teams to provide education and support to all businesses, public bodies and charities affected by the off-payroll working reform. This includes topic-based webinars and workshops, as well as targeted one-to-one calls with affected businesses. This is further supported by updated off-payroll working guidance, online learning and attendance at stakeholder events.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-status-manual/esm11000>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/ir35-enquiries>

Old Oak Common Station

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 25 March (HL14250), why the Department for Transport's Permanent Secretary, Bernadette Kelly, stated in a letter to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee of 22 June, "we do not recognise the £1.7 billion figure"; what is the new recognised figure; and what are the reasons for this change. [HL1444]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department's second bi-annual update to Parliament on 23 March 2021 provided an update on the progress of HS2 including the current cost pressures and the contingency that is available to accommodate them if they do materialise. We will provide a further update in the next bi-annual report.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the cuts to Official Development Assistance have fallen equally across the (1) multi-lateral projects, (2) Non-Governmental Organisations, and (3) bilateral projects; and if not, what was the rationale in assigning how the cuts were going to be applied? [HL1431]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: FCDO Officials are continuing to work through the implementation of the budget changes set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS, with partners and suppliers. Given we are in a one-year spending settlement, FCDO's 21/22 planned budget allocations will be published in our Annual Report later this year. We will also continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish a list of the (1) organisations and projects that

have had official development assistance cuts, and (2) official development assistance projects that will be funded for 2021. [HL1464]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: FCDO Officials are continuing to work through the implementation of the budget changes set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS, with partners and suppliers. Given we are in a one-year spending settlement, FCDO's 21/22 planned budget allocations will be published in our Annual Report later this year. We will also continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will place in the Library of the House a list of projects which will receive reduced funding because of the reduction in overseas development assistance. [HL1477]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: FCDO Officials are continuing to work through the implementation of the budget changes set out in the Foreign Secretary's WMS, with partners and suppliers. Given we are in a one-year spending settlement, FCDO's 21/22 planned budget allocations will be published in our Annual Report later this year. We will also continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

Overseas Aid: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether diplomatic posts will be able to apply for official development assistance funding for local projects this year. [HL1465]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The creation of the FCDO has brought together diplomacy and development into a single organisation.

On 21 April, the Foreign Secretary laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament which outlined the allocation of FCDO ODA for 2021/22. At present, Officials are working through the implementation (and corresponding details) of these decisions with partners and suppliers.

Overseas Aid: Drugs and Surgery

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 28 June (HL1041), what discussions, if any, they have had with Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases to discuss the finding that most of the 770 million medicines donated by pharmaceutical companies will not be delivered because of cuts in Overseas Development Assistance; and if they have not had any such discussions, whether they plan to do so. [HL1441]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO is currently working with implementing partners, drug companies, donors, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to exit the programme Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (ASCEND). As part of this we have participated in two stakeholder meetings in June, at which Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases were present. We have also been in touch with the organisation recently via correspondence.

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

Overseas Aid: Environmental Protection

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending for environmental research on the achievement of their commitment to maintaining a place at the leading edge of science and technology. [HL1414]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The economic impact of the Covid pandemic has forced the UK Government to take tough, but necessary decisions to move to a target of spending 0.5 per cent of GNI on ODA in 2021, as a temporary measure. This has included cuts to ODA Science and Technology funding. We have worked with a range of stakeholders including UKRI, universities as well as directly with grant holders and funding partners to mitigate the impact of these cuts, adjust timeframes and results expectations, and continue to maximise the impact for every pound spent.

Despite the reductions, the UK remains a development superpower, with an ODA budget on track to exceed £10 billion this year. FCDO ODA will be targeted to addressing seven global challenges facing the world's poorest which both includes climate change and biodiversity, and science, research and technology. FCDO will make £251 million of science, research and technology investments across all seven themes of the Foreign Secretary's strategic objectives, including climate change and biodiversity.

Overseas Aid: Females

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether programmes supporting women and girls will be disproportionately impacted by the aid cuts; and if so, what plans they have to mitigate that impact. [HL1429]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Promoting gender equality and advancing women and girls' rights around the world is a priority for the UK Government. Both the Integrated Review and recent G7 Leaders' Communique confirms this commitment.

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough but necessary decision to temporarily reduce the overall amount we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA). Despite this, the UK remains committed to advancing gender equality, as evidenced by co-hosting the Global Partnership for Education replenishment, a focus on gender at COP26 and co-leadership of a new global Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as part of the Generation Equality Forum. The UK's G7 Presidency has prioritised action which places gender equality and girl's education at the centre of our COVID-19 response and recovery. We remain bound by the UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 to ensure gender equality remains at the heart of the UK's work on international development and in humanitarian crisis.

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a gendered assessment took place before the cuts to Official Development Assistance this year; and if so, (1) when this was carried out, and (2) how this was carried out. [HL1430]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: During the 2021/22 ODA allocation process, the FCDO considered risks and impacts to inform advice to Ministers. An overarching Equalities Impact Assessment analysed impacts across bilateral country spend. The assessment was considered by Ministers before decisions were made.

Overseas Aid: Global Challenges Research Fund

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending, whether they will restore to its previous level the contribution to the Global Challenges Research Fund for international environmental projects in the next financial year. [HL1415]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The economic impact of the Covid pandemic has forced the UK Government to take tough, but necessary, decisions to move to a target of spending 0.5 per cent of GNI on ODA in 2021, as a temporary measure.

Despite the reductions, the UK remains a development superpower, with an ODA budget on track to exceed £10 billion this year. FCDO ODA will be targeted to addressing seven global challenges facing the world's poorest which both includes climate change and biodiversity, and science, research and technology. FCDO will make £251 million of science, research and

technology investments across all seven themes of the Foreign Secretary's strategic objectives, including climate change and biodiversity.

Overseas Aid: Unemployment

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of jobs being put at risk due to the cuts in Official Development Assistance. [HL1432]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of the number of jobs at risk following the difficult decision to reduce aid spending temporarily to 0.5% of GNI. As the Foreign Secretary has said, our primary focus is on poverty reduction in developing countries and we are working closely with delivery partners to reprioritise the development portfolio to meet the priorities set out to the House on 26 November 2020. Delivery partners will consider how best to restructure their operations in order to deliver the reprioritised portfolio.

Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent of freedom of (1) religion, and (2) belief, in Pakistan; and what is their strategy for supporting those freedoms in that country. [HL1393]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities around the globe. Pakistan is one of the FCDO's human rights priority countries and protecting FoRB is an integral part of our engagement on human rights in Pakistan. The UK Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of innocent people based on their beliefs.

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their religion or belief. Most recently on 23 and 24 June during a visit to Pakistan, I raised these important issues with Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and other senior government ministers, including Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, and Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Shireen Mazari. During these meetings, I highlighted the need to address persecution, promote respect for all religions and increase tolerance for religious minorities, including Ahmadiyya Muslims and Christians. Alongside my engagement with the Government of Pakistan, I met with minority communities to understand better their concerns, including a meeting with representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, an interfaith roundtable and discussions with influential religious leaders.

In addition, the UK works within the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance to promote and protect FoRB around the globe. I underlined the UK's commitment to FoRB for all at a number of international meetings in November 2020, speaking at the intergovernmental Ministerial to Advance FoRB and the Ministers' Forum of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance. On 20 December 2020, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his personal commitment to the issue by appointing Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for FoRB. I set out the UK's commitment to defending FoRB and addressing FoRB violations in my response to a question in this house from Lord Singh of Wimbledon on 8 July.

Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 30 June (HL1403), what is the value of the current contract awarded to Capita Business Services Ltd to carry out Personal Independence Payment assessments in Northern Ireland. [HL1731]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments in Northern Ireland are administered by the Department for Communities for Capita Business Services, so therefore the Department of Work and Pensions would not hold the information requested. Please contact the Department for Communities Health Transformation Team.

Prisons: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 24 June (HL1005), what proportion of (1) prisoners, and (2) prison officers, have received their COVID-19 vaccinations. [HL1483]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service strongly encourages all staff and prisoners to have the Covid-19 vaccine. We ask employees to let us know when they have had each dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by recording their vaccine status on our HR system. As the disclosure of their vaccine status is entirely voluntary, it means the self-declaration rates presented below will be lower than the actual number of staff who have been vaccinated.

The total number of Band 3-5 Prison Officers in Public Sector and Youth Custody Prisons who have declared that they have received their first COVID-19 vaccination, as at midday 25 June 2021, was 6,417. This is equivalent to approximately 28.5% of staff within those roles.

The total number of Band 3-5 Prison Officers in Public Sector and Youth Custody Prisons who have declared that

they have received their second COVID-19 vaccination, as at midday 25 June 2021, was 3,407. This is equivalent to approximately 15.2% of staff within those roles.

Now that all adults are eligible, HMPPS will be increasing efforts to encourage staff to record their vaccination status.

For prisoners in England as of 25 June 2021 the total number who had received their first COVID-19 vaccination was 38,895. The total number of adult prisoners who had received their second COVID-19 vaccination was 19,236. These figures represent approximately 54% and 26% of the population of 72,687 prisoners.

Data for prisoner vaccinations has been provided by NHS England who are responsible for the vaccination programme. Please note that figures in relation to prisoner vaccinations change daily due to the level of activity in the vaccination programme across the estate.

Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the Barnett consequential in each relevant year for Northern Ireland from expenditure on (1) Levelling Up, (2) UK Shared Prosperity, and (3) Community Renewal funds. [HL1457]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Levelling Up the whole of the UK is a key priority for this government and the responsibility of a wide range of government departments – I understand your question to be referring to the specific Levelling Up Fund announced at Spending Review 2020.

The Levelling Up Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the UK Community Renewal Fund will operate UK-wide, extending the benefits of funding for local priorities across all parts of the UK, including Northern Ireland.

As they are UK-wide programmes, they do not result in any Barnett consequential for the Northern Ireland Executive or other devolved administrations.

Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what public surveys, if any, they have undertaken on (1) the mandatory use of face coverings on public transport, and (2) the impact a change to a voluntary approach may have on (a) public confidence in the safety of public transport, and (2) demand for public transport. [HL1726]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has commissioned surveys on travel behaviour, attitudes and social impacts of COVID-19. These surveys are part of the Department's *All Change?* study and include questions on perceptions of face covering use on public transport, public transport confidence and travel intentions. Reports of findings are published on gov.uk.

Pupils: Protest

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that schoolchildren in the UK have been punished for taking part in pro-Palestine protests. [HL1495]

Baroness Berridge: The Government is aware that many young people will have a strong personal interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Schools should ensure that political expression by senior pupils in school is conducted sensitively, avoiding disruption or an atmosphere of intimidation or fear for other pupils and staff.

On 28 May 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to schools to remind them of requirements on political impartiality and their responsibility to deal with antisemitic incidents with due seriousness. This followed a reported increase in such incidents in school during the recent conflict, including the expression of antisemitic views and bullying towards Jewish pupils and teachers.

All schools should set clear, reasonable, and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour in line with the Department's guidance on 'Behaviour and discipline in schools', published in 2016. It is for individual schools to develop their own best practice for managing behaviour in their school.

Railways: Carbon Emissions and Electrification

*Asked by **Lord Bradshaw***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish their plans to de-carbonise the railways before 22 July; and whether those plans will include further electrification of the railways. [HL1672]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We will publish the Transport Decarbonisation Plan shortly. The Plan will cover how we will support further electrification of the railways.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Somerset

*Asked by **Lord Patten***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons for the environmental condition of the Sites of Scientific Interest within the Somerset Levels and Moors being downgraded. [HL1486]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As the Government's conservation advisory body, condition assessments of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are carried out by Natural England. Natural England's assessment of the Somerset Levels and Moors SSSIs is based on the latest available evidence including

monitoring and modelling work carried out by Wessex Water and agreed with the Environment Agency.

A full assessment of Natural England's evaluation has been set out in their SSSI condition change briefing note. This was published in May 2021 and is attached here.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

SSSi condition briefing [sssi-condition-briefing-note-24-may-2021.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-06-28/HL1486>

Srebrenica: Genocide

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide in 2021. [HL1448]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: 2021 marks 26 years since the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which saw more than 8,000 mostly Muslim men and boys murdered, and over 20,000 women and children forcibly expelled from their homes. The UK remembers all victims and pays its respects to the survivors. The UK continues to fight for justice and an end to impunity: this year Radovan Karadzic, convicted in part for his role in the Srebrenica genocide, was transferred to the UK to serve his life sentence. HMG's commemorative activities include a video message from the Foreign Secretary, to be shown online as part of Remembering Srebrenica's programme of events, and a statement commemorating the anniversary. The FCDO hopes to host Remembering Srebrenica's in-person commemoration when COVID-19 restrictions allow. The British Embassy in Sarajevo, alongside its project funding for the Srebrenica Memorial Centre, will join commemorations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sugar Beet: Manufacturing Industries

*Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current state of the sugar beet industry. [HL1476]

Lord Benyon: Defra's reach and engagement with the agri-food sector is extensive and well-established. This includes regular contact with producers and processors in the UK sugar industry, including British Sugar.

Through the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group, we monitor UK agricultural markets, including for sugar beet, looking at price, supply, and trade. This provides forewarning of any atypical market movements or shocks.

The NFU is recognised by Defra to represent all sugar beet growers in the UK due to the nature of the UK Market with British Sugar the sole processor and buyer of Sugar beet. NFU Sugar negotiates on UK Sugar beet

growers' collective behalf to ensure fair contract terms and prices.

Current issues for sugar beet growers include the control of pests (aphids) and yellow virus, along with weather related problems - such as dry springs affecting crop establishment and wet conditions during the campaign harvests. We welcomed British Sugar's work with Rothamsted to predict levels of yellow virus early in the growing season. This meant that emergency use of neonicotinoid seed treatment was not needed in 2021.

Teachers: Disability

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to monitor employers' behaviour to ensure that they are meeting their public sector equality duties in respect of teachers with a disability. [HL1417]

Baroness Berridge: Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil or member of staff in a number of respects because of a characteristic protected by the Act. As employers, schools are under the same duties to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for their employees or potential employees as they are for their pupils. State funded schools are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The department has published guidance on the Equality Act 2010 for schools, which includes advice on how they can meet their duties under the Act. We expect schools to adhere to their statutory requirements as employers and do not monitor this at a school level on a routine basis. The guidance can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides more detailed advice on workplace adjustment and has powers to enforce equality legislation. Additionally, the Equality Advisory and Support Service, is an independent service aimed at individuals who need information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues.

Telecoms Diversification Task Force

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the publication of the Telecoms Diversification Taskforce Report on 20 April, whether the taskforce now been disbanded; and if not, what role and responsibilities the Taskforce now has. [HL1720]

Baroness Barran: The Telecoms Diversification Taskforce has completed its work and submitted its independent recommendations to the Government in April. The Taskforce will now transition to become the permanent Telecoms Supply Chain Diversification Advisory Council with Simon Blagden CBE as the new chair; as announced in the Government's response to the recommendations published on 2 July. Many of the

Taskforce members will continue to provide advice as part of the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council will play a key role in overseeing and offering scrutiny to the delivery of the 5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy. We will also draw on the expertise of the Advisory Council for wider telecoms supply chain diversification issues beyond the RAN (Radio Access Network).

Tigray: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the people of Tigray of the ongoing war in that region. [HL1442]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is deeply concerned about the conflict in Tigray that has gone on for more than seven months and which has taken a terrible toll on the people of Tigray. Over 350,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions with region-wide famine in Tigray now likely if the security situation does not improve significantly, and if urgent humanitarian support cannot be delivered.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) a Member of Parliament in Northern Ireland, or (2) a Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, will have a vote on new legislation brought forward to (a) amend, or (b) replace, the Annexes to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL1419]

Lord Frost: In such situations, new EU law within the scope of the Protocol takes effect in line with Articles 13(3) and 13(4) of the Protocol. For any changes requiring further implementing legislation in the UK Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly, the ordinary scrutiny processes apply. Otherwise, the amending EU law applies directly.

It is because this situation is so unusual from the democratic perspective that the Protocol incorporates a consent mechanism to allow for the Northern Ireland Assembly to determine whether Articles 5-10 should continue to apply.

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the UK's economic performance. [HL1475]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) is the first free trade agreement based on zero tariffs and zero quotas and the

largest bilateral trade deal in the world, by volume of goods trade. Alongside the TCA's other provisions, this helps businesses to continue to trade smoothly.

The Treasury does not prepare forecasts for the UK economy and public finances, as this is the duty of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The latest forecasts from the OBR were published alongside the Budget on 3 March 2021, ^[1] and include an assessment of the impact of EU exit.

^[1]<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2021/>

Undocumented Migrants: Deportation

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government with what countries they have (1) bilateral return and readmission agreements, and (2) agreed Memoranda of Understanding for the return of migrants found to be illegally in the UK. [HL1460]

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many return and readmission agreements, or Memoranda of Understanding for the return of migrants found illegally in the UK, they have participated in either (1) bilaterally, and (2) as a member state of the EU, in each of the past five years. [HL1463]

Lord Greenhalgh: Bilaterally outside of the EU, the UK has a range of returns arrangements with receiving countries including bilateral MoU, formal readmission agreements and informal operational arrangements which provide the basis for administrative removal and deportation of own country nationals.

Formal immigration returns arrangements are in place with following countries:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, China, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Korea, South Sudan, Switzerland, Vietnam.

As an EU Member State, the UK participated in 14 of the 18 EU Readmission Agreements. These were with: Pakistan, Georgia, Serbia, Albania, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Macao and Hong Kong.

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK currently has bilateral return and readmission agreements, or Memoranda of Understanding for the return of migrants found to be illegally in the UK, with (1) Albania, (2) Brazil, (3) Bangladesh, (4) Pakistan, and (5) Turkey. [HL1462]

Lord Greenhalgh: We are currently in discussions with a number of third countries regarding the transition of existing EURAs the UK participated in, into bilateral

returns agreements, along with creating other new relationships with third countries.

Violent and Sex Offender Register

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will meet with the family of Collette Gallacher to discuss changing the law to ensure that those convicted of committing violent sexual offences against children before 1997 can be included on the sex offenders register. [HL1555]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has some of the toughest powers in the world to deal with sex offenders and those who pose a risk.

In addition to the notification requirements for registered sex offenders ("sex offenders' register"), where someone poses a risk of sexual harm, the courts can impose Sexual Harm Prevention Orders on individuals convicted of certain sexual or violent offences (including murder), and Sexual Risk Orders, on any individual who poses a risk of sexual harm, even if they have never been convicted. Both orders can place a range of restrictions on individuals, and breach is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.

We are strengthening these orders through the Policing and Crime Bill, including enabling the imposition of positive requirements.

Although I am unable to comment on specific cases, I thank my Noble Friend for raising this case, and I will look into this matter to see what appropriate actions can be taken.

Waste Disposal: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many metric tonnes of carbon emissions were released by shipping containers exporting waste from the UK in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, and (3) 2020. [HL1423]

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many shipping containers the Environment Agency inspected in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, and (3) 2020. [HL1424]

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many shipping containers were prevented from leaving the UK by the Environment Agency in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, and (3) 2020; and what was the reason given for preventing them leaving. [HL1425]

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Environment Agency ensures that waste is legally disposed of once it reaches another country. [HL1426]

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many operators were found by the Environment Agency to be illegally exporting waste in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, and (3) 2020. [HL1427]

Asked by Lord Grantchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many plastic recycling facilities there were in England in (1) 2016, (2) 2017, (3) 2018, (4) 2019, (5) 2020, and (6) 2021. [HL1428]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government has made no assessment of carbon emissions produced by the export of UK waste. The UK monitors and reports emissions from the shipping industry through the National Emissions Inventory but this information is not disaggregated to the level of individual cargo movements.

Between 2017 and 2020 the Environment Agency inspected and prevented the departure of the following containers. The Environment Agency also issued the following stop notices in respect to suspected illegal waste shipments over the same period.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Containers inspected	1,012	926	1,889
Containers prevented from leaving	404	300	463
Stop notices issued	106	238	444

The reasons for preventing the departure of these containers included:

- The proposed recovery site did not exist or was not permitted to accept waste;
- The proposed shipment was not in compliance with the correct procedure;
- Issues with waste quality, for example, the level of contamination;
- The required paperwork was not present, was incomplete or completed incorrectly; and
- The waste was not permitted for export to a non-OECD country.

All waste exports need to be made in accordance with the relevant legislation and the UK regulators have a

system of inspections in place to verify compliance. The UK regulators take a pro-active, intelligence led approach to checking compliance with the legislation on waste shipments, targeting exports which pose a high risk and intervening to stop illegal exports taking place.

In addition, the regulators undertake rigorous checks to ensure businesses accredited as exporters of packaging waste under the Packaging Waste Regulations comply with their conditions of accreditation, this includes verifying evidence that exported waste is recycled. The conditions of accreditation have been tightened to require an exporter to provide the Environment Agency with full details of the final overseas reprocessing sites receiving packaging waste it exports and to provide access to export documentation to prove that the material reached or was accepted by these overseas reprocessing sites.

Stop notices are issued prior to the export of waste when the Environment Agency suspect a shipment to be illegal (this could be for single containers, or multiple containers). The notice is served on those in control of the waste at the time. There are usually multiple parties involved in the waste shipment process including load sites, brokers, freight forwarders, hauliers, shipping lines etc. Liability for the illegal export of waste is potentially held throughout the waste export chain and therefore only through conducting investigations are the Environment Agency able to determine a definitive number of parties involved.

Plastic recycling is carried out at many waste management sites across England and numerous sites will accept incidental amounts of plastic waste, as such it is not possible to give exact figures for the number of plastic reprocessing facilities in England.

It is possible however, to give the following figures for treatment sites that accepted over 1,000 tonnes of plastic waste per year up to the year 2019. This information has been extracted from data held by the Environment Agency, using European Waste Catalogue codes denoting plastic waste.

Year	No of sites
2016	68
2017	71
2018	68
2019	68

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