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Tuesday
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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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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 13 July 2021

Correction to Statement HLWS129

[HLWS169]

Lord Callanan: Subsequent to my Written Statement regarding the Subsidy Control Bill on Wednesday 30th June (UIN HLWS129), I wish to correct the record and to confirm that reference to a “Statement of Policy” is a corrigendum and as such will not be deposited in the Libraries of the House.

National Crime Agency: Crime Reduction Function Inspection

[HLWS168]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The National Crime Agency (NCA) leads the fight against serious and organised crime. It has the power to task other law enforcement partners and a capability, with local to international reach, to disrupt the impact of serious and organised crime on the UK.

This is the eighth HMICFRS inspection of the NCA and examines the non-specialist NCA investigation teams based at the branch offices across the UK. The focus is specifically on the alignment of investigations to the threats, allocation of resources, and the NCA’s capacity to tackle organised crime.

I have asked HMICFRS to publish the report. It will be published today and will be available online at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk. I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The inspection found that NCA’s crime reduction function is working well in a number of areas of law enforcement. The Agency’s management of the highest priority cases and the difficult management of scarce, specialist resources are effective, and cases being developed by the intelligence command are focused on SOC threats. The Agency’s investigators show resilience and flexibility often in difficult conditions. However, the report also identifies a number of areas for improvement, including assessment of capacity in the Investigations Command to meet the demand being developed by the Intelligence Command, inadequate level and quality of equipment and access to investigative tools in some parts of the country, an over-reliance on legacy IT systems and the need for consistent investment to ensure the NCA is at the same standards as the police force.

Official Development Assistance Budget

[HLWS166]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The government has acted on a scale unmatched in recent history in responding to the twin health and economic emergencies, with over £400 billion of total support for the economy since the start of the pandemic to protect people’s jobs and livelihoods, and to support businesses and public services.

But the damage inflicted on our economy and the public finances by Coronavirus has been immense. We have suffered the biggest recession in 300 years. Last year we borrowed nearly £300bn – equivalent to 14.3 per cent of GDP – the highest since World War II. Debt as a percentage of GDP reached nearly 100 per cent, the highest since 1962. This year we are forecast to borrow the second highest amount on record during peacetime – second only to last year. This is clearly unsustainable, and the economic damage of coronavirus cannot be fixed overnight.

That is why we have had to take difficult decisions to get borrowing down and restore the public finances – including by increasing corporation tax, freezing income tax personal thresholds and maintaining public sector pay at current levels.

As part of these difficult decisions, we took the decision last year to temporarily reduce the ODA budget to spend 0.5 per cent of gross national income on overseas aid in 2021. The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 envisages situations in which a departure from spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA may be necessary; for example in response to “fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of meeting the target on taxation, public spending and public borrowing”.

Spending at 0.5 per cent of gross national income for this year means we will still spend more than £10 billion to improve global health, fight poverty and tackle climate change. In 2020 we were one of only two G7 countries to meet the 0.7% target, and the only one to do so each year since 2013. Based on the latest OECD data, spending 0.5% GNI as ODA in 2021, as we plan to do, would mean that the UK is still the third largest donor in the G7 as a percentage of GNI.

As we have made clear since that decision, this is a temporary measure and the government is committed to the 2015 Act and to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA once the fiscal situation allows. That is why we are today setting out the responsible fiscal circumstances under which we will return to 0.7%.

Consistent with the fiscal principles set out at March Budget 2021, and with the principles contained within the Conservative Party 2019 Manifesto, the government commits to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the independent Office for Budget Responsibility's fiscal forecast[1] confirms that, on a sustainable basis, we are not borrowing for day-to-day spending[2] and underlying debt[3] is falling, as explained in more detail below.

At the upcoming Spending Review the government will set the ODA budget for 2022-23 (and provisionally for later years) in line with these tests and the latest fiscal forecast.

Each year over this period, the government will review, in accordance with the 2015 Act, whether a return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA is possible against the latest fiscal forecast. If it expects to meet the fiscal tests described above in the following financial year, the government will increase overseas aid spending above 0.5% of GNI to 0.7% of GNI and such that these tests are still met. Once the government has spent 0.7% of GNI as overseas aid in a given year, these tests will no longer apply to overseas aid spending and the government will return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA year on year.

The government will continue to act compatibly with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, under which accountability is to Parliament. The Secretary of State will lay a statement in Parliament in accordance with section 2 of the Act in relation to each calendar year in which the government does not spend 0.7% GNI on ODA.

A motion will be tabled by the government alongside this Written Ministerial Statement asking the House of Commons to consider this approach, for debate tomorrow. If the House approves the motion, recognising the need to manage the public finances responsibly and maintaining strong investment in domestic public services like the

NHS, schools and police, then the government will continue with the approach set out in this Statement. However, if the House were to negative the motion, rejecting the government's assessment of the fiscal circumstances, then the government would consequently return to spending 0.7% of GNI on international aid in the next calendar year, and with likely consequences for the fiscal situation, including for taxation and current public spending plans.

[1] By fiscal forecast, we refer to the final post-measures official forecasts by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) as published in their Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

[2] By "not borrowing for day-to-day spending", we mean when the fiscal forecast shows a sustainable current budget surplus. The current budget deficit counts all receipts and all current spending, but excludes spending on net investment.

[3] By "underlying debt" we mean public sector net debt (excluding the Bank of England) as a % of GDP. PSND ex BoE is the amount of debt the public sector owes to private sector minus the amount of cash and other short-term assets it holds excluding the liabilities and the liquid assets held on the Bank of England's balance sheet

Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill

[HLWS167]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 13 July 2021

Apprentices: Finance

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all businesses have the required funding to carry out sufficient on course training for apprenticeships. [HL1569]

Baroness Berridge: The government is committed to supporting employers of all sizes to offer apprenticeships. In the 2021-22 financial year, we are making available £2.5 billion to support apprenticeships in all employers, double what was spent in the 2010-11 financial year.

To support businesses in offering apprenticeships, we have increased the incentive payments to £3,000 for each new apprentice they hire as a new employee between 1 April and 30 September 2021, as part of the government's Plan for Jobs. These incentive payments are in addition to the £1,000 employers already receive for hiring an apprentice aged 16 to 18, or under 25 for those with an education, health and care plan. In addition, we pay 100% of the training costs for employers with fewer than 50 employees when they take on certain apprentices, including 16 to 18 year olds.

We recognise the enormous value that small and medium-sized enterprises contribute to the UK economy. Smaller employers that do not pay the levy continue to be able to access funding for 95% of apprenticeship training and assessment costs, and can reserve funding for up to 10 new apprenticeship starts in the 2021-22 financial year.

Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Coaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel have died due to COVID-19. [HL1632]

Baroness Goldie: As at 5 July 2021, there have been five deaths amongst UK Service personnel who had a positive COVID-19 test result recorded on Defence medical systems. Two were Regular personnel and three were Reservists.

Asked by *Lord Coaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all UK armed forces personnel deployed as part of the Carrier Strike Group 2021 have been vaccinated against COVID-19. [HL1635]

Baroness Goldie: Service personnel currently deployed on the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) have been fully vaccinated with two doses. I can also confirm that any personnel joining CSG will have received both doses before departure.

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many military personnel are (1) not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, and (2) currently having to isolate. [HL1762]

Baroness Goldie: As at 5 July 2021, 54,742 UK Armed Forces personnel had no record of having received a COVID-19 vaccination (based on those Defence Medical Services entitled personnel in service as at 1 May 2021).

As at 1 July 2021, 5,200 Regular and Reservist Armed Forces personnel were reported as absent from work because of COVID-19 self-isolation.

Brazil: Rainforests

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent British financial institutions from (1) knowingly, or (2) unknowingly, (a) investing in, or (b) facilitating, the destruction of rainforest in the Amazon basin. [HL1649]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK is taking clear steps to ensure that financial decisions take the environment into account. This includes plans to introduce economy-wide Sustainability Disclosure Requirements for businesses and investment products to report on their impact on climate and the environment – and the risks/opportunities these pose to their business. This builds on and streamlines existing sustainability reporting requirements such as our commitment to reporting aligned with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, where the UK is already a world-leader.

Further to this, Defra is supporting the scoping of a Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), which will develop guidance for the finance sector in relation to biodiversity and nature-related risks. TNFD will provide a framework for corporates and financial institutions to assess, manage and report on their dependencies and impacts on nature.

The Government convened the Global Resource Initiative (GRI) Taskforce in July 2019, bringing together representatives from business, finance and civil society. This Taskforce investigated what more the UK can do to reduce our footprint on the global environment by enhancing sustainability and reducing the impacts of supply chains on the world's forests and other ecosystems. The Taskforce's report in March 2020 included 14 recommendations addressing a range of areas, including finance. The Government has responded to the Taskforce's initial report and has funded Phase 2 of the GRI's work through 2021 to help take forward practical actions to reduce deforestation-linked finance in the UK.

British Nationality: Children

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on

28 June (HL 1071), (1) how long they anticipate the ongoing review of child citizenship fees will take, and (2) when they anticipate the results will be published. [HL1540]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: A Supreme Court hearing on Child Registration fees took place on 23rd and 24th June.

We await the final judgment and the ongoing section 55 review before publishing results.

British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the UK's Overseas Territories. [HL1515]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic the UK Government has been supporting the Overseas Territories in their response. This has included enabling seven Overseas Territories to establish local testing facilities, and ensuring all had sufficient personal protective equipment, testing kits, and other medical supplies. The UK also committed to supply the Territories with a proportionate share of the vaccines it procured, in line with the UK's enduring commitment to the people of the Territories. So far the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has arranged deliveries to all 12 permanently inhabited Territories, most recently the Pitcairn Islands and Tristan da Cunha, but also to South Georgia. The UK Government, including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Department for Health and Social Care, Public Health England continue to work closely with the Overseas Territories to support them in their response to COVID-19.

Caravan Sites: Licensing

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to allowing the addition of a separate set of Model Standards to those provided in 1983 under the Caravan Sites Control and Development Act 1960, which would recognise the distinction between caravans and motorcaravans. [HL1554]

Lord Greenhalgh: Section 5(6) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 gives the Secretary of State powers to from time to time specify model standards with respect to the lay-out and the provision of facilities, services and equipment for caravan sites or particular types of caravan site.

The planning permission for many holiday and touring caravan sites permit motorhomes to be stationed on those sites. The model standards for those sites make provision for motorhomes. We do not consider that additional model standards are necessary.

Children in Care: Restraint Techniques

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the article 'Children in care as young eleven handcuffed like 'dangerous animals' published by the Sunday Express on 27 June; and what steps they intend to take in response to the claim that children in the care of local government, who are not charged with or convicted of any offence, are routinely being handcuffed. [HL1530]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy regarding the handcuffing of children in the care of local government and who are not charged with or convicted of any offence; and what plans they have, if any, to review that policy. [HL1531]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what data they hold on (1) the numbers of children who are handcuffed whilst in the care of local government and not charged with or convicted of any offence, and (2) the reasons for such restraints being used. [HL1532]

Baroness Berridge: Legislation is in place to ensure that the use of restraint in respect of looked-after children is used in very limited circumstances and must be necessary and proportionate. Under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations (2015), all incidents of restraint when a young person is cared for by a children's home must be recorded.

Regulation 20(1) states that the only purposes for which restraint can be used in a children's home are to prevent injury to any person (including the child who is being restrained) or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person. In addition, restraint may be used on a child in a secure children's home for the purpose of preventing a child from absconding from the home. Regulation 20(2) states that restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.

Similar regulations apply to children in foster care. Regulation 13(2)(b) of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 states that fostering service providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no child placed with a foster parent is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable.

Ofsted regularly inspect all children's homes in England to ensure they are complying with their legal duties, which include detailing incidents of restraint. Ofsted also inspects local authorities' fostering services and independent fostering agencies to ensure they are meeting their duties and responsibilities. The department does not collect data on the use of handcuffs for children in the care system.

Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Robathan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total number of hospitalisations of patients with COVID-19 since 1 March 2020. [HL965]

Lord Bethell: NHS England began collecting data on the number of patients hospitalised with COVID-19 from 20 March 2020. From 20 March 2020 to 4 July 2021, the number of such patients hospitalised in England is 407,019.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will fully end COVID-19 related restrictions in July. [HL1546]

Lord True: On 12 July, the Government confirmed Step 4 will take place on 19 July.

The Government has announced that we will move to Step 4 of the roadmap on 19 July but that people should remain cautious given the continued risks of the virus. Therefore, while many of the legal restrictions will be lifted, cautious guidance will remain.

DNACPR Decisions

Asked by *Lord Balfe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will report on (1) the membership, (2) the workings, and (3) the decisions, of the Ministerial Oversight Group tasked with overseeing the use of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) orders; and what assessment they have made of the circumstances in which these orders are now being issued. [HL1668]

Lord Bethell: The Ministerial Oversight Group was created in response to a key recommendation of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) review of how Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions were made during the early phases of the pandemic. Further details of the Group's membership, workings and key decisions will be published in due course.

The Department does not record or assess the circumstances of DNACPRs orders in place. However, the Ministerial Oversight Group will be responsible for the delivery and required changes of the CQC's recommendations, to ensure adherence to guidance across the system about how DNACPRs are used.

Families: Food Poverty

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with (1) breakfast cereal

manufacturers, and (2) related stakeholders, on how to support families facing food poverty. [HL1561]

Lord Benyon: The Government continues to have discussions with all levels of the food supply chain to understand how industry and the Government can work together to ensure families that live in low-income households continue to have access to affordable, nutritional food.

During the pandemic collaboration between the Government and the food industry was key in putting into place policies to support vulnerable individuals, which included wholesalers leading on the delivery of the Food Box scheme, supermarkets putting in place priority delivery slots to support those shielding and food manufacturers donating free breakfasts to school children following school closures.

The Department for Education will shortly be launching a £24 million contract to support over 2500 schools with a National Breakfast Clubs programme, with the aim of ensuring pupils have a healthy start to their day.

Fisheries: Norway

Asked by *Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential bilateral fisheries agreement between the UK and Norway. [HL1529]

Lord Benyon: The Government's assessment following the conclusions of all fisheries negotiations for 2021 was delivered in a written ministerial statement to both Houses on 10 June.

The UK looks forward to bilateral discussions with Norway this autumn with a view to concluding fisheries arrangements for 2022. We will develop our negotiation priorities based on the scientific advice and will be engaging stakeholders over the coming months.

Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the majority of work on the three new Fleet Solid Support ships will be undertaken at UK shipyards. [HL1745]

Baroness Goldie: The contract for the manufacture of the Fleet Solid Support ships will be awarded to a UK business, either solely or as part of a consortium. A significant proportion of the build work will be carried out in the UK.

The competition seeks to maximise the economic and social contribution shipbuilding can make in the UK, including encouraging investment in domestic shipyards, whilst balancing the need to deliver value for money and an overall compliant solution to meet the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's needs.

Food: UK Trade with EU

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the decline in food and drink sales to the EU on potential job losses within the UK food and drink industry; and what steps they are taking to prevent such job losses. [HL1500]

Lord Benyon: A unique combination of factors, including stockpiling last year, Covid lockdowns across Europe, and businesses adjusting to our new trading relationship, made it inevitable that exports to the EU would be lower in early 2021 than last year. However, many businesses have adapted well, and our focus now is on making sure that any business that is still facing challenges gets the support they need to trade effectively with the EU.

We continue to engage with the European Commission and the EU Member States, at both a national and Border Control Post level, to ensure that we share a common understanding of the EU's export rules and how they should apply and to resolve any issues that UK exporters may be experiencing.

The UK's growing reputation for high quality food and drink, with high standards of animal welfare, traceability and sustainability is an excellent platform to increase overseas demand for our products further.

Through our new independent trade policy we can take advantage of shifts in the global economy. In the next 10 to 15 years, 90% of global economic growth is estimated to occur from outside the EU; and 54% of Britain's exports of goods and services are now traded outside the EU, compared with only 46% in 2006.

Defra is working closely with industry to help our sectors access the labour they need, and to ensure that they are appropriately supported both this year and in the future.

Defra is also working with industry and the Department for Work and Pensions to raise awareness of career opportunities within our sectors among UK workers.

Government Securities

Asked by *Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total amount of index-linked government stock; and what percentage of total government debt it represents. [HL1693]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The total amount of index-linked gilts (ILGs) in issue on close of business 05 July 2021 stood at £476.93 billion including inflation uplift (£357.60 billion nominal excluding inflation uplift). Therefore, ILGs represent 22.79% of the total amount of wholesale government debt outstanding (£2,092.42 billion as of 05 July 2021 including inflation uplift for ILGs). Further details on the ILGs in issue can be found on the Debt Management Office (DMO) website.

Following a revision to the DMO's financing remit in April 2021, £29.4 billion of ILGs are planned to be sold in 2021-22. This accounts for 11.6% of all gilt financing plans in this fiscal year.

The Government considers the appropriate balance between index-linked and conventional gilts when setting its financing plans, taking account of the level of structural demand, the diversity of the investor base, and the Government's desired inflation exposure. Decisions on precise levels of ILGs and conventional issuance continue to be taken annually through the financing remit, taking into account market and demand conditions as well as other factors.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Building Safety Bill, announced by the Housing Secretary on 5 July will assist leaseholders facing bills for non-cladding defects in high rise flats. [HL1715]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Building Safety Bill will ensure that those responsible for occupied higher-risk buildings will be required to actively manage building safety risks, evidencing this through the safety case regime overseen by the Building Safety Regulator. This will ensure major fire and structural hazards are effectively and proportionately managed, mitigated and remedied and that effective steps are taken, which take into account safety and cost.

The Bill contains measures to protect leaseholders by providing a legal requirement for building owners to explore alternative ways to meet the costs of remediation works before passing these onto leaseholders, along with evidence that this has been done.

We have been clear that building owners are responsible for ensuring the safety of their residents, that is why we are taking action to extend rights to redress where unacceptable defects have made a dwelling unfit to live in by making changes to the Defective Premises Act 1972. The changes we are making will enhance building owners' ability to seek compensation for defective work carried out on their buildings.

HMS Defender: Black Sea

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what risk assessment was carried out, if any, of HMS Defender's mission to sail close to the Russian Black Sea Fleet headquarters on 23 June. [HL1575]

Baroness Goldie: HMS DEFENDER's mission was not to sail close to the Russian Black Sea Fleet HQ.

HMS DEFENDER's route through the Crimean Traffic Separation Scheme was the most direct route between the ports of Odesa and Batumi, visited by HMS DEFENDER as part of planned defence engagement activity from 18 to 22 June and 26 to 29 June respectively. The Crimean

Traffic Separation Scheme is an internationally recognised shipping route for all maritime vessels and HMS DEFENDER's route utilised the right of innocent passage in accordance with the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

As with all operational activity, the risks and benefits of HMS DEFENDER's route were considered in advance of the ship's movements, with expert advice from defence planning staff.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) on what date, and (2) at what time, they were made aware by the BBC that classified documents relating to HMS Defender's Black Sea mission had been discovered at a Kent bus stop. [HL1577]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence were informed by the BBC of the discovery of documents before publication, due to the sensitivity of the material we are unable to comment on specific timelines.

Homelessness

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many homeless people there were in England in (1) 1990, (2) 2000, (3) 2010, and (4) 2020. [HL1615]

Lord Greenhalgh: Levels of homelessness in England can be best estimated by looking at the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of each year.

There is no data before 1998. The number of households in temporary accommodation in Q4 1998 was 53,790. In Q4 2000 it was 73,080, in Q4 2010 it was 48,010 and Q4 2020 is provisionally 95,370.

We are putting in place an unprecedented level of support to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over 2021/22, over £750 million. This includes the £310 million Homelessness Prevention Grant, giving local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness.

Immigration: EEA Nationals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether European Economic Area nationals who apply late to the EU Settlement Scheme will be permitted to have the right to work and rent while their applications are pending. [HL1518]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: From 1 July, right to work and right to rent checks will change and EEA citizens will be required to demonstrate eligibility through evidence of their immigration status, rather than their nationality.

EEA citizens who have an outstanding, late application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and do not have any other form of immigration leave will not be permitted to take up new employment or enter into a new tenancy agreement until they have been granted status under the EUSS.

We have designed a process to ensure employers do not have to cease the employment of an individual who has been working for them since before the end of the grace period, who makes a late application.

Likewise, a landlord is not required to evict an existing tenant who no longer has lawful status in the UK, but they must make a report via GOV.UK to the Home Office, to maintain their statutory excuse.

A person granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme on the basis of a late application will have the same rights from the date they are granted status, as a person who applied by the deadline. This includes their right to work and right to rent.

Immigration: EU Nationals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that the number of young people in the care of local authorities who still need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme do so before the deadline. [HL1520]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with local authorities to ensure all eligible children in care and care leavers are identified before the EU Settlement Scheme deadline. [HL1521]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish updated figures of the number of children in care and care leavers identified as eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. [HL1522]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the update to the EU Settlement Scheme caseworker guidance on late applications and its discussion of children in care and care leavers, whether care leavers who are over 18 at the deadline are included as having reasonable grounds to make out of time applications. [HL1523]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has continued to engage with local authorities as they undertake their responsibilities to ensure eligible looked after children and care leavers were supported to make an application to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) by the 30 June 2021 deadline for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

This included running webinars for local authority staff making or supporting EUSS applications, providing

support seven days a week via the EU Settlement Resolution Centre and making available £22 million in grant funding through to 30 September 2021 for a network of 72 organisations across the UK, including several local authorities and local government associations, to help vulnerable groups apply to the EUSS. We have also provided additional funding, following a new burdens assessment, for local authority work in helping looked after children and care leavers to obtain EUSS status. This work and their relevant statutory responsibilities are reflected in the guidance on the EUSS for local authorities which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-guidance>.

To monitor progress with this important work, the Home Office carried out a further survey of local authorities earlier this year. As of 23 April 2021, applications had been submitted by or for 2,440 (67 per cent) of the 3,660 looked after children and care leavers identified by the survey as eligible to apply. Using the data from the survey, further workshops have been delivered and targeted engagement carried out with local authorities to support further progress.

We are considering options for further progress monitoring in relation to this cohort following the 30 June 2021 deadline. Further information on the survey is available at:

EU Settlement Scheme: looked-after children and care leavers survey 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

We will continue to work closely with local authorities following the 30 June 2021 deadline. Consistent with the published non-exhaustive guidance on reasonable grounds for making a late application, we will take a pragmatic and flexible approach to dealing with late applications, including from care leavers who were aged over 18 before the deadline.

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of migrants to the UK from 2016 to 2020 were from the EU. [HL1528]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have, therefore, asked the Authority to respond.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician
The Lord Hay of Ballyore
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW
07July 2021
Dear Lord Hay,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what proportion of migrants to the UK from 2016 to 2020 were from the EU (HL1528).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes international migration statistics and estimates from the year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2020 show that 36.1% of total migrants to UK were EU citizens. This estimate is derived from the ONS' survey-based estimates for long-term international migration (LTIM) and taken from Table 1 of 'Provisional long-term international migration estimates' [1].

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/migrationstatisticsquarterlyreportprovisionallongterminternationalmigrationltimestimates>

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to clear the backlog of settled status applications. [HL1562]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We currently have 1,500 UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) European Casework staff in post working on applications made to the EUSS.

Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) as quickly as possible. The majority of applications have been concluded within 5 working days, but cases may take longer dependent on the circumstances of the case, for example if the applicant is facing an impending prosecution or has a criminal record.

The following link lists the expected processing times for EU Settlement Scheme applications, based upon current performance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the date by which settled status applications have to be made; and what steps they are taking to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly. [HL1563]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members who were resident in the UK by the end of the transition period had until 30 June 2021 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Yet we have made clear where a person eligible for status under the scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

We have published non-exhaustive guidance on what may constitute such reasonable grounds, which underpins a flexible and pragmatic approach to considering late applications under the scheme based on the circumstances of each case.

All applications are decided fairly based on the Immigration Rules.

Letting Agents: Regulation

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce new legislation on the regulation of property agents. [[HL1572](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. This commitment includes raising professionalism and standards amongst property agents, protecting consumers while defending the reputation of good agents from the actions of rogue operatives. We therefore welcome the ongoing work being undertaken by the industry itself to raise professionalism and standards across the sector.

Government welcomes the work of Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town as the Chair of the independent steering group on codes of practice for property agents, and we will continue to work with industry on improving best practice.

Marriage Certificates: Fraud

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the black market for counterfeit marriage certificates following the changes to marriage certification. [[HL1564](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Marriage certificates are secure stock which contain a number of security features that help to prevent and detect counterfeits. Controls are in place to identify and investigate any unusual activity.

This is the same as prior to the introduction of the marriage schedule system, which does not increase the risk of counterfeited certificates in any way.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they plan to implement to combat counterfeit marriage certificates. [[HL1565](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: Marriage certificates are secure stock which contain several security features which help to prevent and detect counterfeits.

Controls are in place to identify and investigate any unusual activity.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what avenues for recourse authorised clergy have in response to a counterfeit marriage falsely bearing their name as the officiating minister. [[HL1566](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Authorised clergy would continue to be supported by the General Register Office and their local register office in the event a counterfeit marriage certificate were to falsely bear their name.

Arrangements are in place for a full investigation which would help to determine a falsely claimed officiating minister was not involved in the production of a counterfeit certificate.

Medical Records: Data Protection

Asked by Baroness Cumberlege

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have registered an opt-out with their GP practice to prevent the sharing of personal data outside of their GP practice except for their own care as at 5 July; and how many people have registered an opt-out covering the broader health and care system, that is the National Data opt-out, as at 5 July. [[HL1681](#)]

Lord Bethell: Data on how many people have registered such an opt-out is not held centrally. NHS Digital reports that the current number of registered national data opt-outs is 3,066,543.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the data protection impact assessment for NHS Digital General Practice Data for planning and research data collection will be published. [[HL969](#)]

Lord Bethell: The data protection impact assessment is currently being reviewed and updated ahead of the delivery of this service. NHS Digital plans to publish the impact assessment for the programme following its final assurance processes, legal and stakeholder reviews.

Mental Health Services: Self-employed

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to provide tailored mental health support schemes to freelancers. [[HL1331](#)]

Lord Bethell: Mental health support tailored specifically to freelancers is not provided by the National Health Service. The Government is committed to ensuring everyone with a mental health illness, including freelancers, has access to timely treatment based on clinical need rather than employment status.

Ministers: Disciplinary Proceedings

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what penalties apply to ministers who are found to have breached paragraph 1.7 of the Ministerial Code. [[HL1534](#)]

Lord True: Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of

the Code and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public.

The Prime Minister is the ultimate judge of the standards of behaviour expected of a Minister and the appropriate consequences of a breach of those standards.

As the Prime Minister noted in his letter to the Committee on Standards in Public Life on 28 April 2021, he agreed with the Committee's suggestion that the appropriate sanction should depend on the circumstances of the case, and that the expectation that has arisen over time - that any breach should lead automatically to resignation - is disproportionate.

National Audit Office: Email

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Audit Office were given access to the private email accounts of either (1) civil servants, (2) special advisers, or (3) ministers, when carrying out their investigation into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL1535]

Lord True: The Government fully cooperated with the National Audit Office's investigation into Government procurement during the pandemic and provided all information requested.

Navy: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all those currently deployed on Royal Navy nuclear submarines have been vaccinated against COVID-19. [HL1634]

Baroness Goldie: I can confirm that all submariners currently deployed on operations have received both vaccinations against COVID-19.

Navy: Deployment

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many countries, and (2) what countries, are part of the Carrier Strike Group. [HL1680]

Baroness Goldie: Two Partner Nations are integrated into the UK Carrier Strike Groups maiden voyage; the United States and the Netherlands. The United States has provided an Arleigh Burke class destroyer, USS The Sullivans, and has an embarked US Marine Corps F35b Squadron on HMS Queen Elizabeth. The Netherlands have provided the De Zeven Provinciën-class frigate HNLMS Evertsen.

NHS: Standards

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect on patient outcomes of the

steps being taken by NHS providers to improve such outcomes. [HL1268]

Lord Bethell: We have made no specific assessment.

Pigs: CJD

Asked by Lord Vinson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the lack of proof of a link between pigs being fed food waste and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease; and what plans they have to revoke legislation preventing food waste being fed to pigs in order to reduce the volume that ends up in landfill. [HL1578]

Lord Benyon: UK legislation on Animal By-Products (ABPs) bans the feeding of all farmed animals with catering waste. This ban was introduced following the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in the UK in 2001, which is thought to have originated from the illegal feeding of pigs with untreated food waste. The outbreak resulted in the destruction of more than 10 million cattle and sheep and cost the UK economy billions of pounds.

Defra has undertaken studies which show that it might be possible for a range of food waste to be safely fed to livestock but that this is dependent on proper segregation of animal by-products from other material, meaning non-segregated material is an unacceptable disease risk. It is doubtful whether it would be economically viable for potential operators to comply with the controls we would consider necessary for the use of catering waste in feed for pigs.

The UK government has committed to working towards sending zero food waste to landfill by 2030 through its Clean Growth Strategy and Waste and Resources Strategy for England, published in 2018: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>. The Environment Bill requires that food waste must be collected from households at least weekly. It should be sent for recycling or composting, ideally through anaerobic digestion which generates energy and produces fertiliser digestate. We will continue to discuss with industries and other stakeholders how we reduce waste and maximise recycling.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease belongs in the family of fatal brain diseases, Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs). The family also includes BSE in cattle, scrapie in sheep and goats and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer. Scientific research indicates that new variant (nv) CJD is contracted via the consumption of products from cattle infected with BSE, the only TSE known to be transmissible to humans. There is no evidence that pigs and poultry can be affected by TSEs.

Legislation for the prevention and eradication of TSEs prohibits the feeding of protein of animal origin to farmed animals, with a few exceptions (e.g. milk). This is to prevent the transmission of TSEs through feeding. Processed animal protein (PAP) made from pig or poultry

material is currently used as fertiliser or is exported but is not sent to landfill.

Poverty

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for creating a Food Security Minister responsible for interventions to people living in poverty. [HL1560]

Lord Benyon: I am the Minister responsible for security of the food chain, working with industry to make sure food is available to buy. Defra officials continue to work with other relevant Departments on food policy and food insecurity, including on school meals (DfE), local authority provision (MHCLG) and the welfare system (Department for Work and Pensions) (DWP).

Since the start of the pandemic, government departments have come together to coordinate support for the most vulnerable. Defra, DfE, DWP and DHSC worked together on the COVID Winter Support Package in November 2020 - ensuring that support was provided to those impacted by the pandemic throughout the winter period. Departments are continuing to work together to deliver a number of key cross-cutting outcomes linked to the 2020 Spending Review.

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.

Pupils: Absenteeism

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that persistently absent school pupils receive targeted educational support programmes. [HL1568]

Baroness Berridge: Good attendance at school is vital for pupils' education, wellbeing and development. We recognise that the COVID-19 outbreak has caused particular challenges for some children who are at risk of disengaging from education. We have been clear throughout this period that schools should identify these pupils and develop plans to re-engage them.

Our £3 billion investment in education recovery includes over £900 million that schools can use as they see best to support the children who have been most impacted. We are also working closely with specific local authorities and schools to support strong school attendance, including through providing best practice advice and guidance. In addition, the Supporting Families programme continues to provide targeted help to families where attendance issues are a significant concern.

Pupils: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Walney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of days of in-person education lost by school pupils in England and Wales as a result of isolating after coming into contact with a fellow pupil who has tested positive for COVID-19. [HL1579]

Baroness Berridge: The department's goal is to support pupils to attend face to face education, and to reverse the long-term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education.

The department collects information from schools through the daily education setting survey. Schools record and submit data on the following categories:

- pupils with a suspected case of COVID-19.
- pupils with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- pupils self-isolating due to potential contact with a case of COVID-19 from inside the school.
- pupils self-isolating due to potential contact with a case of COVID-19 from outside the school.
- pupils absent as a result of school closures due to COVID-related reasons.

Full school attendance data is published weekly and includes information on the number of pupils absent due to potential contact with COVID-19 in schools. The latest week's data can be accessed through the following link, along with each previous week: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#dataDownloads-1>.

Education is a devolved power and the Department does not collect data on Welsh schools. Please contact the Welsh Government (<https://gov.wales>).

Retail Trade: Abuse and Violence

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they intend to take to protect retail workers from violence and abuse. [HL1548]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government conducted a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff to understand the extent of the issue and how we can work with retailers and police to improve the response to these crimes. The Government's formal response was published 7 July 2020 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-and-abuse-toward-shop-staff-call-for-evidence>.

Russia and USA: Natural Gas and Oil

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of plans by the governments of the

United States and Russia to allow test drilling for (1) gas, and (2) oil, on land in the Arctic or in the Arctic Ocean, and (3) the compatibility of these plans with those nations' commitments under the Paris Agreement. [HL1533]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Decisions on oil and gas activities, including Arctic drilling, are matters for the relevant national authorities. We recognise the global impacts the changes in the Arctic environment will have, such as global sea-level rises and threatening our shared biodiversity. As such, we are committed to halting and reversing biodiversity loss and protecting nature. The UK welcomes President Biden's recent announcement to suspend oil and gas leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, pending an environmental review as a step in the right direction.

The implementation of ending the UK's support for new fossil fuels projects overseas demonstrates the UK's international leadership on climate. It is a proactive way to pivot support to clean energy and drive down global emissions. The G7 has now committed to phasing out international fossil fuel finance, starting with coal, and to bend the curve of biodiversity loss by 2030. Ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, we welcome the United States' updated Nationally Determined Contributions target of 50-52% greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction in 2030 below 2005 levels. We are encouraging Russia as a G20 economy to also commit to reductions in line with the Paris Agreement Commitments.

Sharing Economy: Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enhance workers' rights in the gig economy; and what steps they are taking to provide more clarity to businesses over employment status criteria. [HL1570]

Lord Callanan: The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world. We have made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights, such as banning the use of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts.

Gig economy workers' employment rights are determined by their employment status - employee, worker or self-employed. Employees are entitled to all rights (subject to qualifying periods) and have responsibilities towards their employer. So-called "limb (b) workers" are only entitled to some rights such as the National Minimum Wage but have increased flexibility and fewer obligations to their employer. The self-employed generally have no employment rights but have complete flexibility in their work. We believe our three-tiered Employment Status structure provides the right balance for the UK Labour Market.

The Government will continue to work closely with businesses, trade unions and other groups to ensure that any options to clarify Employment Status are effective, preserving the flexibility of the labour market while making it easier to understand for individuals.

Shipbuilding

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the National Shipbuilding Strategy refresh. [HL1744]

Baroness Goldie: The National Shipbuilding Strategy refresh will be published later this year.

Shipping

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vessels by type are operated by HMRC. [HL1749]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: No vessels are operated by HMRC.

Responsibility for customs and revenue work at the border was transferred from HMRC to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) – now Border Force – in 2009. From that time, Border Force has been responsible for the prevention of smuggling, frontier controls on the movement of goods, and clearing goods and people across the UK border, collecting taxes and duties where appropriate.

Stalking: Sentencing

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce tougher sentencing for stalkers. [HL1549]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Stalking is an insidious crime that can have a devastating impact on a victim's wellbeing. This Government is committed to protecting and supporting victims and is determined to do everything we can to stop perpetrators at the earliest opportunity.

In 2012 the Government created two stalking offences to highlight stalking as a specific behaviour, and through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 the maximum penalties for certain stalking and harassment offences were raised from 5 to 10 years' imprisonment. There are currently no plans to make further changes to the penalties available for stalking offences.

In January 2020 we introduced new civil Stalking Protection Orders to protect victims of stalking at the earliest possible opportunity and address the perpetrator's behaviours before they become entrenched or escalate in severity. A breach of this order carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Suicide

Asked by *Lord McCreagh of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding suicide prevention measures. [HL1717]

Lord Bethell: Departmental officials responsible for suicide and self-harm prevention attend regular meetings with officials from devolved administrations to discuss best practice, share learning and look at emerging issues.

Taiwan: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to supply Taiwan with COVID-19 vaccines; and what is the timetable on any such plans. [HL1573]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to equitable access to safe and effective vaccines and the Prime Minister has stated that we will share vaccines with COVAX and has called on G7 leaders to vaccinate the world by end of next year. We will continue to discuss this issue with our G7 partners and will issue details of the quantities and timeframe for sharing vaccine doses soon.

Taiwan has had one of the lowest incidences of Covid-19 in the world since the outbreak of the pandemic. We are continuing to engage with the relevant authorities locally through the British Office in Taipei as it faces its first significant occurrence of community transmission of the virus. Taiwan has so far received 609,600 doses through the COVAX platform. We will continue to work with all of our international partners to deliver a strong global response to the pandemic.

Telecommunications Cables: Seas and Oceans

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include the building of subsea cable repair ships within the National Shipbuilding Strategy. [HL1582]

Baroness Goldie: The Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship will be included in the 30-year cross-Government shipbuilding pipeline which will be published in the National Shipbuilding Strategy later this year. This new capability will enhance our ability to protect our underwater critical national infrastructure and our ability to detect threats in the North Atlantic and beyond.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that soldiers from Eritrea are using food as a weapon of war in Tigray. [HL1587]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is deeply concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and combatants, including Eritrean armed forces, denying access to humanitarian agencies. Over 350,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions - more than anywhere else in the world. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer visited Tigray in May and concluded that region-wide famine in Tigray is now likely if conflict intensifies and impediments to the delivery of humanitarian aid continue. The head of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, has said that the humanitarian disaster is due in part to the presence of Eritrean forces. He says they are using hunger as a weapon of war and their continued presence is fuelling insecurity. Intentional use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime.

We need to see the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean forces. The Government of Ethiopia has said this will happen, but it has not. We continue to press hard for this commitment to be delivered. The Minister for Africa made this clear when he met with the Eritrean Ambassador on 16 March.

Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of food security in Tigray; and what steps they are taking to respond to cases of acute malnutrition amongst children under five years of age in that region. [HL1585]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ethiopia about the need for unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray. [HL1586]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is deeply concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and we have been consistent in calling for unfettered humanitarian access and continue to do so. We are deeply concerned about the impact of the conflict on food security and nutrition in Tigray, including for young children. Over 350,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions - more than anywhere else in the world. We have raised these points with the Government in Addis Ababa consistently and at the highest levels, most recently during the visit of the UK Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, in May.

On 14 June the Minister for Africa announced the UK will allocate £16.7m to the crisis in Tigray. This will support civil-military coordination to help aid get to those in need and address famine risk through the provision of healthcare, sanitation, and nutrition. This allocation is on top of the existing £27m in 2020-21 already directed to the response, and an additional £4m allocated to support

nutrition and vaccinations in Tigray. This brings UK total funding to support response to the crisis to £47.7m. As the Minister for Africa said in his recent statement of 23 June, we urge all parties to the conflict to protect civilians, respect international humanitarian law and agree an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Trident Submarines: Procurement

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there will be an operational gap between the vanguard class submarines and dreadnought class submarines; and if so, how long that gap will last for. [HL1677]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the first dreadnought class submarine will be operational. [HL1678]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date all four dreadnought class submarines will be operational. [HL1679]

Baroness Goldie: As set out in the United Kingdom (UK)'s future nuclear deterrent: the 2020 update to Parliament, the Dreadnought submarine programme remains on track for the First of Class, HMS Dreadnought, to enter service in the early 2030s. During the phased transition from the Vanguard Class to the Dreadnought Class there will be no compromise to the UK's Continuous At-Sea Deterrent. The Government's integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy, confirmed we will maintain our submarines so that at least one will always be on a Continuous At-Sea Deterrent patrol. It is UK policy to not disclose further planned out of service and in-service dates for submarines, as to do so would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of our Armed Forces.

Veterans: Civil Proceedings

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government when legislation will be introduced to protect soldiers from vexatious prosecutions. [HL1545]

Baroness Goldie: The Government has delivered the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel & Veterans) Act 2021 (the Act), which delivers on the 2019 manifesto commitment to tackle the vexatious legal claims that undermine our Armed Forces.

The measures of the Act provide reassurance to our Service personnel and veterans that, where an investigation into historical allegations of wrongdoing is referred to the prosecutor for a decision on whether to prosecute, the unique circumstances of overseas

operations will be taken into account in their considerations.

The Government has been clear it will introduce a separate legacy package for Northern Ireland that delivers better outcomes for victims, survivors and veterans, focuses on information recovery and reconciliation, and ends the cycle of investigations. The MOD continues to work with the NIO to ensure that the legacy package delivers on the commitments made to Northern Ireland veterans. Government is committed to bringing forward legislation as soon as possible.

World Heritage Sites

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reported threat to Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage Site status, what plans they have to (1) review, and (2) amend, relevant national planning guidance. [HL1552]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to the protection of our historic environment, including our World Heritage Sites. As set out in the recent Planning White Paper, *Planning for the Future*, we consider that the existing heritage planning framework has worked well and we want to build on it as we develop the new planning system. In bringing forward our reforms we will work with those who have experience and expert knowledge of the planning system to ensure that our heritage is fully considered and continues to be protected going forward.

Youth Custody

Asked by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address problems in youth custody centres; and in particular Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre. [HL1553]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The safety and wellbeing of children in custody is paramount. While the number of children in custody is at historically low levels, those in custody are a cohort with complex needs. We are committed to improving the safety and life chances for children in our care, investing in staff, education, psychology services and mental health support.

This is underpinned by SECURE STAIRS – the integrated framework of care led by the National Health Service (NHS) and Youth Custody Service (YCS) – which provides the foundations on working with children. We are also continuing to roll out the youth justice specialist role, and have provided funding for every prison officer in the youth secure estate to take up a degree level qualification to provide them with the skills and confidence to work with children in custody. As of March, there were 201 youth justice specialist officers already in post, with a further 319 staff signed up or undertaking the learning.

Following the Urgent Notification at Rainsbrook STC last December, the YCS ordered MTC (the provider) to take immediate action to address the unacceptable failings. This included ensuring all children in the Reverse Cohorting Unit had suitable access to services and more time out of their room. Whilst this has been achieved, significant issues around staffing, safety and on-site operational grip remain. These concerns have been

further highlighted by a recently concluded Ofsted inspection, resulting in Urgent Notification being invoked on 18 June. As a result, work has begun to remove all children from Rainsbrook, transferring them to alternative appropriate accommodation within the youth secure estate. Separate to this, we are considering the future of the centre, with a further announcement to be made on this position in due course.

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