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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
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Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
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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
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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
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Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
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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, 19 July 2021

Companies House Corporate Targets 2021-22

[HLWS188]

Lord Callanan: I have set Companies House the following corporate targets for the year 2021/2022:

Complete and up to date data

97% of companies on the register will have an up-to-date confirmation statement.

Digital Service Availability

Digital services will be available for a minimum of 99.9% of the time.

New Services

Develop a new online journey for submission of confirmation statements.

Develop a digital filing capability for insolvency transactions.

Customer Satisfaction

Be in the top quartile of public service organisations for customer satisfaction.

Diversity

Increase the number of staff recruited to Companies House from under-represented groups by 10%.

Delivering Value

Manage expenditure within budgetary limits.

Spending with small and medium businesses

15% of spend will be spent directly with small and medium businesses.

Covid-19 Business Regulatory Easements

[HLWS189]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

The challenges faced by the UK, and other countries across the world, since the pandemic began have been substantial and many businesses have experienced unprecedented disruption. In the face of the threat of the virus the government acted rapidly to provide support to protect businesses, individuals and public services across the UK, and has adapted its economic response as the pandemic has evolved. Our Plan for Jobs has supported jobs and businesses with over £400bn of economic support, from generous employment support schemes to tax cuts, deferrals, loan schemes and cash grants.

Alongside financial support, the government took the extraordinary step of temporarily relaxing a wide range of rules and regulations to make it easier for businesses to

continue working through the disruption caused by COVID-19. These easements cover a variety of areas, including capacity market easements, competition, and the suspension of liability for wrongful trading, among others.

As we have successfully progressed through the stages of the Roadmap we have reduced many of the restrictions that have been in place over the last 15 months. And the progress we have made on the Roadmap means that many of the rules that were relaxed can be reinstated.

While the phenomenal vaccine rollout has offered every adult some protection against the virus, and the crucial link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths is weakened, the global pandemic is not over yet, and cases are currently rising across the UK. This means that vigilance must be maintained and people will be asked to continue to act carefully to manage the risks to themselves and others. There will still be high levels of infection and illness and therefore disruption to lives, businesses and the economy.

We are therefore retaining or extending some of the regulatory easements. This is necessary where they continue to provide flexibility to businesses while they feel ongoing impacts from Covid-19, including on workforce absences, and where relaxed rules will enable them to recover - helping to reinvigorate the high street and boost consumption.

We will be publishing the details on the easements that will expire or be retained on gov.uk shortly.

The relaxation of these rules will be reviewed again in Autumn at which point the government will consider the status of these measures for further extension, permanent retention or expiry.

Ministers will continue to review the measures at regular intervals as needed thereafter to provide certainty to business and ensure that the appropriate regulatory environment is in place as required. A separate process is being taken forward for the measures protecting businesses from eviction, insolvency and debt recovery, which has been outlined in an oral statement by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay on June 16th.

Better Regulation Framework impact assessments

The Government introduced a significant amount of emergency legislation responding to COVID-19 and we recognise that there may be a risk that current Better Regulation Framework requirements might lead to disproportionate administrative burdens on government departments, particularly on the retrospective validation of temporary emergency legislation that is extended to be in force for 12 months or more.

For emergency Covid-19 legislation which is exempt from the business impact target (BIT) under the “civil emergencies” exemption we have decided to relax the administrative requirements set out in the Better Regulation Framework for full impact assessments to be undertaken and scrutinised by the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC). This relaxation of the policy requirement covers time-limited measures only. As a

matter of policy under the Framework, impact assessments are still expected for other emergency measures which are not temporary, even if they are non-qualifying measures under the “civil emergencies” exemption, and so not legally required to be supported by an impact assessment. Such impact assessments are to be submitted to the RPC in the normal way. The statutory requirement for measures exempted in this way from legal requirements for IAs to be verified as such by the RPC remains.

This adjustment of requirements will remain in place in advance of the wider reform of the better regulation framework completing.

Developing Countries Trading Scheme: Consultation

[HLWS191]

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

This morning, the Department for International Trade will be launching a public consultation on its new Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Post-Brexit Britain can now take a more ambitious, generous, and pro-growth approach to trading with developing nations. The proposed scheme aims to grow trade with lower income nations, supporting jobs and growth across the globe and at home.

This consultation will make sure that the public, business, civil society, associations and other interested stakeholders, can have their say on the Government’s approach to preferential market access for developing countries.

We intend this new scheme to be best in class, and have studied programs in Canada, the US, Japan and the EU, before designing a uniquely British offer which backs growth, enterprise and ambition.

This is a major opportunity to grow free and fair trade with developing nations, allowing them to diversify their exports and grow their economies, while British households and businesses benefit from lower prices and more choice. The new UK scheme will mean more opportunity and less bureaucracy for developing countries, for example by simplifying rules of origin requirements for the least developed nations.

The UK currently operates a similar scheme rolled over from the EU, but as an independent trading nation can now take a simpler, more generous, pro-growth approach to trading with developing countries. It would apply to 70 qualifying countries currently and include improvements such as lower tariffs and simpler rules of origin requirements for countries exporting to the UK.

For example, this could mean lowering tariffs on products including rice from Pakistan and trainers from Nigeria. Bangladesh and Vietnam demonstrated that increasing trade through schemes like this one have

helped them grow their economy, improve living standards, and drive down poverty.

For instance, Vietnam’s exports to the UK more than tripled between 2009 and 2019 while poverty rates plummeted from more than 20% in 2010 to an estimated 5.9% in 2020. Today, it is a fully-fledged FTA partner. We want more developing countries to follow in their footsteps.

The online consultation opens today on GOV.UK and will be live for eight weeks. It will be accompanied by an information note that sets out details of the existing UK preference arrangements. The new Developing Countries Trading Scheme will take effect in 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/designing-the-uk-trade-preferences-scheme-for-developing-nations>

Digital Identity and Attributes Consultation

[HLWS192]

Baroness Barran: My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Matt Warman MP, has made the following Statement:

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is today publishing a public consultation on enabling legislation to strengthen digital identity use for the whole economy.

More and more people, in all walks of life, are using products and services online. People expect these transactions to be simple, quick, safe and personalised. However, people in the UK often still have to use a combination of paper documents issued by government, local authorities and the private sector - and a mixture of offline and online routes - when opening a bank account, claiming benefits, starting a new job or applying for a school place. And these steps often need repeating for each new transaction.

Voluntary online authentication, identity and eligibility solutions can increase security, ease of use and accessibility. They are central to transforming the delivery and efficiency of public services and people’s ability to operate confidently in an increasingly digital economy.

The Government is committed to realising the benefits of digital identity technologies without creating ID cards. We have committed to put in place the necessary framework and tools so that digital identity solutions enhance privacy, transparency, confidence and inclusion, and that users are able to control their data, in line with the principles published in the 2019 Call for Evidence response.

In our response to the Call for Evidence, we committed to enabling businesses and individuals across the economy to use digital identities securely and with more confidence. This is only achievable by putting in place a legal framework and regulatory infrastructure.

The consultation DCMS is publishing today follows up on that commitment. It sits alongside the UK digital identity and attributes trust framework, which was published as a first draft in February 2021, opening the way for legislation. Digital identity legislation is needed to underpin a governance framework in law, to enable Government to allow checks by industry against data it holds, and to create confidence in the validity of digital identities. We have worked extensively with industry, civil society, and academia to get to this point.

The consultation sets out our plans to create a digital identity governance framework. Creating a governance system which can build trust in digital identities is vital. This trust will drive innovation and growth in the UK economy and good governance will ensure that the digital identity and attribute principles are upheld.

We are also consulting on our intention to create a permissive legal power for government-held attributes to be checked safely and securely by non-public sector organisations for eligibility, identity, and validation purposes. This will allow digital identities in the UK to be built on a greater range of trusted datasets and ultimately provide people with a choice of how they use this data to prove their identity.

Finally, we are proposing to establish in law that digital identities and digital attributes can be as valid as physical forms of identification or traditional identity documents. This builds on our commitment to enable the use of digital identities in as many areas as possible and to build confidence in their validity.

Further details can be found in the consultation, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/digital-identity-and-attributes-consultation>.

A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Hospitality Strategy: Reopening, Recovery, Resilience

[HLWS187]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

On Friday, I published a Hospitality Strategy to support this vital sector.

The hospitality sector contributes significantly to the economy and plays a leading role in supporting local communities, high streets and city centres across the country. However, it has been one of the hardest sectors hit by the pandemic.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on a sector that exists to bring people together was always going to be significant. That is why the Government's £352 billion package of support included specific and targeted help for

hospitality businesses. Despite this, over the course of the pandemic, hospitality businesses have largely been operating at a loss.

To support the sector's bounce back, we have developed a forward-looking strategy that sets out the Government's long-term vision to help businesses on their road to recovery and beyond. This will sit alongside and support other government strategies and plans, including the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy and Tourism Recovery Plan.

We have worked closely with sector partners and businesses to develop an ambitious vision for the sector which reflects the aims of returning the sector to its pre-pandemic health, supporting wider economic recovery and creating thousands of resilient and dynamic businesses for years to come.

The strategy recognises the vital role that hospitality businesses will play in the UK's economic recovery, to society and the levelling up agenda.

Independent Reviewer for National Security Arrangements: 2020 Report

[HLWS193]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement:

The role of the Independent Reviewer of National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland is to monitor compliance with Annex E of the St. Andrews Agreement, reviewing the relationship between MI5 and PSNI in handling national security matters.

His Honour Brian Barker CBE QC, the Independent Reviewer of National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland, has sent me his report for 2020. What follows is a summary of the main findings of the report covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

His Honour Brian Barker states:

2020 was a most difficult year, overtaken by, and then submerged under, the Covid-19 pandemic. It opened with good news: a functioning Executive and Assembly re-emerged after a three-year gap, in parallel with the publication of *New Decade, New Approach*. It closed, still under the shadow of the virus, with the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

The dominant focus faced by the community throughout was to cope with the uncertainties of lockdowns, and the consequences of the unpredictable spread of the pandemic; a combination that led to considerable unforeseen pressures and understandable anxieties in all quarters.

The last visit to Northern Ireland that I was able to make was in February for a Northern Ireland Committee on Protection (NICOP) meeting. The subsequent lockdown, the medical and social emergency and no predictable future pathway made any subsequent planning and conducting of the usual types of personal briefings and interviews impossible. The alternative approach

adopted was to receive regular briefings from members of MI5 and PSNI during virtual NICOP meetings.

Dissident Republican activity during the year was somewhat reduced due to enforced life pattern changes and continuing pressure from the security forces, as their leadership took stock. The number of incidents fell slightly compared to 2019. The overall picture in this area, sadly, had changed little. The threat from both dissident republican groups and loyalist paramilitaries remained, and some areas of the community continued to be subject not only to terrorist activities but also to unacceptable criminal acts and attitudes at a level which has almost come to be regarded by many as normal.

Nevertheless, a number of operations were successfully concluded and were marked with high profile court appearances of senior participants and the imposition of significant sentences. A major success was the coordinated arrest in mid-August of ten individuals who have since been charged with a variety of terrorist offences following a long running and carefully coordinated joint operation between MI5 and the PSNI. Incarceration of key individuals will be a serious blow to dissident republican operations with the resulting loss of leadership and planning capability.

My meetings with senior members of MI5 and PSNI were restricted to virtual contact through secure links in the latter part of the year. It was apparent that the many extra health and operative difficulties faced by MI5 since April, in order to continue to function at the expected level, had been overcome. Benefits gained from regular meetings at senior level with PSNI and the continuing strides made in overall co-operation with a variety of agencies had led to significant resulting successes in the field. The overall impression was of effective co-operation having gone up a level, as working partnerships were strengthened and respective responsibilities better understood.

The dire circumstances faced by the PSNI on the ground, coping externally with administering changing regulations and internally with infection and shielding, had required a change in posture; but adaptation had been impressive and results and control overall had been encouraging. The decrease in activity had led to a sharp decline in arrests under terrorism legislation, compared with the previous year, but there had been an increase in the recovery of ammunition and explosives. The traditional marching events, following leadership advice and public appeals, were severely curtailed.

I was pleased to note that the Policing Board were able to appoint a new Chair and Vice Chair in April and I look forward to the opportunity of meeting them. In the course of the year the Board published their new Corporate Plan and the new stylised Policing Plan 2020-2025. Their Human Rights Advisor was asked to examine the challenges and response of PSNI to community activity (including Black Lives Matter demonstrations). The conclusions were generally positive given the difficulties, although with some reservations.

The annual statistics published in November for 2019/20 show that the powers of stop and search under section 47a of the Terrorism Act 2000 were not exercised. There were 179 premises searched under warrant under section 37 Schedule 5 of the same Act. There were 128 (down from 146) persons detained under section 41 of the Terrorism Act and 125 (98%) were held for 48 hours or less. 17 persons were charged with a total of 39 offences including two charges of murder, one charge of attempted murder, 15 charges of firearms offences, 8 charges of drug offences and 6 charges of explosive offences.

A total of 26 (down from 34) persons were disposed of by non-jury trial, 18 of whom were found guilty of at least one charge. A total of 13 (down from 17) non-jury trial certificates were issued by the DPP. There was a total of 14 (up from 6) persons convicted in the Crown Court under the Terrorism Act 2000, the Terrorism Act 2006 or the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008. There were 465 (down from 1515) examinations carried out by police officers under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, all of these were examinations of persons, 34 of which resulted in a detention. No compensation or agency payments were made under section 38 schedule 4 of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007 where property was broken, destroyed or damaged or other private property rights interfered with.

The extent of my investigations, regrettably, have had to be extensively curtailed. However, in coping with extraordinary difficulties, I have good reason to believe that both MI5 and PSNI have maintained high standards and motivation and have achieved commendable results. The two major Dissident Republican groups undoubtedly suffered severe setbacks in what was a very successful year for the security forces. The danger remained of some sort of reactive show of strength, which fortunately did not materialise; and the minor groups continued to maintain a low profile. Police and prison officers continued to be regarded as legitimate targets and still had to face unacceptable risks. In pockets of the community intimidation continued, and although the figures for paramilitary shootings and beatings dropped, it continued to be concerning.

My conclusions, restricted by the exceptional conditions, in relation to Annex E of the St Andrews Agreement are as follows:

Further to reinforce this comprehensive set of safeguards, the Government confirms that it accepts and will ensure that effect is given to the five key principles which the Chief Constable has identified as crucial to the effective operation of the new arrangement:	
a: All Security Service intelligence relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland will be visible to the PSNI	Clear evidence of successful collaboration. There is compliance
b: PSNI will be informed of all Security Service counter terrorist activities relating to Northern Ireland	Regular and effective top-level meetings. There is compliance.
c: Security Service intelligence will be disseminated within PSNI according to the current PSNI dissemination policy, and using police procedures	There is compliance

d: The great majority of national security CHIS in Northern Ireland will continue to be run by PSNI officers under existing handling protocols

There is compliance

e: There will be no diminution of the PSNI's responsibility to comply with the Human Rights Act or the Policing Board's ability to monitor said compliance.

The new leadership of the Policing Board is now in place and the Human Rights advisor has been asked to investigate and provide reassurance to the Board. I look forward to a good working relationship with the new HR Advisor.

Light Rail: Financial Support

[HLWS190]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

Light rail is a lifeline for many communities across the UK. During the pandemic, the Government has provided significant levels of financial assistance to the light rail sector through the Light Rail Revenue Grant and the Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant, supporting six light rail operators and Local Transport Authorities in England outside of London, with over £200 million in funding since March 2020.

To date, Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant has funded up to 100% of pre-Covid service levels, ensuring key workers have continued to be able to travel easily and safely as well as ensuring the public could access necessary amenities. Critically, as restrictions are lifted and passengers return, the light rail sector is important in helping local economic recovery, thereby supporting the Government's 'Levelling-Up' agenda.

To encourage passengers back, light rail services should be as available as they were prior to the pandemic. Without support, however, it may not be possible for operators to maintain the services they have provided up until now.

I can therefore announce that a further £56 million in financial support in the form of recovery funding has been made available for the light rail sector. Funding operators and local authorities from 20 July until the end of this financial year, this will succeed the Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant which ends on 19 July. This funding will support operators in adapting their commercial offerings to ensure the longer-term viability and self-sustainability of the sector and is intended to be the final tranche of Covid-related support.

Petition of Concern Mechanism: Third Report

[HLWS194]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has today made the following statement:

I am laying before both Houses of Parliament the third report by the UK Government on the use of the Petition of Concern mechanism in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As part of the New Decade, New Approach deal upon which devolved government was restored in Northern Ireland on 11 January 2020, the UK Government committed to undertaking such a report every six months.

This report covers the period from 12 January 2021 to 11 July 2021, during which no Petition of Concern has been lodged against any motion in the Assembly.

The fact that there have been no uses of the Petitions of Concern since the restoration of the political institutions is a positive reflection of the conduct of business within the Assembly. However, I want to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of a stable, mature, functioning Executive and Assembly that is focussed on addressing the issues that really matter to their daily lives.

The next UK Government report on the use of the Petition of Concern will cover the period from 12 July 2021 to 11 January 2022.

The UK Government is standing by its commitment to bring forward legislation that provides the necessary reforms to the Petition of Concern mechanism. The Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill has reached the Commons Report stage in its passage through Parliament. Once this legislation has completed its passage through Parliament and received Royal Assent, it is crucial that the Assembly reflects the detail of these reforms in its standing orders to ensure the full implementation of these aspects of the New Decade, New Approach deal.

Schools Rebuilding Programme

[HLWS196]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) has today made the following statement:

I am confirming details of the next 50 schools to benefit from the ten-year school rebuilding programme announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020. I am also confirming the launch of a public consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for future places on the programme.

The school rebuilding programme forms part of the Government's plans to build back better, supporting teachers in England to deliver a high-quality education, so that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need to succeed.

It is also an important commitment to investing in construction sector jobs and skills, including apprenticeships and T-Level placements, helping drive growth as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme will have a continued focus on modern methods of construction and provide opportunities across the industry, including for small and medium-sized enterprises.

As with the first schools announced in February, this second group of schools have been prioritised based on the condition of their buildings. The projects include primary and secondary schools, as well as special and alternative provision schools. This also represents a substantial investment in schools in the midlands and north of England, with thirty-two out of fifty projects located in these regions.

The new school buildings will be energy efficient designs with high sustainability standards that will be net zero carbon in operation and mitigate the risks of climate change.

The ten-year programme will continue to target school buildings in the worst condition across England and today we have published a consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for the long-term programme. Responses from this consultation will help to shape the way we identify the buildings most in need of replacement or significant refurbishment. The consultation will be open until 8 October 2021.

Alongside the rebuilding programme, the Government has committed £1.8 billion in financial year 2021-22 for maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate.

Further details, including lists of the school rebuilding projects have been published on GOV.UK. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

Three-year School Funding Settlement

[HLWS195]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb) has today made the following statement:

Today I am confirming provisional funding allocations for 2022-23 through the schools, high needs and central school services national funding formulae (NFF). The allocations distribute the final year of the three-year school funding settlement that the Secretary of State for Education announced to Parliament on 3 September 2019. Core school funding increased by £2.6bn in 2020-21, and is increasing by £4.8bn and £7.1bn in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20.

These allocations are part of the annual funding cycle. They are separate to the three major interventions we

have made to support education recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic –over £3bn in total. All of that support for recovery will be provided on top of the funding allocations announced today for local authorities and schools.

Funding through the schools NFF is increasing by 3.2% overall in 2022-23, and by 2.8% per pupil. The NFF will distribute this funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. The main features in 2022-23 are:

- The core factors in the NFF (such as basic per-pupil funding, and funding for additional needs such as deprivation) will increase by 3%.
- The funding floor will ensure that every school is allocated at least 2% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to its 2021-22 NFF allocation.
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase by 2%, compared to 2021-22. This will mean that, next year, every primary school will receive at least £4,265 per pupil, and every secondary school at least £5,525.
- Support for small and remote schools (through the "sparsity" factor) will receive a further increase. In 2022-23 the additional funding that such schools can attract is rising to up to £55,000 for primary schools, and up to £80,000 for secondary schools – in both cases, a £10,000 increase from 2021-22. We are also moving to using road distances instead of straight line distances when measuring a school's remoteness. This will significantly increase the number of schools attracting this funding. As a result, the funding allocated through the sparsity factor is increasing from £42 million in 2021-22 to £95 million in 2022-23.

High needs funding is increasing by £780m, or 9.6%, in 2022-23 – following the over £1.5 bn increase over the last two years. This brings the total high needs budget to £8.9bn, an increase of over a third since 2019-20. The high needs NFF will ensure that every local authority receives at least an 8% increase per head of population, with some authorities seeing gains of up to 11%. This vital extra resource will continue to help local authorities manage their cost pressures in this area, while the government remains focused on completing the cross-departmental review of the SEND system to ensure that it supports children and young people with SEND as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Central school services funding funds local authorities for the ongoing responsibilities they continue to have for all schools. The total funding for ongoing responsibilities is £284 million in 2022-23. In line with the process introduced for 2020-21 to withdraw funding over time based on the historic commitments local authorities entered into before 2013-14, funding for these historic commitments will decrease by 20%.

The provisional NFF allocations published today will be updated, based on the latest pupil data, to produce final allocations in December that local authorities will receive through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Local authorities will continue to use that funding to determine final allocations for all local mainstream schools. In parallel with the changes being implemented for 2022-23, the Government is in the process of consulting on how we complete our reforms to the

schools NFF in the longer term – whereby funding allocations for individual schools are determined by one single national formula, rather than 150 separate, different, local authority formulae.

Written Answers

Monday, 19 July 2021

British Overseas Territories: EU Grants and Loans

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, whether the Overseas Territories can still apply for grants from the InvestEU Fund. [HL1704]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has not entered into an agreement covering the participation of the UK or the British Overseas Territories in InvestEU, which launched in 2021 and is supported by the EU's budget. We remain unwavering in our commitment to safeguarding the Overseas Territories' interests and we are providing support to the Overseas Territories, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

China: Overseas Aid

Asked by *Baroness Greengross*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what aid and development programmes they have funded in China since 2016. [HL1690]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Details of UK bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China between 2009 to 2019 can be found in table A4b of the Statistics on International Development (SID), published on the gov.uk website at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920048/Table-A4b.ods. Please note in line with SID revision policy there has been a minor revision to the 2019 SID dataset. A data processing error in reporting meant that the published 2019 figure of UK ODA spend in China was £500,000 lower than the actual spend [as the Grant in Aid ODA for the Great Britain-China Centre (GBCC) was mistakenly attributed to 'developing countries unspecified'].

Further details on the programmes that underpin the figures in table A4b, including project titles and descriptions, can be found in the ODA activity level datasets published on gov.uk: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921034/Data_Underlying_SID_2019.ods (for 2017-2019) and https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/695435/data-underlying-the-sid2017-revision-March.ods (for 2009 - 2016).

Her Majesty's Government's final 2020 ODA spend, including country data, will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2021.

Choirs: Coronavirus

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether amateur choirs will be treated in the same way as professional choirs in the event of renewed restrictions on singing due to COVID-19. [HL1845]

Baroness Barran: The government's Roadmap set out four steps out of lockdown in England.

As of today, there are no limits on the number of people who can sing indoors or outdoors. This includes amateur and professional choirs, and congregational singing.

From Step 4, The government has removed outstanding legal restrictions on social contact and life events, and opened the remaining closed settings.

The [Events and Attractions guidance](#) sets out how those organising events can operate at step 4, including in the Performing Arts. The guidance will apply to workplaces and therefore is intended for those who are undertaking activities as part of their work, or who organise events in those venues. Organisers will need to assess whether this guidance is relevant when they plan activities that also involve amateur groups.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total cost to employers of retaining employees who are currently using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme once the scheme ends. [HL1779]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As of 14 June 2021, there have been 11.6 million unique jobs supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) since its inception. At the end of May, the number of jobs furloughed was at its lowest since the scheme began and has halved in the last 3 months, with 2.4 million jobs furloughed.

From July, employers are asked to contribute 10 per cent of wages for hours not worked up to £312.50 per month. This is the same approach the Government introduced successfully last summer, where comparable restrictions were in place. Ending the CJRS at the end of September 2021 strikes the right balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work as demand returns.

The Government has been clear that it will not be possible to preserve every job or business, and it should not stand in the way of the economy adapting, people finding new jobs or starting new businesses. As part of the comprehensive Plan for Jobs, the Government announced the £2 billion Kickstart scheme which will create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people, and the new three year Restart

programme, which will provide support to over one million unemployed Universal Credit claimants across England and Wales and help them find work.

If needed, businesses can also benefit from support past the end of September through the Recovery Loan Scheme, which runs until the end of the year and Business Rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure until next April.

Cultural Heritage: Protection

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of £60 million funding to support 20 museums of which 16 are based in London, what assessment they have made of the need to protect national heritage outside of London. [HL1982]

Baroness Barran: Regional sites will benefit considerably from this £60 million investment in our national cultural infrastructure, irrespective of where their headquarters happen to be located. Of the 100 projects this Fund will support, over a third are based wholly outside London and the South East. For historic reasons there is a cluster of older, more expansive estates in London that require particular care and attention, but this is not at the expense of other regions, with projects funded across the North West, South West, North East, Yorkshire, and others. In fact, every single one of the multi-site organisations has received funding for one or more of its regional sites.

Regional organisations have been further boosted by our Museums Estates and Development Fund (MEND) worth over £18 million, available exclusively to non-national accredited museums for maintenance projects. Throughout the pandemic, this Government has supported locally-accessible culture and heritage across the entire nation, with 70 per cent of awards from our £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund to date going to save thousands of organisations outside of London.

Customs: Kent

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the White Cliffs Site for the Inland Border facility is being reduced to 25 per cent of its original size; and what plans they have to sell off the rest of the site. [HL1767]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The original site was intended to be used by both HMRC and Defra. The recent decision, which also took into consideration the concerns of local residents, means that the site will now be an HMRC facility only and therefore smaller than the original plans.

Department for Transport, as site owners, are currently evaluating all options before making a decision on the future of the remainder of the land.

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reduction in the planned size of the Inland Border Facility at the White Cliffs Site, whether they still expect that the North Downs Way will need to be rerouted; and if so, (1) when they expect construction at that site to commence, and (2) why it has not already begun. [HL1768]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is currently agreeing the final design for the site and assessing any effect this may have on the North Downs Way. It is working closely with Natural England to reach the right decision.

The project was paused pending the review of the Dover White Cliffs facility. Following the decision that HMRC will be the sole occupant, they are now finalising their plans including engaging commercial partners. Work on the access road is due to commence shortly.

Cybercrime

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many reports were made to report@phishing.gov.uk for the last period for which records are available. [HL1967]

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, for the last period for which records are available, how many separate incidents the reports made to report@phishing.gov.uk referred to. [HL1968]

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, for the last period for which records are available, what proportion of phishing incidents reported to report@phishing.gov.uk resulted in (1) an email address being successfully blocked, (2) links to malicious websites being removed, or (3) both. [HL1969]

Baroness Barran: Since launch in April 2020 the number of reports received by the NCSC's Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) stands at more than 6,500,000 with the removal of more than 50,500 scams and 97,500 web addresses (URLs). In June there were up to 7000 individual URLs first identified by SERS submissions which were taken down.

Reporting figures are updated monthly on the NCSC website alongside information on SERS and protection against phishing can be found at [Phishing: how to report to the NCSC](#)

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people in the UK who were (1) successfully, and (2) unsuccessfully, phished in the last period for which records are available. [HL1970]

Baroness Barran: 39% of all UK businesses identified at least one cyber security breach or attack in the last 12 months. Among these firms, the most common type of breach is related to phishing attacks (reported by around four-fifths of businesses (83%) which were attacked (CSBS 2021). This figure has risen from 72% in 2017 to 83% now. The Home Office is responsible for policy on cyber crime and fraud/scams.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Official Secrets

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the extra costs in terms of (1) people, and (2) storage, to allow the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to handle Top Secret and Strap material from the agencies on a regular basis, rather than occasionally under the Osmotherly rules. [HL1873]

Lord Callanan: As has been the case under successive administrations, the Government does not comment on departmental security matters.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the estimates that less than one per cent of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to low-income countries (2) the reports of increasing COVID-19 (a) infection rates, and (b) fatalities, in parts of (i) South Asia, (ii) South East Asia, and (iii) Africa, and (3) the need to balance sending vaccines to these regions against the decision to provide a third vaccination for 32 million people in the UK. [HL1663]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has played a leading role in supporting global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines from the outset of the pandemic, and stands alongside its international friends and partners during this deeply challenging time to tackle COVID-19 infections and fatalities. The UK is among the largest donors to COVAX, which has so far shipped over 95 million COVID-19 vaccines to 134 participants, and aims to provide doses equivalent to up to 30% of the population in low- and middle-income countries by early 2022, including countries in South Asia, South East Asia, and Africa. The UK's investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has also been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort. So far, over 500 million doses of the vaccine have been distributed worldwide at non-profit prices, with two-thirds going to lower- and middle-income countries.

Making vaccines globally available not only helps end the coronavirus pandemic in developing countries, but will also reduce the threat posed by vaccine-resistant variants emerging in areas with large-scale outbreaks that could threaten the UK. The health of the UK public remains our priority, but this virus will not truly be beaten

until it is defeated everywhere. The UK is proud that our G7 Presidency secured agreement from leaders to support vaccinating the world in 2022, and to share and finance an additional 1 billion doses over the next year to accelerate vaccine roll-out. This includes a commitment from the UK to share 100 million doses, 80% of which will go to COVAX to support countries in need. We will also work closely with G7 and international partners to mobilise international financing; increase vaccine supply; and support in-country delivery, including community mobilisation, and work to build vaccine confidence.

Duty Free Allowances

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the tourism industry of abolishing the VAT Retail Export Scheme. [HL1828]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On 11 September 2020, the Government announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers) following the transition period. The following rules were implemented on 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom (UK) can purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- Personal allowances apply to passengers entering Great Britain from any destination outside of the UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) in Great Britain has not been extended to EU residents and has been withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods has been removed across the UK.

The Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May 2020. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with industry stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation. The Government has also met and discussed these changes with many stakeholders following the announcement of these policies.

The detailed rationale for these changes was provided in the written ministerial statement and the published summary of responses to the consultation. A detailed technical note has also been made available to stakeholders.

On 25 November 2020 the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out their assessment of the fiscal impact of the withdrawal of the VAT RES.

Factoring in a higher-than-usual elasticity of 1.9 to account for spending on luxury goods, the OBR estimate that the withdrawal of the VAT RES will result in a significant direct Exchequer saving of around £400 million per year, once passenger numbers recover from

the impacts of Covid-19. Based on the 1.2 million users of the scheme who received a refund in 2019, this includes an assumption that approximately 20,000 – 30,000 fewer tourists visit Great Britain a year. That is 0.07% of the 40 million visitors to the UK in 2019.

The OBR also looked at this package in the round when assessing the indirect impact on the economy – including the effects of extending duty-free sales – alongside the substantial support provided to the economy and retail industry.

Education: Children

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Centre for Social Justice Kids can't catch up if they don't show up, published on 27 June, which found that almost 100,000 children did not return to schools full-time when they re-opened in March. [HL1742]

Baroness Berridge: The COVID-19 outbreak has caused particular challenges for children, many of whom have faced significant disruption to their education. In May 2021, the department published pupil absence data from the 2020 autumn term: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term>.

Good attendance at school is vital for pupils' education, wellbeing and development. This is why the department's £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 by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has worked closely with local authorities and schools to support school attendance, including through providing best practice advice and guidance.

Education: Males

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to close the learning gap between boys and girls; and in particular, what steps they are taking to address boys' early years underachievement in language and vocabulary development. [HL1682]

Baroness Berridge: Girls continue to do better than boys in the early years, but boys are improving at a faster rate. In 2013, the gap between girls and boys achieving at least the expected level in all early learning goals at aged 5 was 17.1%; in 2019, (the most recent year for which data is available), the gap was 13.6%. Similarly, the gap between girls and boys achieving a Good Level of Development at aged 5 is persistent but narrowing: from 16% in 2013 to 12.9% by 2019.

Since 2018 we have committed more than £85 million on programmes to improve early language and literacy,

with a further £153 million recently announced for training early years staff to support the very youngest children as part of the education recovery strategy. This is in addition to £27 million announced to support children's early language development in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. £10 million will support language development for pre-reception children in the next academic year and £17 million is to deliver the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) in schools that would particularly benefit.

NELI is a robustly evidenced programme aimed at the reception aged children needing extra support with their speech and language development and is proven to help children make around three months of additional progress. 40% of primaries have signed up so far, helping 60,000 children this academic year. The NELI screening tool identifies those in most need of help.

Furthermore, over 3,000 early adopter schools are implementing the reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) from this September, ahead of statutory roll out in September. One of the main aims of the revised framework is to improve early years outcomes for all children, particularly disadvantaged children in the critical areas that build the foundation for later success, such as language development.

As part of the reforms, we have revised the educational programmes to strengthen teaching practice in communication and language, providing a deeper focus on building vocabulary to address the word gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The new EYFS framework that will be statutory for all early years providers from September 2021 can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf.

Education: Young People

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of 17 year-olds in each local authority in England; and what proportion of them are studying for (1) academic, and (2) vocational qualifications, at state schools (a) within, and (b) outside, the local authority. [HL1709]

Baroness Berridge: Information is not available for the specific breakdowns requested.

There are 2 table attachments for this response. The first table attachment (titled 'Annex A'), has local authority level data showing the proportion of the population aged 17 in education and training as at March 2020. The proportion of 17 year olds participating will include those studying academic and vocational qualifications, participating on an apprenticeship or in wider training or re-engagement activity that complies with raising the participation age requirements. Activity can take place in schools, general further education colleges, sixth form colleges or private training providers.

The second table attachment for this response (titled 'Annex B'), has local authority level data giving the proportion of children aged 17 in each local authority who attend state schools within and outside the local authority they reside, as at January 2020.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL1709_Annex_A
[HL1709_Annex_A_table_showing_participation_of_17_year_olds_at_local_authority_level.xls]

HL1709_Annex_B
[HL1709_Annex_B_table_showing_cross_border_movement_of_17_year_olds_at_local_authority_level.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-07-05/HL1709>

English Language: Education

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to English language tuition businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL1797]

Lord Callanan: The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, including grants, business interruption loans and the Coronavirus Job Support Scheme.

English Language Schools were not eligible for the Government's Restart Grant programme, which was aimed at the non-essential retail, hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym sectors.

However, the sector is eligible for support via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). The ARG provides Local Authorities with funding to put in place discretionary support that suits their local area.

Environment Protection

Asked by *Lord Goodlad*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which areas will (1) be designated national parks, (2) be designated areas of outstanding natural beauty, or (3) otherwise protected from development, by 2030. [HL1686]

Lord Benyon: Natural England, as the statutory advisor to the Government on landscape, announced on 24 June 2021 an ambitious programme to create and improve protected landscapes.

As part of this programme Natural England has with immediate effect started work to consider the creation of two new Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Yorkshire Wolds and the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge; and expansions of both the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs.

The Government has committed to protect and improve 30% of UK's land for biodiversity by 2030. To meet this

commitment, Natural England will also undertake an all-England landscapes assessment to identify any remaining places suitable for National Park or AONB designation.

We have announced our intention to publish a Green Paper on nature recovery, including wildlife reform, before the end of the year. This consultation will provide the opportunity to influence how we can improve our wildlife laws to deliver our ambitions for nature recovery, including improving sites and habitat protections, aligning these with the Government's strategic priorities for nature and biodiversity.

Equality

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Government departments treat any of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, excluding disability, as taking precedence over any other. [HL1694]

Baroness Berridge: The Equality Act 2010 does not recognise any precedence of rights beyond the special circumstances of disability. However, in situations where there are multiple protected characteristics to be considered, Government Departments, like other employers or service providers, need to take decisions based on the facts.

Where the relevant conditions apply, Departments may also choose to take targeted action to advance the interests of and/or meet the specific needs of groups with a particular protected characteristic in accordance with the positive action provisions in the Act.

Fishing Vessels

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 1 July (HL1216), what is the breakdown by type and ownership of the "15 vessels from the Royal Navy Overseas Patrol Squadron and Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities". [HL1747]

Lord Benyon: The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) can call upon the Royal Navy Overseas Patrol Squadron who have three batch 1 Patrol Vessels (HMS Tyne, HMS Severn and HMS Mersey) available for fishery protection duties. In addition, patrol vessels under the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) provide coverage around England's coast. The IFCAs operate a range of craft which the MMO can call upon to assist with fulfilling its at-sea duties of: boarding vessels and inspections, intelligence gathering and the issuing of directions to vessels. The vessels range from small Rigid Inflatable type boats suitable for estuarine and close inshore through to more substantial craft more able to work 'near' offshore waters. The table details the IFCA vessels currently able to be called upon.

<i>IFCA</i>	<i>Vessel Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of Vessel</i>
North Western	North West Protector	Whitehaven	FPV
North Western	Protector Charlies	Whitehaven	RIB
North Western	Protector Bravo	Whitehaven	RIB
North Western	Bay Protector	Liverpool	RIB
North Western	Protector Gamma	Barrow	RIB
North Western	Zodiac Bravo	Carnforth	RIB
Northumberland	St Aidan	North Shields	FPV
Northumberland	Robert Arckless MBE	Amble	RIB
North Eastern	NE Guardian III	Whitby	FPV
North Eastern	Bravo 1	Whitby	RIB
North Eastern	Protector III	Whitby	RIB
Eastern	Sebastian Terelink	Sutton Bridge	FPV
Eastern	Three Counties	Sutton Bridge	Survey Vessel
Eastern	John Allen	Wisbech	FPV
Eastern	Sea Spray	Levington	RIB
Kent and Essex	Nerrisa	Ramsgate	FPV
Kent and Essex	Tamesis	Brightlingsea	FPV
Kent and Essex	FPV Vigilant	Brightlingsea	RIB
Sussex	Watchful	Shoreham	FPV
Sussex	Merlin	Shoreham	RIB
Southern	Stella Barbera	Southampton	RIB
Southern	Protector	Portland	RIB
Southern	Endeavour	Poole	RIB
Devon and Severn	David Rowe	Brixham	RIB
Devon and Severn	Enforcer	Brixham	RIB

<i>IFCA</i>	<i>Vessel Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of Vessel</i>
Cornwall	St Piran	Newlyn	FPV
Cornwall	Lyonesse	Newlyn	RIB
Cornwall	Avalon	Newlyn	RIB
Cornwall	Tiger Lily	Newlyn	Survey Vessel
Isles of Scilly	Vigilant	St Mary's Bay	RIB

Football: Safety

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the safety and security of spectators at future major football events. [HL1954]

Baroness Barran: The safety of all those who attend sporting fixtures is a priority for the government. We fund the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) whose purpose is to ensure sports grounds are safe for everyone. While it is the responsibility of individual clubs and venue owners to take the necessary steps to put in place reasonable protection for spectators at events, the SGSA provides support to minimise risk and help deliver safe events. It does this by setting high standards for safety in its internationally-renowned Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, and through its expert team of inspectors who provide first-rate advice across all areas of sports grounds safety to individual clubs and grounds.

Additionally, the SGSA enforces the Government's all-seater policy by issuing annual licenses to all grounds of clubs in the Premier League and Football League along with Wembley and the Principality Stadium. Under the Football Spectators Act 1989, the clubs of these grounds are unable to admit spectators without a licence issued by the SGSA.

Following incidents of public disorder at the UEFA EURO 2020 finals held at Wembley on 11 July, all key local partners and expert bodies, including the FA, UEFA, City Hall, the Metropolitan police, local authority and SGSA are investigating the events that took place in and around the stadium to ensure that robust plans are in place to prevent a recurrence.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Asked by Lord Tyrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many staff working at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office at C5 level or above and working from the office on King Charles Street speak fluent Russian. [HL1740]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Language skills are critical to the FCDO's operation and Russian, as one of

the FCDO's five top priority languages, is no exception to this. FCDO officers undertake full-time language training in preparation for roles overseas which require them to speak the local language (known as speaker slots). Although there are no formal 'speaker slot' roles based in King Charles Street, some roles in London (such as Research Analysts) will draw on language skills in their day to day work and officers returning from speaker slots are incentivised to maintain their language skills and 're-qualify' once their FCDO exam pass has expired (after 5 years).

Forests and Peat Bogs: Conservation

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all (1) removal of forest and woodland cover, and (2) peat extraction, is balanced by new or replacement planting. [HL1697]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The recently published England Trees Action Plan and England Peat Action Plan set out our ambitions to massively increase woodland creation, peatland restoration, and their protection and management in support of Net Zero commitments and nature recovery. This is being kickstarted using the £640m Nature for Climate Fund.

The Government has a general policy against permanent loss of woodland and tree cover, and the management and felling of trees is managed through the felling licence regime. We have developed the National Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards to help local authorities, developers and communities improve greening provisions in their areas.

The Government open habitat policy helps balancing conversion of woodland to open habitat and protection of existing woodland, to generate landscapes that provide benefits for people and wildlife for the 21st century.

There are an estimated 24 extraction licences currently in operation in England and each extraction permission already contains a condition requiring the restoration of the site at the conclusion of the permission to ensure a return over time to as near a natural state as possible. We have taken action to tackle domestic extraction of peat which includes the National Planning Policy Framework, first published in 2012. This ends the granting of licences for peat extraction on new sites or extensions to existing sites and peat extraction in England will therefore end when those remaining licenses expire. Peatland restoration has already begun on some sites.

Gangs: Young People

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of fatherlessness on young men who are members of gangs. [HL1683]

Lord Greenhalgh: We recognise the impact that family structure can have on children and young people,

with research showing that a lack of support from parents can be a risk factor related to involvement in serious violence. This is why we are committed to investing in programmes of work focussed on early intervention and targeted towards young people at risk.

In March of this year, the Home Office announced its £130.5 million investment in tackling serious violent crime, with £23 million being invested in new early intervention programmes to help stop young people being drawn into violence. This includes programmes which use significant moments in a young person's life, such as when they enter police custody or Accident and Emergency, as opportunities for trained professionals to engage and divert young people away from crime and violence.

Over the three years from 2018-2021, we have also invested a total of £105.5 million, in multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in the 18 areas most affected by serious violence, bringing together local partners to deliver an effective, joined up approach to tackling violent crime and its drivers.

We have also made clear that the Government is determined to crack down on the county line gangs, by funding specialist support for those affected by county lines exploitation, providing one-to-one support to under 25s and their families in the three largest county lines exporting force areas (London, West Midlands and Merseyside) to help them safely reduce and end their involvement.

In addition, we are funding Missing People's SafeCall service which provides confidential, specialist advice and support to young people and their families/carers who are affected by county lines exploitation.

Greece and Middle East: Migrant Camps

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to assist the closure of refugee camps in (1) Syria, and (2) nearby countries; and what plans they have to help resettle refugees currently in Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. [HL1696]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's policy is that refugee returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified. Whilst we hope that Syrian refugees will, ultimately, be able to return home, we agree with the UN judgement that conditions in Syria do not currently allow this. Understandably, the key concern of the majority of Syrian refugees when considering returning home is personal safety and safety of their families. In the meantime, the UK has spent at least £1.99 billion since 2012 to support 5.5 million refugees in the region, as well as host communities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Hospitality Industry and Tourism: VAT

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made, if any, of the cost of reducing Value Added

Tax for the hospitality and tourism sector to five per cent. [HL1849]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, for a permanent cut in Value Added Tax for the hospitality and tourism sector. [HL1851]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: In order to support the cash flow and viability of about 150,000 businesses and to protect over 2.4 million jobs, the Government has applied a temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors, which will now end on 30 September 2021. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5 per cent will be introduced for these goods and services to help affected businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate. The new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

The reduced rate of VAT has been designed as a temporary measure. As restrictions are lifted and demand for goods and services in the tourism and hospitality sectors increases, this relief will be reduced and eventually removed in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances. This policy will cost the Exchequer over £7 billion. While the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to make the reduced rate of VAT permanent.

Hospitality Industry: Students

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey by People 1st International Future Talent in Hospitality, published in June; and what steps they are taking to assist hospitality students to pursue a career in the industry. [HL1778]

Lord Callanan: The Department regularly meets with representatives from the hospitality sector to discuss how businesses can recover and build back from the pandemic, including raising the profile of skills and careers in hospitality. We welcome insight from a wide range of sources.

Human Rights: Females

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, what steps they are taking to develop a more strategic approach to partnering with and supporting human rights defenders globally; and, in particular, women human rights defenders. [HL1691]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. We are concerned about eroding respect for human rights, including targeted discrimination of women and activists and Women Human Rights Defenders online and offline. In 2019 I, as the Minister of State responsible for Human

Rights, launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally.

Furthermore, the UK National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security sets out how the UK will work on tackling the obstacles to women's leadership and meaningful political participation such as lack of an enabling environment for women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders. Following the publication of the Integrated Review, the UK remains strongly committed to this agenda and will continue to support and work in partnership with Human Rights Defenders to promote open societies. The Review also commits the UK to work with women's rights organisations to tackle the discrimination, violence and inequality that hold women back. We will reflect these commitments in the various strands of strategic planning which will flow from the Integrated Review. The FCDO also monitors repression of HRDs in its annual Human Rights and Democracy Report, the most recent of which was published earlier this month. That report paid tribute to the courageous work of HRDs and listed support for them as a UK international policy priority.

Influenza

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact the 2019–20 winter flu season on the UK economy. [HL1764]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury, as part of its normal activities, carefully monitors the UK economy, and any risks to it, and remains ready to respond to challenges. Any assessment of economic impacts would form part of a wider central government approach to prepare for adverse events, including the flu season.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel, in response to the findings by a UN Working Group on 7 June that three Palestinian students from Birzeit University have been held in arbitrary detention. [HL1702]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the findings by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, published 7 June, on Israel's continued detention of Layan Kayed, Elyaa Abu Hijla and Ruba Asi. The UK remains concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention. According to international law, administrative detention should be used only when security makes it absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive

measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of authorities in Israel carrying out extra-judicial killings of Palestinians. [HL1703]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned by the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank and Gaza. 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 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. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Large Goods Vehicles: Regulation

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the adverse impact of the new road haulage rules. [HL1963]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: To provide immediate relief to the shortage of HGV drivers, we granted a temporary and limited relaxation to the drivers' hours rules to allow additional flexibility to operators. Any changes to weekly rest patterns that results in reduced rest periods must be compensated for in the normal way.

The temporary relaxations of rules are to be used only where necessary, and operators must notify the Department if this measure is used. Driver safety must not be compromised, and drivers should not be expected to drive whilst tired. Employers remain responsible for the health and safety of their employees and other road users.

Lebanon: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to arrange (1) bilateral, and (2) multilateral, economic aid for Lebanon to support the Syrian refugees currently living in Lebanon. [HL1698]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since 2011, the UK has allocated over £700 million in humanitarian and development funding to Lebanon, as well as funding for Syrian refugees there. The UK has spent £1.92 billion since 2012 to specifically support the over 5.5 million Syrian refugees in the region, including those in Lebanon. Our humanitarian assistance in Lebanon will continue to promote access to education and provide those most in need with timely, flexible assistance and protection services to cover their basic survival needs and reduce

gender-based violence, saving lives and reducing suffering.

Lifelong Education: Learning Disability

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional measures they intend to take to ensure life-long learning is available for those with severe learning difficulties. [HL1718]

Baroness Berridge: The government believes that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) must get the support that they need to benefit from the Lifetime Skills Guarantee (LSG).

Preparing all young people with SEND for adulthood is a key part of the SEND system and should begin from the earliest point. Colleges have a duty to use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision that the young person needs, regardless of whether students have an education, health and care plan.

We believe that our measures in the Skills for Jobs Bill will support those with SEND. The cross-government SEND review, which is currently underway, will consider how children and young people with SEND can be supported effectively. We will continue to work closely with the SEND sector and system leaders at pace over the coming months, to ensure we are in a strong position to publish proposals for public consultation as soon as possible.

The adult education budget supports the delivery of flexible tailored provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3 qualifications. The provision is either fully or co-funded, depending on the learner's age, prior attainment, and circumstances, and helps learners to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. Under the LSG, the government is now supporting any adult (aged 19 and above) who does not have A levels or equivalent qualifications, to access around 400 fully funded level 3 courses, with free courses for jobs. Complementing this, skills bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Both offers are funded through the National Skills Fund. We will be launching a consultation on the fund in due course to ensure that we use this investment to help adults, including those with protected characteristics, to gain the valuable skills they need to improve their job prospects.

Finally, the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE), will be introduced from 2025, providing individuals with a loan entitlement to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education to use over their lifetime. We believe students with SEND must get the support that they need to benefit from the LLE. The government has not yet determined what form this support will take, and plan to use our consultation this year to build our evidence base on how people with protected characteristics might access or

benefit from the LLE offer. We do not want to prejudge the information we receive and outcome of the consultation.

Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 13 February 2020 (HL 605), what legislation is now in force to ensure mobile phone operators apply a financial limit on mobile data usage while users are abroad; what are those limits, and what powers they have if any UK mobile provider gives notice to its customers that it intends to levy excess charges. [[HL1998](#)]

Baroness Barran: The Mobile Roaming (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 is the legislation in force to ensure mobile operators apply a financial limit on mobile data usage while users are abroad. The limit on data usage abroad is £45, which means a consumer cannot spend more than £45 unless they actively consent to continue spending over this cap.

The communications regulator Ofcom has powers to set out the instances where UK mobile providers are required to give notice of price changes. Ofcom's General Conditions set out that providers should give notice not shorter than one month of any modifications likely to be of material detriment and allow its customers to withdraw from their contracts without penalty upon such notice.

Multinational Companies: Technology

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce tax penalties against tech companies that are slow to remove harmful content. [[HL1983](#)]

Baroness Barran: Where tech companies fail to fulfil their new duty of care, the Online Safety Bill provides a suite of enforcement powers for the regulator, Ofcom. Ofcom's powers will include fines for companies of up to £18m or 10% of qualifying annual global turnover (whichever is higher), and business disruption measures (including applying to court to block access to services that cause serious harm).

Musicians: EU Countries

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture on 29 June (21802) that "some touring activities are possible without needing visas or work permits in at least 17 out of 25 Member States", what assessment they have made of the varying time limits placed on such activities. [[HL1878](#)]

Baroness Barran: We have always acknowledged that the end of freedom of movement would have consequences for touring musicians and performers.

Member States are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake in the EU, and we have spoken to every Member State.

We have established some touring activities are possible in at least 18 out of 27 Member States without needing visas or work permits. This includes France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and many more.

The length of tour permitted without a visa or permit varies across Member States. For many Member States it is for up to 90 days, which will capture the vast majority of tours.

We are continuing to speak to each Member State to encourage them to ensure their rules and guidance are clear and accessible. And we are now engaging with those Member States that do not have any visa or permit free touring to encourage them to adopt a more flexible approach in line with the UK's own rules, which allow creative professionals to tour easily here.

Nauru: Deep Sea Mining

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the International Seabed Authority about the environmental implications of proposals for deep sea mining off Nauru. [[HL1687](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Nauru has notified the International Seabed Authority of its intention to apply for approval of a plan of work for deep sea mining exploitation under the terms of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The UK recognises the growing pressure to extract deep sea resources, and is deeply concerned about the potential impacts of mining activities on the fragile marine environment. We therefore continue to press for the very highest environmental standards to be agreed and activated by the International Seabed Authority. Until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impacts on deep sea ecosystems and strong and enforceable environmental regulations in place, the UK has committed not to sponsor or support the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep sea mining projects.

Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab by Nexperia; and whether they used the powers granted by the National Security and Investment Act 2021 in relation to this takeover. [[HL1783](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government has considered this transaction thoroughly. We do not comment on the detail of commercial transactions or of national security assessments. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely and will not hesitate to take action if needed.

Nizar Banat

*Asked by **Baroness Janke***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the future of the Palestinian Authority, following the death of political activist Nizar Banat in police custody. [[HL1701](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 25 June Middle East Minister James Cleverly publicly expressed his sadness to hear of the death of activist and human rights defender Nizar Banat while in Palestinian police custody. Our thoughts are with his family. The Palestinian Authority investigation must be swift and transparent. We continue to have a regular dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, where we urge the them to respect human rights and to improve the performance of the security sector.

Nnamdi Kanu

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the alleged role of the government of Kenya in the detention and alleged mistreatment of Nigerian activist Nnamdi Kanu, (2) the circumstances surrounding the transfer of Mr Kanu to Nigeria against his will, and (3) of any assistance being provided to him by the High Commission in Abuja. [[HL1665](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are seeking clarification from the Nigerian Government about the circumstances of the arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu. The UK has requested consular access to Mr Kanu from the Nigerian Government, and we stand ready to provide consular assistance.

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proportion of their financial aid to the Palestinian Authority which is spent on that Authority's security forces. [[HL1733](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has not provided financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority National Security Forces. UK financial assistance has helped to deliver essential health and education services in the West Bank. The UK provides technical assistance to support the development of capable, accountable, sustainable, and inclusive Palestinian security forces.

Philippines: Offences against Children

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to discuss with the government of the Philippines the reported failures of internet service providers in that country to comply with anti-child pornography legislation RA 9775; and if not, why not. [[HL1700](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to work with international partners to improve the capability of the Philippine authorities to fight online sexual exploitation of children. This includes National Crime Agency (NCA) work with the Philippines authorities to feed in potential changes in procedures, structures and legislation that will assist in the investigation and prosecution of offences.

The UK supports the introduction of legislation by countries around the world to combat online sexual exploitation of children. The Philippines' Senate has recently passed a bill on Special Protections against Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. The bill, which now passes to the Philippines House of Representatives, expands the scope of the Anti-Child Pornography Act from 2009 and addresses the duty and legal requirements of Internet Service Providers in the Philippines.

Prisons: Employment

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the number of employment hubs in prisons. [[HL1738](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The MoJ, working with DWP, is committed to improving the employment outcomes of prisoners on release. To enable this, employment hubs have been set up within some prisons to mirror job centres in the community. It is intended that the hubs will help prisoners obtain information and advice for employment related matters before release.

HMPPS' New Futures Network, which acts as a broker for finding job opportunities on release, has worked with a range of partners to establish Employment Hubs – first in six prisons in the North West regions, and gradually in further prisons across the estate.

The Hubs will help to better identify and match vacancies to the serving prisoners who are ready to take on employment when they are released. They will do this by advertising job vacancies, improving communications and sharing physical spaces for the various teams and providers to work together.

Currently, there are 9 Employment Hubs that are fully operational. A further 19 Hubs are running 'limited operations' including HMP Brixton. 23 hubs are not yet operational including HMP Belmarsh, but development work is ongoing. Timescales for delivery are varied.

Pupils: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of media reports that school pupils are using fruit juice to produce fake positive COVID-19 tests. [[HL1741](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department is aware of this. It is imperative that everyone using lateral flow devices uses

them in the correct way to ensure that we can control and slow the spread of COVID-19. Any misuse of these tests could have extremely serious consequences, and the government strongly urge people to administer the tests in a responsible way.

Rules of Origin: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide clarification to small businesses on the rules of origin for duty free trade with the EU. [HL1736]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) ensures there will be zero tariffs or quotas on trade between the UK and the EU, where goods meet the relevant rules of origin. Rules of origin are a standard feature in all free trade agreements and the Government worked closely with industry throughout negotiations with the EU to ensure that the vast majority of trade will benefit from zero tariffs.

Overall, businesses have been adjusting well to the new rules and continue to trade effectively. The Government appreciates that increasing business understanding of the rules is a key factor in facilitating tariff-free trade.

Accordingly, to support all businesses, the Government has published extensive guidance on the rules of origin requirements under the TCA, and is regularly updating GOV.UK based on industry feedback. The Government continues to engage extensively with industry stakeholders and business organisations across all sectors to provide general support, raise awareness of the rules and help identify and resolve various sector specific issues.

Furthermore, to simplify the adherence process for traders, the Government has temporarily suspended some rules of origin requirements in 2021. We have agreed with the EU that until 31 December 2021, for both goods imported from the EU to the UK and vice versa, traders do not need supplier declarations from business suppliers to be in place at the time the goods are exported. These easements give businesses extra time to make the necessary adjustments to evidence their claims for preference.

The TCA also establishes a Specialised Committee on Customs and Rules of Origin, through which we can work with the EU to resolve implementation issues. UK officials are currently working closely with their EU counterparts to ensure the TCA is implemented in full, including that duties are not applied to goods that meet the rules of origin requirements in the TCA.

The Government also supported small businesses through the £20m SME Brexit Fund. The fund was announced on 11 February this year, to give small and medium businesses who trade only with the EU up to £2,000 towards training and/or professional advice to help them adapt. It was well publicised that applications to the scheme would close on 30 June.

The SME fund was just one form of support; HMRC's Customs Grant Scheme paid out over £69 million. But these schemes are finite. HMRC continues to support businesses through regular engagement, and the Government will continue to monitor the impacts of rules of origin and review the support available to businesses.

Semiconductor Devices: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the dependence of UK manufacturers on China for imports of (1) semiconductors, and (2) semiconductor devices; and what assessment they have made of links between Chinese-owned technology firms operating in the UK and China's Military-Civil Fusion Strategy. [HL1784]

Baroness Barran: HMG recognises the importance of semiconductor technology to key UK industries, and the wider digital ecosystem. Supply chains for semiconductors are incredibly complex, spanning a large number of countries. China has a limited share of the global semiconductor export market, and is the world's largest importer of semiconductors.

The UK Government has outlined its concerns that advanced dual-use technology and knowledge may be diverted to assist Chinese military programmes. As an open economy, we welcome foreign trade and investment, including from China, where it supports UK growth and jobs.

HMG will not accept investments which compromise our national security, and all investment must meet stringent legal and regulatory requirements to protect the UK's national interest. The National Security and Investment Act 2021, due to come into force later this year, will modernise and strengthen our national security investment screening powers.

Stan Swamy

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of India about the imprisoned human rights activist Stan Swamy prior to his death on 5 July; whether they made representations about his campaign on behalf of Dalits and Adivasis; and if so, what response they received. [HL1664]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I was greatly saddened to learn of Father Swamy's passing on July 5, aged 84. I raised Father Swamy's case with India's Foreign Secretary, Harsh Shringla, and India's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy, on 15 March while in India. Most recently, I discussed Father Swamy's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 8 June.

We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and oppose discrimination against minorities because of religion, caste, or belief. The British High

Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Mumbai had been monitoring Father Swamy's case closely and will continue to monitor progress on the rights of Dalits and indigenous people in India.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India regularly meet representatives from minority communities and run projects promoting minority rights. Our project work has provided legal training for 2,000 Dalit women to combat violence against them. We also helped establish the first network of Dalit Women Human Rights Defenders who are trained as paralegals in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra. Furthermore, we engaged 365 state criminal justice system officials in case issues, training programmes, legal roundtables, and awareness raising programmes.

Technology: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the government of China's plans to become a world leader in future technologies on the resilience of the UK's supply chains. [HL1786]

Baroness Barran: The Integrated Review reflects that we need to adapt to a more competitive world. We are implementing a robust framework for our relationship with China which allows us to manage disagreements, defend our values while preserving space to tackle transnational challenges such as climate change. Our approach will remain consistent even if difficulties emerge."

The Integrated Review articulates the UK's goal to extend the impact and influence of the UK's 'Science and Technology Power' by 2030, and the need to secure and develop critical and emerging technologies where there is a realistic prospect of delivering strategic advantage. A new 'own-collaborate-access' framework, will guide our approach:

- **Own:** where the UK plays a leading and owning role, end-to-end from discovery to commercialisation. This will always involve elements of collaboration and access.
- **Collaborate:** where the UK is not able to establish a dominant position, but can provide unique contributions that allow us to collaborate with others to achieve our goals.
- **Access:** where the UK will seek to acquire critical science and technology from others, through options, deals and relationships.

To this end the Prime Minister has recently announced he will chair a new National Science and Technology Council, and the creation of a National Technology Advisor role, initially held by Sir Patrick Vallance to support the new committee and provide leadership.

Telecommunications: Australia and Canada

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) Australian, and (2) Canadian, subsea cable maintenance regimes. [HL1934]

Baroness Barran: The Government maintains an interest in subsea cable operating regimes to inform our national arrangements.

By their nature, subsea telecommunications cables are international, and the UK engages with international partners on a range of issues pertaining to cables, including environmental, fishing, trade and regulatory aspects.

Third Sector: Public Consultation

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to consult with civil society on the development of their plans for supporting, at an international level, (1) open societies, (2) media freedom, (3) anti-corruption efforts, (4) human rights and the rule of law. [HL1692]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO values civil society organisations (CSOs) as important policy and delivery partners at the forefront of delivering UK objectives. We have an ongoing policy dialogue with CSOs on open societies, and are committed to working in partnership with a diverse range of organisations across the whole of the UK and southern-based CSOs, both large and small. Civil Society plays a critical role in defending media freedom. In addition to regular consultations with CSOs, for example around the G7, we work closely with the 17 CSOs in the Consultative Network of the Media Freedom Coalition.

On anti-corruption issues we regularly engage with CSOs, for example holding civil society roundtables on our new anti-corruption sanctions regime and participating with colleagues from the Joint Anti-Corruption Unit in regular engagement with the UK Anti-Corruption Coalition. Ministers meet regularly with the Advisory Group on Human Rights, a group of 14 experts including civil society representatives. Open Societies were discussed at the most recent meeting. CSOs are also strongly represented in the UK war crimes network. Modern slavery is another important part of our human rights work. We are supporting the Home Office to review the government's modern slavery strategy and will engage external partners, including CSOs.

Tradeshaw Access Programme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to replace the Tradeshaw Access Programme Scheme in order (1) to enable Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to compete on a level

playing field against international competitors, and (2) to retain the UK's status as a global maritime leader. [HL1926]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is working on future arrangements for supporting British businesses to benefit from key tradeshows. We are confident these arrangements will continue to help British businesses, including those based in the Maritime sector, to realise their export potential by providing support, education and export skills which will deliver long-term tangible benefits to the internationalisation of their business.

Training

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the importance of independent training providers in delivering training to meet current and future skills shortages in (1) the North East, and (2) the wider UK economy. [HL1660]

Baroness Berridge: In our Skills for Jobs White Paper, published in January 2021, we recognised the unique knowledge and capacity that independent training providers bring. They are the largest provider type delivering apprenticeships and they contribute substantially to adult education and training. In the academic year 2019 to 2020, enrolments at publicly funded private sector providers were:

- 21,700 apprentices and 15,900 adults in the North East.

- 429,190 apprentices and 175,810 adults in England.

This prominence across the market is why we are legislating through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill to place duties on independent training providers, alongside other post-16 providers, to co-operate with employer representative bodies in developing Local Skills Improvement Plans, so they can play their part in responding to the skills gaps that the plans identify.

Training: Finance

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that independent training providers have access to funding on an equal basis with other adult skills providers, including colleges. [HL1659]

Baroness Berridge: The government recognises the important role Independent Training Providers (ITPs) play in delivering adult training and skills. After changes in the law brought about by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, it was decided to procure an element of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) openly and competitively, for contracts for services provision. ITPs can submit bids for these contracts in Education and Skills Funding Agency non-devolved areas. In areas where the AEB has been devolved, mayoral combined

authorities are now responsible for the provision of AEB-funded adult education for their residents and for deciding which providers to fund.

Training: Standards

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve communication at a (1) local, and (2) national, level about best practices in the delivery of adult skills. [HL1661]

Baroness Berridge: The steps being taken to improve communication at a local and national level about best practices in the delivery of adult skills were outlined in the white paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, published in January 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>.

We are trailblazing new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans in a small number of areas in the 2021-22 financial year. They will be created by employer representative bodies working closely with further education colleges, other providers and key local stakeholders and will set out the key changes needed in a local area to make technical skills training more responsive to employers' skills needs. Alongside the trailblazers, we are legislating to put Local Skills Improvement Plans on a statutory footing as part of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.

Local Skills Improvement Plans will provide a framework to help colleges and other providers reshape what they offer, to tackle skills mismatches and ensure that they are responding as effectively as possible to labour market skills needs. We will also make development funding available in the 2021-22 financial year in a number of pilot areas to support colleges to reshape their provision to address local priorities that have been agreed with local employers.

We will reform our funding and accountability systems to better support providers in their role. To this end, The Skills for Jobs: A New Further Education Funding and Accountability System Government Consultation was published on 15 July 2021: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/fe-funding/reforms-to-funding-and-accountability/>. This consultation proposes a range of steps to improve communication at local and national level about effective skills delivery:

- Specifying the outcomes we expect through a new published Performance Dashboard.
- Introducing a new skills measure that will feature in the dashboard and capture how well local and national skills needs are met.
- Exploring an enhanced role for Ofsted to inspect how well local and national skills needs are met.
- Enabling the Further Education Commissioner to enhance its existing leadership role, with a renewed focus on driving improvement and championing excellence in colleges.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ring fence money for the next five Type 26 frigates in the forthcoming spending review. [HL1746]

Baroness Goldie: Resources have been allocated by the Ministry of Defence to build and support the next five Type 26 Frigates. Funding lines are continually reviewed as part of routine programme management to ensure value for money is maximised for the taxpayer, drive the schedule and manage risk and opportunity.

UK Border Force: Patrol Craft

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vessels by type are operated by UK Border Force. [HL1748]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Force Maritime Command's fleet includes five cutters and six coastal patrol vessels as well as niche capability in the form of tactical watercraft (TWC) and dedicated mobile RHIB capability. Each cutter carries a jet driven RHIB capable of delivering a boarding team. The type of asset deployed will reflect the operational task and may be deployed as a standalone asset or as a combination, to allow for a broad range of tactical options, that can respond to a specific threat or event.

Border Force Vessels undertake strategic patrols, tactical surveillance and enforcement activity in support of Border Force and other government agencies providing a law enforcement capability at sea.

As a minimum a Cutter and two CPVs will be permanently deployed to the south east to the 30-mile stretch of coast covering the Dover Straits with additional vessels deployed as operationally required.

Visas: Boarding Schools

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether students from the EU are required to apply for visas in order to enrol in boarding schools in Northern Ireland. [HL1707]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Since freedom of movement ended on 31 December 2020, EEA nationals travelling to the UK for the first time to enrol on a course of 6 months or longer at an independent school in the UK, including those with boarding facilities in Northern Ireland, are required to apply for a visa under the Student or Child Student routes.

Irish citizens in the UK have the right to reside, work, study, and access healthcare, social security and public services without requiring permission.

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether international boarding school students wishing to study in the UK are required (1) to apply for visas to enrol in a school that is classed as a Highly Trusted Sponsor, and (2) to provide a birth certificate translated into English; if so, what is their estimate of the additional cost for each applicant to provide this information; and what assessment they have made of the extent to which this may act as a deterrent for international students. [HL1708]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK welcomes international students and places no limit on the number of international students who can study in the UK.

Our offer to students is competitive internationally and as part of the launch of the Student & Child Student route we have simplified and streamlined the route to make it simpler for students to meet the requirements.

To be able to study in the UK, international students must receive an unconditional offer of a place on a course of study from a licenced Student sponsor listed on the published register of Student sponsors.

A key safeguarding requirement for unaccompanied minors travelling to the UK is for Child Students, and Students under the age of 18, to provide proof of relationship (such as a birth certificate) and consent from their parent or legal guardian for their living and care arrangements during their study in the UK. Proof of relationship is also required where the student is relying on funds held in their parent's name, to establish the parent has consented to their use.

All documents submitted with an application for permission on the Student or Child Student routes must be in English or accompanied by a certified translation of the document. The cost of translation may differ dependent on the certified translator used and the document being translated.

An impact assessment on the new points-based Student and Child Student routes was published and can be found alongside the Statement of Changes laid in Parliament on 10 September 2020.

Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they withdrew funding from the Yemen Multisector Humanitarian Response Programme. [HL1729]

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Yemen Multisector Humanitarian Response Programme. [HL1730]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Yemen Multisector Humanitarian Response Programme (MHRP) aims to

reduce the risk of famine and malnutrition in areas of extreme food insecurity. Originally scheduled to end in April 2020, FCDO Ministers approved an extension to September 2021.

The most recent published assessment of the Yemen Multisector Humanitarian Response Programme was

undertaken in August 2020 and can be accessed on Development Tracker. A project completion report for the MHRP extension period is expected to be completed by December 2021 and will be subsequently published.

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