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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 20 July 2021

Adviser on Concussion in Sport

[HLWS207]

Baroness Barran: My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and Tourism, Nigel Huddleston MP, has made the following Statement:

I wish to inform the House that the Secretary of State for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has appointed Laurence Geller CBE as a Ministerial adviser on concussion in sport.

Mr Geller is a leading expert in dementia care and is a pioneer in bringing the latest research and technology to bespoke dementia care facilities. He has a background in the business, hospitality and charity sectors.

The Secretary of State and I have made the issue of concussion in sport a priority. Mr Geller is an advocate on improving the safety of players across a wide range of contact sports and attended the two ministerial roundtables held on the subject earlier this year (attended by players and the National Governing Bodies of sport).

Mr Geller will work with DCMS officials to improve understanding of head injuries in sport and coordinate action to address it. Mr Geller's experience in this area will be invaluable in increasing safety standards in sport to the benefit of individual players and sport as a whole.

This role is not remunerated.

Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group: Annual Report

[HLWS206]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am pleased to announce the publication of the 4th annual report of the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group on 20 July 2021. The Group provides Ministers with independent advice on matters relating to ethical issues in forensic science and biometrics and considers issues in data ethics.

I would like to thank the Group for their advice concerning the use and retention of biometric identifiers and for their advice on the development and testing of biometric technologies.

The BFEG have published two reports this year; on the feasibility of using genetic genealogy techniques to assist with criminal investigations by UK law enforcement; and on the ethical issues arising from public-private collaborative use of live facial recognition technology. The group have also updated their ethical principles for the development and use of biometric and forensic technologies and the use of large datasets.

The group continue to provide valuable advice and guidance: on policy changes relating to the use of the National DNA Database; in support of the Home Office Biometrics programme; and for projects involving large

data sets or machine learning applications. The group also provided advice on a leaflet for arrestees explaining their rights regarding deletion of custody images.

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group annual report can be viewed on the website of the Group at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/biometrics-and-forensics-ethics-group> and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Border Operating Model

[HLWS200]

Lord Frost: Today, the Government will publish an updated Border Operating Model. This will reflect the revised timetable for introduction of the next stage of UK import requirements as well as including additional detail on policies and processes.

This updated Border Operating Model will continue to help businesses, which trade with the EU, to understand the approaching new requirements as well as those which are already in effect. We are also encouraging businesses to go to www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-trades-with-the-eu to gain access to the host of resources the Government has created to assist traders.

A copy of the updated Border Operating Model has been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Building Beautiful Places

[HLWS211]

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

The Government has set out to put beauty and design, for the first time, at the heart of the local planning system. To that end, we are changing the system so that local people are empowered to set standards for beauty and design in their area through local design codes. These codes will reflect their area's unique aesthetics, culture and heritage, with tree lined streets accompanying new developments.

The Government is publishing today the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the new National Model Design Code and the Government's response to the consultation on both. The consultation on the draft Framework and National Model Design Code ran from 30 January to 27 March and the Government is grateful to all who responded. In light of comments received, the Government has made important changes to this Framework and National Model Design Code.

The new Framework is fundamental to ensuring local authorities and communities can shape and deliver beautiful places to live and work, with a greater emphasis on quality, design and the environment than ever before.

The changes we have made take forward the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission that national policy should place a

stronger focus on the creation of beautiful buildings and beautiful places. The Framework will ensure that communities are more meaningfully engaged in how new development happens, that local authorities are given greater confidence in turning down schemes which do not meet locally set standards, and greater certainty to those schemes that do. This is part of the Government's programme of improving the planning system to put high quality, environmentally friendly design front and centre of new development.

Our policy changes will ensure the system helps to create buildings that fit in with places, while maintaining the Framework's existing strong focus on delivering the homes and other development which communities need. The changes:

- Make beauty and place-making a strategic theme in the Framework.
- Set out the expectation that local authorities produce their own design codes and guides setting out design principles which new development in their areas should reflect.
- Ask for new streets to be tree-lined.
- Improve biodiversity and access to nature through design.
- Put an emphasis on approving good design as well as refusing poor quality schemes.

We have also made a number of environment-related changes, including on flood risk and climate change. These changes are an initial response to the emergent findings of our joint review with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) of policy for building in areas of flood risk. For instance, highlighting the opportunities from improvements in green infrastructure and natural flood management techniques. We are also amending guidance on flood risk to emphasise that checks done by local authorities should steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.

Our changes also include:

- emphasis of the importance of retaining and explaining the historic and social context of historic statues, plaques, memorials or monuments rather than removing them.
- an update on the use of Article 4 Directions.
- an expectation that local planning authorities take a proactive approach to engaging with key delivery bodies and other stakeholders at the pre-application stage of local plan making.

Alongside the National Planning Policy Framework, the Government is also publishing the National Model Design Code. This provides detailed guidance on the production of local design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design. The National

Model Design Code forms part of the Government's planning practice guidance. Creating more beautiful places requires a greener approach that supports progress towards our 25-year environment plan goals. The National Model Design Code sets a baseline standard of quality and practice which local planning authorities are expected to take into account, including the approach to landscape, green infrastructure, biodiversity and tree lined streets.

The National Model Design Code should be used as a toolkit to guide local planning authorities on the design parameters and issues that need to be considered when producing design codes and guides. It also sets out methods to capture and reflect the views of the local community from the outset, and at each stage in the process. Design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, environmentally responsive and sustainable places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. This will provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end.

Our changes will ensure that new homes in England are built to a dramatically higher standard, embedding the work Sir Roger Scruton, Nicholas Boys Smith and everyone involved in the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission began. And we are now establishing the Office for Place within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), advised by a board led by Nicholas Boys Smith, who will look to help local authorities across England create user-friendly but effective design codes for their communities. 14 councils across England are now testing this new approach and we will undertake further pilots over the course of the year.

Cash Ratio Deposit Scheme: Review

[HLWS204]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Cash Ratio Deposits (CRDs) are non-interest bearing assets deposited with the Bank of England ("the Bank") by banks and building societies. They are invested in gilts by the Bank and the income is used to finance its policy functions, in particular its efforts to secure price stability and the stability of the financial system in general, from which these institutions are key beneficiaries.

The CRD scheme was extended to include building societies, and was placed on a statutory basis, when the Bank of England Act became law in 1998. At the last review, the Government committed to review the scheme within five years. The last review was in 2018 and resulted in the CRD ratio being moved from a single fixed ratio, to a variable ratio indexed to gilt yields, re-indexing the ratio to prevailing gilt yields every six months. The Treasury, working closely with the Bank, will now begin the next review.

The review will include an assessment of the detailed arrangements of the scheme as well as the continuing suitability of the scheme itself compared to alternative sources of funding. It will also address the impact of the scheme on eligible institutions and involve a public consultation.

Competition and Consumer Policy

[HLWS212]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng) has today made the following statement:

Today I will lay before Parliament two consultation papers on competition issues which respond to proposals that have been put to Government in recent years from a variety of stakeholders. This includes those directly commissioned by Government from Jason Furman, John Penrose MP, Lord Tyrie and the Competition and Markets Authority. The consultation periods will end on Friday 1st October.

The first document, entitled “Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy - Driving growth and delivering competitive markets that work for consumers” sets out the Government’s vision for the future of competition and consumer policy. We aim to create a competition regime that reflects the Government’s strategic priorities and intervenes quickly and effectively when markets are not working, and consumers are being harmed. It also updates consumer rights so that consumers can navigate changing and new markets with confidence. Our proposals also aim to provide easier routes for consumers and traders to resolve problems amicably on their own and ensure the Competition and Markets Authority and regulators have the powers they need to fix consumer problems, delivering our manifesto commitment to give the Competition and Markets Authority enhanced powers to tackle consumer rip-offs and bad business practices.

These proposals will create a prosperous economy where vigorous competition drives growth and productivity, where businesses that do the right thing are rewarded with greater market share so that consumers can engage in markets with full confidence they will get a good deal.

The second publication called “A New Pro-Competition Regime for Digital Markets” is a joint publication with my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. I will invite him to provide further detail on this consultation.

Both consultations invite views from consumers, businesses, civil society, think tanks, academics, public authorities, and the devolved administrations to ensure our new approach works for the UK economy and supports growth and productivity in markets in every part of the country.

Subject to the outcomes of the consultations, the Government will bring forward legislation to implement reforms.

Covid-19 Tests: Mandatory Validation Regime

[HLWS208]

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

This statement sets out the analysis used to support the development of the mandatory validation regime for COVID-19 tests before they can enter the UK market. This goes alongside the full Impact Assessment, which we have published.

Testing will continue to form a crucial part in the response to COVID-19. Consumers must have confidence in the performance of tests they use. That is why the Government is bringing in draft legislation under the Medicines and Medical Devices Act, which will require all antigen and molecular COVID-19 tests to undergo mandatory validation to assess their performance before being permitted for sale on the UK market. This will ensure that any COVID-19 test on the UK market meets a minimum standard – the same standards as those met by COVID-19 tests procured for the NHS.

We have engaged with the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) throughout our work to ensure that our analysis meets the high standards the Committee upholds. We thank them wholeheartedly for their constructive feedback and for working at pace to meet an unusually tight legislative timetable.

While the Department is working to produce a revised Impact Assessment, we intend to publish the current draft in the interim for transparency. In developing this assessment, we brought together regulatory knowledge in an area where we have not innovated policy for decades, alongside the ongoing challenges of modelling both economic and epidemiological predictions. We were unfortunately red rated in one key area which has resulted in a red rated IA. While I am obviously disappointed in this rating, we remain committed to working closely with the RPC to ensure that we produce a final IA that we are all satisfied with and proud of, making use of the latest data from a nascent and rapidly evolving market.

The analysis to date strongly supports our planned policy intervention. This is a necessary regulation to protect consumers and give reassurances to producers. While we do recognise the potential profit loss for companies whose products do not meet the required standards, this is a necessary move to ensure the highest quality tests are available to protect consumers and public health. We have looked carefully at this and are committed to work closely with these producers to ensure they understand the requirements and can work to achieve them. Furthermore, the potential profit loss needs to be set against the additional profits that manufacturers who are producing high-quality tests that meet the validation standards could potentially gain, and the benefit to society of removing poorly performing tests and associated public health impacts.

The RPC has identified areas for further development, which include:

- The need to enhance our analysis of the latest evidence of the share of the market for COVID-19 tests which are accounted for by businesses based in the UK. This determines whether business impacts are reflected in the Equivalent Annual Net Direct Cost to Business (for businesses based in the UK) or as trade impacts (for businesses based elsewhere).
- The need to test with stakeholders (or otherwise confirm) our assumptions about the proportion of devices presenting for validation (currently assumed to be 60 per cent) - this affects profit/EANDCB/trade impacts since products not validated will be removed from the market) and the life cycle of devices (currently assumed to be 1-5 years - this affects programme costs in determining how frequently manufacturers need to submit devices for validation).
- The need to explain further how we have:
 - extrapolated from third party estimates of the future size of the private testing market size;
 - established and treated stakeholders' estimates of market profit margins; and
 - estimated familiarisation and transition costs, including the use of any non-wage uplifts.
- The need to add new content (and test with stakeholders – or otherwise confirm) to address:
 - familiarisation costs incurred by retailers; and
 - how devices online will be monitored and enforced.

The RPC fulfils a crucial role in ensuring that analysis and evidence in regulations are robust and assessed to an extremely high standard. The Government is committed to this process and in relation to this policy, we are determined to ensure the Impact Assessment we complete includes the best possible research and evidence available.

The Impact Assessment is a living document, used to support the process of policy design and implementation. We plan to make further iterations of this Impact Assessment publicly available ahead of the next Statutory Instrument we intend to lay in the Autumn, which will introduce a second element of laboratory validation.

COVID-19 Vaccines

[HLWS198]

Lord Bethell: My Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published its advice on the vaccination of children and young people. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) has accepted this advice and all four parts of the UK expect to follow the JCVI's advice and align their deployment in each nation.

JCVI's advice is based on currently available data and is kept under review as new data emerges, the JCVI has advised that the Government:

- Maintains the existing eligibility criteria for 16-17 year olds;
- Offers vaccination (for operational flexibility) to all 17 year olds who are within 3 months of turning 18;
- Offers vaccination to 12-15 year olds with the underlying health conditions specified below:

severe neuro-disabilities,

Down's Syndrome,

underlying conditions resulting in immunosuppression, and

those with profound and multiple learning disabilities, severe learning disabilities or who are on the GP learning disability register.

- Offer vaccination to 12-15 year olds who are healthy but are household contacts of individuals (adults or children) who are immunosuppressed: The purpose of this is primarily to protect the household member who is immunosuppressed (16-17 year old household contacts are already offered vaccination).

Through the COVID-19 Vaccines programme, we have administered over 80 million vaccine doses in the UK, with recent PHE data suggesting that this has prevented between 6.4 and 7.9 million infections and between 26,000 and 28,000 deaths in England alone. The vaccine is the most effective way of protecting the most vulnerable and minimising hospitalisations and deaths. An early estimate from PHE suggests that in adults under the age of 40 a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine is 61% effective against symptomatic disease, and 72 % for a single dose of the Moderna vaccine.

For children and young people, the risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 is much lower than for older people and we recognise that decisions on vaccination for this group are therefore much more finely balanced than for adults. The JCVI has been clear that for those children and young people with specified health conditions the balance of evidence is that they will benefit from vaccination.

With the deployment to these new groups of children and young people, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine supply via this statement and attached Departmental Minute containing a description of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further doses to the population increases the statutory contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme for the only vaccine currently authorised for use in those aged under 18, the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

It has been and remains the Government's strategy to manage COVID-19 until effective vaccine/s have been deployed at scale. Willingness to accept the need for appropriate indemnities to be given to vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines with the expected

benefits to public health and the economy alike much sooner than may have been the case otherwise.

Given the exceptional circumstances we are in, and the terms on which developers have been willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

Even though the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. The MHRA approval for use of the currently deployed vaccines clearly demonstrates that this vaccine has satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the very unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other COVID-19 vaccines or additional doses of vaccines already in use in the UK are deployed.

HM Treasury has approved the proposal.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Departmental Minute [(None)-Departmental Minute-Update on COVID 19.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-07-20/HLWS198/>

Deaths in Police Custody

[HLWS202]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 23 July 2015, the Home Office announced a major review into deaths and serious incidents in police custody, to be carried out by the Right Honourable Dame Elish Angiolini QC. On 30 October 2017, Dame Elish's review was published, alongside the Government's substantive response. In December 2018, a progress update was published focusing on three main themes: supporting families, strengthening accountability and preventing deaths.

The Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody has continued to oversee and drive progress work resulting from the recommendations in the Angiolini Review. Today, as co-chair of the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody, I report on the progress made in delivering this work programme since the last update.

There has been significant progress made in response to the recommendations made by Dame Elish. Of the 110 recommendations, 65 have been completed fully, with a further 20 completed in part. The Government update addresses in detail each of Dame Elish's twelve thematic areas covered in her report: restraint, custody environment, health and wellbeing, funding for families

and family support, communications, investigations, coroners and inquests, accountability, training, learning, statistics and research.

Since 2018, the Home Office has substantially reduced the use of police custody as a place of safety for people undergoing a mental health crisis and introduced a major package of reforms to improve the effectiveness of the police complaints and discipline systems in order to increase accountability and help reduce delays. The Department for Health and Social Care has rolled out NHS England and NHS Improvement-commissioned liaison and diversion services to ensure when vulnerable people are in custody that their needs are identified and addressed and introduced the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 (Seni's Law) to increase the oversight and management of the use of force in mental health units, so that force is only ever used as a last resort.

The Ministry of Justice has undertaken a range of work to make inquests more sympathetic to the needs of bereaved people, including updating materials to aid families throughout the coronial process, publishing a protocol on how Government will act when it has interested persons status and encouraging local authorities to provide areas in coroners' courts that are suitable to family needs.

The College of Policing has published guidelines on conflict management, including de-escalation and negotiations to promote safer resolutions to conflicts, updated their training to cover acute behavioural disturbance and introduced guidance on the role of a safety officer to monitor the use of restraint. Agencies, including the coroner's services and Independent Office for Police Conduct, are continuing to ensure the voices of bereaved families and victims are part of their training, harnessing their knowledge to ensure they receive appropriate support and that no one else endures the same experience.

Since becoming Policing Minister, I have met a number of key stakeholders to develop my future priorities to tackle deaths in police custody in line with the spirit of Dame Elish's recommendations. These include supporting police chiefs and PCCs to continue to drive forwards a zero-tolerance attitude to deaths in state custody, to treat each death as a serious tragedy and to learn quickly from deaths that do occur; ensuring detainees receive the response most appropriate to their needs as soon as possible and that appropriate health and social services are available; improving data collection to fully understand the extent to which protected characteristics impact detainees' experience and use of powers within police custody and consideration of support for detainees judged at risk of post-custody suicide.

I am committed to keeping our work in this vital area transparent, and will ensure that regular updates on work to prevent deaths in police custody will be included in the published annual progress updates of the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody.

Every death in police custody is a tragedy. The impact is devastating on their loved ones. Dame Elish Angiolini's

report has been and remains a catalyst for change, and I am determined that we continue to prioritise preventing deaths in police custody and, in the tragic instances that they do occur, holding organisations to account and improving support for families to demonstrate how seriously we take these incidents.

I am placing a copy of our progress update in the Libraries of both Houses and on www.gov.uk.

Debt and Fraud Powers: Statutory Review

[HLWS209]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Cabinet Office (Julia Lopez MP) and I are announcing the statutory review of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Digital Economy Act 2017. Chapters 3 and 4 provide legal gateways which enable specified public authorities (and persons providing services to public authorities) to disclose information for the purposes of reducing debt owed to the public sector and combating fraud against the public sector respectively.

Cabinet Office ministers are under a legal duty to review the operation of both Chapters as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of three years beginning with the day on which the Chapters came into force (1 May 2018) for the purposes of deciding whether they should be amended, repealed or retained in their current form.

To commence that review, we are today publishing the criteria by reference to which that determination will be made, in accordance with sections 53 and 61 of the Act. Those criteria are set out below.

To determine if the debt and fraud powers of the Digital Economy Act (2017) should be amended, repealed or retained in their current form, the following criteria will be used:

a) What has been achieved in the three years since commencement and how has the risk of fraud and debt changed?

b) Have the powers been effective in managing and reducing debt owed to the public sector and in combating fraud against the public sector?

c) What positive and negative impacts (including societal impacts) have the DEA powers had? Due to their different characteristics, separate criteria will be used for fraud and debt:

i) For Debt: have the powers led to improved management and recovery of debt owed to government authorities, increased fairness and better approaches to vulnerable debtors among such authorities and sustainable Business-as-Usual processes which allow recovered money to flow into the public purse?

ii) For Fraud: have the powers led to improved identification, prevention and recovery of fraud committed against government authorities and sustainable Business-as-Usual processes which allow the prevention

of fraud and recovered money to flow into the public purse?

d) Have the powers contributed to the effective delivery of Government policy, helped support manifesto pledges and supported the maintenance of the integrity of the Union and devolved administrations?

e) Have the powers enhanced the willingness of public authorities to engage with and utilise data sharing powers, reduced or created burdens for public authorities and/or given rise to any privacy concerns (such as in relation to reductions in privacy or the misuse of data)?

f) Are there changes that can be made that would improve the effectiveness of the debt and fraud powers' operations?

As part of this review, the Cabinet Office will include a consultation to obtain the views of all interested parties.

A copy of the Review Criteria is being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Digital Markets: Pro-competition Regime

[HLWS214]

Baroness Barran: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, The Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP, has made the following Statement:

Following the announcement of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy today, I would like to further update the House on the consultation on "A New Pro-Competition Regime for Digital Markets".

The consultation sets out our proposals for a new pro-competition regime for digital markets which will tackle the unique sources of market power in fast-moving digital markets. The new regime will drive a more vibrant and innovative economy, across the UK.

The proposals include new rules that will ensure consumers and businesses are treated fairly and will help to level the playing field so that new and innovative tech firms can flourish. Alongside these rules, new measures will be put in place to tackle the sources of market power, injecting much needed competition into digital markets and spurring growth and innovation across the economy.

The new regime will be overseen by the Digital Markets Unit that will proactively shape the behaviour of the most powerful tech firms and protect those who rely on them. The Digital Markets Unit will be given robust powers to enforce the regime and the most powerful tech firms will face tough new fines if they do not comply.

The consultation builds on the Furman Review, which highlighted the specific characteristics which make some digital markets susceptible to competition issues and made the case for a more targeted and forward-leaning regime to address these competition issues. It also draws on advice from the Digital Markets Taskforce on the design and implementation of the regime.

This [consultation](#) invites views from businesses, civil society, think tanks, academics, public authorities, and the devolved administrations to ensure our new approach works for the UK economy and supports growth and productivity in markets in every part of the country.

EEA EFTA Separation Agreement Joint Committee

[HLWS203]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Honourable Friend, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The EEA EFTA Separation Agreement, which was agreed with Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, and signed on 28 January 2020, covers citizens' rights and other separation provisions. These provisions wind down certain arrangements that the UK had with the EEA EFTA States by virtue of their participation in the Single Market and other EU-led initiatives. The Separation Agreement established a Joint Committee whose primary role is to supervise and facilitate the implementation and application of the Separation Agreement, with the power to make decisions. The Joint Committee has a rotating chair which is currently held by Iceland. The second meeting of the Joint Committee took place on 27 May 2021, by video conference. Each of the Parties gave an update on implementation and application of the Separation Agreement, and reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the citizens' rights provisions are upheld for those in scope. The Independent Monitoring Authority and the EFTA Surveillance Authority also attended to give updates on their monitoring and complaints handling functions required by the Separation Agreement.

The Joint Committee adopted a Decision to amend Part I of Annex I of the Separation Agreement to reflect decisions taken by the EU's Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems that have also been incorporated into the EEA Agreement. The Decision of the Joint Committee ensures the Separation Agreement reflects the latest position under the EEA Agreement. These decisions concern the interpretation of relevant social security coordination, including on data processing and exchange. They do not impact the rights provided for in the Separation Agreement. Full detail on and copies of this Decision have been deposited in the House of Libraries.

The Joint Committee will meet at least annually, with Liechtenstein holding the next rotating chair. The next meeting is expected to take place in 2022. I commit to updating parliament immediately following future meetings of the Joint Committee where Decisions are taken.

Energy Digitalisation and Smart Technology Strategies

[HLWS201]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) has today made the following statement:

I am pleased to announce the latest steps the government is taking to decarbonise our electricity system, to meet our net zero target by 2050, delivering on commitments made in the Energy White Paper.

Firstly, the government has today published a new Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, jointly with Ofgem. Technologies such as energy storage, interconnection and smart charging of electric vehicles are essential to balance supply and demand as we deploy more intermittent renewables to power our buildings and vehicles. Flexibility reduces the amount of generation and network we need to build, and costs for energy consumers – flexibility could reduce the cost of the system by up to £10bn by 2050. It is critical for energy security as we shift away from unabated gas over the next decade. System flexibility is therefore fundamental in reducing emissions to net zero by 2050.

The transition to a smarter and more flexible energy system is also an opportunity. It will be delivered by UK businesses and will benefit consumers across the country. It will create nationwide jobs, potentially 24,000 by 2050, and drive investment across the UK. The UK is a global leader in smart systems and there is significant export potential – which could contribute as much as £2.7bn per year to the UK economy by 2050 – for the solutions that we will need to deploy at home. As nations confront the challenge of climate change, markets for new green products and services will spring up around the world. Taking action now will help position UK companies and our world class research base to seize the business opportunities which will flow from it, creating jobs and wealth for our country.

The new Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan sets out how we will drive flexibility across the system, including a vision, analysis and suite of actions, focusing on:

- Facilitating flexibility from consumers;
- Removing barriers to flexibility on the grid;
- Developing markets for flexibility, and
- Improving monitoring of flexibility.

Secondly, the government has published the UK's first Energy Digitalisation Strategy, jointly with Ofgem and Innovate UK. Energy system digitalisation is essential to enabling millions of assets – including solar panels, heat pumps, batteries and electric vehicles – to be optimised across our energy networks. A digitalised system will spur innovation, remove barriers to new entrants, facilitate new consumer offers and services, and enable system flexibility.

The Energy Digitalisation Strategy sets out a vision and suite of actions to achieve this, focusing on:

- Providing leadership and co-ordination to the sector;
- Incentivising the sector to digitalise; and
- Supporting the development of digital tools and infrastructure.

These documents have been produced in close co-ordination with the energy sector.

Thirdly, the government has published a call for evidence on de-risking large-scale, long-duration electricity storage. Large-scale and long-duration storage can provide additional benefits to other forms of flexibility, in particular by storing energy over long periods of low wind. Government have developed a call for evidence from industry, investors and other stakeholders on the barriers and financing challenges that this type of storage faces, and how these barriers might be mitigated whilst minimising distortions in the market. This is the first stage in deciding whether a bespoke de-risking mechanism, such as a ‘cap and floor’ regime is needed to accelerate deployment of this technology on the system.

Fourthly, the government has published a call for evidence on the barriers to widespread deployment of vehicle-to-grid (and similar) technologies. Vehicle-to-grid technologies enable electric vehicles to balance the system with by exporting electricity in return for payment when electricity is scarce – and reimporting it when it is abundant. Government have developed a call for evidence to gain wider market views on the timescales, opportunities, and barriers as well as invite discussion on potential solutions to the widespread deployment of these technologies. The feedback will aid in creating a policy strategy for this area, help to design future innovation competitions and show government’s ongoing commitment to an area where the UK is a global leader.

I will place copies of the 2021 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan and its appendices; Appendix I: Electricity System Flexibility Modelling, and Appendix II: Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan - Monitoring Framework, the Energy Digitalisation Strategy, the call for evidence on facilitating the deployment of large-scale and long-duration storage and the call for evidence on the role of vehicle-to-X technologies in a net zero energy system in the Libraries of the House.

Finance Bill 2021-22: Draft Legislation and Tax Documents

[HLWS213]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In line with the tax policy-making framework, the Government is publishing draft legislation to be included in Finance Bill 2021-22. This allows for technical

consultation and provides taxpayers with predictability over future tax policy changes. Alongside this, the Government is making announcements in a number of areas of tax policy.

Publication of draft legislation

The Government is publishing draft legislation and associated documents, further to previous announcements, including at Budget or in *Tax Policies and Consultations* (CP 404, published on 23 March 2021):

- **Sanctions to tackle tobacco duty evasion:** The Government is publishing a summary of responses to the consultation on ‘sanctions to tackle tobacco duty evasion’ alongside draft legislation. Respondents to the consultation indicated broad support for tougher sanctions to tackle small scale repeated tobacco duty evasion and for the concept of extending the use of these new sanctions to Trading Standards authorities. The draft legislation will introduce a package of sanctions, including a new penalty of up to £10,000 for repeated contraventions. The legislation will also grant HMRC the power to make future regulations for the operation of these sanctions, including provisions to extend their use to Trading Standards.

- **Clamping down on promoters of tax avoidance:** As announced in November 2020, the Government is bringing forward a package of measures to clamp down on promoters of tax avoidance. Proposals include ensuring HMRC can protect their position by freezing a promoter’s assets so that the penalties they are liable for are paid, tackling offshore promoters and the UK entities that support them, closing down companies that promote avoidance schemes, and supporting taxpayers to identify and exit avoidance schemes. This package of measures builds on the Promoters Strategy, announced at Budget 2020, and the measures to strengthen existing anti-avoidance regimes which were legislated for in Finance Act 2021.

- **Hybrid and other mismatches:** The draft legislation will make a technical change to the rules governing hybrid and other mismatches. The change will ensure that the legislation applies to certain types of entities that are seen as transparent in their home jurisdictions, including US Limited Liability Corporations, in the same way as it does to partnerships.

- **Capital Allowances:** Technical amendment to allowance statement requirements for Structures and Buildings Allowance (SBA) : The draft legislation will amend the requirements for SBA allowance statements, to include the date qualifying expenditure is incurred or treated as incurred when the allowance period commences from this date. Without this change, subsequent owners of an asset on which SBA is being claimed may sensibly assume the date the allowance period commences is the date the asset is brought into use. Clarity for businesses on the remaining length of the allowance period means they will not be adversely affected by failing to claim the full relief to which they are entitled.

- **Powers to tackle electronic sales suppression (ESS):** This draft legislation will introduce new powers to tackle electronic sales suppression. The new ESS-specific powers and penalties will make offences of possessing, making, supplying and promoting ESS software and hardware. There will also be ESS-specific information powers allowing HMRC investigators to identify developers and suppliers in the ESS supply chain; and access software developers' source code and the locations of code and data.
- **Scheme Pays Deadlines:** The draft legislation will extend the reporting and payment deadline for individuals to ask their pension scheme to settle their annual allowance charges from previous years by reducing their future pension benefits in the process known as 'Scheme Pays'. This will resolve a technical issue that arises within the pension tax framework as a result of the Government's planned remedy for addressing the age discrimination found in the 2015 public service pension reforms (the 'McCloud Case'). The Government will make further technical updates to pension tax rules as necessary to remove any other anomalies as a result of the remedy.
- **Increasing Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA):** The draft legislation will increase the normal minimum pension age from 55 to 57 in April 2028. This is the age at which most members of registered pension schemes can draw benefits without incurring unauthorised payment charges. Members of unregistered public service pension schemes and those with unqualified rights to take their pension below age 57 will be protected from these changes. After considering consultation responses, individuals will be able to keep their protected pension age if they transfer their pension.
- **Notification of an uncertain tax treatment by large businesses:** The Government is publishing a summary of responses and draft legislation to implement a new requirement for large businesses to notify HMRC where they have adopted an uncertain tax treatment. This will apply to returns due to be filed on or after 1 April 2022. This requirement to notify will provide HMRC with accurate and timely information to encourage earlier identification and resolution of uncertain tax treatments. This will help address the legal interpretation portion of the tax gap, estimated to be £4.9bn in 2018-19. The Government will also publish accompanying draft guidance in due course.
- **Tax treatment of asset holding companies (AHCs):** The Government is responding to its second stage consultation on, and publishing initial draft legislation relating to, the tax treatment of AHCs. These targeted reforms are designed to enhance the UK's attractiveness as a location for AHCs, and represent a balanced approach in response to stakeholder representations.

The Government is also publishing draft legislation and associated documents in the following areas which have not been previously announced:

- **Basis Period Reform:** Under the current system, tax returns filed by the self-employed and partnerships are based on a business's set of accounts ending in the tax year. A set of complex rules can apply to allocate the profits of those businesses to a tax year, which can cause confusion and error. The Government has announced a reform and consultation on how to simplify the system.
- **Location of Risk regulation:** Under current legislation, the determination of the location of a risk for Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) purposes is unclear. The Government has therefore published draft legislation to clarify the rules for determining the location of a risk by placing the criteria into the primary legislation governing IPT. This will ensure clarity for taxpayers and HMRC, and retain the principles initially set out in legislation in 2001.

All draft legislation is accompanied by a Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN), an Explanatory Note (EN) and, where applicable, a summary of consultation responses document.

Policy announcements

- **London Capital & Finance compensation payments:** The Government will legislate in the Autumn to ensure that payments made by the London Capital & Finance Compensation Scheme will not be subject to Capital Gains Tax. This will provide certainty to bondholders that these payments will be free from income tax and Capital Gains Tax. This measure will apply retrospectively from the date payments are made. The Government will also ensure that the Compensation Scheme terms enable bondholders who receive compensation in respect of a subscription to an ISA to return the money to an ISA without it contributing to their annual subscription limit.
- **Income tax exemption of new social security payments in Scotland:** The Government will legislate in the Autumn to ensure that two new social security payments made by the Scottish Government will not be subject to income tax (as provided for in the 2016 Fiscal Framework). This legislation will apply to the Child Winter Heating Assistance (introduced in November 2020) and the Short-Term Assistance (introduced in July 2021). The legislation will be retrospective, from November 2020 and July 2021 respectively. HM Revenue and Customs will not collect any income tax that may have been due on payments made from November 2020 to the date the legislation takes effect.
- **Covid Local Grant scheme payments:** The Government will legislate in the Autumn to ensure that payments made by Local Authorities to families through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme and Covid Local Grant Scheme, and similar schemes operated by the Devolved Administrations, are not subject to income tax. This will provide certainty to those who have benefited from the additional funding provided to

Local Authorities. The legislation will be retrospective and cover payments made from 2020-21 onwards.

Other publications

The Government is also publishing summaries of responses to the following consultations:

- ‘Modernisation of the stamp taxes on shares framework’.
- ‘VAT Grouping – Establishment, Eligibility and Registration’.
- ‘VAT and the Public Sector: Reform to VAT Refund Rules’.
- ‘VAT and the Sharing Economy’.
- ‘VAT and value shifting’.

Finally, the Government is also publishing a research report titled ‘Impact of Making Tax Digital for VAT’. This considers the impact of Making Tax Digital (MTD) across those taxpayers that have been required to operate it for VAT from April 2019 and further demonstrates that taxpayers are experiencing benefits in operating MTD.

All publications can be found on the GOV.UK website. The Government’s tax consultation tracker has also been updated.

Future System Operator and Energy Codes Reform

[HLWS199]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng) has today made the following statement:

I am pleased to announce the launch of the consultations on the future system operator (FSO) and the energy codes governance reform. This is a key step that will contribute towards helping us achieve the government’s net zero targets and our commitment in the Energy White Paper “to ensure that the institutional arrangements governing the energy system are fit for purpose for the long term, consulting in 2021 over organisational functions, including system operation and energy code governance”.

Net zero is an unprecedented challenge for our economy and society – and the energy system at its heart. It has created the need for new technical roles and responsibilities in the electricity and gas systems to drive decarbonisation while minimising costs and maintaining resilience. We will require an organisation with the mandate, whole-system perspective, and engineering capability to fulfil the new and enhanced roles effectively, and the organisational design, incentives, and accountability to fulfil them impartially in the best interests of consumers.

The future system operator (FSO) consultation sets out the case for an expert, impartial, cross-vector FSO to ensure the energy system drives progress towards net zero. The system operators are in a unique position at the heart of their respective systems, both to keep each

system operating in real time day to day and to be forward-looking. To help us achieve net zero, we propose bringing the Electricity System Operator (ESO) and the forward-looking elements of the Gas System Operator (GSO) together in a new entity, which will enable the systems to be transformed. The consultation also sets out the potential roles that could fall to the new organisation and presents two potential organisational templates which might be adopted. Finally, it sets out considerations on implementation.

Today, we are also launching a consultation on the design and delivery of the energy codes reform. The energy codes are the detailed technical and commercial rules of the gas and electricity system, which cover wholesale, transmission, distribution, and retail. Many of the codes were designed pre-privatisation which has resulted in a code governance framework that is complex, fragmented and lacks incentives to innovate, despite our urgent need for a more unified, flexible and dynamic approach.

Building on a consultation from 2019, we have now developed two governance models further and will be consulting on our preferred option of designating Ofgem as a strategic body over the energy codes, alongside separate code managers. As the strategic body, Ofgem would assess and respond to relevant government policy and priorities to ensure these are reflected in codes. It would also select and license code managers, who would replace the existing code administrators and take on most of the roles that are currently held by industry-led code panels. However, crucially, we expect that industry input will remain key to the code change process, including through new stakeholder advisory forums.

To help us develop our view on these reforms, we are seeking views on where improvements could be made to existing arrangements. Our final position will be shaped by the outcomes of these consultations.

These energy system governance reforms are intended to apply only to England, Scotland and Wales. Energy is generally devolved in Northern Ireland and so the scope of the review and proposed reforms do not apply to NI’s energy system governance, system operator or energy regulator.

I will place copies of both the Future System Operator Consultation and Energy Codes Consultation in the House Libraries.

Improving Support for Disabled People and People with Health Conditions

[HLWS217]

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

I am pleased today to update the house on the publications of *Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper* and the *Health is everyone’s business consultation response*.

The Government has a clear objective to make sure that disabled people and people with health conditions can lead the fullest, most independent lives possible, reaching their potential. As part of this, we remain committed to our ambition to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

Today's publications and the work that follows will help us take an important step towards improving the way we help disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work.

In 2021/22 we are forecast to spend a record £58 billion on benefits for disabled people and people with health conditions, and we have witnessed record levels of disability employment. We must now build on these achievements, unlock new opportunities and consider how support can be made sustainable for the future, so we can continue to help those most in need.

The consultation launched by today's publication of the Green Paper will help us do this. It focuses on issues that disabled people and people with health conditions have told us they would like to see improved. This includes:

- Testing new advocacy support, drawing on support already being provided by partners, so we can test and develop new ways to support the most vulnerable people who need extra help accessing and using the benefits system and who don't have families, friends or trusted networks to support them;
- Making changes to the way we deliver health assessments, including considering future use of telephone and video assessments where that is right for the individual and exploring how we can improve the decision making process, including the evidence we take into account;
- Reducing the number of assessments that we undertake by exploring the extension of the principles of the Severe Conditions Criteria;
- Exploring ways to strengthen the process people follow if they think the decision from a health assessment is wrong, building on the changes we have already introduced at the Mandatory Reconsideration Stage; and
- Building on our commitment to reform the Work Capability Assessment, following work with disabled people and people with health conditions to consider future changes to assessments.

It is essential that any changes we make are shaped by disabled people and their representatives. This is why the Department and I have hosted a series of engagement events across the country, to hear about disabled people's experiences of DWP services and priorities for future changes. This has also included a number of sessions with Members of Parliament who have held sessions in their constituencies, sessions I am thankful to have held. These experiences have directly shaped the Health and Disability Green Paper.

The consultation started by the launch of this Green Paper will last for 12 weeks. Following the consultation,

detailed proposals will then be brought forward in a White Paper in mid-2022.

Taking action to better support people in work is another crucial element of our agenda, and with the publication of the Health is everyone's business response, we are setting out the further action this Government intends to take to tackle ill-health related job loss. I am grateful to the almost 500 respondents to the consultation.

Reducing health-related job losses is as important as helping people into work. Whilst most people return to work following a period of long-term sickness absence, disabled people have a heightened risk of falling out of work, an estimated 300,000 disabled people falling out of work a year prior to COVID-19. The initiatives set out in the Health is everyone's business response will work to address this challenge. They are designed as a package that both increases employer responsibilities in managing employee health at work, whilst also improving employer access to Occupational Health (OH) advice and government support.

Employers have an important role to play in creating inclusive and healthy workplaces. Government recognises that employers need both more clarity on their existing responsibilities and clearer information to enable them to have the right guidance to support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to remain in work or return to work following sickness absence.

Cross-Government collaboration will continue as we enact proposals, ensuring we are well equipped to meet the challenges ahead. We will also continue working with key stakeholder organisations, employers and employees to deliver the proposals into the future. This will reduce the chance that certain individuals or groups are left behind and complement existing initiatives to help employees manage the employment impact of their condition, such as integrated Employment Advice provision in the NHS's Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) services in England.

I am hugely excited by this work. It is a real opportunity to deliver a more effective health and disability system and unlock every disabled person's potential. This Green Paper will deliver ambitious policy reforms to improve the lives of disabled people, whilst the package outlined in the Health is everyone's business response will ensure all employers are equipped to do the right thing for their employees, helping disabled people and people with health conditions stay in and thrive in the new world of work. The Health and Disability Green Paper and Health is everyone's business response, alongside the forthcoming National Disability Strategy, will set out holistic approach to enable disabled people and people with health conditions to thrive in work and live more independent lives.

Lasting Powers of Attorney: Consultation

[HLWS205]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for

Justice (Robert Buckland) has made the following Written Statement:

"Today I am launching a public consultation on modernising lasting powers of attorney.

There are things we take for granted until we no longer have them – our ability to make decisions, our ability to express ourselves, our ability to choose. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) led to the implementation of lasting powers of attorney (LPA) in 2007. An LPA gives people the opportunity to appoint someone they trust to make decisions on their behalf, in the event those abilities are taken from them, whether through accident, disease or illness.

The MCA also created the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. OPG is responsible for registering LPAs. This must be done before an LPA can be used. The OPG is also responsible for taking action where there are concerns about an attorney's use of the LPA.

When the LPA was introduced in 2007, the safeguards put in place were appropriate for the time, but technology and society have moved on. Society's attitudes to fraud and abuse, and the expected protections against them, have also changed. Technology now offers new ways for OPG to protect its users through identity and information verification.

An LPA must be printed out so that it can be signed and witnessed on paper, no matter how the LPA documentation is completed. In the 14 years since LPAs were introduced, technology has advanced and become more widely available. People increasingly expect to be able to access government services online and many donors and attorneys have told us the paper-based LPA is cumbersome, bureaucratic and complex.

Due to LPAs being paper-based, the OPG is required to handle a large amount of paper, which is costly and inefficient for the organisation, creating an ever-increasing need for staff, equipment and storage. OPG's operating costs are funded entirely by the income from the fees it charges. If the LPA service is not made more efficient, either fees will have to increase or the way OPG is funded will become unsustainable.

We need to respond to these challenges and look at how technology can make it easier for people to make and register an LPA. We must also fully consider concerns about security - finding the right balance between ease of use and protection against abuse. Ease of access and protections must also be ensured for those who cannot use digital services or do not want to.

We believe that a move towards automating OPG's services will improve efficiency and reduce costs. It will also allow resources to be moved to improving other OPG services that provide more benefits for users.

It is for these reasons that I am launching this consultation on modernising lasting powers of attorney - to consider how to increase safeguards, whilst ensuring accessibility and OPG sustainability, and any changes to primary legislation may be needed to facilitate this.

To develop the proposals put forward in this consultation, we have undertaken user research, interviews and surveys to gather the views of the public and professionals. We have engaged stakeholders from a range of sectors, including finance, legal, charity and social care. We now want to gather evidence from a much wider group and are asking for views on the following:

- The role and value of witnessing on LPAs and how to keep that value.
- The role of applying to register an LPA and who can apply.
- Changes that may be needed to OPG's remit.
- Changes to how people can object to the registration of an LPA.
- Changes to when people can object.
- The speed of the LPA service and whether a dedicated faster service should be introduced for people who need an LPA urgently.
- How to ensure that solicitors have access to the service.

The consultation is available in full at: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/opg/modernising-lasting-powers-of-attorney> and a copy has been presented to parliament."

Magnox Inquiry Report: Government Response

[HLWS215]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) has today made the following statement:

We today publish the Government's combined response to the March 2021 final report of the Magnox Inquiry and the June 2021 Departmental Review into the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The response has been co-authored by BEIS, the Cabinet Office and UK Government Investments. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has developed its own combined response to both the Magnox Inquiry final report and the Departmental Review, which is also being published today.

Since it was established under the Energy Act 2004, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has driven a significant step change in the decommissioning of the UK's legacy nuclear sites. The organisation's portfolio includes 17 licenced nuclear sites, with over 15,000 people across its estate, and contributes very significantly to the Government's levelling up agenda. However, there is an ongoing need for the organisation to evolve to become a more resilient, efficient and effective organisation that continues to drive transformation on the ground and deliver value for money for the taxpayer.

The Magnox Inquiry was an independent, non-statutory inquiry commissioned by the then [Secretary of State](#) for

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP in 2017. Its purpose was to review the procurement and subsequent termination of a management contract for decommissioning the Magnox nuclear power stations. An interim report was published in October 2017 with a number of initial findings and the March 2021 final report contained a total of 57 recommendations. These recommendations centred around future commercial assurance, oversight of governance procedures and organisational culture change.

The Departmental Review into the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, conducted by an independent team within BEIS, was published in June 2021, with a total of 26 recommendations. These centred around the form and function of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, its oversight by Government and its internal governance, organisational health and operational effectiveness.

I am grateful to Mr Holliday and his team and to the independent Departmental Review team for their comprehensive and rigorous work, which is reflected in the reports.

Since the publication of the Magnox Inquiry interim findings, significant progress has already been made to strengthen and simplify the organisation of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority estate. This includes the replacement of management contracts with direct subsidiary arrangements to support improved efficiencies across the estate and improvements to the governance of assurance and approval decisions, especially in the area of commercial assurance. There has been a complete overhaul of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority leadership team since the 2017 Magnox procurement and the Government has also enhanced its oversight arrangements for the organisation. The recommendations from the reviews complement the progress made and propose further improvements.

Both reviews that are being responded to today contain further valuable lessons for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and for the Government. We take the recommendations very seriously and have considered them with great care. The responses will give stakeholders confidence of the depth of reach and robustness with which the learnings from the reports will have an impact on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

The Government and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will prioritise the implementation of the commitments within these responses as we continue to deliver against the UK's critical nuclear decommissioning challenges.

National Security and Investment Act 2021

[HLWS216]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng) has today made the following statement:

The National Security and Investment Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April and provides for a new investment screening system to help protect our national security. Today I am publishing three sets of documents related to the Act: a consultation on the draft statement on the use of the call-in power (made under section 3 of the Act), the draft notifiable acquisition statutory instrument and guidance documents on the Act.

I am announcing today that the commencement date for the sections of the Act not already commenced will be 4 January 2022.

Statement on the use of the call-in power

This statement (a draft of which was previously published as the "Statement of Policy Intent") sets out how the Secretary of State expects to use the call-in power under the Act. The call-in power enables the Government to screen qualifying acquisitions for national security risks. During the Parliamentary passage of the Act, the Government committed to consult on this statement and I am launching the consultation today. The consultation is available on Gov.uk and will be open until 11.59pm on 30th August.

Draft notifiable acquisition statutory instrument

The draft notifiable acquisition statutory instrument sets out the proposed descriptions of the 17 sectors of the economy that would be captured under the mandatory notification requirements set out in the National Security and Investment Act 2021. The Government has previously consulted on the mandatory notification sectors and published a response in March 2021. The draft sector definitions have been refined in response to stakeholder feedback and the draft statutory instrument has been published today on gov.uk to update businesses and investors about mandatory notification requirements.

Guidance

I have today published the first set of guidance documents on the Act. The guidance will build understanding and awareness for all parties who may be affected by the Act and who may need to comply with its provisions. The Government has tested and refined these documents with an expert panel of industry representatives, which includes business representative organisations, higher education bodies, investment associations and other stakeholders, who provided important feedback.

These guidance documents are: an overview of the Act, explaining what types of acquisitions are covered, whether parties need to tell the Government about an acquisition and how the Government will investigate an acquisition; the extraterritorial application of the Act; how the Act works alongside other regulatory bodies and market practices; and guidance for Higher Education Institutions and other Research organisations.

I will place copies of the Section 3 Statement for consultation, the Section 3 Statement consultation document and Draft Notifiable Acquisitions SI the Libraries of the House.

Office for Nuclear Regulation: Annual Report and Accounts

[HLWS197]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Later today I will lay before this House the Office for Nuclear Regulation Annual Report and Accounts 2020-2021. These documents will also be published on the ONR website.

I can confirm, in accordance with Schedule 7, Section 25(3) of the Energy Act 2013, that there have been no exclusions to the published documents on the grounds of national security.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

[HLWS210]

Baroness Berridge: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Vicky Ford) has made the following statement:

On 20th July, the Department for Education confirmed it will be continuing the extended powers given to the

SEND Tribunal to hear appeals and make non-binding recommendations about health and social care aspects of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, provided those appeals also include education elements.

These extended powers are currently being tested under a National Trial, which began in April 2018. The Trial will end on 31 August 2021 and the powers will continue.

Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. It will enable the Tribunal to continue to take a more holistic view of the needs of the child across education, health and care while the cross-government SEND Review completes its important work.

Full details of this announcement have been published on the Department for Education section on the GOV.UK website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extended-powers-send-tribunal-national-trial>.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 20 July 2021

Afghanistan: Homicide

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Taliban fighters killed Afghan commandos who had surrendered. [HL2033]

Baroness Goldie: We strongly condemn such egregious actions perpetrated by the Taliban. While we recognise that the current security situation is serious, we do not believe there is any military solution to this conflict. The Taliban must engage in meaningful dialogue with the Afghan government, to enable a political solution to ensure lasting peace. We will continue to work closely with international and regional partners to support Afghan peace efforts, including through diplomatic support and technical advice.

Afghanistan: Immigration

Asked by **Lord Coaker**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications they have (1) received, and (2) processed, since the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy launched in April. [HL1754]

Baroness Goldie: Through the Ex-Gratia Scheme (EGS) 1,550 former staff members including their families have relocated to the UK. Under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) 96 former staff members including their families have relocated to the UK so far with several thousand more due to arrive over the summer.

Unfortunately for operational security reasons we cannot at this time comment on specific numbers of applications. However, we are significantly accelerating the pace of relocations in parallel with the military withdrawal. Our commitment to those who are eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure beyond the military presence in Afghanistan.

Ambulance Services: Staff

Asked by **Lord Jones**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the manpower of the NHS Ambulance Service in England (1) in 2010, and (2) at present. [HL1904]

Lord Bethell: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in general practitioner surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the full time equivalent (FTE) number of staff working in all ambulance trusts in England as at March 2021, the latest data available and at March 2010.

	<i>FTE in all ambulance trusts in England</i>
March 2010	34,408
March 2021	47,932

Source: NHS Digital HCHS Monthly Workforce Statistics

Animals: Customs

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are no longer planning to carry out animal checks at the White Cliffs Site; and where they plan to locate a suitable facility for such checks. [HL1770]

Lord Benyon: The Government undertook a thorough review of the plans for Border Control Post (BCP) facilities for EU goods arriving through Kent, and a range of delivery options were explored.

Ministers agreed that the BCP at Sevington's inland border facility would carry out the majority of SPS inspections for imports arriving through the short straits for all plants, plant products, and live animals apart from livestock. Inspections of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) from Eurotunnel will also take place at Sevington. POAO from the Port of Dover will go to a separate BCP in the Dover area.

The review was undertaken in line with good practice to ensure that Government programmes are meeting requirements and delivering the most value for money.

We are working to procure suitable sites which meet the requirements for livestock and POAO facilities.

Assessments: Fees and Charges

Asked by **Baroness Garden of Frogal**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of charging awarding organisations for the approval of qualifications and the effect of this on the qualifications sector. [HL1757]

Baroness Berridge: The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill introduces provision for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to charge fees in connection with the approval or continued approval of technical education qualifications.

An initial assessment of the impact of charging fees for the approval of technical education qualifications has been published as part of the wider Skills and Post-16 Education Bill impact assessment and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-and-post-16-education-bill-impact-assessment-and-jchr-memorandum>.

As set out in the bills policy summary note: “approval fees would be charged on a cost-recovery basis. Any approach designed would be proportionate and take into account the impacts on the market to ensure the range of approved qualifications meets the needs of employers and learners, including qualifications in niche areas.”.

The intention is that the introduction of fees will not be considered until the initial reforms to technical qualifications have been implemented. The fee-charging power would be subject to regulations published by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education. A further assessment of the impact of the regulations on the market will be undertaken when the regulations are being made.

Care Homes and Hospitality Industry: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the number of job vacancies in the (1) care, and (2) hospitality, sectors. [[HL1827](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is continuing to work with the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Devolved Authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as other Government Departments to fill vacancies in adult social care, hospitality and other sectors, offering training for those who need it, and securing jobs directly for those ready to move into roles.

Two websites, JobHelp and Employer Help, were launched last year by the Department in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. JobHelp offers job search advice, showcases recruiting sectors, including adult social care and hospitality, and signposts to job vacancies to help people successfully find work.

The Department is continuing to deliver the Plan for Jobs, which is focused on providing a skills and employment offer which allows people to adapt and pivot into the job roles that employers need to fill. This includes targeted provision such as Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) (in England and Scotland), which comprise training, work experience and a guaranteed interview for a real job.

Launched in September 2020, the DWP Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion scheme to create thousands of 6-month jobs for 16–24 year-olds on Universal Credit, who have been hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic. As part of Plan for Jobs, Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) is now live across England, Wales and Scotland. JETS provides light touch employment support for participants who are claiming either Universal Credit or New Style Jobseeker's Allowance, for up to 6 months within the first year of unemployment.

We have also just launched the Restart Scheme which will provide intensive, tailored employment support to

help over 1 million Universal Credit claimants back towards sustained employment.

The Department is working with trade bodies from England (Skills for Care), Wales (Social Care Wales) and Scotland (Scottish Social Services Council) to actively promote opportunities in the care sector and with key Hospitality sector employers and trade associations such as UK Hospitality and the British Beer and Pub Association to promote opportunities in the hospitality sector.

Census

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many 2021 census forms were (1) requested, and (2) have been completed and returned. [[HL1710](#)]

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many fines have been issued for non-completion of the 2021 census. [[HL1711](#)]

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have compare the census data with the Department for Work and Pensions' database of National Insurance numbers to identify (1) NI numbers which should be terminated, and (2) individuals who should be fined for non-completion of the 2021 census. [[HL1713](#)]

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

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician

Lord Lucas

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

13 July 2021

Dear Lord Lucas,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Questions relating to Census 2021 in England and Wales asking firstly how many 2021 census forms were (1) requested, and (2) have been completed and returned ([HL1710](#)); secondly, how many fines have been issued for non-completion of the 2021 census ([HL1711](#)); and what plans there are to compare the census data with the Department for Work and Pensions' database of National Insurance numbers to identify (1) NI numbers which should be terminated, and (2) individuals who should be fined for non-completion of the 2021 census ([HL1713](#)).

Census 2021 was designed to be a digital-first census and we encouraged people to complete online where possible, but we made sure that those who preferred to use a paper questionnaire were able to do so. Most

households were sent a letter with an access code to complete the census online. Ten percent of households, where the take-up of the online option was likely to be relatively low, were sent a paper questionnaire in place of the Census 2021 letter. Each paper questionnaire also included an access code so that the household could complete online. Similarly, while most reminder letters sent to households that had not yet completed the census included the online access code, some households were sent paper questionnaires as part of the reminder and follow-up process. Paper questionnaires and online access codes were also available on request via our freephone contact centre or the Census 2021 website.

The response to Census 2021 has exceeded all expectations, with a return rate of 97 percent of households across England and Wales and an online-completion rate above our target of 75 percent. The return rate is based on the number of households where we have a valid return, as a percentage of all addresses that are not considered to be vacant. Final response rates will be calculated after following the processing of data from the census and the Census Coverage Survey, and may therefore differ from the return rate. While this processing is continuing, we are not able to provide the detailed information requested. We are planning to publish an article in the autumn with information on how people completed the census, including whether they did so online or on paper.

As regards the number of fines for non-completion and for providing false information in Census 2021, I would like to clarify that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) does not have the power to impose fines under the Census Act 1920. Fines can be imposed by the courts as a result of a successful prosecution, and the ONS works closely with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on bringing cases to court where necessary. The ONS is currently undertaking the non-compliance process, including gathering evidence to be passed to the CPS where appropriate. The main objective of this work is to persuade the few people who refuse to complete a questionnaire to do so; as such, people can avoid the risk of a fine for non-completion at any stage by completing the census.

We have no plans to use census data for the purposes described in your question. In accordance with all relevant legislation, UK Statistics Authority policy, and the promises made to census respondents, personal information collected during the census can and will be used for statistical purposes only, and not used in any way that could have a direct impact on individuals.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Constitutional Reform and Governance Act

Asked by Lord Norton of Louth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they put in place in 2020 to ensure that Government Departments complied with the requirements of section

3(6) of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. [[HL1866](#)]

Lord True: The Civil Service Code sets out that civil servants advising ministers should be aware of the constitutional significance of Parliament, and of the conventions governing the relationship between Parliament and the government.

The Code is part of the terms and conditions for civil servants. Each department or agency has a duty to make civil servants aware of the Code and its values.

Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accuracy of the NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app in identifying close contacts with people who test positive for the virus. [[HL1771](#)]

Lord Bethell: The app uses Bluetooth Low Energy to understand the distance over time between people who have downloaded the app. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, the app's risk-scoring algorithm uses this data, along with the infectiousness of the individual testing positive, to make calculations about the risk of transmission and who should receive an alert. If a notification to self-isolate is received, the user's device has been in close proximity to the device of someone who has recently tested positive. For its ability to judge proximity, the app achieves 'excellent' performance by scientific standards.

Prior to the launch of the app it was tested in a range of environments, in order to evaluate its effectiveness at accurately measuring distance. The app has also been modelled in simulations involving hundreds of thousands of scenarios. The app performed as expected and we are confident that it can accurately detect distance in different settings. As Apple and Google develop aspects of the underlying contact tracing technology, they have also conducted their own tests related to accuracy.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding the removal of COVID-19 restrictions; and what were the outcomes of those discussions. [[HL1859](#)]

Lord True: The UK government has worked closely with the Devolved Administrations throughout the COVID-19 response. While public health is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, our joint statement last September demonstrates our commitment to seek a coordinated approach where the evidence and the science shows this would save lives or make the response more effective, and work together to protect lives and livelihoods across the UK.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of the numbers of patients in England who remain clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 as of 19 July because (1) the vaccines are not effective for them due to their underlying condition, or (2) they have not received a vaccine. [[HL1895](#)]

Lord Bethell: We have not made a specific estimate.

Approximately 9% of clinically extremely vulnerable people have not received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and thus remain at risk. A further 4% have received a single dose.

Domestic Abuse: Prosecutions

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need for improvements in the implementation of the public interest test in decisions about whether to prosecute in cases involving a suspect who may also be a survivor of domestic abuse. [[HL1808](#)]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: All decisions to prosecute are made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors, and a case must meet the evidential and public interest stages of the Full Code Test.

We recognise that suspects may also be victims of domestic abuse. Accordingly, the Code acknowledges that suspects may have a lower level of culpability if they are compelled, coerced, or are victims of crime. The sixth edition of Charging (The Director's Guidance) published in December 2020 reinforces that in such circumstances it may be appropriate to offer an of court disposal or not to proceed with a case.

The CPS also has bespoke guidance illustrating how bespoke conditional cautions can support offenders in appropriate cases.

East Coast Railway Line: Trains

Asked by *Lord Vinson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) quality, and (2) safety, of the suspension of the Azuma trains being used on the East Coast mainline; whether (a) they, or (b) LNER, have received reports of increased customer discomfort since the Azuma trains were introduced; and in light of any such assessment or reports, what plans they have to support the rectification of any operational problems identified with these trains. [[HL1870](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Azuma trains were designed to modern standards for comfort and safety. Before the trains were delivered to London North Eastern Railway (LNER), a number of commissioning tests were carried out ensuring the quality of the ride was of an

acceptable standard and safety specifications had been met. The comfort and safety of the trains in service and the rectification of any operational problems is the responsibility of the train operator, LNER, working in partnership with the train supplier and, if required, the Office of Rail and Road.

English Language: Education

Asked by *Lord Gilbert of Panteg*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 2 June (HL434), whether they still intend to publish a cross-Government English language strategy, as set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy green paper. [[HL1599](#)]

Baroness Berridge: I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave on 2 June 2021 to Question [HL434](#).

This government remains committed to English language as demonstrated by the manifesto commitment to boost English language teaching.

Our response to the COVID-19 outbreak is our priority at present. We will provide an update on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in due course.

The department also remains committed to strengthening communities through integration. Since publication, we have made significant progress on the commitments in the Integrated Communities Action Plan. This includes providing over 18,000 learner places through our Integrated Communities English Language Programme (£4.5 million) and Coordination Fund (£1.2 million), and setting up of five Integration Areas.

We continue to build upon the Integration Area Programme and are working hard to boost English language provision, including through the ESOL for Integration Fund.

Ethiopia: Sexual Offences

Asked by *Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK experts have been deployed to Ethiopia to advise on the safe collection and preservation of evidence relating to sexual violence. [[HL1758](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have deployed an expert from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative UK Team of Experts. They are currently conducting an initial scoping mission. Their recommendations from this scoping mission will inform further options - including a wider deployment - for supporting the Government of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and other key stakeholders to safely collect and preserve evidence, and bring the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. The UK fully supports the joint investigation involving the UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights. We continue to explore options for addressing the immediate needs of survivors, preventing further sexual violence and delivering justice and accountability.

The UK has recently allocated a further £16.7m towards the crisis in Tigray. Part of this funding will be used to support survivors of sexual violence, through mobile health teams and by helping to re-start service delivery at health centres that were impacted by violence and looting.

Gambling: Children

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they will take to stop gambling firms from enticing children to bet. [HL2031]

Baroness Barran: Under the Gambling Act 2005, it is a criminal offence to invite or allow a child to take part in most forms of commercial gambling, and protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling is one of the licensing objectives which guide the work of the Gambling Commission. Operators must abide by strict requirements for the protection of children and are subject to sanction by the Commission if they breach these rules.

All gambling advertising, wherever it appears, is subject to strict controls on content and placement. Gambling operators advertising in the UK must abide by the advertising codes issued by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) and the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP) in which a wide range of provisions are designed to protect children. For example, gambling adverts must not be targeted at children or feature content which appeals particularly to them. CAP and BCAP have also recently consulted on strengthening the codes to reduce potential appeal to children. The Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising requires that operators ensure their logos do not appear on commercial merchandise (such as replica football kit) which is designed for children, and includes a 'whistle-to-whistle' ban on gambling adverts during live broadcast sport before 9pm.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 with the publication of a Call for Evidence which closed on 31 March and received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals. We are considering the evidence carefully and intend to publish a White Paper by the end of the year.

Great British Railways

Asked by **Lord Bradshaw**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether their Great British Railway reforms will (1) lead to a rationalisation of the demands on timetable space, and (2) end speculative bids from franchisees for timetable space. [HL1946]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: A new public body, Great British Railways, will run and plan the rail network, own the infrastructure, and receive the fare revenue. It will

procure passenger services and set most fares and timetables, contracting with private companies to operate trains to the timetable and fares it specifies. Great British Railways will draw up contracts and the service plans that underpin them in line with its mandates to grow the railways and improve efficiency. Great British Railways will not design services that the infrastructure cannot support, or that are based on unworkable timetables, as happened repeatedly under franchising.

There will also be the potential for new open access services to be explored in the future where spare capacity exists to make best use of the network and grow new markets for rail.

Hospital Beds

Asked by **Lord Jones**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many NHS hospital beds there were in (1) 2010, (2) 2015, and (3) 2020. [HL1903]

Lord Bethell: Information is not available in the format requested as data is not collected on the total number of hospital beds by year.

Influenza

Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the efficacy of the current pathway to test and treat influenza. [HL1766]

Lord Bethell: We have not made a specific assessment. However, the diagnosis of influenza is generally made using clinical symptoms in primary care settings then confirmed by laboratory testing. Rapid testing for complicated influenza often takes place in hospitals. The treatment of influenza can involve antiviral medication and/or hospital admission. As a preventative measure, priority groups most at risk and frontline health and adult social care workers are eligible for a free influenza vaccine to protect them and prevent onward transmission to vulnerable members of the community.

Influenza: Screening

Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expand flu testing, including through (1) at-home testing, and (2) testing in the community, in 2021–22. [HL1765]

Lord Bethell: The diagnosis of influenza is generally made using clinical symptoms in primary care settings and can only be confirmed by laboratory testing. Rapid testing should be undertaken in all people with complicated influenza which often takes place in hospital. The Department is exploring potential options to expanding winter virus testing via home or community testing.

International Development

Asked by *Baroness Sugg*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the International Development strategy will be published; and what plans they have to consult (1) non-governmental organisations, and (2) Parliament, in the development of that strategy. [HL1774]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy, which will be cross-government in scope. We look forward to engaging with partners and stakeholders, including civil society and Parliament, over the coming months. This will build on the extensive engagement and call for evidence that was undertaken to inform the Integrated Review.

Ivermectin

Asked by *Lord Stone of Blackheath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the (1) licensing, and (2) use, of Ivermectin in both the (a) treatment, and (b) prevention, of COVID-19. [HL1922]

Lord Bethell: The Department is closely monitoring the evidence on the case for using ivermectin for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19. Licensing of ivermectin is dependent on application to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for authorisation. We are continuing to monitor for new data from trials worldwide, including the UK PRINCIPLE clinical trial platform, which announced on 23 June that ivermectin would be investigated to generate robust data on its effectiveness in treating adults aged 18 years old and over who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Kickstart Scheme

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to extend the Kickstart Scheme; and what steps are they taking to communicate this decision to businesses. [HL1837]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are presently no plans to extend the Kickstart Scheme.

Long Covid: Females

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of London*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that long-COVID disproportionately affects women, what consideration they have given to the production of gender-sensitive guidelines for primary care professionals. [HL1814]

Lord Bethell: While we have not specifically considered gender sensitive guidelines, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published *COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of COVID-19* for all health and care professionals. A copy of the guideline is attached.

'Long' COVID-19 is a new condition and our understanding of its impact on different demographic groups, as well as the best treatment options to pursue, is still developing. NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to a health equity audit to assess equitable access, excellent experience and optimal outcomes for all communities.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19 Rapid Guideline [covid19-rapid-guideline-managing-the-longterm-effects-of-covid19-pdf-66142028400325 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-07-07/HL1814>

Long Covid: Health Services

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of London*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to long-COVID in the NHS to ensure patients have access to joined-up care across multiple services. [HL1816]

Lord Bethell: NHS England published *Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22* on 15 June. Within the Plan, a multi-disciplinary care pathway is outlined as a principle of care for 'long' COVID-19, with the expectations that services must offer multidisciplinary, physical, cognitive, psychological and psychiatric assessments. The paediatric hubs also announced as part of the Plan will consist of multidisciplinary teams which can provide assessment services and remote support to other clinicians to ensure ongoing holistic support. The Plan also outlined that by mid-July, healthcare systems should provide fully staffed 'long' COVID-19 service plans covering the whole pathway from primary care through to specialist care using multidisciplinary teams. A copy of *Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22* is attached.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's *COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of COVID-19*, states that access to multidisciplinary services should be provided for assessing physical and mental health symptoms and carrying out further tests and investigations and that integrated, multidisciplinary rehabilitation services, based on local need and resources should also be provided. A copy of the guideline is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19 Rapid Guideline [covid19-rapid-guideline-managing-the-longterm-effects-of-covid19-pdf-66142028400325.pdf]

Long COVID: The NHS Plan for 2021/22 [C1312-long-covid-plan-june-2021.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-07-07/HL1816>

Motor Sports: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) findings, and (2) recommendations, of the Royal Academy of Engineering's Hamilton Commission report *Accelerating Change: Improving Representation of Black People in UK Motorsport*, published on 13 July. [HL1995]

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the British motor sports industry regarding access to training and employment opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people. [HL1996]

Baroness Barran: The Government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in all sport and physical activity, including motor sport. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase diversity among sporting organisations and to help the sport sector be more inclusive and welcoming to its spectators, participants and people in its workforce. However it is ultimately for all individual sports' national governing bodies, to decide on the specific aims and appropriate initiatives in their organisations, and to evaluate progress with these.

We welcome the work of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Sir Lewis Hamilton which is aimed at improving the representation of Black people in UK motor sport. We will continue to work across government and with sector partners to ensure that inequalities people from ethnically diverse backgrounds face in sport, including motorsports, are being tackled effectively.

Sport England, UK Sport and the other home nations' sports councils have also recently published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. Following the findings each Council is working to develop their own specific action plans to deliver on their initial commitments relating to people; representation; investment; systems and insight. This will involve working closely with relevant groups or communities to tackle racial inequality in sport, and bring about lasting change.

Motor Vehicles: Speed Limits

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all new motor vehicles will be sold with automatic speed limiters from 2022. [HL1940]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There are no proposals for mandating speed limiters on all new vehicles in the UK. Vehicles sold in Northern Ireland will be required to

have speed warning systems, known as Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA), installed on all new registrations from July 2024. The Department for Transport is currently considering a package of new vehicle technologies, which includes ISA, that are designed to aid road safety. We will consider whether to make these technologies compulsory in new vehicles sold here once the new GB type approval scheme is in place. This is scheduled to be ready by mid-2022.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Vehicle speed compliance statistics for Great Britain: 2020, published on 13 July, which found that 56 per cent of car drivers and 58 per cent of van drivers broke the 30mph speed limit, what steps they intend to take to reduce levels of speeding. [HL1941]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government believes that any form of dangerous or inconsiderate driving behaviour is a serious road safety issue. All available research shows a link between excessive speed and the risk of collisions.

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit, and enforcement is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads, and how available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues.

Last July, the Department for Transport launched a Call for Evidence, as part of a wider Roads Policing Review, a thorough examination of roads policing in England and Wales and its relevance to road safety. Responses to the Call for Evidence have been analysed and the Government response is currently being prepared for publication. The response will address the key points raised by respondents, including feedback on speed enforcement.

National Insurance

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many National Insurance numbers were valid on the latest date for which this figure is available. [HL2027]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As of 11:50am on 16th July 2021, the Department Customer Information System (CIS) holds National Insurance Number records for 72,096,863 Adults; where a Date of Death is not held on their record. As processes are in place to remediate invalid National Insurance Number records, the volume of Live Adult records are deemed to be valid.

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what characteristics of the National Insurance number system prevent them being aware how many National Insurance numbers are valid. [HL2028]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The National Insurance Number application process is robust, however there are

instances where errors do occur. If it is identified that a National Insurance Number has been allocated and a record created in error, there are processes in place between the Department of Work and Pensions and HMRC to take action to prevent the National Insurance Number being used, for example in cases where a fraudulent application has been identified or a duplicate record has been created in error.

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government why their systems use National Insurance numbers as personal identifiers if, at any given instant, they do not know whether such numbers are valid. [HL2029]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: National Insurance Number are used as Identifiers for National Insurance Number Records; held for each individual who has been allocated a National Insurance Number.

Robust identity checks are undertaken when an application for a National Insurance Number is received. At the point of creation of a National Insurance Record the validity of the record has been confirmed.

Whilst a National Insurance Number is the identifier for a National Insurance account within the Department of Work and Pensions and HMRC, to enable Tax and Contributions to be posted to the citizen's record and/or the administration of Department Benefits and Pensions, there are robust processes in place to validate a citizen's/customer's identity before a benefit/pension will be paid.

NHS Test and Trace: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the detailed breakdown of the amount forecast to be spent on corporate services by NHS Track and Trace in its 2021–22 budget; what has been spent to date against that budget line in the current financial year; and how much has been spent on the use of management consultants from that budget line. [HL1616]

Lord Bethell: The programme is expected to spend £1,779 million on corporate services in 2021/22, which includes spend on finance, legal, commercial, human resources, digital, policy and communication services. However, a detailed breakdown of the forecast spend, the spend to date against that budget line and on management consultants is not currently available as it is being collated and centrally validated.

Olives: Imports

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that every olive tree imported into the UK is inspected for disease. [HL1756]

Lord Benyon: In March 2021, Great Britain (GB) introduced strict controls on the import of olive trees in response to the threat posed by the plant disease *Xylella fastidiosa*. These measures represent a significant strengthening of requirements.

Imports of olive trees from countries where *Xylella* has not been officially confirmed as absent are only permitted under stringent conditions, including: i) inspections of the place of production and the surrounding area during the 12 months before export; ii) inspection and testing of the plants annually; iii) pre-export inspections and testing where suspect symptoms are seen; and iv) if the place of production is in an area where *Xylella* is known to occur they should also be grown in complete physical protection to exclude the insect vector of *Xylella*.

In all other cases, olive trees destined for export to GB must be grown for at least three years (or throughout their entire life in the case of trees which are younger than three years) in a country known to be free from *Xylella*. The site of production must be subject to annual official inspection with sampling and testing.

All imports of regulated plants, including olive trees, are subject to GB's risk-based import checking regime. The highest risk items (those assessed as presenting a significant risk of introducing harmful pests and diseases into GB) are subject to 100% documentary, identity and physical checks. This includes olive trees imported for propagation, growing on or multiplication.

The level of identity and physical checks on other commodities is based on the risk presented by the import of different plants and goods from different origins. Certain plants, including olive trees, imported from the EU for final users, are subject to a lower rate of inspection to reflect the lower level of risk posed.

Levels of inspection are kept under review and can be adjusted to reflect any changes in the risk situation.

Political Parties: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Tyrrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to requiring all political parties represented in the House of Commons to publish party membership numbers. [HL1781]

Lord True: This is a matter for individual political parties.

Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Sugg

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are developing new frameworks for working on open societies, conflict and multilateralism; if so when they will be published; and what plans they have to consult (1) non-governmental organisations, and (2) Parliament, in the development of such frameworks. [HL1775]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Integrated Review published in March sets out the Government's vision of the UK's role in the world through to 2030. The review was the result of extensive consultation with non-governmental organisations and Parliament. It provides the framework for all UK Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy including in relation to open societies, conflict and multilateralism. The review renewed the UK's commitment to be a force for good in the world and puts promoting open societies at the centre of the Government's priorities, defining the framework for UK action both internationally and domestically.

The review also outlined our approach to conflict, including focusing on preventing, managing and resolving conflict in priority regions and working in partnership with allies and multilateral organisations. The review underscored the UK's determination to seek multilateral solutions to global challenges. It set out a clear ambition for the UK to be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation with a global perspective, working with others to protect our values and shape the international order of the future. We maintain an ongoing dialogue with Non-Governmental Organisations and Parliamentarians, including on the implementation of the Review.

Pregnancy: Down's Syndrome

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect unborn babies with Down's Syndrome. [HL1719]

Lord Bethell: The Department expects clinicians to take note of the Supporting women and their partners through prenatal screening for Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome and Patau's syndrome consensus statement published in an online only format by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives and the Society and College of Radiographers.

The consensus statement sets out that all medical professionals involved in the offer of prenatal screening should ensure that women are given results in a non-directive way; the offer of further tests is non-directive; women are signposted to relevant charities and organisations to support personal informed choice; and options following a higher chance result in a non-directive manner. The consensus statement explicitly states that parents whose babies have been identified as having a higher chance of having Down's Syndrome who have decided to continue with their pregnancy should not have their decisions challenged or be pressured into changing their minds.

Prisoners: Females

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the recent Employment Appeal Tribunal judgment that gender critical beliefs are protected under the Equality

Act 2010, what steps they are taking to ensure that female prisoners will not suffer any detriment if they profess gender critical beliefs. [HL1759]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Employment Appeals Tribunal judgment that gender critical beliefs are protected under the Equality Act 2010; and what impact that judgement will have, if any, on current female prisoners in relation to biologically male transgender prisoners. [HL1761]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service are committed to advancing equality, eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation (including based on someone's religion or belief, or gender reassignment status, as defined in sections 7 and 10 of the Equality Act 2010). This commitment remains in place following the judgment *Forstater v CGD Europe & Others* (UKEAT/0105/20).

As part of this, we ensure that all prisoners are treated fairly and in a way that respects their rights, and encourage them to act in a way that is respectful and considerate of others. Any prisoner who has concerns about discriminatory behaviour can make a complaint via the discrimination incident reporting form and this will be investigated and addressed, as appropriate.

Recycling: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the recycling rates of (1) London, and (2) the core cities of England; and what steps they are taking to improve the rates of the poorest performing cities. [HL1772]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The most recent annual publication of waste statistics shows the 'household waste' recycling rate for the 2019/20 financial year:

- London Region - 33.5%
- Birmingham City Council - 23.6%
- Manchester City Council MBC - 40.4%
- Leeds City Council MBC - 38.2%
- Bristol City Council - 47.1%
- Liverpool City Council - 23.6%
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council MBC - 40.2%
- Nottingham City Council - 26.2%
- Sheffield City Council - 31.7%

Recycling rates for 2020/21 for local authorities in England are not yet available. Recycling rates for 2019/20 were published on 3 March 2021. An ad hoc set of provisional results covering April 2020 to June 2020 was published on 12 May 2021.

The Government is committed to increasing both the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling

and making recycling easier for everyone. The Environment Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament, introduces legislation that will require all collectors of waste to collect a core set of materials from households, businesses, and other organisations such as schools. The core set will be plastic, glass, metal, paper and card, food and garden waste (for household only). By collecting the same core set of materials there will be less confusion among householders and businesses about what they can put in their recycling bins. As a result, the amount of materials that local authorities collect for recycling will increase.

We want to work closely with local authorities to help them improve their recycling performance. We plan to provide guidance and examples of good practice.

Refugees: Syria

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals have been resettled under its Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme since the scheme restarted. [HL1755]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In December 2020, the UK resumed resettlement following a pause due to the pandemic. On 25 February 2021 the Government met its target of resettling 20,000 refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Since then, the Government has continued to welcome refugees through the global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).

The numbers of refugees resettled are published through official statistics at quarterly intervals. The next set of statistics will be published in July and will include the number of people resettled since March. These are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>.

Rehabilitation

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 19 February (HL13296), whether work on producing a cross-addiction strategy has now resumed; and if so, when such a strategy will be published. [HL1947]

Lord Bethell: Work on developing the addiction strategy will commence later this year and we expect this to be published in 2022. This will build on current Departmental work related to drugs, alcohol and gambling addiction.

Religious Practice: Islam

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

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

29 April (HL15173), what is their estimate of the number of mosques in the UK; and how many have they assessed for evidence of radicalisation through their (1) support, or (2) justification, of violence towards non-Muslims. [HL1825]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We assess all evidence of those that radicalise others though their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives. We cannot discuss individual cases and we have made no assessment of the number of mosques in the UK.

We continue to work with law enforcement agencies and multi-agency partners to increase our understanding of new and emerging radicalising threats to society. Any violent threat is assessed and managed by the police and security services based on the threat that it is deemed to pose.

Our work to counter radicalisation through Prevent works best when it is delivered in partnership with communities and civil society, including faith institutions.

Social Services

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to tackle (1) rising demand, (2) rising costs, and (3) rent-seeking behaviours, in the adult social care sector, as identified by the APPG on Limits to Growth report Tackling growth dependency – the case of adult social care, published on 13 July. [HL2057]

Lord Bethell: The Government is committed to reforming the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals in 2021.

We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including of those with lived experience of the care sector.

Television Licences: Payments

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is legislation which stipulates that TV licences can be paid for only (1) by cheque for the full amount, or (2) Direct Debit for quarterly payments. [HL1994]

Baroness Barran: The regulations which set the frequency and amount of instalments by which TV licence fees can be paid are the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004. The Communications (Television Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 amended instalment amounts for the period beginning 1 April 2021.

The Regulations allow for a range of payment options. For example, the TV Licensing website sets monthly, quarterly and annual payment options for direct debit plans: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/direct-debit>.

It also sets out that licence fee instalment amounts for a weekly or fortnightly payment licence are set out in an individual payment plan when a customer signs up for a Payment Card: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/payment-card>.

There is no provision in the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004 which specifies payments must be made by a certain method. The BBC is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the licence fee, including methods of payment.

Trade Agreements: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of making protection of freedom of religion or belief one of the criteria which must be met for the UK to enter into a trade deal; and whether they have plans to introduce such a measure. [HL1848]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. HM Government regularly reports on violations of these freedoms, including in an annual report published by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

We are clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of rights and responsibilities. We will continue to take a balanced approach with our partners, delivering the best outcome for the United Kingdom, maximising the benefits of trade and upholding our values.

Travel: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK passport holders and their spouses who live in the UK travel red list countries of (1) South Africa, (2) Botswana, or (3) Zambia, and who have both received two coronavirus vaccinations, are able to visit the United Kingdom without the need to go into quarantine. [HL1964]

Lord Bethell: All international arrivals who travel from or transit through a 'red-list' country, including South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia, in the preceding 10 days must quarantine in a managed quarantine facility, irrespective of their vaccination status.

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 21 May (HL18), what information, if any, is retained on requests for exemptions to the COVID-19 hotel quarantine system; if information is retained, how many such requests were made on medical grounds; and how many requests were (1) accepted, and (2) rejected. [HL606]

Lord Bethell: The Managed Quarantine Service securely retains all the exemption correspondence and associated data within internal Departmental system and fully complies with the relevant provisions of the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Personal data is retained for as long as necessary for the purposes it is needed.

Since February, approximately 60 cases have been granted exemptions from COVID-19 managed quarantine facilities on medical grounds. We do not hold data centrally on the number of unsuccessful exemption requests on medical grounds.

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 21 May (HL18), whether (1) individuals, or (2) a panel, are responsible for assessing applications for medical exemptions from the COVID-19 hotel quarantine system, including the assessment of any supporting medical evidence; whether those responsible for assessing applications for medical exemptions hold any medical qualifications; and how those responsible for assessing applications are (a) recruited, and (b) remunerated. [HL607]

Lord Bethell: To apply for a medical or compassionate exemption, a traveller should contact the Managed Quarantine Service at least 14 days before their travel date, with medical evidence to support their application. Evidence must be supplied from a healthcare professional, applying professional clinical judgement on the basis of past treatment and an assessment of whether it is possible for adequate care to be provided in a managed quarantine facility. This includes considering whether additional medical support could be provided by telephone, or by a family member joining an individual in quarantine. This will need to be assessed against the public health risk of variants of concern and conditions may be placed on any exemption.

Applications are considered by trained Departmental staff, following detailed procedures designed by public health professionals and are supported by medically qualified public health professionals. These individuals are recruited and remunerated according to standard civil service procedures.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what public expenditure has been incurred on the (1) Traders' Support Scheme, (2) the Movement Assistance Scheme, and (3) other such programmes for the support of Northern Ireland businesses operating under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and whether they have estimated the full expenditure for 2021. [HL1400]

Lord Frost: The UK has taken forward extensive work on and invested substantial sums in the operation of the Protocol since the beginning of the year. The total spend

on the Trader Support Service through to May 2021 is £125m. In procuring the contract, the UK Government committed over £200m in trader support through the service, and as it stands the forecast is for around £360m in support over the full two years to the end of 2022.

Since launching in December 2020, the MAS has supported over 140 businesses with the cost of more than 11,400 certificates; the scheme is now confirmed to run until at least December 2023. We have already spent £25 million on the Digital Assistance Scheme and the forecast is that total spend in this area could run to up to £150 million.

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the trade barriers between Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be removed. [HL1857]

Lord Frost: The UK Government has ensured through legislation that there is unfettered access for Northern Ireland businesses to the whole of the UK market. There are therefore no processes in place for goods movements from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

With regards to the movement of goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, the Government recognises the extensive burdens imposed by customs and agrifood processes and checks seemingly required to create a zero-risk approach to protecting the single market.

We are considering our next steps and discussing with all those with an interest. We will set out our approach to Parliament in a considered way shortly.

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust: Doctors

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by Leicester NHS Trust to reinstate the employment of a doctor who was convicted of manslaughter in 2015; and what safeguards are in place to assess professional competence in this and equivalent situations. [HL1790]

Lord Bethell: As the independent regulator, the General Medical Council (GMC) assesses all fitness to practise concerns therefore, it would not be appropriate for the Department to make a specific assessment of their decisions. In serious cases, doctors are referred to the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service who make decisions on a doctor's fitness to practise. If any restrictions are imposed on a doctor's practise, the tribunal can only lift them if they are satisfied that there is no likely risk of repetition or danger to the public.

We expect National Health Service organisations to have robust recruitment procedures. For healthcare professionals, this includes confirmation with the relevant professional regulatory body to ensure the individual has a license to practise and does not have any ongoing fitness to practise concerns. Where the outcome of pre-

employment checks or any subsequent risk assessment are unsatisfactory, organisations retain the right to withdraw the offer of employment.

Vaccination: Industrial Health and Safety

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) scientists, (2) care workers, and (3) volunteers, working with vaccines are kept safe while undertaking their duties. [HL1826]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Employers, including those involved in scientific activities such as the development, manufacture and testing of vaccines, are required to risk assess the activities they plan to undertake and implement controls to mitigate identified risks. Activities with certain types of vaccines (e.g. genetically modified organisms or biological agents), may require notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in advance of the work, providing details of the activity, and a summary of the risk assessment and key controls. Notifications are assessed by HSE before permission is granted.

HSE may carry out inspections of facilities involved in the development, manufacture or testing of vaccines to ensure that necessary controls are in place and workers, including scientists, are not put at risk while undertaking their duties. Inspections cover a range of topics including engineering controls, procedural controls, training and competence of workers and management of health and safety. If breaches of health and safety legislation are identified there are a range of enforcement tools (from verbal instruction to enforcement notices) available to help achieve compliance.

Care workers and volunteers are not involved in the administration of vaccines.

Veterans: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure the protection of veterans who served in Northern Ireland while ensuring that the implementation of any such protection does not result in those responsible for terrorist offences evading justice. [HL2030]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government has been clear that it will deliver on its commitments to NI veterans as part of a wider package to address the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland.

As set out by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland last week, the Government's proposed package focuses on reconciliation, information recovery and ending the cycle of investigations that is not working for anyone.

The Government remains clear however, that it will never accept any moral equivalence between those who upheld the law in Northern Ireland and those, on all sides, who sought to destroy it.

These proposals will be considered as part of the ongoing intensive talks process with the NI parties, Irish Government and representatives of NI society, further to which we will bring forward legislation.

Vocational Guidance: Greater London

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by London First Central Government's Role in Helping London Drive Recovery, published in May; and what plans they have to introduce a London Careers Service to provide tailored and flexible support to (1) young Londoners transitioning from education to employment, and (2) adults who have been displaced as a result of the pandemic. [HL1777]

Baroness Berridge: We are investing over £100 million in the 2021/22 financial year to help young people and adults access high quality careers provision through The Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service. This includes additional funding of £32 million announced as part of the government's Plan for Jobs for the National Careers Service up to March 2022. This additional investment will support delivery of individual careers advice to help 269,000 more people (over 500,000 people in total), whose jobs or learning have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Through the Careers Hubs programme, The Careers and Enterprise Company is putting in place a national programme of support and coordination that will help all schools and colleges to deliver the Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. Careers Hubs have played a vital role supporting young people to transition from school to

the next phase of their lives, by delivering local careers events and developing resources.

We have no plans to delegate the careers budget for young people or adults at this time. We will continue to work with local and combined authorities to ensure that local priorities are fed into the provision of careers advice, so that it is employer-led, integrated, and meets local needs.

Work Permits: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to conclude bilateral agreements with European Union member states on work permit exemptions. [HL1962]

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 that musicians and performers do not require visas or work permits for short-term tours in at least 19 out of 27 Member States without needing visas or work permits. This includes France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and many more.

We are now working with the remaining countries to encourage them to match the UK's generous arrangements, which allow creative professionals to tour here easily. The Government's door also remains open if the EU is willing to revisit the proposals made during the negotiations.

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