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WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers..... 13

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Building Safety Regime

[HLWS225]

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:

Today marks the next major step on our path towards a robust, but proportionate, building safety regime. We seek a regime that delivers high standards of safety for people's homes, particularly those which are high-rise and therefore somewhat higher risk whilst providing reassurance to leaseholders, residents and the market that the overwhelming majority of homes are safe.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy and subsequent independent review of Building Regulations led by Dame Judith Hackitt, exposed serious issues in the regulatory system and construction of some high-rise buildings: developers cladding buildings in combustible materials that should never have been used; construction product manufacturers ignoring safety rules, gaming the system and rigging the results of safety tests; building owners failing to take responsibility for ensuring the safety of their residents; and the Government's regulatory system lacking the strength and oversight to identify these failings and enforce standards.

That is why, as a Government, we have taken a safety first approach in our response to buildings that we know to be higher risk – those over 18m. We have:

- Engaged Fire and Rescue Services to survey all buildings over 18m to assess their safety;
- Targeted Government funding at the buildings we know to be at greatest risk if a fire spreads - those over 18m with unsafe cladding – investing over £5 billion to make those buildings safe as quickly as possible;
- Banned the use of combustible materials in new buildings over 18m, providing industry with a clear standard for the construction of new builds;
- Incentivised the installation of central alarm systems in high-rise buildings with a waking watch through our Waking Watch Relief Fund; and
- Today, we have reached Second Reading of the Building Safety Bill, our landmark legislation that brings forward the biggest improvements in building safety in a generation. The Bill introduces an enhanced safety regime for higher-risk buildings, defined as those over 18m (or seven storeys) - we have enshrined this scope on the face of the Bill.

The Fire Safety Act, which received Royal Assent in April will also ensure that the external walls of buildings are considered as part of routine fire risk assessments for all multi-occupied residential buildings.

We are making good progress in bringing those high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding up to an acceptable standard of safety:

- Over 95% of buildings with 'Grenfell type' cladding identified at the beginning of last year have been fully remediated or have workers on site. By the end of the year, I expect works to have started on all buildings barring a handful of cases where ACM cladding has only recently been identified or where remediation works are especially complex. This means around 16,000 homes have been fully remediated of unsafe ACM cladding – an increase of around 4000 since the end of last year.
- Despite many buildings owners failing to provide adequate basic information, almost 700 buildings, with estimated remediation costs of £2.5 billion are proceeding with a full application to the Building Safety Fund. We have already allocated £540 million which means owners of over 60,000 homes and properties within high-rise blocks are covered by Building Safety Fund applications and can be reassured that unsafe non-ACM cladding on their blocks will be replaced. All eligible applications currently made to the Building Safety Fund will proceed, and we are working with applicants to ensure work gets underway as soon as possible. For any buildings that may have missed the original registration deadline we will be reopening for registrations in the Autumn. This will ensure we meet our commitment to fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18m and over in England. We currently forecast that works of some form will be supported by the Building Safety Fund on over 1,000 high-rise buildings.
- 191 buildings are already benefiting from the £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund. More buildings will benefit from the fund as final decisions are made on applications. Leaseholders are expected to save on average £137 per month, or over £1,600 a year, on Waking Watch costs.

It is right that we have taken a safety first approach and safety will always continue to be our priority and inform the decisions we make. However, it is also thankfully the case that fires in homes in England are extremely rare in all dwellings and I have become concerned to hear from leasehold residents feeling trapped in blocks of flats, particularly those lower than 18m in height. In many cases these residents have been held back from selling their homes and moving on with their lives because of excessive caution in the lending, surveying and fire risk assessment market. Understandably, this has caused some residents worry over safety and unnecessary costs due to a failure, on the part of many parties, to adequately explain the true nature of risk which statistics demonstrate is very low. I want to be clear – the vast majority of residents in all homes, including blocks of flats, should not feel unsafe in their homes. Residents need to be urgently reassured and the evidence presented clearly to them. And, other market participants need to exercise their professional

judgement and not perpetuate this climate of extreme caution.

Driven by these concerns for leasehold residents, earlier this year I asked a small group of experts on fire safety to consider the evidence and advise me on steps that should be taken to ensure that a more risk-proportionate approach is taken to fire safety in blocks of flats. An approach through which genuine life safety risks are tackled swiftly, and where all blocks of flats meet statutory requirements on life safety, but where excessive caution and unnecessary costs are avoided.

The experts I commissioned were:

- Dame Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.
- Sir Ken Knight, Chair of the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on building safety following the Grenfell Tower Fire.
- Ron Dobson, former London Fire Commissioner.
- Roy Wilsher, adviser on fire reform, former Chief Fire Officer.

The key finding of this advice is clear – there is no evidence of systemic risk of fire in blocks of flats:

- Dwelling fires are at an all-time low since comparable statistics started to be collected in 1981/82. This is despite the fact that, in 2020, people spent significantly greater amount of time in their homes as a result of Covid restrictions.
- The vast majority of fires (91%) were in houses, bungalows, converted or low rise (three storeys or lower) flats or other properties, while only 9% were in blocks of flats of four storeys or more.
- Very few fires spread from the room where they start. In 2019/20, 7% of fires spread beyond the room of origin in blocks of flats over four storeys, compared with 9% in blocks below four storeys and 14% in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other dwellings.
- Any death in a fire is tragic, thankfully only a small proportion of fires resulted in a fire-related fatality in 2020: 176 people in total lost their lives in dwelling fires (down from 257 just a decade earlier), of which only 10 fatalities were in blocks of flats of four or more storeys. This is the lowest number of fatalities from fire since comparable statistics began to be collected forty years ago. I thank the Fire and Rescue Services for all that they do to keep us safe.

On this basis, the expert advice, which I have published today on gov.uk, reaches five recommendations to correct the disproportionate reaction we have seen in some parts of the market:

- EWS1 forms should not be a requirement on buildings below 18m.
- In the small number of cases where there are known to be concerns these should be addressed primarily through risk management and mitigation.
- There should be a clear route for residents/leaseholders to challenge costly remediation

work and seek assurance that proposals are proportionate and cost effective.

- Government should work with the shadow Building Safety Regulator to consider how to implement an audit process to check that fire risk assessments are following guidelines, not perpetuating the risk aversion we are witnessing, in some instances, at the present time.
- Fire risk assessors, and lenders should not presume that there is significant risk to life unless there is evidence to support this. This would ensure that they respond only to the evidence and adopt a far more proportionate and balanced approach.

Having carefully considered these recommendations the Government will support and act upon them.

Delivering real change for leaseholders requires a concerted effort from all participants in the market including, Government, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), lenders and fire experts, and we have been working intensively with these groups.

As Government, we are clear that we support the expert advice and the position that EWS1s should not be needed for buildings less than 18m. This position is a significant step and one supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Institute of Fire Engineers.

Government will work with the Health and Safety Executive and others to explore ways to deliver an effective fire risk assessment audit process that ensures assessments are carried out in a risk-proportionate manner and do not recommend unnecessary and costly remediation works where they are not genuinely needed. We will also rapidly progress exploration of options to provide a clear route for residents and leaseholders to challenge costly remediation work.

It is crucial that all market participants show the necessary leadership to help end the nightmare that has impacted the lives of many leaseholders. I thank everyone for coming to the table and supporting the Government's efforts.

I am pleased that all major lenders have welcomed this advice. HSBC UK, Barclays, Lloyds Banking Group and others have said that the expert advice, and our clear response, paves the way for EWS1 forms to no longer be required for buildings below 18m and will help further unlock the housing market. I hope and expect other lenders to follow suit swiftly. I am very grateful to these organisations for their constructive work with Government on this critical issue - I appreciate that it is a complex and some parties have further work to do in which the Government will support them.

Through concerted, cross-market action I believe we can help open up the housing market, allowing thousands to buy, sell or re-mortgage their homes.

This work will be progressed alongside existing steps we are taking to ensure a proportionate response to risk, this includes:

- Development of a new more risk-proportionate guidelines for fire risk assessors, including PAS9980.

The Consolidated Advice Note, the product of the need for reliable safety information in the period following the Grenfell Tragedy will shortly be retired.

- Launching a Government-backed professional indemnity insurance scheme for qualified professionals conducting external wall system assessments. This is aimed at supporting those qualified professionals to complete EWS1 forms, where genuinely needed, in a risk-proportionate manner and will help ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the market to allow EWS1 forms to be completed quickly, helping people to buy, sell and re-mortgage their homes. With the comfort Government backing provides, professionals must exercise their judgement in a proportionate manner and refrain from proposing works that are not strictly necessary to achieve an acceptable standard of fire safety - and risk management and mitigation should always be considered before costly remediation.
- Working with the National Fire Chiefs Council to re-emphasise the scope of the simultaneous evacuation guidance, the temporary nature of waking watches and the alternative proportionate fire safety interventions to be considered before implementing a waking watch, particularly in buildings below 18m.

Latest indications are that the number of residential blocks between 11m and 18m in height are 61,000. Data from one major lender suggests that 7% of flats in buildings up to 6 storeys currently require an EWS1 assessment and in a majority of these cases EWS1s are found to already be held, leading to requests for an EWS1 form on approximately 5% of flats. Of these buildings, the vast majority do not need any remediation work at all. This is reinforced by initial results of surveys of medium rise blocks of flats indicating that the vast majority are free from serious safety risks associated with combustible cladding requiring remediation, and from any associated costs. If the market reacts as we would hope to the expert advice these numbers should reduce yet further and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be able to get on with buying, selling or re-mortgaging their homes. To reiterate, the Government sees no reason why an EWS1 form, or equivalent, should be requested on buildings below 18m. For the very small number where works are required, the presumption in favour of mitigation should also reduce remediation costs.

It is my expectation that these actions will significantly ease the challenges faced by the vast majority of leaseholders looking to buy or sell flats in high-rise buildings and ensure that leaseholders do not face huge bills for unnecessary remediation works. In the very small minority of cases where remediation works are identified in 11m – 18m buildings as part of the normal statutory requirement for buildings to have an up to date fire risk assessment, I can reaffirm that leaseholders will be protected from unaffordable costs by a generous financing scheme through which their monthly cladding repayment costs will not exceed £50.

COP26: Notification of Contingent Liability

[HLWS218]

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

I am writing to notify Parliament of a contingent liability that will be created when the government signs the Host Country Agreement for hosting the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), known as COP26. The Host Country Agreement (HCA) will be signed in October 2021, ahead of the conference taking place in Glasgow in November. The HCA includes a standard liability clause, which commits the host country to indemnify the UN or its personnel against any successful claim in respect of the Conference.

To mitigate against HMG being liable for covering incidents outside of our control, we have asked the UNFCCC to take out an insurance policy to cover claims arising from misconduct or negligence on the part of UNFCCC or its personnel, which they are willing to do and have done for previous COPs. We believe it is appropriate to provide this indemnity to the UN as it is a mandatory requirement for host countries of COP. Although the liability is technically uncapped, my officials have reviewed incidents at previous COPs, and have assessed that the risk of the indemnity being called upon is low.

Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review Report: Government Response

[HLWS222]

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:

The Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS Review) was published on 8 July 2020.

On 11 January, I updated the House on the [government's progress in responding to the recommendations of the IMMDS Review](#).

I am pleased to today announce to the House the publication of the government's full response to the IMMDS review. We have accepted four of the nine strategic recommendations in full, one in principle and two in part. We have also accepted 46 of the 50 Actions for Improvement in full or in principle, one in part and one remains under consideration. We do not accept two of the Actions for Improvement.

This response sets out an ambitious programme of change, which at its core is about improving patient safety by:

- improving how the system listens to and responds to concerns raised by patients by putting patient voice at the centre of patient safety;
- strengthening the evidence base on which decisions are made, including through making sure the right data is collected and used; and
- improving the safety of medicines and devices, and embracing the new opportunities following the UK's departure from the European Union to reform regulatory frameworks.

Recommendation 1: the government should immediately issue a fulsome apology on behalf of the healthcare system to the families affected by Primodos, sodium valproate and pelvic mesh.

The government accepts recommendation 1.

In July 2020, the government apologised in full on behalf of the healthcare system to all the families affected by report for the time it has taken to listen and respond to their concerns. I salute their courage and persistence in coming forward to make these concerns heard; without their bravery, the review would not have been possible.

Listening to patients

The Review was commissioned because the government recognised and accepted that the system had taken too long to listen to patients. One of the key conclusions from the Report was that 'the system has not been listening as it should'. The government recognised the need for effective patient engagement to rebuild trust and ensure that patient voice was embedded in work to develop the full government response to the Report. We were pleased to announce in January that we had accepted the second part of the Report's ninth recommendation, for the establishment of a Patient Reference Group (the 'Group').

The purpose of the Group was to provide challenge, advice and scrutiny to the work to develop the government's response to the Report's recommendations. The Group represented a diverse range of experiences, and members include individuals who have been affected by or have an interest in pelvic mesh, sodium valproate, and Hormone Pregnancy Tests (HPTs), those who have been affected by or have an interest in other medicines or medical devices, and also those with a wider interest in patient safety. The Group met regularly and worked closely with officials to discuss the Report's recommendations in great detail. I met with the Group in June to listen to their feedback directly.

We are extremely grateful to the Group for their insight and honesty. The government response has undoubtedly been strengthened through listening to and learning from group members' experiences, knowledge and expertise. I am very pleased that the final report of the Patient Reference Group has been published alongside the government response today.

Recommendation 2: the appointment of a Patient Safety Commissioner who would be an independent public leader with a statutory responsibility. The commissioner would champion the value of listening to patients and

promoting users' perspectives in seeking improvements to patient safety around the use of medicines and medical devices.

The government accepts recommendation 2.

Patient safety is a top priority for the healthcare system; we want to make the NHS the safest healthcare system in the world, and we must retain an absolute focus on achieving this goal.

As Members will know, the central recommendation in the Report is for the establishment of an independent Patient Safety Commissioner.

The government has accepted this recommendation, and we have already legislated for a Patient Safety Commissioner through the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 (MMD Act).

It is integral that patients are listened to in our healthcare system and the Commissioner will help to make sure patient voices are heard, as envisaged in the Report of the IMMDS Review.

The core role of the Commissioner will be to promote the safety of patients in the context of the use of medicines and medical devices and to promote the importance of the views of patients and other members of the public in relation to the safety of medicines and medical devices.

A public consultation is currently open seeking views on the proposed legislative details on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner. The consultation closes on 5 August 2021. After the consultation has closed, responses will be carefully considered and reviewed, and will feed into the drafting of the regulations on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner.

We plan to have the first Patient Safety Commissioner in post in the first half of 2022.

Recommendation 3: a new independent Redress Agency for those harmed by medicines and medical devices should be created based on models operating effectively in other countries. The Redress Agency will administer decisions using a non-adversarial process with determinations based on avoidable harm looking at systemic failings, rather than blaming individuals.

The government does not accept recommendation 3

As set out in the January statement, we have no current plans for a redress agency, as set out in recommendation 3.

We do not believe it is necessary to create a new agency for redress as it is already possible for the government and others to provide redress for specific issues where that is considered necessary. Neither do we believe that creating an agency would succeed in making products safer as the report suggests, or that grouping existing redress schemes through a single front door would add value for harmed patients.

Recommendation 4: separate schemes should be set up for each intervention – hormone pregnancy tests (HPTs), valproate and pelvic mesh – to meet the cost of providing

additional care and support to those who have experienced avoidable harm and are eligible to claim.

The government does not accept recommendation 4.

While the government is sympathetic to the experiences of those patients who gave evidence to the report, our priority is to improve the future safety of medicines and medical devices. This includes not just the products themselves but also ensuring they are used in line with the latest evidence of best practice – in ways that are both effective and safe for patients. This means we will continue to focus our work on direct support for future safety, improve how the system listens to patients, and support and monitor the safety of clinical practice where medicines and devices are concerned. The MMD Act delivers further on our commitments to patient safety, embedding reform through legislation and delivering an ambitious programme of improvements medicines and medical devices.

Recommendation 5: networks of specialist centres should be set up to provide comprehensive treatment, care and advice for those affected by implanted mesh; and separately for those adversely affected by medications taken during pregnancy.

The government accepts recommendation 5 in part.

The government accepts the first part of recommendation 5; specialist centres for those adversely affected by implanted mesh.

Much progress has been made to establish the specialist mesh services, led by NHS England and Improvement. These services became operational on 1 April 2021, and there are now 8 specialist centres in operation across England. Good progress is being made towards the establishment of a ninth regional service with a South West provider, to ensure patients across the country can access these vital services. It is important that women have choice over their surgeon where possible and I am happy to confirm that when patients request treatment for mesh complications, they can exercise patient choice and be referred to another centre if they wish.

The Report of the IMMDS Review highlights the importance of the specialist services working together re-enforced the need for the commissioned mesh services to network across providers to ensure each service provides comprehensive treatment, care and advice services. I am pleased to confirm that the providers of specialised services for women with complications of mesh will meet annually from 2021 at a Clinical Summit to discuss data and outcomes.

Recognising the need for enhanced data collection on pelvic mesh, the government in 2018 announced the provision of £1.1m for the development of a comprehensive database of urogynaecological procedures, including vaginal mesh, to treat pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence. I can update the House that the pelvic floor information system has started to receive live data, including historical data from July 2017 onwards, with an initial focus on supporting specialist

services to report every pelvic floor and comparative procedure to this national database.

The Report of the IMMDS Review also recommends that the information system is accompanied by a retrospective audit of mesh procedures, and by the development of a patient reported outcome measure (PROM) or patient reported experience measure (PREM). I am pleased to announce to the House today that the government accepts both these recommendations. NHS Digital has been commissioned to scope and deliver the retrospective audit. Subject to receiving high quality research bids, a new validated PROM for pelvic mesh procedures will be commissioned through the National Institute of Health Research in 2022. Additionally, earlier this year a £440,000 research study into ‘[Experiences of Urogynaecological services](#)’ was commissioned by the NIHR to feed into this vital work to develop a new PROM.

The government does not accept the second part of recommendation 5, specialist centres for those adversely affected by medications taken during pregnancy.

We recognise the underlying issue that there is a need to improve the care and support for the individuals and families affected by a range of medicines used in pregnancy, including valproate exposure. However, our view is that a network of new specialist centres is not the most effective way forward. We will instead take forward work to improve the care pathways for children and families affected by medicines in pregnancy, within existing services. This will include strengthening care pathways and tackling the variation in access to services across NHS regions.

Currently, services for all children with neurodevelopmental disorders are primarily managed by multidisciplinary teams within Child Development Centres, which are commissioned locally. These are then supported by regional clinical networks, and specialised neuroscience centres. A limited number of specialist centres focussed only on those affected by medications in pregnancy would not be able to provide the whole range of services that patients need, for example coordinating provision across local health, education and social care systems. It is important that patients who need ongoing care can access services as conveniently as possible, and many of these services are better delivered at a local level. Additionally, a new network of specialist centres could divert clinical expertise and potentially result in a reduced service for all the patient groups involved.

We will also continue work to improve the safety of medicines in pregnancy more widely, and to ensure that valproate is only prescribed where clinically appropriate.

Sodium Valproate

The Report of the IMMDS Review discusses sodium valproate (valproate) in much detail and contains a number of actions for improvement related to valproate. For this reason, we have dedicated a chapter in the government response to valproate.

The January statement updated on the significant work underway to ensure valproate is only used where clinically appropriate, and to improve patient safety for women and girls for whom there is no alternative medicine. The government does not however support calls to eliminate the use of valproate completely; for some women, it is the only drug which is able to control their epilepsy, and it is vital that women are able to access effective treatments.

I am pleased to update the House that much progress continues to be made. The first [report from the valproate registry](#) was published on 11 February 2021, and a second is planned for September 2021. The first report presents an important step to improving our ability to monitor implementation and compliance with the Pregnancy Prevention Programme. There are plans to extend the registry to the whole of the UK and to expand it to include other anti-epileptic drugs later this year, as recommended by the Report. As recommended by the Report, NHS England and Improvement have recently sent a letter to all women of childbearing age who are prescribed valproate, including important safety reminders in relation to contraception, pregnancy and regular prescribing reviews.

I have also heard from patients that measures to reduce valproate prescribing and support women to make informed choices must be holistic and wide-ranging. I am pleased to announce that the MHRA is planning to consult on an amendment to the Human Medicines regulations which would require pharmacists to supply sodium valproate in the manufacturers original pack with a patient informational leaflet. This will ensure that prescriptions for valproate are dispensed with a patient information leaflet and information on risk minimisation measures.

Recommendation 6: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) needs substantial revision particularly in relation to adverse event reporting and medical device regulation. It needs to ensure that it engages more with patients and their outcomes. It needs to raise awareness of its public protection roles and to ensure that patients have an integral role in its work.

The government accepts recommendation 6.

In the January Statement the government announced that the MHRA initiated a substantial programme of work to improve how it listens and responds to patients and the public, to develop a more responsive system for reporting adverse incidents, and to strengthen the evidence to support timely and robust decisions that protect patient safety.

This is set out in detail in the MHRA's corporate delivery plan for 2021-23, '[Putting patients first – a new era for our Agency](#)', which was published on 4 July. This sets out the MHRA's future plans, which centre on: putting patients first; becoming a truly world-leading, enabling regulator; and protecting public health through excellence in regulation and science.

A key strand of this work is improving how the MHRA engages with patients, and ensures patients have an integral role in its work. In May this year, the MHRA published its draft [Patient and Public Involvement Strategy](#) for public consultation. This sets out how the Agency will deliver a step change in its involvement and engagement with patients. Following the consultation, the MHRA will publish the final strategy later this year.

I am pleased to confirm to the House that the MHRA's newly appointed Chief Safety Officer will lead the MHRA's ongoing implementation of the recommendations from the Report. This will help to ensure that the MHRA continues delivering on their commitment to keep patients safe. The post holder will oversee the development of a revitalised approach to vigilance of both medicines and medical devices.

Recommendation 7: a central patient-identifiable database should be created by collecting key details of the implantation of all devices at the time of the operation. This can then be linked to specifically created registers to research and audit the outcomes both in terms of the device safety and patient reported outcomes measures.

The government accepts recommendation 7.

The government has legislated for a patient identifiable database in the MMD Act, which creates a power for the Secretary of State to regulate for the establishment of a UK-wide Medical Device Information System (MDIS).

The Report of the IMMDS Review rightly identifies the need for the healthcare system to centralise and standardise the collection, retention and analysis of data for monitoring the safety and effectiveness of implantable medical devices. In order to close the gap identified in the collection and analysis of this data, it is essential that the UK has a comprehensive system to ensure that implantable devices are effectively monitored and any issues affecting patient safety are responded to appropriately. As required by the MMD Act, the government is planning to hold public consultation on the MDIS regulations. Formal public consultation on the MDIS regulations will begin later this year with the aim of laying the regulations in 2022.

Alongside developing regulations, I can announce that over £11m has been set-aside for a package of work in 2021/22, involving partners across the healthcare system to scope, test and cost options for MDIS and other medical devices patient safety workstreams.

Recommendation 8: transparency of payments made to clinicians needs to improve. The register of the General Medical Council (GMC) should be expanded to include a list of financial and non-pecuniary interests for all doctors, as well as doctors' particular clinical interests and their recognised and accredited specialisms. In addition, there should be mandatory reporting for the pharmaceutical and medical device industries of payments made to teaching hospitals, research institutions and individual clinicians.

The government accepts recommendation 8 in principle.

The government accepts in principle the first part of recommendation 8, for greater transparency of doctors' interest.

We agree that lists of doctors' interests should be publicly available, but we do not think that the GMC register is the best place to hold this information. It is absolutely crucial that any published list of interests is meaningful and accessible to patients. Our approach is therefore for publications of interests to be held by healthcare providers at the local level, because patients know where healthcare professionals work, and are more likely to seek information from the organisation that provides their treatment and care. Additionally, at the local level healthcare providers can ensure patients have the necessary support to understand the relevant information.

We also believe that it is not just doctors who must declare their interests, but rather all registered healthcare professionals. That is why we are going further than the recommendation, and we will make it a regulatory requirement that all registered healthcare professionals must declare their relevant interests. Registered healthcare professionals will be required to declare their relevant interests to their employer, contractor, or the organisation where they are providing services. All healthcare providers will be required to collect, monitor, and publish a list of their employee's relevant interests. At the local level, healthcare providers must ensure that all declarations of interest are publicly available for patients to access, and providers can then ensure there is meaningful oversight of publications of interests.

These changes build on current NHS guidance, which states that all staff should declare interests and organisations should publish the interests of decision making on their website. These changes will also extend publication of declarations of interest to the private sector. We will continue to work with healthcare organisations across the NHS and independent sector, as well as regulators, to ensure there is appropriate implementation, governance, and enforcement of this approach.

The government also accepts in principle the second part of recommendation 8, for mandatory reporting of payments from the pharmaceutical and medical device industry.

The government agrees that transparency of medicine and medical device industry payments to clinicians and organisations is an important part of ensuring patient confidence. As with doctors' interests, it is important that this information is published and easily accessible for patients.

Regarding medicines, the government has listened to stakeholder concerns that the existing industry scheme is voluntary, and that more could be done to achieve consistent transparency in reporting of payments. We have listened to concerns from patient groups and others that a mandatory scheme is needed. We are exploring options to expand and reinforce current industry schemes, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

Regarding medical devices, we recognise that the sector does not have any formal scheme for reporting payments. We have listened to stakeholder concerns that the current situation means that that patients lack crucial information on a highly important area of clinical decision-making. We will work with the devices industry and other stakeholders on the options for introducing reporting of payments for the medical device sector, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

Recommendation 9: the government should immediately set up a task force to implement this review's recommendations. Its first task should be to set out a timeline for their implementation.

The government accepts recommendation 9 in part.

As set out in the Statement of 11 January, the government has no plans to establish an independent taskforce to implement the Report's recommendations. As is convention with independent reports and inquiries, conclusions and recommendations are passed to government for consideration.

The government has considered the Report's recommendations carefully, and our response sets out an ambitious programme of change. We have accepted the majority of the Report's 9 strategic recommendations and 50 Actions for Improvement.

The actions set out in this response are a combination of well-established programmes of work and new initiatives. The government is committed to making rapid progress on all the areas set out in this response. To ensure that Parliament and patients can continue to hold the government to account, we will publish an update on progress to implement the government response in 12 months' time.

Conclusion

The Report of the IMMDS Review is a powerful call to action, and we are determined to deliver meaningful change through the government response.

I would like to once again thank the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and the Rt Hon Theresa May MP for commissioning this landmark review, and to thank Baroness Cumberlege and the Review team for their diligence and dedication in conducting this review.

Above all, I would like to once again recognise and thank the women and their families, who fought to bring these issues to light and to have their stories heard.

The Report highlights a stark inequality in the healthcare system. We cannot ignore the fact that the Report of the IMMDS Review is one of several independent reports and inquiries to have concluded that our healthcare system disproportionately fails to listen to women and keep them safe. This government is determined to change this, not least through our work to develop the first ever Women's Health Strategy for England later this year.

I am depositing a copy of the Government Response and the Independent Report of the Patient Reference Group in the Libraries of both Houses.

Industrial Development Act: Coronavirus-related Assistance

[HLWS219]

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

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as coronavirus-related under the Coronavirus Act. This statement fulfils that purpose.

The statement also includes a report of the movement in contingent liability during the quarter. Hon. Members will wish to note that measures such as Local Authority grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and tax measures such as the suspension of Business Rates are not provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and hence are not included below.

This report covers the first quarter of 2021, from 1 January to 31 March 2021, in accordance with the Coronavirus Act.

The Written Ministerial Statement covering the fourth quarter of 2020 was published on May 17th 2021.

Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of assistance designated as Coronavirus related provided in each relevant quarter. In the period from 1 January to 31 March 2021, the following expenditures were incurred:

Actual expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 1 January to 31 March 2021	£ 1,058,687,252
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All expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 25 March 2020	£ 2,699,037,690
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Expenditure by Department

Actual expenditure of assistance from 1 January to 31 March 2021 provided by:	
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	£ 968,013,744
Department for Transport	£ 86,925,000
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs,	£ 3,748,507

Contingent liability under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 1 January to 31 March 2021	£ 5,666,529,651
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All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020	£ 66,855,181,895
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Loot Box Call for Evidence: Government Response

[HLWS220]

Baroness Barran: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Caroline Dinenage MP, has made the following statement:

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to the loot box call for evidence. The call for evidence received over 30,000 responses which clearly reflects the immense amount of interest in the issue.

The Government takes concerns about potential harms relating to loot boxes in video games seriously. That is why we are continuing to thoroughly evaluate the evidence received to determine solutions that are both robust and proportionate in response to the issues identified from the evidence received. This will be set out in the government response which will be published in the coming months.

Ensuring that video game players are protected is also a responsibility that the Government shares jointly with the games industry. In recent months, we have continued to engage heavily with many in the industry about loot box concerns to determine the most effective solutions to issues identified from the evidence. This includes holding a ministerial roundtable with a number of games companies. Following the call for evidence we commissioned an external rapid evidence review and we are evaluating the findings of this alongside the evidence received from responses.

National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021 to 2026

[HLWS223]

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

Today I am announcing the publication of 'The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026'. The strategy is aimed at significantly improving the lives of autistic people in England.

This strategy builds on improvements made over the decade since the inception of the Autism Act in 2009. The Autism Act was enacted to tackle the multiple disadvantages that autistic people face. It is estimated that around 560,000 people in England are autistic and that autistic people die on average 16 years earlier than the general population. They experience poorer overall health outcomes and face substantial health inequalities in comparison to non-autistic people.

Since the Act's introduction, there have been two strategies, which have resulted in improved availability of services for autistic people, including diagnostic services, and significantly improved public awareness of what autism is. I want to pay particular tribute to our late colleague, my Rt Honourable Friend Dame Cheryl Gillan DBE MP, who was so instrumental in bringing forward

this Act in 2009. She worked tirelessly to improve autistic people and their families' access to services through her role as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA).

Today, I am delighted to announce the publication of the third iteration of the autism strategy, which sets out our vision for how we will make further progress on improving the lives of autistic people over the next 5 years. We have worked with my colleague Vicky Ford MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families on this new strategy, which extends to children and young people for the first time. This is in recognition of the importance of supporting autistic people throughout their lives, from the early years of childhood and through adulthood. We have also worked in partnership with other government departments to ensure the strategy addresses the wide range of issues that affect autistic people's whole lives.

The focus of this new strategy and the actions we are committing to have been informed by evidence including our National Call for Evidence undertaken in 2019, which received 2,745 responses from autistic people, their families and unpaid carers as well as organisations. We also involved self-advocates and family members in the development of the new strategy through our Autism Strategy Executive Group. In addition, the strategy was informed by the APPGA's 'The Autism Act, Ten Years On' report and independent research we commissioned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on autistic people, both of which involved autistic people and their families. I know the pandemic has created new challenges and exacerbated problems many autistic people already faced, including higher levels of loneliness and social isolation.

Today we also publish our response to the CQC's 'Out of sight – who cares?' report and our response to Baroness Hollins' and the independent Oversight Panel's recommendations regarding independent reviews for people with a learning disability and autistic people detained in long term segregation.

The new autism strategy is supported by an implementation plan for 2021 to 2022, which sets out actions we will take forward in the first year of the strategy. We will publish further implementation plans for subsequent years of the strategy, in line with future spending review rounds. The strategy sets out our vision for what we want autistic people and their families' lives to be like in 2026 across 6 priority areas, and the specific steps we, local government, the NHS and others will take to this end in this first year:

- Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society. To ensure that autistic people can take part in their communities without fear or judgment, just like everyone else, we are funding the development of and will test an autism public understanding initiative.
- Improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood. To enable children and young people to

access the right support, we are providing funding to train education staff in autism, and we are strengthening and promoting pathways to employment, such as Supported Internships, traineeships and apprenticeships.

- Supporting more autistic people into employment. We will continue with our efforts to make Jobcentres more autism-inclusive, improve employer awareness and promote better access to employment support programmes for autistic people.
- Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people. To tackle these inequalities, we are investing £13 million to begin reducing diagnosis waiting times for children and young people, as well as adults, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan.
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care. To make progress towards our targets of reducing the number of autistic people and people with a learning disability in inpatient mental health settings, we will take a number of actions. We are proposing to change the detention criteria in the Mental Health Act (1983) to prevent autistic people without a co-occurring mental health condition from being detained for treatment under section 3 of the Act. In addition, we are investing £40 million to improve community support, over £18 million to drive improvements in the quality of inpatient care and providing £21 million as part of the Community Discharge Grant to speed up discharges.
- Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems. To improve autistic people's experience with the criminal and youth justice systems, we will develop a training toolkit for frontline staff on neurodiversity and the additional support people might need. We will also take a number of steps to improve staff awareness and understanding of autism and improve people's access to adjustments.

Over the next 5 years, we will work together to create a society that truly understands and includes autistic people in all aspects of life; one in which autistic people of all ages, backgrounds and across the country have equal opportunities to play a full part in their communities and to have better access to the services they need throughout their lives.

NCA Remuneration Review Body Report 2021

[HLWS227]

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

I am today announcing the government's decision on pay for the National Crime Agency (NCA) for 2021-22.

The government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services,

including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against Covid-19.

The government received the NCA Remuneration Review Body (NCARRB) report on 2021 pay for the NCA on 2 July. This will be laid before Parliament today (CP 467) and published on Gov.uk.

I would like to thank the Chair and members of the Review Body for their work on gathering evidence from the NCA, the Home Office, HM Treasury and the Trade Unions, resulting in their detailed, comprehensive report. The government values the independent expertise and insight of NCARRB and takes on board the useful advice and principles set out in response to my remit letter of 14 January 2021.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented government spending on the response to Covid-19.

My remit letter informed NCARRB that I would not be seeking a recommendation for pay uplifts in the remit group for 2021/22, in the light of the public sector pay pause but invited views on areas including the operational context in which the Agency is operating, its ongoing pay strategy and longer-term plans for its workforce. NCARRB was also invited to comment on how the £250 uplift is best implemented so as to avoid leapfrogging. The NCA has considered options to avoid leapfrogging, including the impacts on its pay strategy, and considers the most effective way to remediate this is by paying a percentage uplift to those who are at risk of being leapfrogged, which is applicable to those earning less than £24,000.

The government accepts the NCARRB observations in full and the awards will be fully funded within the NCA's existing budget.

Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body: Spokesperson

[HLWS221]

Lord Best: I wish to inform the House that I have been appointed by the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body as its new spokesperson in the House of Lords. I take over this role from Baroness Scott of Needham Market, who has held the role since the Sponsor Body became a statutory organisation in April 2020. I would like to place on record the thanks of all the Board members and officers of the Sponsor Body to Baroness Scott for the

tremendous energy and drive she brought as the Sponsor Body spokesperson.

As proposed by the Procedure Committee (1st Report of Session 2019-21, HL Paper 29), the role of the spokesperson is to:

- i) Respond to questions for written answer;
- ii) Respond to oral questions;
- iii) Participate in debates, including responding to questions for short debate, on behalf of the Sponsor Body;
- iv) Make written statements; and
- v) Move the resolution to approve the proposed restoration works and funding (required by section 7 of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019).

The Committee's report was agreed by the House on 17 March 2020 (HL *Hansard*, Volume 802, cols 1388-89).

I have been involved with the Restoration and Renewal Programme since I was first appointed to the Sponsor Board in March 2020. I look forward to working in this new role and engaging with Members across the House in the coming months, which will be a critical period as the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority develop the detailed and costed plan for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Police Pay

[HLWS226]

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

The seventh report of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) was published today. The Body considered the pay and allowances for police officers up to and including the chief officer ranks in England and Wales. The Government appreciates and values the independent, expert advice and contribution that the PRRB makes and thanks the Chair and members for their detailed considerations and observations.

We absolutely recognise the bravery, commitment and professionalism of our police who work night and day to keep us safe and we will continue to give them the resources, tools and powers they need to protect the public.

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against Covid-19.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies,

whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (full-time equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented Government spending on the response to Covid-19.

The PRRB recommended that the minimum rates for Police Constable Degree Apprentice starting pay and pay point 0 of the constable scale should be uplifted by £250, and that all officers with a basic salary above these minima but below £24,000 (on a full-time equivalent basis) should receive a consolidated pay award of £250. The Government has accepted the PRRB's recommendation in full.

The pay award will take effect from 1 September 2021. Officers who have not reached the top of their pay band will also continue to receive incremental progression pay worth at least 2% of salary, subject to satisfactory performance.

Reports on Seclusion and Restrictive Practice for People with Autism, Mental Health Conditions and Learning Disabilities

[HLWS224]

Lord Bethell: My Hon. Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Care) (Helen Whately), has today made the following written ministerial statement:

Today we have published two formal responses to independent reports that the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care commissioned to address and reduce the use of restrictive practice in the care of people with a learning disability or autistic people. The first response is to the recommendations made by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in its report 'Out of Sight – who cares?' published on 22 October 2020. The second response is to the independent interim report by Baroness Hollins reviewing the care and treatment of people with a learning disability or autistic people in long term segregation. A copy of these responses will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

We welcome these reports and strongly support their recommendations. It is our priority to ensure that the rights of people with a learning disability or autistic people are protected and that where needed they receive high-quality care in the least restrictive settings possible.

We have carefully considered these recommendations and are accepting in full or in principle the vast majority, including:

- Developing a pilot for a Senior Intervenor role, which will be focused on reducing the length of time people with a learning disability or autistic people remain unnecessarily in inpatient care in segregation. The pilot will be funded as part of a wider package of £31m to support learning disability and autism services, to address the diagnostic backlog as a result of the

pandemic, and support intervention to prevent children and young people with learning disability, autism or both escalating into crisis.

- Working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to define good practice with respect to admission and discharge protocols, including the development of a clinical contract for admissions.
- Supporting the continuation of an independent review process which provides necessary scrutiny in the care and treatment of people who are subject to segregation. The reviews, chaired by independent experts, are aimed at developing bespoke recommendations, offering advice on implementing person-centred care plans and, where appropriate, moving the individual to less restrictive settings.
- Working with the CQC to ensure more transparent reporting about the use of restrictive interventions in order to improve practice and minimise all types of force used on patients so that it is genuinely only ever used as a last resort.

Our goal is to ensure that care for people with a learning disability and autistic people is therapeutic and beneficial and that the presumption is always that, individuals can be supported to live fulfilling lives in the community. We remain committed to delivering on the Government's manifesto commitment to improve how people with a learning disability and autistic people are treated in law and to make it easier for them to be discharged from hospital. The steps we are taking in responding to these recommendations support this commitment and are part of our wider work on Building the Right Support and the Mental Health Act White Paper.

Response to the 2021 Senior Salaries Review Body Report

[HLWS228]

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

I am today announcing the Government's decision on pay for the senior civil service, senior military, senior managers in the NHS and the judiciary.

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against COVID-19.

The Government received the Senior Salary Review Body's report on 2021 pay for the senior civil service, senior military, senior managers in the NHS, and the judiciary on 28 June 2021. This will be presented to Parliament and published on GOV.UK.

The Government welcomes the Senior Salary Review Body's report and is grateful to the Chair and members for their valuable advice, observations and strategic recommendations outlined within it.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented government spending on the response to COVID-19.

In line with this, the Senior Salary Review Body was not asked to make any recommendations for consolidated pay increases for its remit group this year.

This is the first year the Senior Salary Review Body's remit group has been expanded to include all Very Senior Managers (VSMs) within the NHS and Executive Senior

Managers (ESMs) within the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) arms-length bodies. They were asked to make observations on the current levels of pay for this group to use as a baseline for future years. The Government is pleased that the Senior Salary Review Body agrees that existing pay levels are appropriate and that their observations broadly reflect existing themes within the development of a new pay framework for VSMs within the NHS.

The Senior Salary Review Body made no specific pay recommendations for the 2021/22 pay year for the Senior Civil Service and judiciary and made two recommendations for the senior military.

The Government accepts the Senior Salary Review Body's recommendation to change the annual Incremental Progression date for senior military officers from 1 April to the anniversary of the date of promotion for senior military officers of 2-star rank and above.

The Government accepts the Senior Salary Review Body's recommendation to maintain the current pay differentials for senior medical and dental officers.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Adoption

Asked by *Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Adoption UK The Adoption Barometer: A stocktake of adoption in the UK, published in June, and, in particular, (1) the recommendation for a 10-year commitment to the Adoption Support Fund in England, (2) their finding that only 54 per cent of respondents felt the process for accessing the Adoption Support Fund was clear and only 51 per cent felt it was completed in a timely fashion, (3) the recommendation that all education and health professionals are trained in early childhood trauma, and (4) the recommendation that adoption support should be extended to at least the age of 26. [HL1838]

Baroness Berridge: Improving adoption is a manifesto commitment and Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer report is a valuable resource for informing policy debate. We will be considering the report carefully as part of our planning for funding for future years.

Advanced Maths Premium

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the cost per annum of the Advanced Maths Premium scheme. [HL1880]

Baroness Berridge: The Advanced Maths Premium was first paid in the 2019-20 academic year, when we allocated £10,630,200 to providers of 16-19 education. In the 2020-21 academic year, we allocated £14,059,800 of funding through the Advanced Maths Premium.

This information is available from 16-19 published allocations data at the following links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2020-to-2021-academic-year> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2019-to-2020-academic-year>. This information can be calculated by totalling the allocations to individual providers in the Advanced Maths Premium column.

Amazon: Consumer Goods

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Environment Agency is taking to prevent Amazon destroying unsold stock. [HL1388]

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice the Environment Agency has given Amazon about the need to (1) separate, (2) re-use, and (3) recycle, unwanted stock. [HL1389]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of the recent news regarding Amazon and the alleged destruction of unsold stock and are closely monitoring the situation.

Businesses that handle waste, including companies like Amazon, are obliged to follow the waste hierarchy, under our Waste Regulations 2011, which requires action to prevent waste as the priority option. Failure to meet the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to apply these steps can lead to enforcement action from the Environment Agency in England. Waste is a devolved matter and SEPA is the regulator in Scotland.

The Government recently consulted on its draft Waste Prevention Programme. The consultation document outlined the potential for, and benefits of, action on waste prevention and sets out the actions that the Government intends to take. It recognised that action is required across society – by government, businesses, local authorities, consumers and others - for progress to be made. Responses to the consultation are currently being analysed.

The Government also plans to consult on reforms to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations later this year. Amongst a number of issues, we will seek views on placing new responsibilities on Online Market Places such as Amazon and reviewing existing obligations placed on retailers to ensure they play their part in maximising collections of unwanted electricals for re-use and recycling. We also want to gather views on ways in which we can make it easier for all businesses with unwanted electricals to return them under a system of producer responsibility that respects the waste hierarchy.

The Environment Agency has had no direct contact to date with Amazon over destroying, separating, re-using, or recycling unwanted stock.

Asylum: Children

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their New Plan for Immigration, published on 24 March, whether they intend for the proposal that judges be told to give "minimal weight" to evidence raised by an asylum seeker late in the legal process to apply to unaccompanied children seeking asylum. [HL1801]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The policy intention is that judges must have regard to the principle that minimal weight should be attached to late evidence unless there are good reasons why the evidence was provided late. It will be a matter for judges to make decisions having regard to that principle on a case-by-case basis.

Climate Change: Population

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the link between climate change and population growth; and what plans they have, if any, to weaken this link to reduce the impact caused by population growth. [[HL2017](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Evidence shows that while population growth has an impact on the environment and global emissions, the bigger factor is consumption levels per capita. For example, it takes the average UK citizen five days to emit the same amount of carbon as the average Rwandan does in a full year. Voluntary family planning programmes are one of the most powerful enablers of sustainable development and prosperity. Effective and voluntary family planning programmes can positively change population trends and the overall development trajectory of communities and whole countries, by empowering women and bringing down fertility rates. Good investments in health and education can also enable communities to adapt and respond to climate change.

Key UK aid investments include support for voluntary family planning and for provision of 12 years of quality education for girls in low income countries. This year, we are supporting the launch of FP2030, the new global partnership to accelerate progress on voluntary family planning. This November, the UK is hosting the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26 and is committed to delivering an ambitious and inclusive COP26.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

Asked by *Lord Collins of Highbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the annual budget for the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Cyber and Technology Programme in each of the past five years. [[HL1798](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's (CSSF) Cyber and Technology Programme started in April 2020. The final FY20/21 programme spend will be released in the CSSF annual report due to be published in the autumn.

Corporation Tax: Overpayments

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that businesses are aware if they have overpaid corporation tax. [[HL1985](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK corporation tax regime is a self-assessment regime. This means that the taxpayer is responsible for calculating their own taxable profits or allowable losses. Companies will submit their returns to HMRC confirming this and will, therefore,

make payments of corporation tax or request repayments (where applicable) on this basis.

HMRC do not know that an amount is overpaid until the self-assessment for the period is filed. Repayments are issued automatically at this point, provided there are no other liabilities, open enquiries etc. In all other cases, repayments are treated as a priority and issued as soon as possible.

Similarly, if a company is due a refund for earlier years due to a loss in a later year, HMRC cannot know about this loss until a valid claim is made. To support businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chancellor announced a temporary extension to the loss relief rules enabling companies to make claims to carry back up to £2 million of losses by two further years than pre-existing rules permit. HMRC have introduced a form on Gov.UK specifically to make it easier for companies to make such claims and has recruited additional staff to prioritise these and other repayment claims.

Criminal Justice Royal Commission

Asked by *Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 9 November 2020 (HL Deb, col 798) and the answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 6 July (HL Deb, col 1149), what work has been undertaken by the team of officials appointed to work on the royal commission on criminal justice since November 2020; and what work are they currently undertaking. [[HL1803](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Work to establish a Royal Commission was slowed down last year to prioritise the safe operation of the Criminal Justice System in response to the impact of Covid. As we continue to recover and build back the CJS, it is right that we now pause work on the Royal Commission to allow space for the recovery work before revisiting where a Commission might add most value. As work on the Commission has paused, officials have been redeployed to other roles in government.

Developing Countries: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the overall official development assistance reduction to (1) Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and (2) Family Planning, will be this financial year; and whether there has been an impact assessment of the effects of these reductions. [[HL1811](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary provided thematic ODA allocations for 2021/22 in a written ministerial statement which included £1,305 million allocated to global health. FCDO spend by sector is calculated using OECD-DAC sector codes. Details of FCDO spend by sector code for 2021 will be available in

the Statistics on International Development publication in Autumn 2022 and details of FCDO spend for 2022 will be available in the Statistics on International Development publication in Autumn 2023. FCDO programme sector codes are available on DevTracker.

The impact of the global pandemic on the economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including within our global health portfolio. The aid budget has been allocated in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial climate. Officials considered any impact on women and girls, the most marginalised and vulnerable, people with disabilities and people from other protected groups, when developing advice to Ministers.

Digital Technology: Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a Smart Fund tax on technological devices to support the creative arts sector. [HL1836]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: There are no plans to introduce a Smart Fund tax on technological devices but the Government continues to monitor the way that creative sector tax reliefs are working to ensure they are effective.

The Government recognises the significant disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors such as the creative arts.

During this difficult time the Treasury has worked intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups, and other government departments to understand the long-term impact of Covid-19 on all key areas of the economy and continues to do so.

The sector continues to benefit from the significant cross-economy support made available throughout this pandemic, including the generous employment schemes, grants, loans, a reduction in VAT to 5%, business rates relief, and the extension of the moratorium on commercial evictions for business tenants.

In March 2021, the Chancellor announced a further £300m to build on the existing £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to protect the cultural sectors. To date, more than £1.2 billion in grants, repayable finance and capital has been awarded to over 5000 organisations and sites in England.

Additionally, in March 2021, the Chancellor extended the £500 million Film & TV Production Restart Scheme to enable the screen sector to operate throughout the year. The registration deadline for this scheme is 31 October 2021, and claims will be able to be submitted up to 31 March 2022 for losses incurred up until 31 December 2021. The scheme has directly supported more than 45,000 jobs.

The £7 million UK Global Screen Fund pilot has also been established to support the export of UK independent screen content, in particular UK independent film.

Divorce Settlements

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 6 July (HL1300), whether they have departed from the commitment made by Lord Keen of Elie in his letter dated 16 March 2020 (DEP2020-0150) to gather evidence, consult and develop recommendations relating to the law governing financial provision on divorce. [HL1799]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government remains committed to examining the law governing financial provision on divorce.

On 22 January, in answer to written question HL11921 from the noble Baroness, I said that the Government was committed to set up a Lord Chancellor's working group to take forward that work, including consideration of whether there are problems with the current law. In February 2021, the Nuffield Foundation began an independent research project to investigate how divorcing couples in England and Wales negotiate financial arrangements, both inside and outside the legal system. This study, "Fair Shares? Sorting out money and property on divorce", aims to provide the first fully representative picture of divorcing couples in England and Wales.

In light of this important study, and its relevance to the gathering of evidence, the Government will further consider how best to progress the commitments made by Lord Keen and will announce its intentions in due course.

Domestic Abuse: Homicide

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what are the terms of reference, and (2) what is the planned process, for the Lord Chancellor's review of sentencing in domestic homicide cases; and what plans they have, if any, to hold a public consultation on this matter. [HL1804]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Lord Chancellor's review of sentencing in domestic homicide cases to (1) commence, and (2) report. [HL1805]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what organisations will be consulted for the Lord Chancellor's review of sentencing in domestic homicide cases. [HL1806]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Lord Chancellor committed to reviewing sentencing in cases of domestic homicide earlier this year and I am pleased that the first stage of this review, an analysis of data, sentencing remarks and outcomes of relevant domestic homicide cases from the past two years, is well underway. We are

hopeful that the review will be complete by the end of the year.

The first stage of the review is focused on achieving an improved understanding of current sentencing practice, before moving to a second stage which will consider whether any changes to the law are necessary, and if so, what those changes should be. This initial stage will examine how the sentencing legislation and guidelines have been applied, including in cases where a weapon is and is not taken to the scene, and where victims of domestic abuse have killed their abuser. It will also consider how aggravating and mitigating circumstances are taken into account, the use of current defences to charges of murder and manslaughter, and whether there appear to be gender disparities in case outcomes and how the guidelines are being applied.

Following this initial stage, the Lord Chancellor intends to appoint an independent expert, with the relevant experience and knowledge in this field, to oversee a more detailed phase of consideration and consultation. Their role will be to consider the findings of the initial case review and data analysis and use that as the basis for identifying potential areas for reform and delivering recommendations for change to the Lord Chancellor.

Once the independent expert is in place, we will work with them to finalise the scope and approach for this second phase of the Review, including issues of consultation. Engagement with key stakeholders will be critical and the Lord Chancellor is keen that they have the opportunity to provide their input in helping shape the recommendations. He has already met with both the Victims Commissioner and Domestic Abuse Commissioner to discuss the review as a first step.

Economic Growth: 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 create a London Apprenticeship Fund targeted at small firms affected by COVID-19 to restart apprenticeship growth in the capital. [HL1834]

Baroness Berridge: We welcome the report's focus on the importance of business-led skills programmes in responding to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Through our Plan for Jobs, we are supporting businesses to create employment opportunities and develop their skills bases as we build back better from COVID-19.

We are committed to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the country, including in London, to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer. In the first half of the 2020/21 academic year (August to January), there were 18,400 apprenticeship starts in London.

For the 2021/22 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England is £2.5 billion,

double that spent in the 2010/11 financial year. As well as funding new apprenticeships in levy-paying employers, income from the levy is used to fund new apprenticeships in employers that do not pay the levy. These SMEs continue to be able to access funding for 95% of apprenticeship training and assessment costs, and can now reserve funding for up to 10 new apprenticeship starts in the 2021/22 financial year.

SMEs can also benefit from further funding through the receipt of levy transfers from larger employers who are able to transfer up to 25% of their annual levy funds. In August 2021, we will introduce a new online service to help levy paying employers pledge funds for transfer and find SMEs to receive their transfer. This will allow large employers to make greater use of their levy funds to support apprenticeships in their supply chains and help meet local and regional skills needs.

To further help businesses offer apprenticeships as new employment opportunities, we have increased our cash incentive payments to £3,000 for every apprentice they hire as a new employee from 1 April until 30 September 2021.

Given this existing commitment to supporting apprenticeships in SMEs, we have no plans to introduce a London apprenticeship growth fund.

Education and Skills Funding Agency

Asked by Lord Rose of Monewden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the effectiveness of the Education and Skills Funding Agency in supporting the UK's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; and what plans they have to bring the work of the Education and Skills Funding Agency back under direct ministerial control. [HL1832]

Baroness Berridge: The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is an arm's length body (ALB) of the Department for Education, responsible for administering and distributing funding of over £61 billion to deliver education and skills, from early years through to adulthood. It is accountable to ministers who make key decisions on the ESFA's business, and it has played a key role in supporting the department's response to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 outbreak has highlighted the importance of all government departments and ALBs being set up in the most efficient and effective way, ensuring the delivery of high-quality outcomes for all. In line with this, the department, including the ESFA, keep under constant review how the best possible outcomes for all learners can be ensured.

Equinor: Hydrogen

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the meeting on 28 June with the Norwegian Energy

Minister and state-owned oil and gas company Equinor regarding the bilateral energy relationship, why an announcement was made ahead of the publication of the Hydrogen strategy of Equinor's 1.8gw target for fossil fuel hydrogen. [HL1867]

Lord Callanan: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy met with the Norwegian Energy Minister in Oslo to discuss ways to build back better from the Coronavirus pandemic and tackle climate change. They signed a Joint Statement reaffirming the importance of the bilateral energy relationship between the countries.

The Joint Statement marks a new phase of cross-border energy cooperation between the UK and Norway. The statement celebrated the completion last month of the construction of the North Sea link interconnector and announced that the UK and Norway are close to concluding a historic bilateral treaty on electricity interconnection. It also signalled both countries' commitment to work together on future opportunities to support our economies' transition to clean, green energy.

Both Norway and Equinor already play a valuable role in the UK's energy supply. Equinor has major existing investments in wind and hydrocarbon projects on the UK Continental Shelf.

Equinor announced their latest plans for potential investment in low-carbon hydrogen production separately, following the Joint Statement. Equinor are one of several companies looking to invest in low carbon hydrogen projects in the UK.

Further Education: Finance

Asked by Lord Rose of Monewden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the benefits, and (2) the disadvantages, of the Education and Skills Funding Agency's lagged funding mechanism in assisting businesses to have a pipeline of employees with the skills they need to help the economy to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL1830]

Baroness Berridge: The skills for jobs white paper sets out how the department would place employers at the heart of local skills systems by leading the development of new Local Skills Improvement Plans. Through this, employers will be able to articulate their skills needs, and colleges and other providers will be able to reshape their provision in response.

We have recently launched an extensive government consultation on reforms to the further education funding and accountability system, including how funding is calculated. This consultation is a first step for a funding and accountability system that will maximise the potential of further education and help us build back better. We want to use the consultation to open a dialogue with the sector, employers, and other interested parties on how government funding can be administered more simply and

effectively, so that colleges and other providers can focus on supporting students to develop the skills needed by employers and local labour markets. The consultation will run up to 7 October 2021.

Asked by Lord Rose of Monewden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to change policy so that funding for further education follows the learner, and (2) to scrap the lagged funding mechanism used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. [HL1831]

Baroness Berridge: Funding for providers of 16-19 education, including further education institutions, already follows the principle of funding per student. Funding is based on the characteristics of the student and the courses they study, alongside student numbers from the previous academic year. The system of lagged funding is well established and understood because it provides institutions with clear allocations each year based on student data, allowing them to make plans with confidence. Where institutions see a particularly large increase in student numbers in a year, they typically qualify for exceptional in-year growth funding, in addition to the lagged funding, to help them with the extra costs of these students, though this is subject to affordability. We do not have any plans to remove the system of lagged funding at this time.

The lagged funding system does not currently apply to funding for adult provision. On 15 July, we published a government consultation on reforms to the further education funding and accountability system, to gather views on how colleges and other providers can focus on supporting learners to develop the skills needed by employers and local labour markets. As part of this, we are seeking views on how government funding can be administered more simply and effectively which includes asking for views on whether we should move to a lagged system for core adult funding.

Judiciary: Retirement

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to use the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to amend the law to raise the mandatory retirement age for judicial office holders; and whether, further to consultation on the matter, they will propose an amendment to that Bill to fulfil the commitment made by the Lord Chancellor on 9 March to "legislate to increase the mandatory retirement age as soon as parliamentary time allows". [HL1791]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: As set out in the background briefing notes to the Queen's Speech on 11 May, the government intends to legislate to raise the mandatory retirement age of judicial office holders to 75 through the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, to be introduced shortly.

Livestock: Ritual Slaughter

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of (1) sheep, and (2) cattle, which were slaughtered without prior stunning in the last year for which figures are available, split by (a) Kosher, and (b) Halal slaughter; and what percentage of UK slaughterhouses are licensed to carry out such slaughter. [HL1822]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The most recent assessment was carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), on behalf of Defra and the Welsh Government, over a one-week period in 2018. During that period, the numbers slaughtered without stunning were 60,748 sheep by halal and 222 sheep by Shechita; and 214 cattle by halal and 164 cattle by Shechita.

Religious slaughter can only be carried out in an FSA approved slaughterhouse but there is no separate licensing of slaughterhouses carrying out religious slaughter.

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the average time it takes for an unstunned (1) sheep, and (2) cow, to die after having their throat cut in a UK slaughterhouse. [HL1823]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: No such assessment has been made.

When an animal is slaughtered without stunning, in accordance with religious rites, it must not be moved in any way until it is unconscious and, in any event, not before the expiry of 20 seconds for sheep and 30 seconds for cattle from the neck cut. These "standstill" times are to ensure the animal is unconscious and insensible so it can be moved and are not related to the time it may take for the animal to die.

All slaughterhouses in England, including those where religious slaughter takes place, must have CCTV in place in all areas where live animals are present.

Local Government

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many meetings the (1) Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and (2) Minister of State for Digital and Culture, have had with representatives from the Local Government Association or local Council representatives, since March 2020. [HL1106]

Baroness Barran: The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport met with the Local Government Association this month.

In addition, the Minister of State for Digital and Culture and the Local Government Association were among the attendees for a Museums Working Group in June.

The full list of Ministerial meetings are published on gov.uk on a quarterly basis.

Meat: Ritual Slaughter

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to legislate to ensure that meat from animals which have been slaughtered without prior stunning is clearly labelled as such. [HL1824]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has committed to consult on what can be done through labelling to promote high standards and high welfare across the UK market. First, we will launch a call for evidence this summer to assess the impacts on different types of labelling reforms for animal welfare, including method of slaughter. This will feed into the Government's wide-ranging review on food labelling to ensure that consumers can have confidence in the food they buy and to facilitate the trade of quality British food at home and abroad.

Migrants: Children

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their New Plan for Immigration, published on 24 March, when they plan to consult on the proposal to remove support from families who have become Appeals Rights Exhausted (ARE), but have a child that was born prior to becoming ARE. [HL1802]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office plans to consult on the implementation of the support provisions of the Immigration Act 2016 later this year.

Ministry of Defence: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the investigation into the leak of Ministry of Defence documents which were found at a bus stop in Kent to conclude; and whether they will publish the findings of that investigation. [HL2006]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the Noble Lord to the Written Statement HLWS 186 which was released to the House on Friday 16 July.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HLWS186 - MOD Loss of Secret Documents [HLWS 186.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-07-14/HL2006>

Multinational Companies: Corporation Tax

Asked by Lord Hannan of Kingsclere

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the UK insurance sector regarding the impact of timing differences arising from

Pillar 2 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development BEPS Framework. [HL1810]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: OECD discussions on addressing the tax challenges of digitalisation have been ongoing for a number of years, with the detailed frameworks for Pillars One and Two having been under development since 2019.

Over the course of that time the OECD has conducted multiple public consultations on the proposals and had extensive engagement with businesses across sectors to take their views on board.

UK government officials are also engaged with many sectors regarding the potential impact of both pillars, including with the insurance sector on the specific issue of timing differences under Pillar 2.

North Korea: Coronavirus and Famine

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the famine in North Korea, (2) the effects of COVID-19 on its population, and (3) whether these issues or other factors explain the scale of the evacuation of Russians from that country. [HL1782]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned that humanitarian needs may be growing in North Korea. According to UN figures, 40% of North Korea's population were food insecure in 2019. We assess that North Korea's own restrictions at the border have prevented aid shipments from entering the country since January 2020, and that natural disasters last year may have reduced harvest yields. North Korea continues to claim that it has had zero cases of Covid-19.

We are unable to verify the humanitarian or Covid situations directly, because the border restrictions also forced the temporary closure of the British Embassy in Pyongyang in May 2020. Other Embassies have also closed or reduced their staff, and we understand the Russian Embassy sent some of its staff home in early July. All UN agencies and NGOs have also now withdrawn expatriate staff and ceased operations. We will work to restore the British Embassy presence in Pyongyang once it is safe and possible to do so, and encourage North Korea to allow entry for humanitarian workers to carry out an independent assessment of humanitarian needs, and to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities.

Nuclear Power

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the exclusion of nuclear power from the Green Financing Framework means that they no longer see nuclear

power as a crucial part of delivering the net zero carbon emissions policy by 2050. [HL1840]

Lord Callanan: The Government has been clear that nuclear has a key role in delivering net zero, confirming in the Energy White Paper in December 2020 that it is committed to bringing forward "at least one large-scale nuclear project" this parliament and entering negotiations with EDF on Sizewell C. The White Paper also included plans for £385m in an Advanced Nuclear Fund with up to £215m investment to develop a domestic Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design by the early 2030s.

The role of nuclear in delivering net zero was reiterated in the Green Financing Framework policy document to which the noble Lord refers, which said that "nuclear power is, and will continue to be, a key part of the UK's low-carbon energy mix". The policy document is available at:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-government-green-financing>

Furthermore, eligibility under the Framework is not a determinant of what the government considers to be 'green' – that is the role of the UK Taxonomy, which the Government has committed to developing by 2023. In June the Government announced the formation of a Green Technical Advisory Group to advise on the Taxonomy's development. As part of this, an Energy Working Group will consider how to address nuclear power in the Taxonomy.

HM Treasury intends, where possible, to adhere to best practices in the market and will review the Green Financing Framework's alignment with updated versions of the ICMA Green Bond Principles as and when they are released, as well as the UK Taxonomy as it develops. As such, this Framework may be updated and amended.

Offenders: Domestic Abuse

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 3 February (HL Deb, col 2286), what assessment they have made of (1) the need to review the existing defences for individuals whose offending or alleged offending results from their experience of domestic abuse, and (2) the need for statutory reform in relation to (a) sentencing, (b) conviction, or (c) acquittal. [HL1807]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what conversations, if any, they have had with the Law Commission in the last six months about reviewing the effectiveness of existing defences for individuals whose offending or alleged offending results from their experience of domestic abuse; and what assessment they have made of the need for legislative reform on this matter. [HL1809]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government have committed to conducting a review of domestic homicides which, although primarily about sentencing, will also take account of the current defences to a homicide charge. We intend, following that review, to consider whether it is necessary for a separate review of statutory defences to homicide in the context of domestic abuse to be undertaken, or whether there is evidence of the need for consideration of a specific defence for a wider range of offences for those subject to domestic abuse.

The Ministry of Justice regularly engages with the Law Commission on emerging criminal law issues. Some initial discussions at official level have taken place on this and other related matters but the Government will be awaiting the outcome of the domestic homicide review before it considers whether any legislative change is necessary.

Parliament: Internet

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answers by Lord McFall of Alcluith on 1 and 24 February 2017 (HL4961 and HL5612), why the Religion of Peace website is no longer accessible from computers attached to the parliamentary network, having previously been available. [HL1820]

Lord Touhig: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf. The Parliamentary Digital Service uses an industry standard service to categorise and block websites that are deemed offensive, the “Religion of Peace” website is blocked as part of this automated service as it is classified as a religion-based hate website by the service. There are no indications that the website has been available to access on the parliamentary network.

Police: Cameras

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to update the College of Policing's body worn camera guidance (1) to reduce officers' discretion about its use, and (2) to discourage the practice of turning away from an incident to avoid recording wrongdoing by a fellow officer. [HL1813]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The vast majority of police officers act with integrity at all times and Body Worn Video is a vital tool which helps protect them and the public. The College of Policing has improved its guidance on BWV use with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) guidance published in July 2020. These standards will continue to be periodically updated by the College to keep pace with any issues that arise.

In addition, the Government will consider how to increase the value of BWV in protecting officers and the public.

Prisoners

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people sentenced to Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences have never been released. [HL1792]

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence have been recalled more than once. [HL1793]

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence have been released but not recalled. [HL1794]

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence who have been released applied for the life licence to be lifted as they have been released more than 10 years. [HL1795]

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

As of 31 March 2021, there were 1,784 prisoners serving the IPP sentence in custody who have never been released.

As of the same date, there were 632 prisoners serving the IPP sentence in custody who had been recalled more than once, whilst there were 2243 offenders serving the IPP sentence in the community who have been released and not been recalled.

As of 8 July, 18 applications have been received from offenders requesting termination of their IPP licence. From September this year, officials will refer automatically to the Parole Board the case of every offender serving the IPP sentence who has become eligible to apply for termination of his/her IPP licence.

Notes for all figures:

1) These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database and Prison-NOMIS held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any large-scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

Prisoners: Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many biologically female transgender prisoners are housed in

the male prison estate; what assessment they have made of the safety of those prisoners; what steps they are taking to protect those prisoners from sexual assault; and whether those prisoners are subject to full body searches by biologically male prison officers. [HL1789]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: At the time of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Offender Equalities Report 2018/19, there were 163 people who self-identified as transgender. Of the 129 transgender prisoners in men's prisons, 2 reported their legal gender as female. Although those known to hold Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs) were excluded from this data set, it is possible that prisoners may not always disclose this as there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

The policy framework 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender' sets out how decisions regarding the allocation of transgender prisoners are taken. Local and Complex Case Boards provide expertise on the management of transgender prisoners. When managing prisoners, all risk information relating to each individual must be considered, including risk from others, risk to others and risk of self-harm, in order to protect the welfare and rights of every individual as well as those around them.

Searching arrangements for transgender prisoners are agreed on a case-by-case basis, but must be in line with PSI 07/2016 (Searching of the Person).

Pupil Premium: Children in Care

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of extending the pupil premium for Looked After and Previously Looked After children (Pupil Premium Plus) beyond Year 11, to include students in post-16 education. [HL1839]

Baroness Berridge: The government is committed to ensuring that looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported to succeed in education and achieve positive outcomes.

The department has recently confirmed a £3 million pilot to test the use of pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children and care leavers in further education. Local authorities can apply now to take part in the pilot and successful sites will be confirmed in September 2021, with the pilot starting in October 2021 and running until March 2022. Findings from the pilot will help inform any future post-16 support developed for looked-after children, care leavers, and previously looked-after children. Further information for local authorities interested in the pilot is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot-submit-an-expression-of-interest>.

Recruitment and Vacancies

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and KPMG Report on Jobs, published on 8 July; in particular, the finding that the availability of workers to fill vacancies fell at the quickest rates on record; and what steps they intend to take as a result. [HL1898]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) monitors a wide range of statistics and surveys on the labour market.

We want everyone to be able to find a job, progress in work and thrive in the labour market, wherever they are and wherever they live. Through Plan for Jobs, the government announced over £33 billion in measures to create, support and protect jobs, which includes £2.9 billion funding for Restart and £3 billion investment in the Kickstart programme alongside other measures focussed on boosting work search, skills and apprenticeships.

Alongside measures in Plan for Jobs, DWP is leading cross-government collaboration to identify and remove barriers to working in sectors with immediate or growing demand for jobs. We continue to work closely with these departments and sector bodies to identify and address barriers facing DWP customers and to ensure the provision is available to support individuals to access opportunities in these sectors. We work closely with a range of departments to shape skills support to enable individuals to develop the skills needed in order to move to roles in different sectors

Refugees: Syria

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people likely to be resettled this year under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme; and how that figure compares to (1) 2018, and (2) 2019. [HL1800]

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 number of refugees we resettle every year will depend on a variety of factors including local authorities' capacity for supporting those we resettle and the extent to which Community Sponsorship continues to thrive. This year, the recovery from the pandemic will be a significant factor affecting capacity. We are working closely with our

partners to assess the capacity for resettlement in the months ahead and will continue to welcome those in need in the years to come.

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>

Schools: Disability

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide training for school staff on work-based assistive technology; and what assessment they have made of how such technology can support disabled students. [HL1986]

Baroness Berridge: The department funded training in assistive technology in financial year 2020-21 via the EdTech Demonstrator Programme. National Star College launched a special education need and disabilities (SEND) Hub, which included training on ways assistive technology could be used by teachers, leaders and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) to support all pupils. Materials from these training sessions to support teachers and ensure their practice is inclusive to all learners, can still be accessed through the SEND Hub website and the EdTech Demonstrator website.

The success of this programme is informing our next steps in relation to supporting teachers, leaders and SENCOs with assistive technology, including a proposed pilot training programme for school staff for financial year 2021-22.

The department published a rapid literature review on assistive technology in education in July 2020, which found strong evidence of the positive impact of specific types of assistive technology (for example to improve communication) and recommended training for teachers and other staff on the use, assessment and evaluation of assistive technology.

Social Security Benefits: Disability

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Department for Work and Pensions staff contacted disability claimants who were appealing their decisions to persuade them to abandon their appeals and accept a lower offer; and if such practices have been used, who authorised them. [HL2130]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department's aim is to ensure that claimants are paid the correct amount of benefit at the earliest opportunity. Accordingly, if new evidence or information becomes available after an appeal has been lodged, it is right that decisions are reviewed and

claimants put in the best position where they can choose either to continue with their appeal, or have the decision revised. At the same time claimants have, and have always had, a right of appeal against the revised decision, and to have their payments fully backdated if successful at appeal. Claimants are notified of this right of appeal in their revised decision letter.

Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they are relying on telephone assessments to determine a claimant's level of disability rather than using a video service. [HL2107]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We are committed to improving the experience of health and disability benefits and we are currently delivering health and disability assessments via a variety of channels. Face-to-face assessments are being delivered alongside new telephone and video assessments introduced in response to the pandemic.

A programme of in-house analysis and externally commissioned research into the outcomes from and experiences of the newly introduced assessment channels is underway. The Health and Disability Green Paper will offer an opportunity to hear views on how we can improve assessments, including how we might provide a multi-channel health assessment service. Any future decisions about channel will be evidence-based and to ensure this we will draw on existing evidence as well as continuing to build our understanding via research and analysis.

Special Educational Needs

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to create a national framework of minimum standards of support for children with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools. [HL1835]

Baroness Berridge: The government is carrying out a review of the special educational needs and disabilities system, which includes looking at the support available in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The review is looking at how to ensure support across all education settings is consistent, high quality and joined up across health and care.

It is also considering measures to make sure that money is being spent fairly, efficiently, and effectively, and that the support available to children and young people is sustainable in the future.

This cross-government review is being led by the Department for Education, working closely with other government departments, partners in education and with children, young people, and their families.

Stan Swamy

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of India about the death of Father Stan Swamy in custody whilst awaiting trial in that country. [HL1819]

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

We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and oppose discrimination against minorities because of religion, caste, or belief. The British High Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Mumbai had been monitoring Father Swamy's case closely and will continue to monitor progress on the rights of Dalits and indigenous people in India.

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

Technology: China

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to diversify the UK's technology supply chains away from China. [HL1787]

Baroness Barran: China is a leading member of the international community and we have a strong and constructive relationship with China in many areas. It has to be part of the solution to any major global problem we face; whether ensuring we do not face another devastating global health crisis, supporting vulnerable countries or addressing climate change. Our approach to China remains clear-eyed and rooted in our values and our interests.

The security and resilience of the UK's telecoms networks is of paramount importance. That is why the Government undertook the Telecoms Supply Chain Review, a comprehensive review of the supply arrangements for telecoms infrastructure in the UK.

One example of where the government is seeking to diversify its supply chain is in 5G technology. On 2 July the Government published its response to the Diversification Taskforce's recommendations on

solutions and opportunities to diversify the supply market for 5G.

We will progress action across all four areas that the Taskforce focused on. As a part of our ambitious diversification strategy, we will be looking to identify opportunities to diversify component supply chains, both geographically and in terms of the range of suppliers, in order to establish greater resilience against shocks or market disruption.

Trade Agreements: Musicians

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Minister for International Trade on 14 June (13157), whether the new trade deal agreed in principle will enable British musicians and performers to tour for up to 90 days every six months without a permit in Iceland and Liechtenstein. [HL1879]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The agreement secures access to Iceland and Liechtenstein for British service suppliers in all sectors, and to short-term business visitors working in culture and entertainment. This guarantees that British musicians and performers can enter Iceland as visitors to perform for up to 90 days within one calendar year without a permit; and up to eight days within a 90 day period as service providers in Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein does not require British nationals to hold visas under this route.

UK Border Force and UK Visas and Immigration: Staff

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many full-time staff there have been in (1) UK Visa and Immigration, and (2) UK Border Force, in each year since 2017. [HL1511]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Information relating to the staffing in the Home Office including UK Visa and Immigration and Border Force is contained in the annual report and accounts since 2017.

2016/2017

UK Visa and Immigration total staff 6,467

Border Force total staff 7,670

The full report for 2016/2017 can be found at:

Home Office annual report and accounts: 2016 to 2017

2017/2018

UK Visa and Immigration total staff 7,680

Border Force total staff 7,734

The full report for 2017/18 can be found at:

Home Office annual report and accounts: 2017 to 2018

2018/2019

UK Visa and Immigration total staff 9,058

Border Force total staff 8,197

The full report for 2018/19 can be found at
Home Office annual report and accounts: 2018 to 2019
2019/2020

UK Visa and Immigration total staff 10,254
Border Force total staff 9,027

The full report for 2019/20 can be found at:
Home Office annual report and accounts: 2019 to 2020

The Home Office Annual reports and accounts for 2020 to 2021 will be published in due course.

UKVI regularly reviews its capacity plans and resources. Redeploying and recruiting staff where necessary to help meet and maintain service standards for individual services.

Border Force is confident the resources to meet anticipated overall operational requirements are in place as well as recruiting sufficient additional frontline staff and continuing to build staffing levels during 2020/2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HO Annual Report and Accounts for 2019-2020
[HO_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2019-20_FINAL.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-06-29/HL1511>

Universal Credit

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the £20 increase in Universal Credit will be retained. [HL1856]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and we announced the temporary uplift as part of a £400 billion package of measures put in place

that will last well beyond the end of the roadmap. Our focus now is on our multi-billion Plan for Jobs, which will support people in the long-term by helping them learn new skills and increase their hours or find new work.

Zimbabwe: Business

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by The Sentry Shadows and Shell Games: Uncovering an Offshore Business Empire in Zimbabwe, published on 1 July; and what steps they intend to take as a result. [HL1817]

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to apply sanctions against the Zimbabwean Presidential adviser, Kudakwashe Tagwirei. [HL1818]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the report by the Sentry Shadows and Shell Games, published on 1 July, about the offshore business empire and corruption dealings of Kudakwashe Tagwirei. The UK is deeply worried about the state of the Zimbabwean economy, which continues to face unprecedented challenges largely due to corruption, poor fiscal policies and economic mismanagement by the Government. The UK remains committed to reducing poverty and helping the people of Zimbabwe secure their constitutional freedoms.

We continue to look at how all the tools available to the UK, including the full range of sanctions regimes, can be used to encourage accountability and reform in Zimbabwe. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Building Safety Regime 1	Livestock: Ritual Slaughter 18
COP26: Notification of Contingent Liability3	Local Government 18
Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review Report: Government Response3	Meat: Ritual Slaughter..... 18
Industrial Development Act: Coronavirus-related Assistance8	Migrants: Children..... 18
Loot Box Call for Evidence: Government Response.....8	Ministry of Defence: Disclosure of Information 18
National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021 to 2026.....8	Multinational Companies: Corporation Tax 18
NCA Remuneration Review Body Report 2021 ..9	North Korea: Coronavirus and Famine..... 19
Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body: Spokesperson.....10	Nuclear Power 19
Police Pay10	Offenders: Domestic Abuse..... 19
Reports on Seclusion and Restrictive Practice for People with Autism, Mental Health Conditions and Learning Disabilities..... 11	Parliament: Internet 20
Response to the 2021 Senior Salaries Review Body Report 11	Police: Cameras 20
Written Answers.....13	Prisoners 20
Adoption..... 13	Prisoners: Gender Recognition 20
Advanced Maths Premium 13	Pupil Premium: Children in Care 21
Amazon: Consumer Goods..... 13	Recruitment and Vacancies 21
Asylum: Children 13	Refugees: Syria..... 21
Climate Change: Population..... 14	Schools: Disability..... 22
Conflict, Stability and Security Fund 14	Social Security Benefits: Disability 22
Corporation Tax: Overpayments 14	Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations22
Criminal Justice Royal Commission 14	Special Educational Needs 22
Developing Countries: Health Services..... 14	Stan Swamy 23
Digital Technology: Taxation..... 15	Technology: China 23
Divorce Settlements..... 15	Trade Agreements: Musicians 23
Domestic Abuse: Homicide..... 15	UK Border Force and UK Visas and Immigration: Staff 23
Economic Growth: Greater London 16	Universal Credit..... 24
Education and Skills Funding Agency 16	Zimbabwe: Business..... 24
Equinor: Hydrogen 16	
Further Education: Finance 17	
Judiciary: Retirement..... 17	