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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Thursday, 22 July 2021

2021-22 Pay Review Body Recommendations

[HLWS230]

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:

I am responding on behalf of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister to both the 34th Report of the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) and to the 49th Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB). I am grateful to both Chairs and the members of both review bodies for their reports.

At the 2020 Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that pay uplifts in the public sector would be paused this year due to the challenging fiscal and economic context, but, given the unique impact of Covid-19 on the health service, and despite the challenging economic context, the Chancellor committed to continue to provide for pay rises for over 1 million NHS workers.

It is within this context and after careful consideration of both reports that we have chosen to accept the recommendations of both PRBs for 2021/22. In doing so, we have committed to uplifting the salaries of staff within the remit groups by 3% on a consolidated basis. This is expected to be a real-terms increase and nurses will receive an average increase of around £1,000. Overall, the awards amount to a cost to the NHS of £1.9bn for the Agenda for Change workforce and £0.3bn for Consultants.

This is not without its challenges given the economic and fiscal context.

This is an annual process and as is always the case, decisions about future awards will be considered in light of the fiscal context and ensuring awards are affordable and fair.

Investing in the NHS to ensure patients get the care they need as quickly as possible is also a key priority for this Government. We are delivering on our historic long-term settlement for the NHS, which will see NHS funding increase by £33.9 billion by 2023-24. To recognise the unprecedented pressure facing the NHS, the Government is providing £3bn of additional funding to the NHS in 2021/22 to support its recovery from the impacts of Covid.

The DDRB were asked not to make a pay recommendation for contractor General Medical Practitioners (GMPs), doctors and dentists in training or Specialty and Associate Specialist doctors moving onto new contracts as those groups are within multi-year deals. For doctors and dentists in training the multi-year deal will mean all junior doctor pay scales will have increased by 8.2% by the end of the deal, and in addition circa £90 million is being invested to reform the contract, including

to create a new, higher pay point to recognise the most experienced doctors in training.

The Government is also committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by the end of this Parliament and this pay award will help us to ensure we can continue to recruit and retain the nurses we need to reach this target. The number of NHS nurses currently employed in CCGs and NHS Trusts is at the highest recorded level in England, and the latest published NHS Digital provisional data for April 2021 shows 303,800 FTE nurses in NHS Trusts and CCG's, almost 9,000 FTE more than April 2020.

Salaried GMPs

For salaried GMPs the minimum and maximum pay range set out in the model terms and conditions will be uplifted. As self-employed contractors to the NHS, it is for GMP practices to determine uplifts in pay for their employees.

Clinical Excellence Awards

The Government also acknowledges the DDRB's comments on Clinical Excellence Awards and their reasons for not recommending an increase in their value. With this in mind, we will progress our plans to reform these awards with a view to introducing new arrangements from 2022.

General Dental Practitioners

For General Dental Practitioners, there will be a 3% general uplift in the pay element of their contract backdated to April 2021.

The Government recognises the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on NHS dentistry, as discussed within the DDRB report. In response to these challenges, the government has ensured that dentists receive their full contract value, minus deductions which are pre-agreed, in exchange for a reduced threshold of activity.

Abortion Services Directions 2021

[HLWS236]

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

Today I am issuing a direction to the Department of Health, the Minister of Health, the Health and Social Care Board, and to the First and deputy First Minister, to commission and make abortion services available in Northern Ireland as soon as possible, and no later than 31 March 2022. I am also directing that there should be immediate support for interim services of early medical abortion, which are at risk of collapse.

I have a statutory duty to protect the rights of women and girls in Northern Ireland, imposed by section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019. This duty requires me to ensure that the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the 2018 Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Report are implemented in full. I therefore

have a duty to “provide women with access to high-quality abortion and post-abortion care in all public health facilities”. I acknowledge and respect the deeply held views that individuals hold on this issue. However, it is the clear will of Parliament that the rights of women and girls in Northern Ireland are properly upheld.

The Government laid the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 and they came into force on 31 March 2020. Those Regulations delivered a framework for abortion services which struck the appropriate balance between delivering a CEDAW compliant legal framework that ensures the health and safety of women and girls, and gives clarity and certainty to the healthcare profession, but is also sensitive to the circumstances in Northern Ireland.

In March 2021, we took a further step and made the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021. We took this important step because a year after the 2020 Regulations were made, women and girls in Northern Ireland are still unable to access high-quality abortion and post-abortion care in Northern Ireland in all the circumstances allowed by the Regulations we made on 31 March 2020. This remains the case today.

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 gave me a power to direct a Northern Ireland Minister, a Northern Ireland department and the Health and Social Care Board of the Public Health Agency to take action necessary to implement all the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW report. The Regulations were debated on the 26 and 28 of April 2021 in the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively and both houses supported the regulations overwhelmingly, with a majority of 431 to 89 on a free vote in the Commons.

For over a year, the Northern Ireland Office has continued to work closely with the Department of Health, and other relevant Northern Ireland departments, trying to progress this work. Some service provision commenced on the ground from last April and I put on record my thanks to the medical professionals and Informing Choices Northern Ireland who have ensured that women and girls have had some local access to abortion services in Northern Ireland, and the organisations that have supported this work.

Though I recognise the huge strain that Covid-19 has placed on healthcare in Northern Ireland, I remain extremely disappointed that full commissioning proposals have not yet been brought forward by the Department of Health and that the Executive has not an opportunity to discuss them. This ongoing stalemate leaves me no choice but to issue a direction. I have a legal and moral obligation to ensure the women and girls in Northern Ireland are afforded their rights and can access the healthcare as set out in the 2020 Regulations.

I am now directing the Department of Health to secure the commissioning and availability of the relevant healthcare services. The direction also includes an immediate requirement for the Department of Health to continue to support the Central Access Point provided by

Informing Choices NI (ICNI) who are key to providing Early Medical Abortion services. I have chosen to impose a deadline for the availability of commissioned services of 31 March 2022 to account for the Department of Health’s estimate that it would take 8-12 months to make fully commissioned CEDAW compliant services available.

I am also directing the Department of Health and the Regional Health and Social Care Board. The direction includes a requirement to commission, provide and fund abortion services so that they are available in all of the circumstances in which abortions are lawful. This includes access to services in cases of Fatal Fetal Abnormality and Severe Fetal Impairment in line with the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No 2) Regulations 2020 in any service commissioned. It is for the Northern Ireland Executive to allocate all necessary funding for abortion services from its Barnett-based Block Grant or its own resources.

I am also directing the First Minister and deputy First Minister that once proposals are brought forward by the Department of Health, they must be included on the agenda at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

At the heart of this matter are the women and girls in Northern Ireland, who have been, and continue to be, denied the same reproductive rights as women in the rest of the UK. Parliament determined that this should be corrected and by exercising the power to direct, we will ensure that it is.

British Council: Sale of IELTS in India

[HLWS237]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Honourable Friend, the Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

1) I can today inform Parliament that the British Council, a non-departmental public body of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, will sell its IELTS English language test business in India to IDP Education, for £130 million. The business will be sold on debt free, cash free basis.

Rationale

2) Like many organisations, Covid-19 has had a significant financial impact on the British Council’s operations. The proceeds from the sale will strengthen the British Council’s financial position and support its modernisation process.

Format and timing

3) Due to the nature of the agreement between the British Council and its IELTS partners, there is only one possible buyer of the British Council’s India IELTS business. Ernst & Young provided an independent valuation, which concluded that the offer for the business was fair and reasonable.

4) UKGI has worked closely with the FCDO providing valuable advice on commercial aspects of the British Council’s outline and full business cases for the transaction.

Fiscal impacts

5) I can confirm that the net sale proceeds of £120 million were above the government's retention value range.

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Impact (over a 5yr horizon)</i>
Net sale proceeds	£120 million
Retention value range	Above
Public Sector Net Borrowing	No immediate impact
Public Sector Net Debt	Improved by a total of £120m
Public Sector Net Financial Liabilities	Improved by a total of £120m
Public Sector Net Liabilities	Improved by a total of £118m

Covid-19: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS235]

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

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-22.

Parliamentary approval for resources of £4,206,110,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £4,206,110,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Further requests to the Contingencies Fund may be made as necessary to fund Covid-19 activity delivered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Cross-Government Functions and Digital Delivery

[HLWS244]

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained our country's resilience like nothing we have seen out of wartime, and the public has endured huge sacrifices. Our mission now is to respond by transforming the country for the better, levelling up, and making opportunity more equal. To achieve these changes, government must be reformed.

The recently published [Declaration on Government Reform](#), set out a plan for the renewal and rewiring of government, as a means to deliver the better Britain that the public demands and deserves. As part of its focus on improving performance, the Declaration committed to improving the cross-government functions and strengthening standards and spending controls, to ensure the Government is delivering both excellence and value for money.

The Government is today publishing two independent and separate reports which each contain recommendations on how to improve the cross-government functions and digital delivery. These two reports are:

- i) A Review of the cross-cutting functions and the operation of spend controls, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Maude of Horsham; and
- ii) Organising for Digital Delivery report presented to the Digital Economy Council.

Lord Maude's advice and the Organising for Digital Delivery report presented to the Digital Economy Council are critical to driving reform activity within the cross-government functions, and the reports were invaluable input in finalising the commitments and actions in the Declaration.

Lord Maude's recommendations are centred around a strong functional model with three essential elements of Leadership, Capability and Mandate. Strong progress is being made on the functional reform activity, overseen by myself and Lord Agnew, and a Board chaired by Alex Chisholm, the Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service. Some examples of progress so far include:

- New leadership put in place for the Digital Data and Technology function, as announced in January this year. This included the establishment of the Central Digital and Data Office to work with the Government Digital Service and lead the Digital, Data and Technology function for government, also taking on responsibility for the Government Automation Taskforce.
- The Infrastructure and Projects Authority's publication of its mandate in January, which sets out clearly its own responsibilities and those of departmental Accounting Officers for major government projects and programmes. This is critical to making sure they are set up for success from the outset, supporting the Government to meet its ambitions.
- Steps have been taken to strengthen spending controls, and increase their reach and effectiveness. More organisations are now in scope and the controls are being applied more consistently within departments.
- Lord Maude's report advises on the need to set in train (or complete, where already underway) assessment and accreditation programmes; multiple functions are actively exploring how this should be achieved. Investment in professional expertise, recognising its importance, will be an integral part of Government functions. For example, the training and accreditation of Contract Managers across Government is being led by the Government Commercial Function, which is critical to driving excellent value for money for taxpayers.
- We are implementing a programme of modernisation to strengthen and unify the communications profession across Government, to provide more efficient, responsive and effective communication which delivers Government priorities with one voice. This will build fulfilling careers for people and allow us to attract and develop the best talent.

• The Shared Services Strategy for Government was published in March 2021. Following Lord Maude's advice, and working across Government, a core element of the strategy is the plan to consolidate all back office services into a maximum of five centres. This will achieve better quality services for staff, better people data and reduced cost, encouraging greater collaboration and improving interoperability across Government.

Copies of both reports have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Dealing with Rape and Serious Sexual Offences: Defence's Strategy

[HLWS238]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Leo Docherty MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am pleased to announce the Ministry of Defence's intent to publish a Defence wide strategy for dealing with rape and serious sexual offences in the Service Justice System (SJS).

As set out in the cross-Government Violence Against Women and Girls strategy published yesterday (21 July), crimes against women and girls is an unacceptable, preventable issue. To echo the Lord Chancellor in his statement on the End-to-End Rape Review on 21 June, rape and serious sexual offences are some of the most horrific crimes dealt with in both the civilian criminal justice system, and the Service Justice System. They have devastating and lasting effects on victims, and it is only right that action is taken to improve public confidence, make the system fairer and more effective and encourage victims to come forward.

The SJS deals with significantly fewer cases of rape and serious sexual offending compared to the civilian criminal justice system, however Service personnel must have confidence that they will receive the same high-quality care, support and justice in either system. Viewed as a proportion of allegations reported rather than just the cases which reach court, in 2020 the conviction rate in the Service Justice System was around 8%^[1] compared to around 2% in the civilian criminal justice system^[2]. Whilst we are confident the SJS is capable of dealing with the most serious offences it is still not good enough, both systems must do better. Which is why we will be producing a strategy that will pull together ongoing work across the whole of the SJS.

The Ministry of Defence has already been working with the agencies and bodies within the SJS to introduce improvements by implementing the majority of recommendations made in the Service Justice System Review (2019) by HH Shaun Lyons. This includes measures such as the creation of a Defence Serious Crime Unit; changes to how the Court Martial operates; and better support for victims and witnesses.

In addition, the Defence Secretary has asked Sir Richard Henriques to conduct an independent review into policing, prosecutorial and other processes for addressing allegations emanating from overseas operations. The review, which is due to report shortly, will set out recommendations on improving the investigative processes within the SJS.

Furthermore, the Defence Select Committee inquiry into Women in the Armed Forces, is due to publish its report shortly. The Committee has been looking at the experience of our female service personnel from recruitment to transition and considering whether there are unique challenges that are not adequately addressed by the current policies and services. The Committee received evidence from current and former female Service personnel in their thousands, for which serving personnel were given special permission to contribute. We expect this report to make a number of recommendations in relation to the handling of rape and serious sexual offence cases and we will review its evidence and recommendations with the full seriousness and sensitivity they deserve.

To build on these developments, and the recent publication of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, the Defence Secretary and I have commissioned a Defence wide strategy for how rape and serious sexual offences are dealt with in the SJS. The strategy will aim to reduce the prevalence and impact of rape and other serious sexual offending in the Armed Forces and improve the handling of those cases in the SJS. It will learn from the Government's recent response to the review of the end-to-end handling of rape cases in the civilian criminal justice system and provide reassurance that the SJS is also determined to do better and hold component parts of the system to account for delivering improvements.

The strategy will recognise the importance to our people and to the wider service community of the damage caused by sexual offending. With that in mind, we will ensure that support is provided to those who want it, and reassurance that it will remain in place for as long as it is needed. In addition, we will be open and transparent about what victims can expect from the SJS at all stages of their case.

The strategy will bring together in one place all the provisions which the Service Justice System already has for dealing with cases of rape and serious sexual assault and ensure they are coherent across the whole system and that the interests of the victim are prioritised.

[1] www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sexual-offences-in-the-service-justice-system-2020

[2] www.gov.uk/government/publications/end-to-end-rape-review-report-on-findings-and-actions

Global Anti-corruption Sanctions

[HLWS239]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth

and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today, the UK has imposed asset freezes and travel bans on five individuals under the Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions Regulations 2021.

This is the second set of designations under this regime since the Regulations were laid in April 2021. The regime can be used to impose sanctions for serious corruption around the world. As set out in the Regulations, the activities covered are bribery and misappropriation, plus a range of different kinds of involvement in such bribery or misappropriation.

These designations address cases of serious corruption which have deprived citizens of vital resources in Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

In Equatorial Guinea, the sanctions target the Vice President, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, for his involvement in the misappropriation of state funds, corrupt contracting arrangements and soliciting bribes to fund a lavish lifestyle in various countries abroad. We have designated Nawfal Hammad Al-Sultan, a former Iraqi Governor, who misappropriated public funds intended for reconstruction efforts and to provide support for civilians, and improperly awarded contracts and other state property. We have designated Alex Nain Saab Morán and Alvaro Enrique Pulido Vargas, businessmen with links to the Maduro regime, for exploiting two of Venezuela's public programmes which were set up to supply poor Venezuelans with affordable foodstuffs and housing. They benefitted from improperly awarded contracts, where promised goods were delivered at highly inflated prices. Finally, we have designated Kudakwashe Regimond Tagwirei, a Zimbabwean businessperson whose involvement in misappropriation was at the expense of the country's macroeconomic stability.

These latest designations show the UK's ongoing commitment to the fight against corruption. They send a powerful message to deter those involved in serious corruption around the world: you and your dirty money are not welcome in our country. We will continue to keep future designations under close review, guided by the purposes of the sanctions regime and the evidence.

Innovation and R&D Strategies, Post Office Horizon and Framework for Better Regulation

[HLWS243]

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

UK Innovation Strategy

Today the Government is publishing both the UK Innovation Strategy, 'Leading the future by creating it.'

Innovation is central to tackling the largest challenges the world faces, from climate change to global pandemics.

The UK must be in the vanguard of the response to these challenges. That is why the Government has placed innovation at the heart of our Plan for Growth and so much else we want to achieve, from fighting coronavirus to achieving net zero and building Global Britain.

The UK has a long and illustrious history of world-leading innovation, from the industrial revolution to the vaccine development of the past year. Now we have left the EU, we can move even more quickly to respond to emerging challenges and global opportunities, and cement the UK's position as a world-leader in science, research and innovation.

To this end, the UK Innovation Strategy sets out the Government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035, placing innovation at the centre of everything this nation does. Through this we seek to generate disruptive inventions, the most tech-centric industry and government in the world, more tech "unicorns", and a nation of firms and people that all aspire to innovate.

To achieve these objectives, we want to unlock business investment in innovation. This is a core objective of the Innovation Strategy, and my officials have consulted with over 400 businesses and organisations to determine the factors that could lead to an increase in business innovation.

In the Innovation Strategy we set out our plans against four key pillars, which will support the achievement of our vision:

- Pillar 1: Unleashing Business – We will fuel businesses who want to innovate.
- Pillar 2: People - We will make the UK the most exciting place for innovation talent.
- Pillar 3: Institutions & Places - We will ensure our research, development and innovation institutions serve the needs of businesses and places across the UK.
- Pillar 4: Missions & Technologies – We will stimulate innovation to tackle major challenges faced by the UK and the world and drive capability in key technologies.

Through these pillars, the Innovation Strategy aims to both establish the right underlying policy environment and clearly signal those areas where the Government will take the lead.

This Innovation Strategy is only the first step. In the coming months and years, we will maintain a laser-like focus on realising our ambitions for innovation. We will track a range of quantitative metrics to measure our progress in delivering our commitments, alongside in-depth intelligence from businesses and other innovation stakeholders. Innovation will also be a crucial element of our efforts to level up the UK economy. A detailed strategy for levelling up through research and innovation will be set out as a part of the Government's forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper.

I will place a copy of the Innovation Strategy in the Libraries of both Houses.

R&D People and Culture Strategy

I am also delighted to announce that the government has today published its R&D People and Culture Strategy, delivering on the commitment we made in the R&D Roadmap last summer. The Roadmap recognised that people are at the heart of R&D, and that we need talented, diverse people, with the right skills, working in an environment that allows them to do their best work and deliver positive outcomes for our society and the economy.

The R&D People and Culture Strategy sets out, for the first time, a whole sector vision that is backed by clear government commitments. It is a call to action to create a more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable UK R&D sector, in which a diversity of people and ideas can thrive.

Through this strategy, we will set out actions that will bring the best out of people and enable talent and ideas to flow freely between academia, business, and other sectors. We will ensure that everyone's contribution is valued, and the UK has an outstanding research culture that truly supports discovery, diversity, and innovation, and offers varied and diverse careers that bring excitement and recognition.

The Strategy identifies three priority areas across which action is needed:

- *People*: redefining what it means to work in R&D in the 21st Century – valuing all the roles that make it a success and ensuring the UK has the capability and capacity it needs.

- *Culture*: co-creating a vision of the culture we want to see within the sector - working together to make lasting change happen so that researchers and innovators with diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking can thrive and do their best work here.

- *Talent*: renewing the UK's position as a global leader in R&D in attracting, retaining and developing talented people, making sure careers in UK R&D are attractive to talented individuals and teams both domestically and internationally.

A talented and thriving R&D workforce will be key for realising our science superpower ambitions, and the R&D People and Culture Strategy will play an important role in supporting the vision I am setting out in the Innovation Strategy to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035.

We have engaged widely with the sector to date on the issues identified in this strategy, and my Hon. Friend the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation and I are very grateful to the hundreds of individuals and organisations who have contributed to their respective development. The Government will continue working closely with the sector to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy.

I will place a copy of the R&D People and Culture Strategy in the Libraries of both Houses.

Post Office Horizon Update

This House is aware of the distressing impact that problems with the Post Office's Horizon IT system have had on the lives and livelihoods of many postmasters.

Over the years, the Horizon accounting system recorded shortfalls in cash in branches. These shortfalls were treated by the Post Office as caused by postmasters, and this led to dismissals, recovery of losses by Post Office Ltd and, in some cases, criminal prosecutions. We now know this data was unreliable.

The Court of Appeal handed down a landmark judgment on 23 April 2021, which quashed the convictions of 39 postmasters. A further 12 were quashed in the Court of Appeal earlier this week. Further convictions have been quashed in the Crown Court. The Government has been clear that we want to see compensation delivered fairly and as quickly as possible. We have also been clear that it is for the Post Office to engage with the individuals in the first instance regarding how compensation can be paid. I am pleased to provide an update on the steps to begin providing compensation to postmasters whose criminal convictions were based on Horizon data and have been quashed.

We have listened to affected postmasters and want to see them receive compensation quickly. The Government has therefore decided to support the Post Office so that it can make interim payments of up to £100,000 promptly to individual postmasters whose criminal convictions relied on Horizon data and have been quashed, ahead of final compensation settlements being agreed with them. I am providing this support in my capacity as sole shareholder in the Post Office.

While we recognise that these interim payments may not represent the full compensation that postmasters may ultimately receive, and which will need to be determined between the Post Office and the individuals concerned, it is a means of providing monies to individuals at an early stage in the claims process. The process for finally determining the compensation to be paid will take time and will involve POL obtaining a full quantification of all claims. These claims need to be carefully examined so that postmasters ultimately receive fair compensation and the payments that they deserve.

In the meantime, the Government thanks the postmasters for their patience, recognising the impact that being wrongfully prosecuted has had on individuals and believes that an interim payment is a way to begin to address the hardships they have faced ahead of when the final sum can be determined and paid.

Post Office is contacting the legal representatives of postmasters whose convictions have been quashed with further information about interim payments. We expect Post Office to issue offer letters for interim payments within 28 days of receiving a claim from eligible postmasters.

Government is committed to supporting and maintaining the Post Office network, which, along with the postmasters, provide essential services to our urban and rural communities. This decision supports the Government's priorities to support postmasters and to see the longstanding Horizon issues resolved. This support is in addition to the financial support BEIS has provided for the Historical Shortfall Scheme to proceed, which was opened to recompense postmasters who repaid shortfalls and did not have a criminal conviction. In addition, BEIS launched the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, which recently converted to a statutory footing, following the Court of Appeal judgment.

We understand that Post Office has already begun work to deliver the full compensation sum to postmasters and we will work with them towards this. With my status as sole shareholder in the Post Office, my Department continues to engage actively with Post Office Limited on this and will maintain strong oversight of this process.

Reforming the framework for better regulation

Our exit from the EU provides us with the opportunity to think boldly about how we regulate and for the first time in a generation, we have the freedom to conceive and implement rules that put the UK first. The UK will use its newfound freedoms as an independent trading nation to boost growth, increase competition and create jobs by revamping the way rules and regulations for businesses are set. We will use this freedom to unlock cutting-edge technologies, unleash innovation, and propel start-up growth, levelling up every corner of the UK. This will be a crucial part of boosting our productivity and helping us bring the benefits of growth to the whole of our country.

In seizing this opportunity, we are launching a consultation to seek feedback from interested parties on how we can reform the UK framework for better regulation.

The consultation sets out five principles that will underpin the Government's approach to regulation to ensure it benefits the British people:

- A sovereign approach: the UK will use its freedoms to take a tailored approach to setting rules in a way that boosts growth and benefits the British people.
- Leading from the front: we will act nimbly to support the development of new technologies.
- Proportionality: We will use non-regulatory options where we can, while acting decisively to put in place strong rules where they are needed.
- Recognising what works: Regulations will be thoroughly analysed to ensure they work in the real world.
- Setting high standards at home and globally : we will set high standards at home and engage in robust regulatory diplomacy across the world, leading in multilateral settings, influencing the decisions of others and helping to solve problems that require a global approach.

Proposals explored in the consultation

The consultation follows a report from the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform, which the Prime Minister convened earlier this year, and examines a number of the Taskforce's proposals for reforming regulation, including the adoption of a less-codified, common law approach to regulation. There is also a focus on the process for measuring and reporting impacts under the Better Regulation Framework. Areas examined in the consultation include:

- the adoption of a less-codified, common law approach to regulation;
- a review of the role of regulators, especially around competition and innovation;
- delegation of more discretion to regulators to achieve regulatory objectives in a more agile and flexible way counterbalanced by increased accountability and scrutiny;
- streamlining the process of assessment of impacts;
- moving to earlier scrutiny of impact assessments and evaluation of existing regulation;
- consideration of options on measuring the impact of regulation;
- re-introduction of regulatory offsetting; and
- baselining the UK's regulatory burden.

Integrated Care Systems

[HLWS245]

Lord Bethell: My Hon Friend the Minister of State for Health (Edward Argar) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

Earlier this year, Ministers asked NHS England to set out options for boundary alignment in integrated care systems in specific geographies where upper-tier local authorities currently have to work across more than one ICS footprint and to assess the impact of changes to deliver alignment in each case. Over the last six months NHS England has worked with stakeholders to develop advice and analysis for each of the affected areas to inform the final decision.

This work has now concluded, with advice provided to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This statement sets out the final decision that has been taken for the areas in scope of the review:

- East of England
- Frimley
- Bassetlaw
- Glossop
- West Birmingham
- North Northamptonshire

This work has been underpinned by the principle that coterminous boundaries deliver clear benefits in integration between local authorities and NHS organisations. As approaches to integrated care develop it

is crucial that we have a system that helps support closer working both across NHS organisations and between the NHS and local government.

On the ground, coterminous boundaries can also improve joined up decision making on delivery of services for patients. Improved alignment can allow areas to build joint care models around a wide variety of services including children's and adult social care services, public health, as well as community and mental health services which are often also aligned along local authority footprints.

There has therefore been a strong presumption of moving towards coterminosity, save for in exceptional circumstances where there were strong reasons for not doing so.

NHS England regional teams have conducted robust engagement activity with local stakeholder organisations to develop analysis of the risks, mitigations and benefits for any options for coterminous boundaries in the affected areas. This engagement has included roundtables with local NHS organisations, including the ICS's themselves as well as providers, commissioners and local authorities.

The Department of Health and Social Care has engaged at ministerial level with parliamentarians as well as national organisations such as NHS Providers and the LGA to ensure their views were reflected in the final advice to the Secretary of State and they had an opportunity to feed into the development of this work.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's decision process has involved careful consideration of a wide range of issues, perspectives and interests and a careful weighing up of risks and benefits, outlined in the analysis provided by NHS England for each area as well as having regard to his legal duties.

These have been considered on an case-by-case basis for each area and where NHS England has made a recommendation based on broad (not universal) local consensus, including a recommendation to retain the status quo, the Secretary of State has listened and has accepted these recommendations. There was not a broad local consensus for three of the areas within this review and as such no recommendations were made by NHS England. In these areas a balanced judgement was taken, weighing up the risks and benefits of a change in boundaries and having regard to his legal duties by the Secretary of State.

Following this review, the Secretary of State has concluded the NHS should:

- East of England – this area is considered an appropriate exemption to the principle of coterminosity. No changes will be made to the existing boundaries.
- Frimley – this area is considered an appropriate exemption from the principle of coterminosity. No changes will be made to existing boundaries.
- Glossop – The decision has been taken to move the area of Glossop from Greater Manchester ICS into Derbyshire ICS.

- Bassetlaw – The decision has been taken to move the area of Bassetlaw from South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS into Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICS thus delivering coterminous boundaries for the area.

- West Birmingham – The decision has been taken to move West Birmingham from the Black Country and West Birmingham ICS into Birmingham and Solihull ICS thus delivering coterminous boundaries for the area.

- North Northamptonshire – The decision has been taken to move the Lakeside Healthcare GP practice into Northamptonshire ICS and retain the Wansford and Kings Cliffe GP practice in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS. This moves the region much closer to coterminous boundaries and reflects specific local considerations.

Local areas may still wish to keep under review how their boundaries are working in the light of any new legislative framework. Therefore, this decision does not preclude the important work many systems undertake naturally to ensure they have a system and boundaries that best suit local needs. We have already heard such requests from local stakeholders around Cheshire and Merseyside ICS, as such the Secretary of State has also announced his intention to review this system. The Secretary of State also intends to review the areas of Cumbria and North Yorkshire, as we are now aware, they will remain non-coterminous following the conclusion of MHCLG's unitarization process. These reviews will take place in two years, following the implementation, subject to parliamentary passage, of the Health and Care Bill.

Full details of these decisions and the decision process will be published on the Department of Health and Social Care section on the GOV.UK website shortly.

Intelligence and Security Committee's GCHQ Procurement Report: Government Response

[HLWS241]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

On 19 November 2020, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) published their report entitled "GCHQ Accommodation Procurement: A Case Study".

The procurement of Nova South as the headquarters of the NCSC was a unique challenge, undertaken within a demanding timeframe and as a result, the Government acknowledge there are lessons that can be learned from the procurement process.

Today, the Government is publishing its response to this report.

I remain grateful to the Intelligence and Security Committee for its continued independent oversight and scrutiny. I would like to thank the former Committee for their work in the last Parliament, and I look forward to working with the appointed Committee in the future.

Copies of the Government response have been laid before both Houses.

Local Government

[HLWS231]

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:

On 12 October 2020 [HCWS502] I told the House that I had issued invitations under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) to principal councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and Somerset, including associated existing unitary councils, to submit proposals for moving to unitary local government in those areas. Councils in these areas had requested such invitations and had been developing ideas about restructuring local government in their areas for some time.

The consultation

On 22 February 2021 I told the House [HCWS785] that I was launching a statutory consultation on all of the eight locally-led proposals for reorganising local government that I had received on 9 December in response to the invitation. These proposals were - four from councils in Cumbria, two from councils in North Yorkshire and two from councils in Somerset. In the case of each area there is a proposal made by the county council for a unitary authority covering the whole area. In the case of North Yorkshire and Somerset there is a proposal from district councils for two unitary authorities in each area. In Cumbria district councils have made three proposals, each of which involve establishing two unitary authorities.

When launching the consultation I made it clear that I welcomed views from any interested persons, including residents, in addition to the named consultees. The named consultees were the councils which made the proposals, other councils affected by the proposals, councils in neighbouring areas, public service providers, including health providers and the police, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and certain other business, voluntary sector and educational bodies. The consultation closed on 19 April and I have received a total of 13,020 responses. I will be depositing a summary of the consultation responses in the libraries of Parliament.

The decisions on unitary proposals

I am now able to inform the House of my decisions as to which of the eight proposals, subject to Parliamentary approval, are to be implemented. The 2007 Act provides that I may implement a proposal with or without modifications. I have decided that in each of the areas to make no such modifications.

In reaching my decision, I carefully considered each of the proposals. I assessed each proposal against the three criteria set out in the invitation sent to all the principal councils on 9 October. These criteria provide that for a proposal to be implemented, that proposal is likely to

improve local government and service delivery across its area; commands a good deal of local support as assessed in the round overall across the whole area of the proposal; and any unitary councils to be established have a credible geography.

I have also had regard to all the representations I received, including those received through the consultation, and to all the relevant information available to me, including the results of the local poll that the Somerset district councils held during the period from 18 May to 4 June and the representations received about the poll and its conduct.

For Cumbria I have decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for two unitary councils - an East unitary council covering the existing areas of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and a West unitary council covering the existing areas of Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. I considered that this proposal met all three of the criteria.

I also considered that the proposal for a single unitary council for the whole of Cumbria also met all three of the criteria. However, having regard to the size and geography of Cumbria, including the geographic barriers of lakes and mountains, and the rurality of its population, I have decided that it would be more appropriate to implement the East West unitary proposal, allowing for more localised decision making, which could be important given the geography of Cumbria.

I have decided not to implement the proposal for two unitary councils – one council comprising the existing areas of Barrow, South Lakeland and Lancaster City and the other council comprising the existing areas of Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland and Eden. I considered that this proposal did not meet the improving local government and service delivery and credible geography criteria. I have also decided not to implement the proposal for two unitary councils – one council comprising the existing areas of Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden and the other council comprising the existing areas of Barrow, Copeland and South Lakeland. I considered that this proposal did not meet the credible geography criterion.

For North Yorkshire I have decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for a single unitary council for the whole of the existing administrative county of North Yorkshire. I considered that this proposal strongly met all three of the criteria. I have also decided not to implement the proposal for two unitary councils - one council comprising the existing areas of Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby and the current unitary of York, and the other council comprising the existing areas of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate and Richmondshire. I considered that this proposal did not meet the improving local government and service delivery and credible geography criteria.

For Somerset I have decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for a single unitary council for the whole of the existing administrative county of Somerset. I considered that this proposal met all three of the criteria, strongly meeting the improving local

government and service delivery criterion. I have also decided not to implement the proposal for two unitary councils - one council comprising the existing areas of Mendip District and South Somerset and the other council comprising the existing areas of Sedgemoor and Somerset West & Taunton. I considered that this proposal did not meet the improving local government and service delivery and credible geography criteria.

Future steps

I now intend to seek Parliamentary approval for the necessary secondary legislation to implement my decisions. I intend to lay the draft structural changes Order before Parliament around the turn of the year and they will include provisions for appropriate transitional arrangements, including for elections in May 2022 for the future unitary councils; for cancelling elections currently scheduled for May 2022 for existing councils, including those rescheduled from May 2021 as a result of the orders made earlier this year; and for the unitary councils to assume the full range of local authority responsibilities on 1 April 2023, when predecessor councils would be abolished.

Establishing these new unitary councils will be a significant step towards ensuring the people and businesses across Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset can in future have the sustainable high-quality local services they deserve. I expect all the existing councils and their partners to work collaboratively and constructively together to drive forward the process of establishing unitary councils and transforming local service delivery for the residents, businesses and local communities of these three areas.

I would like to reiterate that Government will not impose top-down government solutions. We will continue, as I am now currently doing, to follow a locally-led approach where councils can develop proposals which have strong local support. However, restructuring is only one of the different ways that councils can streamline and make savings, and deliver strong leadership. This has been the Government's consistent approach since 2010, when top-down restructuring was stopped through the Local Government Act 2010.

When considering reform, those in an area will know what is best, and as my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister set out in his speech on 15 July we remain committed to devolving power to people and places across the UK. We are open to devolution where there is strong local leadership, whether supported by two tier local government, unitary structures or various joint arrangements. Our plans for doing this and strengthening local accountable leadership will be set out in the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper.

Machinery of Government Change: Vaccine Taskforce

[HLWS242]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

With effect from 1 August 2021, the Vaccine Taskforce will become a joint-unit of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department of Health and Social Care.

To support this, responsibility for the Taskforce's work on vaccine and antibody procurement and supply and clinical development will transfer, on the same date, from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the Department of Health and Social Care. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will remain responsible for vaccine and antibody manufacturing.

National Policy Statement for National Networks: Review

[HLWS232]

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

In 2019, our roads handled 88 per cent of all passenger travel by distance, the vast majority of it by car or van. Even doubling rail use across the country would only reduce this proportion to 75 per cent, assuming that overall demand did not rise. The roads also carry more than three-quarters of freight traffic, and of course nearly all pedestrian, cycling, bus and coach journeys.

Continued high investment in our roads is therefore, and will remain, as necessary as ever to ensure the functioning of the nation and to reduce the congestion which is a major source of carbon. Almost half of our £27 billion programme for England's strategic roads, though often described as for roadbuilding or capacity expansion, is in fact for renewing, maintaining and operating the existing network, or for funds to improve safety and biodiversity, deliver active travel schemes and tackle noise or pollution.

In the coming years, our ambitious and accelerating plans to decarbonise all road traffic, will transform roads' impact on greenhouse gas emissions. We have always said, however, that we must ensure the road network meets today's demands, not those of the past. In the last eighteen months, fundamental changes have occurred in commuting, shopping, and business travel, which before the pandemic made up 30 per cent of all road journeys by distance, and a much higher proportion at the times and places of greatest pressure.

Trends already underway in homeworking, online shopping, and videoconferencing, all of which had reduced trip rates even before the pandemic, have dramatically increased, and seem unlikely to be fully reversed. Against that, though, must be set the effects on road demand of the hopefully temporary move away from public transport during the crisis; of increases in delivery traffic; and potentially of increases in driving when electric and autonomous vehicles become common.

The current National Policy Statement (NPS) on National Networks, the Government's statement of strategic planning policy for major road and rail schemes, was written in 2014 – before the Government's legal commitment to net zero, the 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the new Sixth Carbon Budget and most directly the new, more ambitious policies outlined in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

While the NPS continues to remain in force, it is right that we review it in the light of these developments, and update forecasts on which it is based to reflect more recent, post-pandemic conditions, once they are known.

The aim is to begin the review later this year, and for it to be completed no later than Spring 2023. This review will include a thorough examination of the modelling and forecasts that support the statement of need for development, and the environmental, safety, resilience, and local community considerations that planning decisions must take into account. Reviewing the NPS will ensure that it remains fit for purpose in supporting the government's commitments for appropriate development of infrastructure for road, rail, and strategic rail freight interchanges.

While the review is undertaken, the NPS remains relevant government policy and has effect for the purposes of the Planning Act 2008. The NPS will, therefore, continue to provide a proper basis on which the Planning Inspectorate can examine, and the Secretary of State can make decisions on, applications for development consent.

New Plan for Immigration

[HLWS240]

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:

On 6 July, the Government introduced the Nationality and Borders Bill in Parliament. This is part of the Government's New Plan for Immigration, delivering the most comprehensive reform in decades to deliver a fair but firm immigration system.

The Bill – and the wider plan – has three key objectives:

- To make the system fairer and more effective so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.
- To deter illegal entry into the UK breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and saving lives.
- To remove from the UK those with no right to be here.

The introduction of the Bill was preceded by a consultation that was launched in March. The Government has carefully considered that consultation and I am today laying before the House a Command Paper (CP 493) setting out its response.

This has also been published on gov.uk.

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS233]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: My Hon Friend Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Domestic Environment) (Rebecca Pow) has made the following Statement:

Defra has sought a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £275,000.

The requirement has arisen because there is an urgent requirement to proceed with the procurement of scheme administrators for the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility scheme and the Deposit Return Scheme in advance of Royal Assent of the Environment Bill.

Under Managing Public Money rules, expenditure to make preparation for the delivery of a new service prior to Royal Assent requires an advance from the Contingencies Fund. The cash advance will pay for essential expenditure related to procurement activities. The need to spend now in advance of Royal Assent is driven by the necessary timelines associated with procurement.

Parliamentary approval for expenditure of £275,000 for this new service will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for Defra. Pending that approval, urgent resourcing estimated at £275,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002: Appointed Person Reports

[HLWS246]

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 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) Appointed Person reports covering England and Wales for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21, are today being laid before Parliament.

The Appointed Person is independent of Government and scrutinises the circumstances and manner in which search and seizure powers conferred by the Act are exercised in instances where prior approval is not gained from a justice of the peace and either no seizures are made or any cash or property seized is not detained for more than 48 hours.

I am pleased that we are now able to publish Mr McCourt's reports covering the period from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The House will note that there has been a delay in publishing the Appointed Person reports since the 2016/17 report, when the previous office holder's tenure ended. Greg McCourt was subsequently appointed to the role for each of the three jurisdictions (England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) with effect from 1

August 2019. Despite the pressures and challenges of COVID, since his appointment he has been working across the jurisdictions and with POCA stakeholders to receive and assess reports on the use of the relevant powers of search and seizure.

Importantly, Mr McCourt, is satisfied with the operation of the powers in the period. There is nothing to suggest that the procedures are not being followed in accordance with the Act. While the figures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 show a small increase in the number of reported cases, it reflects more regular use of the powers in a broader range of live police operations, supporting the recovery of the proceeds of crime whenever they are encountered.

Mr McCourt has made two recommendations. Firstly, that a template should be developed to standardise the information that law enforcement officers provide and, secondly, that law enforcement agencies be regularly reminded of their reporting requirements under the Act. I support Mr McCourt's recommendations and my officials will work with him and our stakeholders to implement them both.

These powers are a valuable tool in the fight against crime. As the reports show, these powers have been used appropriately to combat crime. We will continue to monitor the way that the powers have been used closely.

Copies of the reports will be available in the Vote Office.

Supply Chain Finance in Government: Boardman Review

[HLWS234]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith MP), has today made the following written statement:

On 12 April, the Government announced that the Prime Minister had asked Nigel Boardman to investigate the development and use of supply chain finance in government, especially the role of Lex Greensill and Greensill Capital (including associated companies or companies in its group) and any related issues that Mr Boardman considered were in scope.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, Mr Boardman has provided the Prime Minister with a report which sets out Mr Boardman's findings of fact. This was provided to the Prime Minister yesterday and is being made available to the House today.

In producing this report, Mr Boardman interviewed 45 individuals, for a total of over 100 hours. Mr Boardman had access to all the papers he requested, totalling several thousand pages of written evidence. This is a non-statutory review, but in line with long-standing convention, the Prime Minister made clear at the outset his expectation that all Ministers, special advisers and civil servants, whether current or former, should cooperate fully. Those individuals who participated, or their personal representative where applicable, were

provided with relevant documents to assist their evidence. They were then offered the opportunity to discuss the relevant documents and provide any comment during an interview with Mr Boardman. These comments were considered, in good faith, as part of the Review.

The purpose of the Review was to establish the facts and any lessons to be learnt. As set out in the Terms of Reference, the Review does not form part of a disciplinary process, nor is it intended to apportion blame or criticism to individuals. In establishing and setting out the facts, however, Mr Boardman attributes actions to named individuals, some of which could be read as critical of individuals. Where this is the case, the individuals concerned, or their personal representative where applicable, were given the opportunity ahead of the report being finalised to make representations on those sections of the report that could be perceived as criticisms to correct factual inaccuracies.

The Government thanks Mr Boardman for all of his work in examining the evidence and setting out his judgement on the facts of what occurred. Mr Boardman will be providing the second part of his report, including any specific recommendations, shortly. The Government will respond to Mr Boardman's findings, and any recommendations, in due course.

I am depositing a copy of the report in the Libraries of the both Houses, and publishing it on GOV.UK.

Teachers

[HLWS229]

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

The 31st report of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is being published today. Its recommendations cover the remit issued in December 2020, regarding the pay award for teachers that is due to be implemented from September 2021. The report will be presented to Parliament and published on Gov.uk.

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. I am extremely grateful to all teachers and leaders for the dedication they have shown in enabling schools to remain open and supporting pupils with remote education throughout the pandemic, to ensure pupils get the best possible education.

The government values the independent expertise and insight of the STRB and takes on board the useful advice and principles set out in response to the government's recommendations outlined in the report.

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 to the STRB welcomed views on uplifts for those Unqualified Teachers, earning below £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent).

The STRB has recommended a pay award of £250 for all teachers earning less than £24,000 (or the recommended equivalent value for teachers in the London pay areas). Their report outlines recommendations for how to implement this, including adjustments for London.

The STRB has also recommended that advisory pay points are reintroduced on the Unqualified Teacher pay range, as was the case for classroom teachers on the Main Pay Range and Upper Pay Range last year.

I am today confirming my proposed response is to accept these recommendations in full.

A full list of the recommendations and my proposed approach for implementation is attached as an annex.

I would like to reiterate that the £250 award should be paid to all eligible teachers, whether located on a published pay point or not, and that the pause on pay will apply to headline pay uplifts only. Teachers earning

below the maximum of their pay range may be eligible for performance-related pay progression and teachers can also continue to apply for promotion. Academies, as usual, have the freedom to set their own pay policies.

Finally, this pay award will be affordable within school budgets due to this government's three-year investment package announced at the 2019 Spending Round. We are increasing core schools funding by £2.2 billion in the 2021-22 financial year, compared to 2020-21 – the second year of the three year school funding settlement from the 2019 Spending Round – and will increase it by a further £2.4 billion, to £52.2 billion in 2022-23 overall. As previously set out, the funding schools have previously received through the teachers' pay and pension grants will be part of schools' core funding allocations as determined by the schools national funding formula from 2021-22, and there will be no increase to these grants in respect of this year's pay award.

My officials will write to all of the statutory consultees of the STRB to invite them to contribute to a consultation on the Government's response to these recommendations and on a revised School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and Pay Order. The consultation will last for eight weeks.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Full list of STRB recommendations and response [210721 Teachers Update.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-07-22/HLWS229/>

Written Answers

Thursday, 22 July 2021

Army: Northern Ireland

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Army applicants are from residents of Northern Ireland. [HL1860]

Baroness Goldie: The percentage of Regular Army applications in the calendar year 2020 which provided a Northern Ireland residence as the home address was 1.8%. This figure has been provided by Analysis Army and has been defined as an online application submitted by an individual and accepted by the Defence Recruitment System.

Broadband: Rural Areas

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of OpenRAN (1) as part of their gigabit capable broad rollout, (2) in increasing connectivity to rural communities, and (3) in extending connectivity to rural 'notspots'. [HL2105]

Baroness Barran: The Government continues to explore the role of interoperable technologies, such as Open RAN, in the future of our telecommunications networks as part of the 5G Supply Chain **Diversification Strategy**, published in November last year and here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-supply-chain-diversification-strategy/5g-supply-chain-diversification-strategy>. Open RAN is still a nascent technology which promises efficiency and flexibility gains, and the Government is supporting its development as part of the telecoms diversification agenda, including through the £30m Future RAN Competition (**FRANC**).

The Government is extending connectivity to rural areas - both mobile and full fibre. Project Gigabit recognises Fixed Wireless Access as a potential gigabit-capable technology, which can provide a broadband connection via infrastructure also used for mobile networks. Furthermore, the Shared Rural Network programme will bring 4G coverage to 95% of the UK by 2025 - including total not-spots. We expect Open RAN to play an ever larger role in 5G mobile networks and beyond; these technologies are capable of reaching gigabit speeds and may support the Government's ambition to connect at least 85% of UK premises to gigabit speeds by 2025.

The Government also welcomed the **news** from Vodafone that it will be supplying large parts of Wales and the South West of England with Open RAN technology, and that deployment will start in rural areas.

Asked by **Lord Vinson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the performance of high-speed broadband in rural areas; what steps they are taking to ensure that such services provide the advertised performance; whether they will provide compensation for those who have been advised to replace their old service and install a new one where that service does not meet advertised standards; and what steps they intend to take to support customers experiencing ongoing issues. [HL2131]

Baroness Barran: Ofcom's 2020 Connected Nations **report** shows that 99.4% of UK premises have access to decent broadband speeds (10 Mbps and over), and according to [thinkbroadband.com](https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/uk) (<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/uk>), 97% can get superfast speeds (24 Mbps and over). Ofcom's 2021 report, UK Home Broadband Performance, which can be found here (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/telecoms-research/broadband-research/broadband-speeds/uk-home-broadband-performance-nov-2020>) showed that the average superfast speeds in rural areas was 44.2 Mbps, compared to 48.6 Mbps in urban areas in 2020.

In order to protect consumers, Ofcom has put in place voluntary broadband speeds Codes of Practice with industry, which can be viewed here (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/information-for-industry/codes-of-practice>). Signatories include BT, EE, Plusnet, TalkTalk and Virgin Media. Those signed up to the Code of Practice are committed to having systems which can identify the cause of speed problems, and processes to ensure they are resolved. Furthermore, signatories must provide guaranteed minimum speeds to their customers, and if speeds drop below the promised levels, are required to improve performance within one month. If there is no improvement, consumers have the right to exit their contract without penalty. To ensure effectiveness of the code, Ofcom monitors compliance by the signatories, and where it finds issues, will engage with the provider to deliver prompt resolutions.

China: India

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the deployment of tens of thousands of Chinese troops to the disputed border with India in Ladakh. [HL1871]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to support a peaceful resolution of border issues between India and China, which are a bilateral matter. We welcome ongoing discussions between India and China aimed at reducing tension along the Line of Actual Control.

Climate Change: Public Consultation

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for public engagement on climate change mitigations ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in October–November. [HL1912]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Ahead of COP26 we have launched the Together for our Planet campaign to engage the public in the run-up to COP26 and celebrate the work people across the UK are doing to combat climate change. The campaign aims to drive awareness and create opportunities for people across the UK to participate in the run-up to COP26.

The Together for our Planet campaign is building momentum in the lead up to COP26 by showcasing how people across the UK are going One Step Greener to tackle climate change. Our One Step Greener 'Climate Leaders' will show how much inspirational action on climate change is already taking place.

As Presidency, we are committed to securing an outcome that respects and reflects the interests of all Parties, including those most impacted by climate change. We want to work with civil society to amplify the voices of those on the front line of climate change to deliver a truly 'all of society' and inclusive COP. Civil society organisations, with their links to on-the-ground communities and practitioners, are agents of change and their knowledge and leadership is necessary to deliver effective local solutions.

Conduct Select Committee (HL)

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what (1) qualifications, and (2) experience, in (a) human resources, (b) parliamentary procedure, and (c) bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, the lay members of the Conduct Committee have. [HL2147]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The lay members of the Conduct Committee were not required to demonstrate specific qualifications or experience in any particular field, and the Committee had no preconceptions as to their professional backgrounds. Candidates were asked to demonstrate senior level experience in a complex organisation in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors; excellent analytical and decision-making skills; and personal qualities such as assertiveness and resilience. The biographies of the four lay members were circulated to members of the House at the time of their appointment, and collectively they bring a diversity of experience and an independent perspective to the work of the Committee.

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what are the total costs of (1) the meetings, (2) the production of reports, and (3) other activities, of the Conduct Committee in

the most recent financial year for which figures are available. [HL2148]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Committee's costs cannot be disaggregated from staff, member and publishing costs in this way, except for the lay members' claims which amounted to £38,250 in financial year 2020–21.

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether the four members of the House of Lords Conduct Committee who are not Members of the House of Lords have full voting rights in any vote of that Committee which involves (1) the culpability of a Member of the House of Lords being investigated, and (2) the decision as to any penalty on a Member of the House, to be reported for the approval of the House; and to which other Select Committees of the House similar voting rights apply to any outside members of such committees. [HL2228]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Following a consultation exercise and a lengthy debate on 30 April 2019, the House agreed that the lay members of the Conduct Committee should have full voting rights in order to bring a measure of independence to the conduct process. The House has not to date conferred voting rights on external members of other committees. In the House of Commons, the lay members of the Standards Committee (of which there are seven, alongside the seven MPs) have full voting rights, and the Independent Expert Panel which determines appeals and sanctions in cases of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct is made up entirely of external members.

Conduct Select Committee (HL): Public Appointments

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker when the terms of appointment for each member of the Conduct Committee will expire. [HL2149]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The terms of the five peers on the Committee are due to end in January 2022, though the Committee is considering seeking extensions for some of them in order to ensure continuity by staggering departure dates. The terms of the four current lay members will expire in July 2023. The lay members may be reappointed for one further three year term.

Conduct Select Committee (HL): Recruitment

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what was the recruitment process for the lay members of the Conduct Committee; how many people applied for each lay member vacancy; who conducted the interviews for these positions; and what remuneration the lay members receive. [HL2146]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: I have consulted the Chair of the Conduct Committee in preparing this answer.

The four lay members of the Conduct Committee were appointed following an open and rigorous recruitment process. In common with other senior, lay member or non-executive positions, the House engaged a recruitment consultancy to conduct a search and initial sift of candidates. A total of 322 candidates were identified through this process. Of these, 12 were invited to interview by a panel consisting of two members of the Conduct Committee (Lord Mance, Chair, and Baroness Anelay of St Johns), the then Clerk of the Journals and two external members (Sheila Drew Smith and Emily Jackson), with the four top-ranked candidates accepting the offer of appointment. Lay members are remunerated at the rate of £600 per eight hour day.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter signed by scientists published in *The Lancet* on 8 July, which calls the planned relaxation of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic on 19 July a “dangerous and unethical experiment”. [HL1850]

Lord True: On Monday 12 July, the Prime Minister confirmed that the Government's four tests for easing COVID-19 restrictions had been met and England proceeded to Step 4 of the roadmap on Monday 19 July. A range of data was considered, including from Public Health England, the NHS, and the ONS, as well as modelling from SAGE, to inform this decision. In June, the move to Step 4 was delayed by four weeks so more adults could be vaccinated, and more than 7 million vaccines were administered during this period.

The Government will continue to monitor the data on a regular basis to ensure there is no danger of the NHS facing unsustainable pressure. The Government will maintain contingency plans for reimposing economic and social restrictions at a local, regional or national level if evidence suggests they are necessary to suppress or manage a dangerous variant. Such measures would only be re-introduced as a last resort to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been told to isolate through the NHS Track and Trace app only to (1) show no symptoms, and (2) not need hospitalisation. [HL2039]

Lord Bethell: The NHS COVID-19 app cannot be used to identify users, whether they showed symptoms or were hospitalised.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support immunocompromised or immunosuppressed people, who are not protected by the COVID-19 vaccines and are clinically extremely vulnerable to the virus, to protect themselves after 19 July. [HL1896]

Lord Bethell: Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, *19 July guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19*, was published on 12 July and is available in an online only format. The guidance outlines support for all clinically extremely vulnerable people, including those who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed. Available support includes the NHS Volunteer Responders service and a range of mental health and wellbeing support. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is available until 30 September and local councils may be able to provide additional support. If concerned, an individual's general practitioner practice or specialist can provide them with personalised advice on any additional precautions they should take.

In addition, immunocompromised individuals are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals and repurposed compounds.

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved governments about a common approach to the vaccination of people working in care and nursing homes. [HL1952]

Lord Bethell: The Government has had regular meetings with the devolved administrations since April 2021 to discuss the policy of making vaccination a condition of deployment in care homes in England. The devolved administrations are able to choose whether to adopt a similar policy.

Cybercrime

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to counter ransomware attacks against businesses (1) in the UK, and (2) in other Western countries. [HL1858]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government's priority, working alongside law enforcement and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), is to do all we can to mitigate any harm to the UK from ransomware.

The Home Office provides funding for cyber teams in Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) across England and Wales, to bolster the regional response to crime, provide protect advice to businesses and

individuals, and to divert people vulnerable to cyber criminality.

The NCSC as the UK's technical authority for cyber threats, continually reviews its advice and guidance to reflect new trends and how individuals and organisations can protect themselves, as well as providing swift support to organisations which fall victim to ransomware attack.

The National Crime Agency's (NCA) National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) provides the focus for our national response to combating serious cyber criminals. It is using its operational resources to deliver arrests and disruption, using the NCA's enhanced intelligence picture to target criminals where they are most vulnerable.

The NCSC and NCA continue to monitor and respond to the cyber threat, including ransomware.

The Government is working collaboratively with our international partners specifically the Five Eyes to address the ransomware threat.

Developing Countries

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in the development of a long term international development strategy; whether such a strategy will build on the approach and priorities outlined in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; how a strategy will relate to the Sustainable Development Goals; what consultation on a strategy (1) has been, or (2) will be, undertaken with stakeholders; and what timetable has been established for its implementation. [HL1842]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy, which will be cross-government in scope. The International Development Strategy will set out the UK's approach to development, in line with the Integrated Review. It will refer to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FCDO officials will be engaging with external stakeholders on the development of the strategy. This will build on the extensive engagement and call for evidence that was undertaken to inform the Integrated Review. We intend to publish the strategy later this year.

Electric Scooters: Regulation

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to regulate use of e-scooters, including compulsory insurance cover on their use. [HL1910]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department is running trials of rental e-scooters to assess their safety and wider impacts. Some 32 trials are underway and will run across the year, with final trial schemes due to conclude by 31 March 2022. The evidence gathered during the trials will inform whether e-scooters should be legalised in the future and how we can ensure their use is

as safe as possible. Until we have that evidence, we do not want to speculate on the future legal status of e-scooters or on specific issues like insurance.

Extinction Rebellion: Demonstrations

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the cost of policing Extinction Rebellion protests in (1) 2019, (2) 2020, and (3) 2021; and whether any of those costs have been met by the organisers of the protests. [HL1854]

Lord Greenhalgh: The highly disruptive tactics used by some protesters cause a disproportionate impact on the surrounding communities and are a drain on public funds. The management of protests, including the tactics they use; their cost; and their resourcing, is an operational matter for the police. The PCSC Bill aims to allow the police to take a more proactive approach in managing highly disruptive protests and will increase the police's ability to prevent protests causing serious disruption to the public,

During Extinction Rebellion's protests of April and October 2019, the Metropolitan Police Service reported that policing operations for the two extended protests cost around £37m - more than twice the annual budget of London's violent crime taskforce.

The right to peaceful protest remains a fundamental tool of civic expression and will not be curtailed by this Government. Protesters are not charged for the costs of policing protests.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Ministry of Defence: Staff

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many officials are working on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the (1) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and (2) the Ministry of Defence. [HL1847]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As stated in my reply of 6 July, officials in the FCO and MOD, centrally and across the global network, work collectively to deliver strategic outcomes as part of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and wider work. Given the breadth of the WPS agenda and global focus, information on the number of officials working on this issue is not held centrally.

Global Marine Group

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether Global Marine Group is the only UK-based company that (1) lays, and (2)

maintains, communications cables; and what discussions, if any, they have had with the firm about this capability. [HL1933]

Baroness Barran: Cable laying and operation is a global enterprise which includes UK-based companies. The Government has regular contact with the industry including Global Marine Group. The government understands that the US-owned Global Marine Group is the only UK-based company that can both lay and maintain subsea telecommunications cables.

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, following the recent hereditary peers by-election after the retirement of Lord Elton, how many peers (1) were entitled to vote, (2) voted; how many ballot papers were spoiled; and what the percentage turnout was. [HL2269]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The details of the by-election to replace Lord Elton are as follows:

<i>Vacancy Created By:</i>	<i>Number of Members eligible to vote:</i>	<i>Number of Members who voted:</i>	<i>Number of spoiled ballot papers:</i>	<i>Percentage turnout:</i>
<i>Lord Elton</i>	785	237	0	30%

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with (1) road hauliers, and (2) the devolved administrations, about the recruitment of additional HGV drivers across the UK. [HL2101]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We communicate with the road haulage industry regularly and have recently held additional weekly stakeholder meetings to communicate and engage with proposals, some of which centre on the recruitment of HGV drivers. The Government is actively considering the suggestions put forward by hauliers and continues to support industry in recruiting domestic drivers where appropriate.

We have engaged with devolved administrations through cross-Government discussions, which involves topics such as the situation on the recruitment of HGV drivers.

Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the decision by the government of France to withdraw more than 2000 troops from the Sahel for the British forces sent to Mali last year, including any plans to (1) increase the UK presence, or to (2) withdraw our military presence. [HL1938]

Baroness Goldie: The UK is in contact with our French partners on their planned changes to operations in the Sahel; we have had assurances France will retain the key enablers which allow the UK to effectively contribute to operations in the Sahel. Through our recent deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and our programmatic support for stabilisation and conflict resolution, the UK is committed to building peace and stability in the Sahel. We also use our humanitarian assistance to support those most affected by conflict. While military commitments remain under constant review, there are no plans to change the UK presence in the Sahel at this time.

Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions and Speed Limits

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they use to inform policy about vehicle (1) speed limits, and (2) emissions; and what assessment they have made of the emissions levels of (a) petrol, and (b) diesel, vehicles between 1,000–3,000cc travelling at a constant speed of 20mph in (i) first gear, (ii) second gear, (iii) third gear, (iv) fourth gear, (v) fifth gear, and (vi) sixth gear. [HL2116]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The aim of speed management is to deliver a balance between safety objectives for all road users and mobility objectives, to ensure efficient travel, as well as environmental and community outcomes. The Department has published guidance designed to make sure that speed limits are appropriately and consistently set while allowing for flexibility to deal with local needs and conditions.

The regulatory emissions tests for type approval of new vehicles are conducted under dynamic rather than constant speeds in order to be more representative of real-world use. The Department does not have specific results for the situations outlined. Transport emission factors are used within the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory to provide information on the emissions of vehicle fleets based upon factors such as their average speed, fuel type and engine capacity. These are also used within the Emissions Factor Toolkit, published by DEFRA, to assist local authorities carrying out assessment of local air quality.

Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief is being adequately resourced and supported in relation (1) to her role in implementing the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians,

published on 8 July 2019, and (2) to enabling the planning and delivery of the international ministerial conference on freedom of religion or belief in 2022. [[HL1846](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022.

I [Lord Ahmad] meet monthly with the Envoy to discuss freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) activity. The Envoy also works closely with FCDO Ministers in promoting FoRB in their respective geographic areas, and through her Private Secretary in the FCDO, with support from the FCDO FoRB team and other officials on specific aspects of her role, as well as the FCDO media office and Special Advisers. Geographic and thematic policy desks have the opportunity to feed into policy recommendations and offer advice on activities. We have committed to holding a Ministerial conference on FoRB, which will bring countries together to make global progress on this important issue.

Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidance to transport operators whose services cross the border between England and Scotland in relation to the different policies on COVID-related mask-wearing in the two countries. [[HL2093](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Guidance for transport operators is now available on GOV.UK to reflect step 4 changes. Operators are advised to make to themselves aware of any changes in rules when providing services that cross the border from England into one of the other UK nations and where possible to communicate this to passengers. Links to the rules for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are included in the operator guidance. Passengers are also advised to make themselves aware of any rule changes when travelling from England to another of the UK nations.

Religious Freedom

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the findings of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published on 8 July 2019, what plans they have to conduct a review into persecution on the basis of religion or belief (1) globally, and (2) in the UK. [[HL1869](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, which was commissioned by the then Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt. Work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022.

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a priority in the FCDO's multilateral work. It was a key strand of the UK's successful campaign to be re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council. As part of our longstanding and continuing work, we advocate for countries to appoint FoRB Envoys. The Government is currently considering how the recommendation on the scale of persecution can be implemented in a way that delivers and supports the work we are doing globally to address the challenges faced by religious minorities. We will commission an independent review into the recommendations in good time to take place at the completion of the three-year implementation period.

Sheffield Forgemasters

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to nationalise Sheffield Forgemasters; and what assessment they have made of the importance of Sheffield Forgemasters to the supply of the UK's nuclear submarine fleet. [[HL1872](#)]

Baroness Goldie: Sheffield Forgemasters is a strategic supplier to Defence; therefore, officials are in regular dialogue with company representatives. I have seen the media speculation about the company, and it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Shipbuilding: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what investment they are providing to support the growth of green shipbuilding in the UK. [[HL1931](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The Secretary of State for Defence, in his role as Shipbuilding Tsar, is working across Government to support the shipbuilding enterprise. The National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh will set out our comprehensive support for green shipbuilding, which offers a significant opportunity for driving the renaissance of the sector.

On 22 March 2021 the Department for Transport launched the £20 million Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which has now closed. This will fund feasibility studies and initial technology trials in clean maritime technologies including green shipbuilding, placing the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vessels.

Shipping: Energy Supply

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to UK ports to develop their shore power facilities. [HL1930]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Shore power has a role to play in immediately reducing emissions from vessels visiting ports. Shore-side low and zero carbon fuelling, including bunkering of such fuels, are in scope of the £20m Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which will fund feasibility studies and initial technology trials, to support the transition to zero emission shipping and cleaner, greener ports. As set out in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, published on 14 July, we will consult in winter 2021 on how Government can support the wider deployment of shore power, including consideration of regulatory interventions, for both vessels and ports, that could drive deployment as we transition to a net zero world, and bring forward appropriate measures.

Tigray: Arrests and War Crimes

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) media reports detailing the arrest of Tigrayans in parts of Ethiopia, (2) the conditions in which arrested Tigrayans are being held, and (3) reports

that thousands of Tigrayans have been sent to Eritrea where they are subject to atrocity crimes; and what representations they have made to the government of Ethiopia on the situation. [HL1841]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Recent arrests of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in Ethiopia are extremely worrying, and discrimination against or targeting of any group is unacceptable. The UK is following the situation closely. We have consistently raised the importance of respect for human rights throughout this conflict, and will raise these concerns directly with the Government of Ethiopia.

Transport for London: Finance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to introduce a long-term funding deal for Transport for London to support a return to work in London. [HL1925]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The third extraordinary funding package has been agreed with Transport for London (TfL) covering the period to 11 December 2021, to give time to better understand future demand. The Government is supporting TfL as they deliver on the conditions attached to this funding package and as we work towards a possible longer-term funding agreement which all sides could support.

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