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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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Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
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Lord 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

Monday, 6 September 2021

Armoured Cavalry Programme: Ajax

[HLWS256]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I wish to provide a further update to Parliament on the Ajax equipment project being delivered as part of the Armoured Cavalry Programme.

1. Health and Safety

Extensive work has been undertaken on the Health and Safety aspects of the Noise and Vibration concerns raised on Ajax. The Report is being undertaken independently of the Ajax Delivery Team by the MOD's Director of Health and Safety.

While the Report has not yet been concluded it is apparent that vibration concerns were raised before Ajax Trials commenced at the Armoured Trials and Development Unit in November 2019. In December 2018, an Army Safety Notice introduced restrictions on use in relation to vibration and identified that, in the longer term, a design upgrade was needed to reduce vibration.

I will publish the Health & Safety report once it is finalised, which will contain a full timeline in relation to Health and Safety issues. Key themes likely to emerge from the Report will include:

The importance of having a culture that gives safety equal status alongside cost and schedule.

The overlapping of Demonstration and Manufacturing phases added complexity, technical risk and safety risk into the programme.

The value of having strong risk governance for complex projects that promotes access to expert technical advice on safety issues.

Independent certification and assurance of land environment capability should be adopted and modelled on best practice elsewhere in Defence.

Following the Report's conclusion, we will consider what further investigations are required to see if poor decision making, failures in leadership or systemic organisational issues contributed to the current situation not simply in relation to Health and Safety but more broadly as necessary.

2. Update on Personnel

Initially 121 personnel were identified as requiring urgent hearing assessments as a result of recent noise exposure on Ajax. Subsequently, the MOD broadened the scope of those who should be tested to all those who had been exposed to noise on Ajax. To date, a further 189 individuals have been identified that should be offered an assessment, giving a total number of 310 personnel. Of these 304 have been contacted successfully; the remaining

6 are UK service personnel who have recently left service and are in the process of being traced.

The health of our service personnel is our top priority. 248 personnel, including 113 from the original cohort of 121, have now been assessed. The Army continues to identify and monitor the hearing of all personnel exposed to noise on Ajax, with additional testing put in place where required. The Army is also in the process of identifying any health effects in those potentially exposed to vibration. Veterans who have been exposed to noise or vibration on this project will be supported throughout and will have access to the same assessments as those still serving. I will update the House on the number of personnel affected by noise and vibration in due course, including if any trends become apparent once the data has been analysed.

3. Technical Issues

At present all dynamic testing and training on MOD's Ajax vehicles remains paused. A Safety Assurance Panel for Ajax, comprising Duty Holders from MOD, General Dynamics, Millbrook and independent advisers, has been established to assure that independent testing can recommence safely at Millbrook Proving Ground. Subject to the Panel's final endorsement and General Dynamics own safety approvals, Millbrook trials are expected to resume imminently, initially deploying General Dynamics crew in MOD owned vehicles, with real time monitoring of vibration and in-ear noise.

The independent trials at Millbrook are essential to provide the evidence to support fundamental root cause analysis and to enable the safe resumption of wider trials and training activity. The focus for the MOD and General Dynamics remains on identifying the root causes of the noise and vibration issues to develop long-term solutions to ensure Ajax meets the Army's need.

I have made clear that no declaration of Initial Operating Capability will be made until solutions have been determined for the long-term resolution of the noise and vibration concerns. Work continues on both with General Dynamics heavily committed to delivering a safe resolution.

Over the summer, work has been conducted to examine design modifications to reduce the impact of vibration. A design modification to reduce the risk of noise through the communication system is in development and is currently being tested. These may represent part of the overall solution but considerable work needs to be undertaken before any such assurances can be given.

Until a suitable suite of design modifications has been identified, tested and demonstrated, it is not possible to determine a realistic timescale for the introduction of Ajax vehicles into operational service with the Army. We will not accept a vehicle that is not fit for purpose.

As is often the case with defence procurement process, there have been a number of Limitations of Use ("LOUs") placed on Ajax vehicles during the early phase of use. LOUs restricting speed and the maximum height for

reversing over steps have now been removed and work continues on removing other LOUs.

Ajax is an important capability for the Army and we are committed to working with General Dynamics for its delivery. We have a robust, firm price contract with General Dynamics under which they are required to provide the vehicles as set out in the contract for the agreed price of £5.5bn.

To assist in the delivery of Ajax we have identified the need for a full time, dedicated Senior Responsible Owner who will preferably be able to see the project through to completion, or indeed advise if the project is incapable of being delivered. A short-list of candidates is currently under consideration. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority are also providing MOD with expert support to establish a recovery plan for the programme.

Civil Aviation Noise: Independent Advice to Government

[HLWS250]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Robert Courts) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

The aviation sector is vital to our future as a global trading nation as well as playing a critical role in local economies and in the Government's commitment to level up the economy. However, aviation noise can affect the health and well-being of individuals and communities in the vicinity of airports and underneath flightpaths.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a reduction in aircraft movements in most areas, and with it a reduction in associated noise, but as the Government focuses on building back better and ensuring a successful UK aviation sector for the future, aviation noise will increase from current levels. It is therefore vital that Government has appropriate and credible advice on aviation noise related matters.

The Government established the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) in November 2018 to help ensure that the needs of local communities are properly taken into account when considering the noise impacts of airport expansion, and to help ensure that noise impacts of airspace changes are properly considered.

Following an independent review of ICCAN conducted earlier this year, I have concluded that many of ICCAN's functions would be more efficiently performed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which already has a wider environmental remit. This will help ensure that noise is considered alongside other policy outcomes on the basis of high quality research and advice.

As a result, I can confirm that ICCAN will be wound down this month (September). This will be followed by a transitional phase during which my Department will work with the CAA, which will take on the majority of ICCAN's former functions from April 2022. The CAA also plans to establish a new Environment Panel to

provide it with independent expert advice on a range of environmental issues including carbon, air-quality and noise. ICCAN's existing functions not transferred to the CAA, will remain within my Department.

Civil Cases: Extending Fixed Recoverable Costs

[HLWS251]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland) has made the following Written Statement.

"The Ministry of Justice is today publishing its consultation response on extending fixed recoverable costs (FRC) in civil law cases in England and Wales. This follows the 2019 consultation paper, Extending Fixed Recoverable Costs in Civil Cases: Implementing Sir Rupert Jackson's Proposals, which was based on the recommendations in Sir Rupert Jackson's report on FRC, published on 31 July 2017. This consultation response has been delayed, principally because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we build back a better justice system, we continue with renewed vigour to modernise the courts and how users interact with them. One area in need of further reform is costs, and particularly those that a losing party must pay the winner. This is especially true in lower value civil claims which people and businesses are most likely to face, either as claimants or defendants. Currently, the costs of these cases are too uncertain. Without being able to predict what the costs may be, it is difficult for either side to take an informed decision on the best way forward. We want cases to be resolved as early as possible, including those that proceed to litigation, with costs that are certain, proportionate, and fair to both sides.

FRC are a way of controlling the legal costs of civil litigation in advance by prescribing the amount of money that can be recovered by the winning party at set stages of litigation. They reduce overall costs, keep them proportionate, and enhance access to justice. FRC are already an important part of our justice system in lower value personal injury cases: their extension will be of particular benefit to those of more modest means, including individuals and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and those who may otherwise be unable to litigate.

The Ministry of Justice has carefully considered the way forward in the light of responses to the consultation and developments since, including the Government's desire to extend the use of FRC in other cases not covered in this response, such as clinical negligence claims and immigration and asylum judicial reviews. As is set out in our response, we propose to extend FRC to all cases in the fast track (i.e. generally those up to a value of £25,000), and to implement a new regime for 'intermediate' cases (simpler cases between £25,000 and £100,000). We will work with the Civil Procedure Rule Committee to ensure

the smooth delivery of these reforms, to be implemented over the coming year.

The case for extending FRC remains strong: uncertainty of costs hinders access to justice, whereas certainty of costs set at a proportionate and fair level enhances it."

Covid-19 Vaccinations Programme

[HLWS255]

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

Through the Covid-19 Vaccines programme, we have administered over 90 million vaccine doses in the UK, with recent PHE data suggesting that this has prevented over 24 million infections, 105,900 deaths and 82,100 hospitalisations in England alone. The vaccines are the most effective way of protecting the most vulnerable and minimising hospitalisations and deaths.

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) continues to consider emerging data. When parliament was in recess the Committee provided advice in favour of:

- offering initial vaccination to all remaining 16 and 17 year olds;
- offering a 3rd dose in the primary vaccine schedule to all those aged 12 and over defined as severely immunosuppressed; and
- and expanding the groups of 12-15 year olds defined as at risk.

Her Majesty's Government (HMG) reviewed and accepted the advice. All four parts of the UK have accepted the JCVI's advice and align their deployment in each nation.

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable members to bring to their attention the contingent liabilities relating to the expansion of the Covid-19 vaccine programme taken during the summer recess.

Initial vaccination to all remaining 16 and 17 year olds:

JCVI published further advice on the vaccination of children and young people on 4 August.

JCVI advised that all remaining 16 to 17-year-olds should be offered a first dose of Pfizer-BNT162b2 vaccine. This is in addition to the [existing offer of 2 doses of vaccine to 16 to 17-year-olds who are in 'at-risk' groups](#) or in roles which present a high risk of transmission to vulnerable people.

Third dose in the primary vaccine schedule to all those aged 12 and over defined as severely immunosuppressed:

JCVI published its advice on vaccination for individuals with severe immunosuppression on 1 September.

JCVI advised that a third primary vaccine dose be offered to individuals aged 12 and above with severe immunosuppression in proximity of their first or second

Covid-19 vaccine doses in the primary schedule with a preference for mRNA vaccines for those aged 18 and over. Whether patients are eligible will be determined by their specialist clinician. For young people aged 12-17 years the Pfizer-BNT162b2 remains the preferred choice.

A third primary dose is recommended for individuals with severe immunosuppression in order to bring these individuals up nearer the same level of immunity healthy individuals achieve through 2 primary doses, and this group will become eligible for a booster dose as part of a routine booster programme from around six months after their third primary dose, pending further advice.

Expanding the groups of 12-15 year olds defined as at risk:

JCVI published further advice on expanding the vaccine offer to certain children and young people on 3 September.

JCVI advised that the offer of a course of vaccination should be expanded to include children aged 12-15 years with the following conditions:

- Haematological malignancy.
- Sickle cell disease.
- Type 1 diabetes.
- Congenital heart disease.
- Other health conditions as described in Public Health England's Green Book.

This is in addition to the conditions specified in the existing advice on at risk 12-15 year olds published on the 19 July. JCVI advised that this group is offered a two-dose course of vaccination with Pfizer-BNT162b2 vaccine as the preferred option.

With deployment of additional doses of vaccines to severely immunosuppressed individuals and new groups of young people over the parliamentary summer recess, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine supply via this statement and attached Departmental Minutes containing descriptions of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further doses to the population increases the statutory contingent liability of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Deployment of effective vaccines to eligible groups has been and remains a key part of the Government's strategy to manage Covid-19. Willingness to accept the need for appropriate indemnities to be given to vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines with the expected benefits to public health and the economy alike much sooner than may have been the case otherwise.

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

Even though the Covid-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. The MHRA approval for use of the currently deployed vaccines

clearly demonstrates that this vaccine has satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the very unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

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

HM Treasury has approved the proposal.

Essex Mental Health Independent Inquiry: Terms of Reference

[HLWS254]

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

On 21 January 2021, I announced the establishment of a non-statutory, independent inquiry into the circumstances of mental health in-patient deaths at the former North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, the former South Essex Partnership University Trust and the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, which took over responsibility for mental health services in Essex from 2017.

I am pleased to inform you that I placed a copy of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference in the Libraries of both Houses on 24th August 2021.

This follows a consultation by the Inquiry on its Terms of Reference which commenced on 26 May and concluded on 3 August 2021. The Inquiry team reached out to and heard from affected families, patients, local community groups, charities, and other individuals and organisations with an interest in the issues laid out in my earlier statement.

The Terms of Reference have also been published on the Inquiry's website (<https://www.emhii.org.uk/>).

Housing Delivery Test

[HLWS253]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Housing (Christopher Pincher) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Covid-19 pandemic has tested our country's resilience like nothing else has during peacetime. The public has endured great sacrifices, but access to a home – whether owned or rented – should not be one of them. Therefore, despite the unprecedented challenge facing us, we must not lose sight of the need this country has for more homes.

The Housing Delivery Test exists to offer greater transparency on the level of housing delivery in an area. It is an annual percentage measurement calculated over a rolling three-year period, taking into account the homes delivered in an area against the homes required. The

Housing Delivery Test will remain a key part of the reformed planning system under proposals set out in *Planning for the Future* White Paper.

The 2020 Housing Delivery Test measurement used data relating to financial years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. To respond to the disruption to local authority services and the construction sector caused by the first national lockdown in March 2020, the Government made a one-month adjustment to the 2019-20 housing requirement. Since then, the Government has been engaging closely with local authorities and the housing industry across the country and stands ready to support recovery. Ministers have been listening to our stakeholders and will continue to do so.

The 2021 Housing Delivery Test measurement will be calculated using data relating to financial years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. Over the course of the 2020-21 measurement year, there were considerable variations in levels of housing delivery as local authorities and construction industry continued to face disruption on a national, regional and local level due to the pandemic. As a result, the Government aims to publish the 2021 Housing Delivery Test as intended later this year but will apply a four-month adjustment to the housing requirement figures for 2020-21 in order to account for these fluctuations. This means that there will be a deduction of 122 days to account for the most disrupted period that occurred between the months of April to the end of July. The thresholds for consequences for under-delivery will be maintained, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

A nuance of the Housing Delivery Test is how the calculation is carried out for local authorities that undergo reorganisation to create unitary authorities. Until now, recently reorganised authorities anticipated having their Housing Delivery Test calculated at their former authority boundaries in only the first year following reorganisation.

International Travel: Summary of Updates

[HLWS249]

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

This statement provides an update on developments on international travel and on changes to the traffic light system made over the Summer recess period.

Global Travel Taskforce July Checkpoint Review

As announced on Thursday 29 July, and as part of the second Global Travel Taskforce checkpoint review, the government extended the policy on fully vaccinated passengers arriving from amber list countries to include those who have been vaccinated in Europe (EU Member States, European Free Trade Association countries and the European microstate countries of Andorra, Monaco and Vatican City) and US residents vaccinated in the United States. These changes came into force at 04:00 on Monday 2 August and mean that amber list arrivals vaccinated in the US and in Europe no longer have to take

a day 8 test or quarantine. However, they are still required to take a pre-departure test before arrival as well as a PCR test on or before day 2 after arrival.

Children (under 18s) who are ordinarily resident in the US or Europe are also exempt from quarantine and the day 8 test, the same as children ordinarily resident in the UK. Children aged 11 and over will still need to complete a pre-departure and day 2 test. Children between the ages of 5 and 10 will only need to complete a day 2 test, and children aged 4 and under do not need to take any tests.

Passengers vaccinated in Europe with a vaccine approved by the European Medicines Agency are required to provide proof via an EU Digital Covid Certificate, and those vaccinated in the US are required to provide proof via the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccination card. The policy does not currently cover those who have proof of recovery from Covid-19.

Additional restrictions for France were applied on Monday 19 July due to the persistent presence of cases in France of the Beta variant. These temporary additional restrictions were removed at 04:00 on Sunday 8 August and the fully vaccinated policy now applies to France.

Unvaccinated passengers, or passengers whose vaccines were not provided in the UK, Europe or United States through MHRA, EMA and FDA-approved vaccines, respectively, arriving in the UK from an amber list country are required to quarantine at home, provide a valid notification of a negative test result prior to travel and take a test on day 2 and 8 after their arrival.

The government will explore how to expand this approach to other countries, where it is safe to do so.

Further to this, international cruises also fully restarted on 2 August. Passengers travelling on international cruises are subject to the same rules as other international passengers and should therefore follow the traffic light system. FCDO advice has been amended to encourage travellers to understand the risks associated with cruise travel and take personal responsibility for their own safety abroad.

Traffic Light System Review

During parliamentary recess there have been two reviews of the country allocations within the traffic light system, on Thursday 5 August and Thursday 26 August. The following countries and territories have been added to the Government's green list:

At 04:00 BST on Sunday 8 August: *At 04:00 BST on Monday 30 August*

• Austria • Germany • Latvia • • Canada • Denmark • Finland •
 Norway • Romania • Slovakia • Liechtenstein • Lithuania •
 Slovenia Switzerland • The Azores

Passengers arriving from green list destinations need to provide evidence of a negative Covid-19 test result prior to travel and take a further test on or before day 2 of their arrival in the UK.

The following countries have been added to the amber list at 04:00 BST on Sunday 8 August:

- Bahrain
- India
- Qatar
- United Arab Emirates

The following countries and territories have been added to the red list, reflecting the increased case rates in these countries as well as presenting a high public health risk to the UK from known variants of concern:

At 04:00 BST on Sunday 8 August *At 04:00 BST on Monday 30 August*

• Georgia • La Reunion • Mayotte • • Montenegro • Thailand
 Mexico

Passengers arriving from these destinations, irrespective of vaccination status, are required to self-isolate in a managed quarantine hotel, provide a valid notification of a negative test result prior to travel and take a test on day 2 and 8 after their arrival.

All arrivals into the UK must continue to complete a Passenger Locator Form.

Managed Quarantine Service

From Thursday 12 August, the cost for staying in a Managed Quarantine Facility when arriving from a red list country increased to £2,285 for a single adult and £1,430 for a second adult to better reflect the total costs involved. The price remains unchanged for children.

Testing

Testing remains an important part of ensuring safe international travel. The government continues to work with the travel industry and private testing providers to further reduce testing costs, while ensuring travel is as safe as possible. The government has recently reduced NHS Test & Trace costs for travel testing for a second time to £68 and £136 for Day 2 and Days 2 and 8 testing packages respectively, to send a clear signal to industry and encourage a reduction in private sector pricing.

The Health Secretary has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to conduct an urgent review of private testing providers to explore whether individual PCR providers may be breaching their obligations under consumer law; to report on any structural problems in the PCR market affecting price, reliability, or service quality; and whether there are any immediate actions that the Government could take in the meantime. The CMA has also sent and published an open letter to providers of PCR tests on how they should comply with consumer law.

On 23 August the government also announced that, following a rapid review of the pricing and service standards of day 2 and day 8 testing providers listed on GOV.UK, more than 80 companies have had their misleading prices corrected on the Government's website and given a final warning, and a further 57 firms have been removed. The action will help ensure consumers can trust the testing providers listed on GOV.UK and only the most reliable companies are available.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach.

However, from the 2021 measurement, in order to support new unitary authorities, they will be able to choose to use their former authority boundaries or their new unitary boundaries for the purpose of the measurement until the fifth anniversary of the new authority's existence. We will be updating planning guidance to reflect this. In such cases, unitary authorities will still be expected to deliver housing in line with their identified need.

This Government's ambition is to deliver 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s and one million homes over this Parliament. Therefore, it is vital that work continues to support and facilitate housing delivery. It will help us to build back better, support the economy to rebound strongly from the pandemic and ensure the homes needed across England are provided.

We have been making strong progress. Last year alone, around 244,000 homes were delivered – this is the highest number of new homes for over 30 years, and the seventh consecutive year that net supply has increased.

This Written Ministerial Statement only covers England.

Northern Ireland: Update

[HLWS257]

Lord Frost: The Government set out in its 21 July Command Paper, '*Northern Ireland Protocol: the way forward*', proposals to find a new balance in the operation of the Protocol.

The Government proposed to the EU on 23 July a 'standstill' arrangement to maintain the operation of the Protocol on the current basis, and to pause current legal actions, to provide space for discussions on those proposals. The EU announced on 27 July that it was not, at that stage, moving to the next stage of the legal proceedings it started in March. There have since been initial technical talks between the UK and the EU. These will continue in order to determine whether a constructive process can be established for discussing and addressing the issues identified with the Protocol.

Following on from this, to provide space for potential further discussions, and to give certainty and stability to businesses while any such discussions proceed, the Government will continue to operate the Protocol on the current basis. This includes the grace periods and easements currently in force. Operational and other guidance will be updated to reflect this approach. We will ensure that reasonable notice is provided in the event that these arrangements were to change, to enable businesses and citizens to prepare.

Statutory Storage Limits for Gametes and Embryos

[HLWS252]

Lord Bethell: Family units and family formation in the UK are vastly different today than they were when the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (the HFE Act) was introduced and last reviewed. In a modern society, some individuals are choosing to start their families later in life and are increasingly choosing to use new and effective techniques to freeze their eggs, sperm, or embryos to preserve fertility. The reasons for this are diverse but can include not being ready or able to start a family, medical conditions that might lead to premature infertility, or undergoing gender re-assignment.

The HFE Act currently sets the statutory storage limits for eggs, sperm, and embryos at ten years, with the possibility of extension up to 55 years for those who can demonstrate a clinical need. The Government recognises that these current arrangements are increasingly disadvantageous towards women and unnecessarily restrictive of individual freedom of choice about when to start a family.

In view of the significant scientific innovation and societal changes, the Government launched a public consultation on 11 February 2020, to seek views about changing the statutory storage limits. The consultation ran for 12 weeks and closed on 5 May 2020.

The Government is today announcing the publication of the Government Response to the consultation.

We received 1,222 responses to the consultation, including 17 from key sector organisations. The responses were analysed and carefully considered by the Department of Health and Social Care giving due regard to the importance of equality, facilitating reproductive choice, administrative burden, and public acceptability.

In the light of these factors and the public response, the Government is announcing a change to this policy; to increase the statutory storage limits for eggs, sperm, and embryos for everyone, regardless of medical need, to 10-year renewable storage periods, with a maximum limit of 55 years. The legislation will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

The regulator, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) will provide oversight during the introduction of these changes to ensure they are rolled out effectively and safely.

The proposed policy change is intended to facilitate greater reproductive choice and will allow for less stressful decision-making in family formation. Importantly, it will provide equity for all, regardless of medical need, and will help reduce administrative burden for clinics and the regulator.

A copy of the Government's response to the consultation will be deposited in the libraries of both Houses.

A Regulatory Triage Assessment has also been published alongside the consultation. It can be accessed on gov.uk and will also be deposited in the libraries of both Houses.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Consultation response [Government Response 14-07-2021 in correct publishing format FINAL CLEARED.docx]

Regulatory Triage Assessment [RTA in DHSC publishing template 29062021.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-09-06/HLWS252/>

Written Parliamentary Questions 155392 and 170718: Correction

[HLWS248]

Lord Bethell: On 19 May 2021, I responded to an oral question about insurance and indemnity arrangements for care homes.

In my responses to Baroness Wheeler and Baroness Walmsley, I referred both to CQC data “from the

insurance industry” and CQC data indicating “pressures are being felt by the insurance industry”. I would like to clarify that the CQC does not hold, or collect, data directly pertaining to the insurance industry. Rather, I was referring to CQC registration data, which show that, despite pressures being felt by care providers, including those stemming from the contraction of the adult social care insurance market, this has not translated into significant changes in capacity or service closures.

In my response to Baroness Wheeler, I said that “the number of patients has in fact increased from 457,000 to 458,000”. I would like to clarify that this is the number of CQC-registered care home beds, rather than care home residents.

Finally, in response to Baroness Tyler, I noted that “we have given £6 billion to local authorities to support care homes.” I would like to clarify that this represents funding committed to local authorities through un-ringfenced grants to tackle the impact of Covid-19 across their services, which includes, but is not limited to, adult social care. This sits alongside the £2 billion in specific funding for adult social care that the Government has made available throughout the pandemic.

Written Answers

Monday, 6 September 2021

Afghanistan: Airports

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the open routes to Kabul airport remain safe to travel through. [[HL2391](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Conditions on the ground remain extremely challenging but we are doing everything we can to manage the situation as safely and securely as possible. We aim to bring out hundreds of British nationals, diplomats and Afghan interpreters a day. We are in close contact with our partners and allies about the security situation, including working with the US to help ensure the security and viability of the airport.

Afghanistan: Immigration

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to implement the recommendation of the International Relations and Defence Select Committee in its report *The UK and Afghanistan*, published on 13 January (HL Paper 208), that the "UK Government should ensure that all Afghan interpreters who worked for the UK military, including those now resident in third countries, are aware of, and able to access the provisions of, the ex-gratia scheme". [[HL2325](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to help Afghan staff who have assisted us and we are working to get them and their families out as fast as we can. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), which came into effect in April 2021, offers relocation or other assistance to current and former locally employed Afghan staff. This scheme is in addition to the existing Ex Gratia Scheme (EGS) which will remain open until November 2022. After November 2022, eligible Afghan staff will still be able to relocate via ARAP. Prior to the current evacuation the UK assisted over 1,900 to leave Afghanistan between April and August under the ARAP scheme. Through the current Operation PITTING evacuation, as of 31 August we have evacuated more than 16,000 people from Kabul. This includes Afghan interpreters, staff and their families who served alongside our brave military and are eligible under the ARAP programme. Our officials are working as quickly as possible to bring more people to safety in the United Kingdom, via third countries.

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) individuals, and (2) families, have been relocated to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy. [[HL2347](#)]

Baroness Goldie: Since the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy was established in April approximately 7,000 eligible Afghans and dependents have been relocated. The MOD is currently undertaking a data validation exercise and further information will be released to the House at the appropriate time.

Operation PITTING was the largest UK military evacuation since the second World War. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that as many people as possible, including thousands of British nationals and their families, Afghan former staff and their families and many highly vulnerable Afghan people - were relocated to the UK on over 100 RAF flights.

Our commitment to those who are not eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure. We will continue to do all that we can to support British Nationals who remain in Afghanistan and those Afghans who have supported us, and to put pressure on the Taliban to allow safe passage.

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) individuals, and (2) families, have had their applications to be relocated to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy refused. [[HL2348](#)]

Baroness Goldie: Regrettably we will not be able to evacuate all those we would hope to, and due to the pace at which we continue to receive and assess applications for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), it is not possible to quantify the number of applicants that have been rejected at this time.

Since its launch in April of this year, we have refused a proportion of applicants to the ARAP scheme on the grounds of eligibility. Additionally, a number of applicants were refused relocation under ARAP on the grounds of national security because we were unable to conduct an assessment due to inadequate information.

Thousands of vulnerable people who are not eligible for ARAP, including women, girls and minority groups, will be welcomed to the UK as the Home Office delivers what will be one of its most ambitious resettlement schemes: the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. This is also separate from, and in addition to, the ARAP.

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to widen the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy to include employees of (1) UK based NGOs, and (2) UK funded projects. [[HL2390](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The Government is strongly committed to fulfilling its responsibilities to current and former locally employed staff in Afghanistan. The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme is not time-limited and will endure, remaining open indefinitely to British Nationals who remain in Afghanistan and Afghan allies who were directly employed by Her Majesty's Government.

For those not eligible under the ARAP scheme, including employees of UK based NGOs and UK funded projects, the Home Office is working quickly to establish the details of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will provide protection for those identified as most at risk, such as women and girls. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years.

Afghanistan: NATO

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had within NATO to maintain an Alliance presence in Afghanistan. [HL2395]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have spoken a number of NATO Allies in recent days about the situation in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister has spoken to US President Biden, French President Macron, German Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Rutte and the NATO Secretary General. The Foreign Secretary has spoken to his US, French, Dutch, Danish and Turkish counterparts. We continue to work closely with our partners to assess how to address risks concerning terrorism most effectively and will continue to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they anticipate that the 10 per cent increase in aid to Afghanistan, announced by the Foreign Secretary on 17 August, will be used; and whether delivery of that aid will be contingent on (1) the Taliban demonstrating that there have been no revenge killings or imprisonment of their political opponents, (2) girls' schools remaining open, and (3) the distribution of all aid through NGOs. [HL2324]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. We have provided £3.3 billion of aid funding since 2002, which has helped improve the rights of all Afghans, including women and minority groups. These developments must not be lost. The UK will continue to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. On Wednesday 18 August, the Foreign Secretary announced a £286 million package of support for Afghanistan that will significantly increase our humanitarian support, providing life-saving assistance to people affected by conflict, drought and Covid-19.

Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the total cost of British military operations in Afghanistan since 2001. [HL2367]

Baroness Goldie: The total cost of British military operations in Afghanistan since 2001 (up to and including financial year 2019-20) was £22.7 billion.

Details of expenditure for financial year 2020-21 will be included in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts that will be published later this year.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what preparations they have made to provide emergency mental health support to British soldiers due to return from Afghanistan. [HL2389]

Baroness Goldie: Armed Forces personnel (Regular and mobilised Reserve) who experience a traumatic event are supported through the Trauma Risk Management process (TRiM). Whilst no system can detect every individual at risk of mental illness, there are measures in place to increase awareness at all levels and to mitigate the development of operational stresses. These include pre- and post-deployment briefing and the availability of support, assessment and (if required) treatment, both during and after deployments.

Post-tour decompression activity which supports the readjustment and reintegration of personnel as smoothly and quickly as possible to sustain readiness has been factored into Op PITTING, with time allocated for peer-to-peer discussion on moral injury. This approach is based on experience in the Covid pandemic where soldiers returning from supporting the civilian authorities have undergone a two-day recovery programme.

Each of the single Services also provide through-career mental resilience and stress management training. The MOD has also produced the HeadFIT website to encourage good management of mental fitness and an online Mental Health Fundamentals course is available to all Armed Forces personnel. Furthermore, from September 2021, all Armed Forces personnel will receive mandatory, annual, mental health and wellbeing briefing designed to increase awareness of mental health and the personal barriers that may prevent the seeking of support.

Afghanistan: Refugees

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the timescale for the repatriation of Afghan refugees who have supported the British mission in Afghanistan; and how they intend to achieve that repatriation, particularly for refugees located outside Kabul. [HL2394]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our absolute priority has been to evacuate as many people as possible. However the terror attack outside the Kabul airport tragically demonstrates the complex and vulnerable situation that impacted operations on the ground. We will continue to do all we can to support British Nationals and those Afghans who have supported us, and to put pressure on the Taliban to allow safe passage. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme

remains open to anyone who is eligible, and we will work with international partners on establishing potential routes for those eligible for ARAP to get to the UK.

Afghanistan: Taliban

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the future of Afghanistan under Taliban control; and whether they intend to recognise the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. [HL2349]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The policy of the British Government is to recognise States, not Governments. As the Prime Minister has said, we will judge the Taliban by their actions not their words and respond accordingly. We will take a coordinated approach with our partners as the Prime Minister announced at the G7 Leaders meeting on 24 August.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) Russia, and (2) China, in regard to the current situation in Afghanistan and at what ministerial and diplomatic level; and when the Prime Minister last spoke to US President Biden in regard to the current situation in Afghanistan. [HL2365]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister spoke to US President Biden on 23 August and at the G7 on 24 August. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 18 August. We are in regular contact at an official level with the Russian government through our Ambassador and her team at the British Embassy in Moscow. This is also the case through our missions in New York, where we convened a meeting of P5 representatives on 23 August. We are planning further Ministerial engagement in the coming days.

Animal Products: Imports

Asked by Baroness Fookes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to ban the import of animals killed by trophy hunters, and (2) to introduce related penalties for offenders. [HL2350]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government takes the conservation of endangered species very seriously, which is why we are banning the import of hunting trophies from endangered species, as set out in the Government's manifesto.

Our approach will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. We will be setting out our plans soon.

Arts: Education

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of funding cuts to the high cost subsidy for creative arts courses at universities on the viability of these courses; and what steps they are taking to ensure equal access to creative arts courses in all educational settings. [HL2278]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: In January 2021, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education asked the Office for Students to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant for the academic year 2021/22 in order to ensure value for money and to support strategic priorities across the sector as well as disadvantaged students and under-represented groups.

The Office for Students ran a consultation on this matter and has recently published its conclusions. The responses to the consultation were carefully analysed, and the issues raised were considered by both the Office for Students and the Secretary of State in reaching their respective decisions about the allocation of the Strategic Priorities Grant in 2021/22.

These reforms include the reallocation of high-cost subject funding, which is one element of the Strategic Priorities Grant, towards the provision of high-cost subjects which support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs. As a result, the total funding for high-cost subjects such as medicine and engineering is 12% (£81 million) higher than last year. The high-cost subject funding rate for arts and music courses will be set at £121.50 in 2021/22 – the fall from 2020/21 is equivalent to a reduction of around 1% in combined funding (on a per-student basis) from a £9,250 tuition fee and Office for Students grant funding.

The government continues to value arts and social science subjects. High-quality provision in a range of subjects is critical for our workforce and our public services, as well as being intellectually rewarding and culturally enriching for those studying them and wider society.

As part of the same reform programme, we have asked the Office for Students to invest an additional £10 million in our world-leading specialist providers, many of which specialise in arts provision. We want to ensure that such providers receive additional support, and that grant funding is used effectively to support students.

The Office for Students continually monitors and assesses financial health in the higher education sector, working closely with any provider that shows increased risk of financial difficulties. The latest Office for Students report on the financial sustainability of higher education providers in England showed that the overall financial position of universities, colleges, and other higher education providers registered with the Office for

Students across the higher education sector remains sound, with reasonable financial resilience.

Ashraf Ghani

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have on the whereabouts of former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani; and whether they have had any contact with him since he fled Afghanistan on 15 August. [HL2366]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Media reporting indicates Ashraf Ghani was in the UAE following his departure from Kabul on 15 August.

Boilers

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban gas boilers, and over what timescale. [HL2397]

Lord Callanan: In order to achieve net zero emissions, we will have to transition completely away from traditional natural gas boilers for heating homes on the gas grid.

There are a number of options with the potential to play an important role in decarbonising heat, including heat networks, heat pumps, hydrogen and biogas.

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

Broadcasting Programmes: Television

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will meet (1) representatives of the major television channels, (2) the Financial Conduct Authority, and (3) Ofcom, to encourage the development of programmes that promote investment in shares of companies quoted in the UK. [HL2364]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is fully supportive of initiatives to improve financial education. While the Government regularly meets with the Financial Conduct Authority, Ofcom and representatives of major television channels, it is right that programming and editorial decisions are made independent of Government.

Care Homes: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they plan to take following reports that some private care providers are charging local authorities up to

£10,000 a week to look after one child in care. [HL2333]

Baroness Berridge: Local authorities are responsible for ensuring there are sufficient places to meet the needs of looked after children in their area, including commissioning places from private or voluntary sector providers as required. They are responsible for agreeing prices with providers accordingly.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched a market study that will examine the lack of availability and increasing costs in children's social care provision. The CMA is examining concerns around high prices paid by local authorities, specifically prices charged by providers and variation between prices paid for similar types of placements.

The government has also committed to undertaking a widescale review of children's social care, taking a fundamental look at the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children it supports, and what is needed to make a real difference. The review will be bold, broad, and independently led, taking a fundamental look across children's social care, with the aim of better supporting, protecting, and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people. The review will be evidenced based and bring together a broad range of expertise.

The government will study the findings and recommendations of both reviews carefully when they report next year.

Civil Servants: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Rawlings

To ask Her Majesty's Government which civil servants are exempt from Covid-19 rules related to (1) travelling, and (2) mixing with groups of other people; and for what reasons they are exempt. [HL2096]

Lord Bethell: Crown servants and Government contractors, which includes civil servants must quarantine in a managed facility or in their own accommodation, depending on the 'traffic light' allocation of the country they departed from or transited through in the 10 days before arrival in the United Kingdom. This applies unless a relevant Government department has certified that they are not required to do so and the traveller is:

- a Crown servant or Government contractor travelling to the UK for essential Government work or returning from such work outside the UK;
- returning from conducting essential state business outside of the UK; or
- returning to the UK where this is necessary to facilitate the functioning of a diplomatic mission or consular post of Her Majesty or of a military/other official posting on behalf of Her Majesty.

Civil servants meeting the first two of these eligibility criteria may also be exempt from the mandatory post-arrival testing requirements. Some civil servants who are conducting essential border work or essential defence

activities are also exempt from the requirement to complete a Passenger Locator Form, as well as quarantine and travel testing requirements. While all social distancing restrictions are no longer mandated, the legal duty to self-isolate when notified by NHS Test and Trace remains in place applies to civil servants as to the wider public.

Climate Change

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee in its report Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk, published on 16 June, which highlighted a growing gap between the level of climate change risk the UK faces and the level of adaptation underway; and what steps they are taking (1) to increase UK biodiversity, and (2) to ensure the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats. [HL2370]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Climate Change Committee's (CCC) Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk presented a detailed and up to date insight into the growing risks and opportunities to the UK from climate change. It will help inform greater ambition and action on enhancing resilience and inform the third Climate Change Risk Assessment Government Report, which we will lay in Parliament in January 2022. This report will state our position relative to the CCC's evidence and advice and set out a forward look for adaptation in the UK, including to the third National Adaptation Programme. We welcome the evidence the CCC has presented and recognise the need to go further in preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Domestic biodiversity policy is devolved in the UK, and this response refers to action in England. Our 25 Year Environment Plan marked a step-change in ambition for biodiversity and the natural environment and we are already taking action to fulfil this ambition.

We have committed to protect 30% of our land and sea by 2030, and will be extending protections on land and piloting Highly Protected Marine Areas in English waters to boost biodiversity recovery. Since 2010 we have already established over 100 new marine protected sites. We have also brought forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years with ambitious measures to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age, including restoring and enhancing nature. The Bill requires a new, historic legally binding target to be set to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030. This will help us to deliver our commitment to leave the environment in a better state for future generations.

Furthermore, we are investing in nature restoration and in nature-based solutions to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change and to support new green jobs, for example through our £640 million Nature for Climate and £80 million Green Recovery Challenge funds.

Conflict Resolution: Females

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 Whitehall headquarters of the (1) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and (2) Ministry of Defence. [HL2354]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials in the FCDO 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.

Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the operation of the NHS Covid-19 app. [HL2375]

Lord Bethell: The NHS Covid-19 app is kept under close review and is continually being refined and enhanced to ensure it can continue to break chains of transmission. Research from academics and bodies such as The Alan Turing Institute and The University of Oxford have shown that the app continues to work effectively, and user research and feedback are continually considered and incorporated into app releases. Constant evaluation is conducted to ensure the app can continue to support present and future requirements.

Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much has been reclaimed from suppliers of Covid-19 pandemic-related personal protective equipment which was judged not fit for purpose; and what plans they have to pursue further claims. [HL2363]

Lord Bethell: The Department is working through all its personal protective equipment (PPE) contracts to identify instances where products have not been delivered or failed quality tests and will seek to recover the costs for undelivered or substandard PPE.

As of 27 July 2021, the Department was engaged in commercial discussions (potentially leading to litigation) in respect to 40 PPE contracts with a combined value of £1.2 billion covering 1.7 billion items of PPE.

Dementia: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the behavioural and

psychological symptoms of people with dementia have worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL2371]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement have collaborated with the South East Clinical Delivery and Networks to publish guidance for primary care networks and care homes on dementia and older people's mental health, which includes ways to recognise and support people experiencing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. They have also made guidance and resources available to address the rehabilitation needs of people living with dementia, including the 'Dementia wellbeing in Covid-19' resource.

We have commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on how to manage or mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on people with dementia and their carers living in the community and concise helpful summary leaflets were produced.

We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course.

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address the rehabilitative needs of people with dementia who have experienced a significant deterioration in their symptoms during the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL2372]

Lord Bethell: The NHS Long Term Plan commits to the Enhanced Health in Care Homes service model that sets out best practice for dementia care including rehabilitation and reablement.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also made guidance and resources available to address the rehabilitation needs of people living with dementia, including the 'Dementia wellbeing in Covid-19' resource.

In addition, we have commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on how to manage or mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on people with dementia and their carers living in the community and concise helpful summary leaflets were produced.

We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course.

Dementia: Social Services

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the needs and views of people with dementia are taken into account in any workforce plan that forms part of the forthcoming social care reform proposals. [HL2373]

Lord Bethell: We are working closely with local and national partners from across the sector, including those with dementia and lived experience of the social care system, to ensure that our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives.

Together with stakeholders we are considering how we build back fairer to deliver the sustainable improvements

to adult social care that we all want to see. We will bring forward proposals for reform later in 2021, including for the social care workforce.

Deportation

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many foreign nationals have been deported in the last 12 months, and to what countries. [HL2384]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'.

The latest data on returns of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) are published in Ret_02 and Ret_02q of the returns summary tables. Data on enforced returns (of which 'deportations' is a subset), by destination and nationality can be found in Ret_D02 of the returns detailed dataset.

The latest data relate to Q4 2020. Data for Q1 2021 are due to be published on 26 August within the Immigration statistics, year ending June 2021.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available.

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

Deportation: Afghanistan

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people whose applications to stay in the UK had been refused were returned to Afghanistan in the past five years. [HL2334]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in

each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'. The latest data are published in Ret_D02 of the Returns detailed tables. (See attached for information) This includes information on the number of people returned to each country. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

	2017	2017	2017	2017	2018	2018	2018	2018	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Grand	13905	11912	13005	12418	11656	10456	11036	11445	10439	9237	9004	9529	7207	1495	4479	5075	4565
Total																	

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- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

The published data relate to all returns, regardless of reason for return.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Returns Data - DO2 [returns-datasets-jun-2021.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-08-18/HL2334>

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to follow the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner's advice to stop all returns of individuals to Afghanistan after immigration proceedings. [HL2335]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Enforced returns to Afghanistan have been paused.

Detention Centres: Inspections

*Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations by the Chief Inspector of Prisons following his visits to immigration detention facilities on the south coast of England; and how many of those recommendations have been implemented. [HL2382]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In September 2020, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons carried out an unannounced inspection of the detention of migrants arriving in Dover in small boats. The report was published

The latest data relate to the year ending December 2020. Data to the end of March 2021 is due to be published on 26 August.

The table below covers the period of Quarter 1 - 2017 to Quarter 1 2021 over the last five years.

in October 2020, and the government's response to the report was published at the same time.

The report made 20 recommendations of which the government accepted 19. At the time of publishing the government's response to the report, all the accepted recommendations had been either completed or partially completed.

English Language: Education

*Asked by **Lord Gilbert of Panteg***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Berridge on 2 June (HL434), and on 20 July (HL1599), whether they still intend to publish "a new national strategy for English language in England", as set out in the Integrated Communities Action Plan, published on 9 February 2019; what role the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will have in the formulation of this strategy; and what steps they are taking to ensure a cross-government approach to the development of the strategy. [HL2351]

Baroness Berridge: I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave on 20 July 2021 to [Question HL1599](#).

We remain committed to English language, as demonstrated by the manifesto commitment to boost English language teaching. However, our response to the Covid-19 outbreak is our priority at present. We will provide an update on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in due course.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government continues to work closely with the Department for Education and other government departments on the provision of ESOL.

Firearms

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the legislation on firearms. [HL2357]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This country has some of the toughest firearms controls in the world and our firearms law is kept under constant review to safeguard against abuse by criminals and to preserve public safety.

We will not hesitate to act whenever the need arises. The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 introduced bans on the

civilian possession of certain rapid-firing rifles and devices known as ‘bump stocks’. And the Home Office is bringing forward new statutory guidance to improve how people applying for a firearms licence are assessed in future. The new guidance draws on previous lessons learned and will ensure better consistency and improved standards across police firearms licensing departments.

Following the tragic shootings in Plymouth on 12 August, the Home Secretary has, as a matter of urgency, written asking all police forces in England, Wales and Scotland to review their current firearms licensing processes set against the current Home Office guidance and legislation. This review will help to reassure people that all necessary checks have been made to keep them safe. In particular, all forces are asked to carry out a full review of all certificates that have been seized, refused, revoked or surrendered in the past twelve months, and subsequently approved by the police.

Firearms: Licensing

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban shotgun licences for those living in urban areas. [HL2396]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: While the UK has some of the toughest firearms legislations in the world the Government has no plans to ban shotguns in rural or urban areas.

Following the tragic shootings in Plymouth on 12 August, the Home Secretary has, as a matter of urgency, written asking all police forces in England, Wales and Scotland to review their current firearms licensing processes set against the current Home Office guidance and legislation. This review will help to reassure people that all necessary checks have been made to keep them safe. In particular, all forces are asked to carry out a full review of all certificates that have been seized, refused, revoked or surrendered in the past twelve months, and subsequently approved by the police.

Heating

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the appropriate heat source to replace redundant gas boilers with; and if such a heat source includes heat pumps, what plans they have to make these more (1) available, (2) practical, (3) efficient, and (4) cost-effective. [HL2398]

Lord Callanan: Achieving net zero carbon emissions will require almost all UK homes to be supplied with low-carbon heating by 2050. Electrification through heat pumps and hydrogen both offer potential pathways to achieve heat decarbonisation, supported by other potential solutions including biogas and heat networks, and we expect 2050 to include a mix of these technologies.

Currently, electrification of heat is the only pathway to net zero that has been proven to work at scale in buildings. That is why we have committed to grow the heat pump market to 600,000 installations a year by 2028.

This commitment provides a clear long-term signal to industry on the expected scale of heat pump deployment, providing certainty and enabling investment. The Government is also undertaking a comprehensive package of measures to support the transition, including targeted public investment, proposals for regulation to decarbonise buildings off the gas grid, and establishing a new market-based mechanism. The full package of measures will be set out in our forthcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy. Additionally, the Government is currently trialling solutions to help overcome barriers to heat pump deployment as part of the £14.6 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project, which seeks to demonstrate the feasibility of a mass rollout of the technology by installing heat pumps in a representative sample of homes across the UK.

The above actions by industry and the Government will help to build supply chains and develop a more cost-effective heat pump offer for consumers.

High Speed 2 Railway Line

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to changes to travel patterns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, what plans they have to review the forecasts in their report HS2 Phase One full business case, published on 15 April 2020, specifically the findings that (1) passenger demand between (a) London and Birmingham/Coventry, and (b) London and Manchester/Stockport/Manchester Airport would grow by over 80 per cent, and (2) passenger demand between London and Glasgow would more than double, by 2036–7. [HL2341]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The impact of Covid on demand for travel continues to unfold, and the Department is undertaking research and surveys to develop demand scenarios and understand possible impacts on business cases across the transport portfolio.

The Phase 2b Western Leg strategic outline business case, due to be published in early 2022, will use demand scenarios that explore the impact of Covid to inform the business case. This will be the first time an initial assessment of the pandemic's impact on the HS2 project will have been undertaken.

HS2 is a long-term project and delivers travel opportunities over a long period of time (i.e. in excess of 100 years), limiting any shorter-term effects of Covid on travel patterns. The project will open up new employment and regeneration opportunities for millions of people, contribute to regional and national economic development, and have long-lasting impacts which we are not able to fully model or appraise.

Hikvision

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take in response to the correspondence between the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner and Hikvision on 16 July and 20 August, regarding the use of that company's technology in Uyghur internment camps in China; and whether they intend to follow the decision of the government of the United States of America in banning Hikvision. [[HL2328](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I will be meeting with the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner to discuss the issues raised in the correspondence with Hikvision.

The UK is committed to promoting the ethical development and deployment of technology in the UK and overseas. We are aware of a number of Chinese technology companies linked to violations taking place in Xinjiang, and are monitoring the situation closely.

On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a series of measures to help ensure UK businesses and the public sector are not complicit in human rights violations or abuses in Xinjiang. These measures, which are being implemented by the UK Government, include a review of export controls; the introduction of financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act; increasing support for UK government bodies to exclude suppliers complicit in violations or abuses; and strengthening the Overseas Business Risk guidance to highlight that businesses engaged in the fields of surveillance, biometrics, or tracking technology are at heightened risk of complicity in human rights violations in Xinjiang.

The UK Government has also published guidance to help cutting-edge UK firms negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter when working with Chinese businesses, supporting safe and appropriate UK-China collaboration in digital and tech. The guidance provides firms with clear, up-to-date information and specialist support which reflect the UK's values and take account of national security concerns.

Housing: Construction

Asked by *Baroness Thornhill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the status of the housing targets allocated to each council area; whether there is an expectation, as evidenced by the Housing Delivery Test, that they will be (1) met or (2) exceeded; and on what grounds targets could be negotiated downwards. [[HL2392](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: A crucial first step in making sure the country has the right amount of homes, is to plan for them. The National Planning Policy Framework expects local authorities to calculate local housing need using the standard method. However, our standard method is only the starting point in the process of planning for new

homes. It is not a target. Local authorities will still need to consider the constraints they face locally to assess how many homes can be delivered in their area in setting their own housing targets when preparing their local plans.

The Housing Delivery Test exists to offer greater transparency on housing delivery in an area and encourages local authorities to be realistic about likely rates of delivery from sites in plans. Where delivery falls, policy consequences are applied to ensure more land is brought forward. The latest results show that the majority of those delivering 75% or less of the housing they need had a plan over 5 years old at the time of publication – this underlines the importance of having an up-to-date plan and proactively supporting development in a plan-led way.

Intensive Care

Asked by *Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to ring fence funding, and (2) to prioritise rehabilitation, for hospital patients who are recovering critical illnesses. [[HL2374](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government has provided a dedicated national discharge fund, managed by the National Health Service, for the first half of 2021/2022 financial year. In tandem with the existing services commissioned by local authorities and clinical commissioning groups, this discharge fund pays for the cost of post-discharge recovery and support services. This includes bed based and home-based rehabilitation and rehabilitation care following discharge from hospital and is funded for up to four weeks.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by *Lord Polak*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's investment of (1) effort, and (2) resources, into the advancement of the Middle East peace process. [[HL2378](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We firmly believe a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. That is why we support steps to increase understanding and dialogue between the parties that can help create the conditions for meaningful negotiations. We will continue to fund peacebuilding projects focused on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Asked by *Lord Polak*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's response to Freedom of Information Request FOI2021/07873, dated 23 June, how the disclosure of funding allocated to the advancement of the Middle East peace process would "potentially damage" international relationships. [[HL2379](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following an internal review, the international relations exemption has now been withdrawn and information will be released shortly.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the number of fully qualified HGV Class 1 and 2 drivers in the UK, and (2) any additional number needed to meet current and future demand. [[HL2358](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As of May 2021 Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency data indicated there were about 622,000 full HGV licence holders with active professional competence (a valid driver certificate of professional competence, Driver CPC). The pool of people holding HGV licences is wider still (a further 370,000 as of May 2021) including for example transport managers and drivers not requiring DCPC such as fire service drivers.

Current trade association estimates of the driver shortage range from 60,000 to 100,000, with a central estimate of around 76,000. The current shortage includes both a chronic, long-term, component and an acute element.

Large Goods Vehicles: Channel Crossing

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ease of HGV vehicle movements across the English Channel. [[HL2359](#)]

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ease of HGV vehicle movements across the Irish Sea. [[HL2360](#)]

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ease of HGV vehicle movements from UK ports to northern Spain. [[HL2361](#)]

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ease of HGV vehicle movements from UK ports to Norway. [[HL2362](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) ensures that the vast majority of journeys will continue as they did before the end of the transition period. EU and UK hauliers are able to operate to, from and through each other's territories with no restriction, and undertake up to two additional movements within each other's territories.

With regards to border flow and Covid-19 testing requirements, haulier testing for drivers operating in the EU is now available at 34 Information and Advice Sites

across the country which are strategically located, aligned to strategic routes to ports and typical haulier footfall. The Department has tested over 700,000 hauliers for Covid-19 since December 2020 with a positivity rate of 0.1%. The high compliance demonstrates the effectiveness of the Covid testing at Information and Advice Sites as it enables goods to flow freely across borders and delivers robust public health mitigations to manage the risk of infection in England. As of 19th August, only Germany have any testing requirements for hauliers entering from the UK.

The Department will continue to monitor the changing situation and rapidly engage with hauliers if there are any further changes to haulier testing.

Legislation: Parliamentary Scrutiny

Asked by Lord Norton of Louth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Acts of Parliament enacted in the 2010–15 and 2015–17 Parliaments and eligible for post-legislative review by Government departments have not yet been the subject of such review; and what plans they have to increase the number that are reviewed. [[HL2377](#)]

Lord True: There is no centrally held record of the number of post-legislative reviews submitted by Government departments. The decision on whether a review should be submitted to the relevant departmental select committee is a matter for discussion between departments and the committee. There will be occasions when the department and committee may agree that a memorandum is not required, for example where an Act has already been repealed, has only a very limited policy or practical significance, a review has already been committed to or carried out (e.g. following a pilot); or a department has already submitted relevant evidence in connection with another inquiry by the committee.

LGBT People: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support LGBTQ+ people who are imprisoned and mistreated in countries with poor human rights records. [[HL2385](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has a long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. The UK is fundamentally opposed to all forms of discrimination and works to uphold the rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ people in all circumstances. Our Embassies and High Commissions monitor and raise human rights issues in their host countries. We urge the international community to address discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and to promote diversity and tolerance. We also work with allies and partners through the multilateral system including the Equal Rights Coalition, the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE) and the Council of Europe to stand up for and defend human rights.

We continue to evolve approaches to tackle serious human rights violations and abuses around the world. For example on 6 July 2020, the Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime which gives the UK a powerful new tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses.

Local Plans

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many local plans have been approved without providing evidence that they will meet their housing targets. [HL2393]

Lord Greenhalgh: As part of the plan-making process, local land constraints such as the green belt, sites of special scientific interest and national parks are considered in determining housing targets. All local plans are then subject to an independent examination to determine whether the plan is sound, legally compliant and aligns with national policy. As part of the examination the Inspector will determine whether the plan sets out an appropriate strategy for the area, based on proportionate evidence and whether the strategy is deliverable.

Lung Diseases: Health Services

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what early intervention measures and improvements to 'continuity of care' for patients with chronic respiratory conditions were adopted between 2010 and 2019 in England. [HL2069]

Lord Bethell: A series of early intervention measures and improvements to continuity of care were adopted between 2010 and 2019.

In 2011, the Department's outcomes strategy for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma set out an objective to reduce the number of people with COPD who die prematurely. This was through a proactive approach to early identification, diagnosis and intervention, and proactive care and management at all stages of the disease. The outcomes strategy for COPD and asthma is attached.

In 2013, a guide to performing quality assured diagnostic spirometry was produced. The foreword of the guide says that around a quarter of people on general practice COPD registers did not meet the diagnostic criteria for COPD, and it could be that misdiagnosis occurred because much of the diagnostic spirometry performed failed to meet the essential quality standards. The guide was published to support accurate diagnosis of respiratory conditions. This guide is attached.

Developed in 2017, the NHS RightCare COPD pathway defines the core components of an optimal service for

people with COPD. This includes timely access to Pulmonary Rehabilitation as part of the optimal treatment pathway and timely diagnosis as part of the pathway which help with early intervention measures.

The final measure adopted in this period was The National Asthma and COPD Audit Programme which was launched in March 2018 and is led by the Royal College of Physicians. The aims of this programme are to improve quality of care, services, and clinical outcomes for patients with asthma and COPD by collecting and providing data on a range of quality improvement indicators.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Guide to Diagnostic Spirometry [A Guide to Performing Quality Assured Diagnostic Spirometry (1).pdf]

The Outcomes Strategy for COPD and Asthma [An Outcomes Strategy for COPD and Asthma in England (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-07-15/HL2069>

Migrants: Local Government Services

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance, if any, they have given to (1) Kent County Council, and (2) other local authorities, to meet their statutory responsibilities to (a) asylum seekers, and (b) immigrants. [HL2383]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and other support whilst their application for asylum is being considered. Whilst there is no direct assistance to local authorities for asylum dispersal our accommodation providers pay council tax on the properties they procure for asylum accommodation.

For unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), local authorities receive funding through the Local Government Finance Settlement for all 'looked-after children', and in addition the Home Office pays a 'top up' tariff directly to local authorities for UASC and former UASC care leavers.

As part of vital updates to the National Transfer Scheme, we announced more than £20m of new funding. The new tariff is £114 per UASC per day, rising to £143 if the local authority is over the 0.07% threshold, or accepts responsibility of a UASC from a higher rate receiving authority, and £270 per UASC care leaver per week. In addition, we have established a new exceptions cost fund of £3m, to support local authorities facing particular high costs for individual children. Further changes include a new national voluntary rota and increased support with age assessment.

We recognise the longstanding role that Kent County Council has played in supporting these vulnerable young people and are extremely grateful for their significant

contribution. We have provided substantial operational support to Kent to help alleviate the significant pressures on their children's services, caused by small boat arrivals on the south coast.

We do not provide accommodation or support for those in the UK illegally.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Foreign Secretary last spoke to the Foreign Minister of Iran to secure the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe to allow her to return to her family in the UK. [HL2369]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain committed to doing all we can to secure Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's return home. Iran has put her through a cruel and intolerable ordeal and we have called on them, in the strongest possible terms, to end her suffering and allow her to be reunited with her family. The Foreign Secretary continues to raise the UK's serious concerns about Iran's practice of detaining foreign and dual nationals with his Iranian counterpart. Our Ambassadors in Tehran have regularly raised our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Offshore Drilling: Shetland

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks of the Scotland Office Minister David Duguid on 16 August, what plans they have to deliver a programme of retaining oil from the Cambo oil field in barrels; what such a programme would cost; and what long-term environmental impacts have been identified. [HL2339]

Lord Callanan: No decision has yet been taken by regulators, the Oil and Gas Authority and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning, on the request for approval for the Cambo field to proceed to production.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Polak

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they do not list (1) the Norwegian Refugee Council, or (2) other partners, on their Development Tracker website as receiving funding, despite that information being publicly available elsewhere. [HL2380]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Development Tracker presents information on partners who have received funds from Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in multiple ways depending on how the funding is reported by both the Government department and the implementing partner.

From information reported by the FCDO and other government departments, partners who have received funding are listed as implementing partners on country pages [1] and on project pages [2]. Projects relating to specific partners can also be viewed using Development Tracker's search function [3].

When partners publish data reporting that the UK has been a funder, they will appear on the Partners tab of a Development Tracker project page. There may therefore be instances where the Norwegian Refugee Council or other partners who receive funds from HMG are not listed within the partners tab as they have not referred to HMG as a funding organisation.

[1] For example, on the South Sudan country page, the Norwegian Refugee Council is listed here <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/countries/SS/>

[2] For example, the Norwegian Refugee Council is listed here <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204019>

[3] For example, search for Norwegian Refugee Council as shown here <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/search?query=Norwegian%20Refugee%20Council&includeClosed=0>

Post-18 Education and Funding Review

Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their final response to recommendations made in the Report of the Independent Panel led by Dr Philip Augar. [HL2386]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government is carefully considering its response to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, to which the independent panel reported. We remain committed to introducing further reforms which will ensure a sustainable student finance system, drive up the quality of higher education provision, and promote genuine social mobility. We plan to consult on further reforms to the higher education system before setting out a full conclusion to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding.

Prevent Independent Review

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) individuals identifying as Muslim, and (2) organisations representing Muslims, have engaged in consultations or submitted evidence for the Independent Review of Prevent. [HL2355]

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the report of the Independent Review of Prevent will provide a breakdown of the number and religious affiliation of individuals and organisations that gave evidence to the Review, including how many were funded by, or affiliated with, the Prevent Strategy. [HL2356]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Independent Review of Prevent is currently ongoing. The Reviewer, William Shawcross, is independent, so we cannot provide any specific details of his engagement activities to date, nor can we predetermine the findings of the Review. However, he published details of his methodology for the Review on 23 March 2021. His Ways of Working can be found here: Independent Review of Prevent: ways of working.

The Independent Review of Prevent, led by William Shawcross, will gather and analyse a range of information to underpin robust, evidence-based findings and recommendations on the government's strategy for supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

William Shawcross will submit his report to the Home Secretary on 30 September 2021. His report, with the Government's response to his recommendations, will be laid in the Houses of Parliament by 31 December 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Independent Review of Prevent - Ways of working [Guidance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-08-18/HL2355>

Public Sector Debt

Asked by **Lord Eatwell**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportions of UK national debt were owned by (1) UK households, (2) the Bank of England, (3) overseas purchasers, (4) banks and financial houses, and (5) insurance and pension funds, in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019, (d) 2020, and (e) 2021. [HL2345]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Most of the Government's debt is in the form of publicly traded bonds ('gilts'). The data most recently published on the website of the Debt Management Office (DMO) covering the distribution of gilt holdings are set out in the table below:

	UK households	The Bank of England	Overseas holdings	Banks and other financial institutions	Insurance and pension funds
End-2017	0.2%	24.4%	27.9%	16.0%	31.2%
End-2018	0.2%	23.8%	28.3%	15.8%	31.5%
End-2019	0.2%	23.4%	30.1%	13.3%	32.8%
End-2020	0.2%	31.6%	28.2%	12.0%	27.9%
Q1 2021	0.2%	32.5%	27.6%	11.1%	28.4%

Asked by **Lord Eatwell**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the average duration of UK national debt in (1) 2017, (2) 2018, (3) 2019, (4) 2020, and (5) 2021. [HL2346]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Most of the Government's debt is in the form of publicly traded bonds ('gilts'). The average maturity of the stock of total gilts was 15.8 years at both end-December 2017 and end-December 2018, 15.9 years at end-December 2019, and 15.3 years at end-December 2020. By end-July 2021, the average maturity of the stock of total gilts had fallen to 15.2 years.

Railways

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether in their regular updates to Domestic transport use by mode: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020 they will provide separate data for the rail sector on passenger and freight traffic to match the data on cars, light commercial vehicles, HGVs, London buses, and buses outside London, provided for the road sector. [HL2340]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: This publication table makes public the high-level metrics used by the Cabinet Office for monitoring Covid-19 response which focus on the behaviour of the travelling public. These metrics do not include rail freight. Road goods vehicles are included in these metrics as they contribute to total road transport demand, and thereby impact upon car users' experience of the transport network.

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by **Baroness Valentine**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Prime Minister's levelling up speech on 15 July, what measures and outcomes they intend to use to evaluate the success of this agenda in the short, medium and long term; and how they will take wellbeing into account. [HL2399]

Lord True: Levelling up is at the heart of the Government's agenda to build back better after the pandemic and deliver for the people of the UK. The Government will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper in the Autumn, articulating how bold new policy interventions will improve opportunity and boost livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic.

Teachers: Training

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure full professional and community engagement in its Initial teacher training (ITT) market review given it is taking place while schools are closed for the holidays. [HL2338]

Baroness Berridge: The report from the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Market Review was published on 5 July, around two weeks before the end of the school term, and the department launched a public consultation at the same time. The department recognises some of the consultation

period fell during the school summer holidays, but this reflects the ambitious timetable that has been set for the review. We want to deliver any improvements decided upon as soon as is feasible as trainees, schools and pupils ultimately stand to benefit. The ITT Market Review is central to the department's wider Covid-19 recovery plans and our approach to further narrowing attainment gaps to improve outcomes for all children and young people. During the spring, the department engaged with a broad range of sector representatives to help shape the report and will continue these discussions as we work towards publishing our response to the recommendations and ensuring all trainees have access to the highest quality ITT.

Tunisia: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support Tunisia to help ensure it remains a democracy. [HL2353]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly MP, was in Tunisia 7-9 June to co-chair the inaugural UK-Tunisia Association Council. Bolstering trade, furthering good governance, and supporting Tunisia to develop its economy are all key aspects of our engagement that will enhance Tunisia's resilience and stability. UK programmes have supported political and economic reform, strengthening Tunisia's democratic transition. These have included £385,000 to support implementation of public sector economic reform, and £3million through the British Council to support English language and core skills in schools to address youth unemployment.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current political situation in Tunisia. [HL2368]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is closely monitoring the situation in Tunisia. We believe that the solution to Tunisia's core challenges can only be achieved through the principles of democracy, transparency, human rights, and free speech. We call on all parties to uphold Tunisia's reputation as a tolerant and open society and to protect the democratic gains of the 2011 revolution.

Tunisia: Press Freedom

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of journalists and bloggers being (1) assaulted, (2) detained, and (3) tried in military courts, in Tunisia. [HL2352]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by reports of journalists and bloggers being detained. We regularly raise our concerns about human rights with the Tunisian authorities, and will continue to do so.

Turkey: Iraq

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the Turkish bombing of a hospital in Sinjar on 17 August; and what representations they have made about these reports to the governments of (1) Iraq, and (2) Turkey. [HL2344]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly reiterate the need for dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians whilst respecting Iraqi sovereignty. Reports of an attack on a hospital are deeply worrying and it is important that the full facts are established. We have repeatedly called on all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, and we are monitoring the situation closely.

The UK welcomed last year's Sinjar Agreement as a critical step to stabilise the region - it is vital that all groups cooperate with its implementation.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish all the EU law affecting Northern Ireland that is given effect under the provisions of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL2065]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role the (1) Northern Ireland Assembly, and (2) UK Parliament, have in consenting to the EU law affecting Northern Ireland under the terms of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL2066]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations they have had regarding who will represent the UK on the various bodies set up under (1) the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and (2) the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement. [HL2067]

Lord Frost: Beyond the Protocol itself, which outlines in its annexes the EU law that applies to Northern Ireland, the Government has not so far published any further material regarding rules applied by the Protocol.

The Government's Command Paper [CP 502] published on 21 July sets out alternative proposals for the basis on which EU law might apply in Northern Ireland, potentially involving the Northern Ireland institutions. This could have a significant effect on the visibility of new rules applied in Northern Ireland and how they are brought into force in UK law.

Pending agreement on this potential new settlement, it is entirely right that people in Northern Ireland should be able to be fully aware of the law applying where it derives from EU acts which are not the subject of specific domestic legislation to transpose them into UK law. We

will consider the best way of enabling this. We continue to urge the EU to ensure that there is proper notice of such legislation and that appropriate information is provided through the structures established by the Withdrawal Agreement.

As to the bodies established under the Protocol, in line with commitments made in the New Decade, New Approach deal, representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive are invited to attend all Joint Committee and Specialised Committee meetings as part of the UK delegation when the Irish Government are attending. Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive also form part of the UK delegation at the Joint Consultative Working Group.

Undocumented Migrants: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether immigrants entering the UK from France illegally are required to have a Covid-19 PCR test upon detection by police or immigration officers. [HL2329]

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of Covid-19 PCR tests on illegal immigrants to the UK have returned a positive result; and of these positive samples, what percentage have now been genomically sequenced. [HL2330]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is following guidance published by Public Health England, Health Protection Scotland and the NHS with regards to Covid testing for migrant arrivals.

All migrants are tested on arrival with a lateral flow test, any refusing are treated as if infectious and isolated. Lateral flow testing is a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of Covid-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. Arrivals who present as symptomatic or who provide a positive lateral flow test are allocated to an approved quarantine site.

Due to the small possibility of false positives associated with lateral flow tests, any individual who receives a positive result at a residential short-term holding facility in England or an Immigration Removal Centre, will be offered a PRC test to confirm the result. Any detained individual with symptoms of Covid-19, or testing positive for Covid-19 will be placed in protective isolation for at least 10 days and Public Health England informed.

We do not hold information regarding the percentage which have been genomically sequenced as this is the responsibility of Public Health England.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the factors enabling continued illegal immigration from France to England by boat

across the Channel, (2) what, if any, impact the UK's departure from the EU has had on those factors, and (3) whether the continued illegal immigration indicates that the UK has "taken back control" of its borders. [HL2331]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Crime Agency's National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime for 2021 includes a section on organised immigration crime and the use of small boats. The full assessment may be found here:

www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/533-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2021/file.

The assessment notes that, 'The increase in small boats use is almost certainly a result of Covid-19 travel restrictions affecting freight and air transport, in addition to enhanced security around the UK-operated border controls at Calais, Coquelles and Dunkirk' and 'It is highly likely OCGs and migrants are attracted to the high success rate and low cost-high profit nature of small boats compared to HGV facilitation'.

The UK's departure from the EU has not made a material difference to the methods of the criminal gangs or our joint activity with European partners to stop them. The UK and France share a history of cooperation on this issue, seen in our commitments under the Sandhurst Treaty and Small Boats Action Plan and most recently via the action agreed in the joint statement between the Home Secretary and Minister Darmanin on 20 July. We have an excellent relationship with our French counterparts and are grateful for their continued commitment.

Increasing numbers of French law enforcement officers, supported by UK funding, are patrolling beaches and are preventing more and more crossing attempts. Nearly 10000 crossing attempts have been prevented so far this year.

The Government's Nationality and Borders Bill will seek to reform the system, including by deterring illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of criminal facilitation, and saving lives.

Veterans: Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to increase emergency mental health support for British army veterans who served in Afghanistan, and (2) to communicate current military decisions regarding Afghanistan to veteran communities. [HL2388]

Lord True: There has been a step change in veterans' mental health provision, driven by significant investment. This year £17.8M has been allocated to the Veterans Mental Health Service Op COURAGE and £10M to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to help deliver charitable initiatives supporting veterans' mental health needs across the United Kingdom. However, we recognise that recent events may have caused distress to

some veterans. That is why, last week, an Armed Forces Mental Health summit was held by the Defence and Health Secretaries, bringing together experts to discuss support for those who served and their families. Following the summit, a further £2.7M has been made available to Op Courage to expand services to support those experiencing complex mental and/or physical trauma, or alcohol and substance misuse.

The Government has also engaged members of the Armed Forces community to reinforce that the mission in Afghanistan was of value. Veterans should be in no doubt of the remarkable role they played in serving their country and keeping it safe. They should feel immensely proud of their service. The PM published an open letter to the entire Armed Forces community on 29 August echoing this sentiment.

Veterinary Medicine: Drugs

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2003 Competition Commission Report on supply of Veterinary Medicines; and what the implementation outcome is for each of the recommendations, including reasoning for those that have not been implemented. [HL2343]

Lord Benyon: All recommendations were implemented.

1 & 9

The Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR) provide four distribution categories, based on the perceived risk of a veterinary medicine and striking the right balance between appropriate controls and availability.

'Prescription Only Medicines - Veterinarian' (POM-V) require prescribing by a vet for animals under their care, following clinical assessment. POM-V covers those products containing narcotic or psychotropic substances or requiring veterinary diagnosis/clinical assessment. Clients may request a prescription which can be dispensed elsewhere.

'POM - Veterinarian, Pharmacist, Suitably Qualified Person' (POM-VPS) and 'Non-Food Animal-VPS' products can be prescribed and/or supplied by vets, pharmacists or SQPs; without clinical assessment but with point-of-sale advice.

'Authorised Veterinary Medicine - General Sales List' category covers products with safety profiles allowing distribution across a range of retailers.

7

The distribution category is assessed during the veterinary medicine application procedure. Factors considered in deciding the category include the need for clinical diagnosis, point-of-sale advice, administration route, nature of the product/active substance and safety profile. Cost is not considered as the scope is limited to

the safety of the product for both the animal and people handling the product.

8 & 3

The EU centralised procedure is compulsory for products containing a new active substance, constituting significant therapeutic/scientific/technical innovation, or where a marketing authorisation (MA) is in the interest of animal health at EU level. These products are classified 'Prescription-Only' as their novelty represents an increased risk. The UK had the flexibility to assign one of its distribution categories, based on increased knowledge of the product's safety profile. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol the EU centralised system will still apply in Northern Ireland.

5

The Veterinary Products Committee (VPC) reviewed products over seven categories, recommending the appropriate distribution category. In some cases, this required removal of indications to support the products being more freely available via a lower distribution classification.

6

MA holders can apply to change the category. This will be considered by the VPC unless they previously advised on category changes for comparable products.

4

The VMD may grant, without requiring a full dossier, an MA for an EU-authorised medicine for import into the UK under Parallel Import provisions, provided the applicant demonstrates it is identical to a UK-authorised medicine for food-producing species, or therapeutically identical to a UK-authorised medicine for companion animals. The VMD requests a detailed description of the product's intended re-labelling.

10

An MA is initially valid for five years, after which it may be renewed upon re-evaluation of the risk-benefit balance. Once renewed, the MA is valid indefinitely unless pharmacovigilance raises concerns.

11

The VMD publishes standards and transparent targets around the assessment processes - something recognised and welcomed by industry. The VMD encourages companies to consult on their proposed MA application, particularly for exceptional MAs, prior to submission or during the process itself. After EU Exit the VMD introduced additional MA options - national-only or in parallel with an EU application to better utilise company resources.

2

The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct contains a chapter on fair trading requirements. This includes provision of information on medicine prices.

Viral Diseases: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any evidence which suggests that wearing a face covering reduces the spread of viruses other than Covid-19. [[HL2381](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government has not looked at the effectiveness of face coverings for reducing the spread of viruses other than Covid-19.

Visas: Afghanistan

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a rapid UK visa authorisation process for those Afghan citizens who worked in Kabul with former Royal Marine Commando Paul Farthing for the charity Nowzad. [[HL2387](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our Afghan relocation policy is one of the most generous in the world and has already supported over 7,000 directly employed former Afghan staff and their families to leave Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). As we continue to significantly accelerate the pace of relocations, thousands more will follow.

The Government is rightly prioritising the evacuation of British citizens, their family members and those who qualify for the ARAP by virtue of their work directly for and with HMG. But we are also making every effort to ensure those who are at risk by virtue of their work with charitable or humanitarian organisations are able to leave Afghanistan safely.

The Home Office is committed to providing protection for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan. The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans to the UK, who have been forced to flee the country, in its first year, with up to a total of 20,000 in the long-term.

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