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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

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 Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
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Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
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Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Thursday, 9 September 2021

Covid-19 and Flu Vaccinations: Health and Social Care Sector

[HLWS269]

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

I wish to inform the House of the action the Government is taking to consider how to further improve uptake of Covid-19 and Flu vaccinations by those who work in our health and social care services.

Following a public consultation on making Covid-19 vaccination a condition of deployment for those working in adult care homes, the Government informed the House on 17 June 2021 that Covid-19 vaccination would be required of people entering a CQC registered adult care home, unless exempt, to protect vulnerable residents.

While residents in care homes are some of the most at risk from Covid-19, the responses to this initial consultation made a clear case for extending this policy beyond care homes to other settings where vulnerable people receive care and treatment.

It is right that the Government strains every sinew to maximise the benefits of the vaccine and protect the most vulnerable as we return our freedoms and get back to a normal way of life.

The Government is therefore now undertaking a further public consultation on whether or not to make Covid-19 vaccination and Flu vaccination a condition of deployment for frontline health and care workers, to help safeguard the vulnerable.

While many of those working in health and social care sectors have taken up the offer of vaccination, it is crucial that this is consistent across services to safeguard vulnerable people, and that this high level is maintained as new people join the workforce.

Recent research has shown people infected with both Flu and Covid-19 are more than twice as likely to die as someone with Covid-19 alone and nearly six times more likely than those with neither flu nor Covid-19, so it is right that both are considered within the consultation.

These are complex and important issues and the consultation seeks to gather a wide range of perspectives from the public and across the health and care sectors about whether vaccination requirements should be introduced and how they could be implemented.

I will provide an update to the House, following the completion of the consultation.

Housing Delivery Test: Update

[HLWS270]

Lord Greenhalgh: I am repeating this statement to rectify a minor error within the Written Ministerial Statement published on Monday 6 September - the reference to the 2020 Housing Delivery Test measurement data should have related to the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

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 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. 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. As set out in the Local Government Act 2010, the Government will not impose top-down restructuring.

Until now, recently reorganised authorities anticipated having their Housing Delivery Test calculated at their former authority boundaries in only the first year following reorganisation. 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.

National Lottery Products: Sales

[HLWS267]

Baroness Barran: My Right Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Media and Data, John Whittingdale MP, has made the following Statement:

Following a consultation, the government announced last year that it was raising the age at which National Lottery products can be bought and sold from 16 to 18, protecting young people from the possible risk of gambling harm. The new minimum age comes into force on October 1st and the operator and retailers have already stopped selling tickets to anyone aged below 18.

Following a further consultation which was held in July and August, the government intends to make some technical amendments to the requirements placed on retailers in connection with the uplift in the minimum age for buying and selling National Lottery products from 16 to 18, and today a statutory instrument is being laid which will introduce this change.

The approved sales system is a minor technical easement and will be based on the two existing provisions already in place for alcohol sales in England, Wales and Scotland, and for sales of tobacco and nicotine vaping products in Scotland, through which a designated person aged 18 or over can approve a transaction being handled by a 16 or 17 year old. This approach therefore builds on

an existing framework and maintains the intent of the original policy.

The majority of National Lottery retailers will already be familiar with at least one of the systems. By offering both approaches we hope that the easement will meet the diverse needs of the National Lottery's 44,000 retailers who range from large supermarket chains to small independent family run shops.

The consultation response is being published today on gov.uk and thank you to everyone who took the time to respond.

Prevailing Market Rates

[HLWS268]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan), has made the following statement.

I am announcing today a temporary reduction in the maximum student loan interest rate following the recent decline in the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured personal loans.

In accordance with the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, where the Government considers that the student loan interest rate is higher than the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured loans, we will take steps to reduce the maximum student loan interest rate.

The Government regularly monitors the interest rates set on student loans against the interest rates prevailing on the market for comparable loans.

Following a decline in the prevailing market rate, I have today, 9 September laid legislation to cap the maximum Post-2012 income contingent repayment undergraduate and the postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate in line with the prevailing market rate. The cap will come into effect from 1 October 2021 and last for a period of three months.

The reduction will be 0.4 percentage point on the maximum student loan interest rate to reflect the average market rates during the preceding monitoring period.

The maximum Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 4.1% between 1 October and 31 December.

From 1 January 2022, the Post-2012 undergraduate and postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rates will revert to the standard rate +3%.

Further caps may be put in place should the prevailing market rate continue to be below student loan interest rates.

Written Answers

Thursday, 9 September 2021

Scottish Government: Communication

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from Scottish

Ministers, by (1) email, (2) letter, and (3) other means of communication, since August 2020 on matters which are reserved. [[HL2410](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In the time period outlined, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has received 11 letters (attached to emails) from Scottish Ministers in relation to reserved matters.

There are no further communications to report.

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