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

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

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Written Statements

Thursday, 16 September 2021

Covid-19: Shielding

[HLWS286]

Lord Bethell: My Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care) (Jo Churchill) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

Shielding was introduced at the start of the pandemic as one of the few interventions available to support those who, at the time, were considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

We know shielding advice is extremely restrictive and has a significant impact on people's lives and their mental and physical wellbeing. It was right to take this step to protect the most vulnerable during the initial waves of the virus, and we put in place support for those who were advised to shield to help them to do so.

We now know much more about the virus and what makes someone more or less vulnerable to Covid-19. We are also in a different situation than we were at the beginning of the pandemic. The vaccine continues to be successfully rolled out, with millions of people having received both doses and a booster programme about to commence. We also have proven, effective treatments, such as dexamethasone and tocilizumab, to support improved outcomes in clinical care pathways.

We have not advised people to shield since 1 April. Since 19 July, the guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people has been to follow the same advice as everyone else, with the suggestion of additional precautions people may wish to take. Those patients who are at risk from infectious diseases more generally and who can also remain less protected after other vaccinations may wish to discuss this with their specialist as part of their routine care.

Due to the success of the vaccine rollout, improvements in treatment and clinical care, and growing understanding of the virus, the government has accepted expert clinical advice and decided to end the shielding programme and the requirement for centralised guidance for people who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

This moves us towards the situation pre-Covid where individuals managed their own conditions with their health professionals. We believe this is a proportionate decision based on the success of the vaccine programme and the protection it offers, the availability of effective treatments and the highly restrictive impact of shielding on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Motor Vehicles Driving Licences

[HLWS288]

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

The haulage sector has been experiencing a shortage of HGV drivers worldwide for some time. The issue has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic as driver testing had to be suspended for much of last year, meaning the shortage increased further.

This country enjoys a robust and resilient supply chain. Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency and this Government is determined to do what it can to mitigate the effects as far as is possible. It is therefore vital that we expedite legislation that will expand and accelerate testing - while at the same time acknowledging that the road haulage industry must play its part in improving recruitment and training by offering better pay and conditions.

The Department for Transport and other Government Departments have worked closely with the haulage sector considering a range of options to improve the number of HGV drivers. As part of these measures a consultation closed on 7 September on change to streamline the HGV driving licence regime and removing a separate trailer test for car drivers. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has already taken administrative action to increase capacity and offer more practical HGV tests but more is needed.

The first of these measures will be addressed via a draft affirmative statutory instrument that will be laid before Parliament today and will mean that car drivers will no longer need to take another test to tow a trailer or caravan, freeing up some 30,000 test slots annually. This additional capacity can be used to reduce the backlog in HGV testing.

To make rapid progress on this, we are making use of the urgent procedure under paragraph 14(6) of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. I am of the opinion that, by reason of urgency, the requirements for the statutory instrument to be published in draft 28 days before it is laid, and for a scrutiny statement to be made before laying, should not apply.

Accelerating the legislation by forgoing the 28-day publication period will allow earlier laying of the legislation than would have otherwise been possible and strengthen the steps we have already taken to increase testing capacity and ease supply chain issues as quickly as possible. Arrangements will be in place to ensure that the changes made by the legislation are operationally effective as soon as the legislation is in force.

Road safety continues to be of paramount importance. We will engage with training providers and insurers to test the response to this change and to explore how we can seek to ensure that any road safety concerns are addressed. We will also explore options for an industry led accreditation that could offer a standardised testing approach if that would be welcomed by the market, insurers and consumers.

Supply Chain Finance in Government: Boardman Review

[HLWS287]

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

On 12 April, the Government announced that the Prime Minister had asked Nigel Boardman to investigate the development and use of supply chain finance in government, especially the role of Lex Greensill and Greensill Capital (including associated companies or companies in its group) and any related issues that Mr Boardman considered were in scope. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, Mr Boardman provided the Prime Minister with Part 1 of his report which sets out Mr

Boardman's findings of fact. This was published on 22 July (Paper reference DEP2021-0641).

The purpose of the Review was to establish the facts and any lessons to be learnt. Mr Boardman has now delivered the second part of his report, including making recommendations. These recommendations and wider suggestions, for institutions in public life to consider, are being published today.

As Mr. Boardman's report recognises, the Government has already committed, through the Declaration on Government Reform, to continually reinforce high standards of conduct in public life through proper process and transparency so that the public can have trust and confidence in the operation of Government at all levels.

The Government notes the work of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs, Treasury and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committees, as well as the forthcoming Standards Matter 2 report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life. We will consider their work alongside Mr Boardman's recommendations, and set out a substantive Government policy statement to Parliament in due course.

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

Written Answers

Thursday, 16 September 2021

Afghanistan: Armed Conflict

Asked by *Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the qualification criteria for the Operational Service Medal (Afghanistan) to ensure that service personnel deployed to theatre during Operation Pitting qualify. [HL2498]

Baroness Goldie: Medallion recognition for the evacuation in Afghanistan will be considered in due course. The current qualifying length of service is 30 days and any decision to change that will take lengthy consideration.

Medals or awards for individual acts of bravery or leadership are separate to the length of deployment criteria and are therefore considered based on a citation by citation basis.

Afghanistan: Immigration

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have made available to individuals approved for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme; and when they anticipate those individuals can be relocated from Afghanistan to the UK. [HL2409]

Baroness Goldie: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for those who worked with the UK in Afghanistan is not time-limited and will endure. We are now looking at all possible avenues to facilitate relocation, from third countries if possible, for those eligible.

To anyone to whom we have made commitments - and who is currently in Afghanistan - we are working urgently with our friends in the region to secure safe passage. As soon as routes are available we will do everything possible to help these eligible individuals to reach safety.

British Venture Capital Association

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what meetings they have had with the British Venture Capital Association on private equity. [HL2453]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Ministers and Government officials routinely meet with representatives of various institutions and organisations as part of ongoing policy development and stakeholder engagement. This engagement has included the British Venture Capital Association, amongst others.

Grenfell Tower: Monuments

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government who will make the decision on a lasting memorial to those who (1) suffered, and (2) lost their lives, at Grenfell Tower; and when the decision will be announced. [HL2477]

Lord Greenhalgh: In March 2018, a set of Principles that underpin the decision-making process in relation to the future of the Grenfell Tower site were agreed and published, (attached) which led to the establishment of the independent Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission. The terms of reference for the Memorial Commission are to establish a proposal for:

- What happens to the Grenfell Tower site in the future, assumed to be a fitting memorial to remember those who lost their lives; and
- How the memorial site will be owned and sustainably managed for the long term.

The Memorial Commission is made up of representatives of the bereaved, survivors and local residents, and will work with the local community to agree a consensus on the most fitting and appropriate way to remember those who lost their lives in the Grenfell tragedy. The Memorial Commission is continuing to work with the local community to establish its proposal.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Future of the Grenfell Tower site
[Principles_governing_consultations_on_the_future_of_the_Grenfell_Tower_site - HL2477.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-07/HL2477>

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what budget they are providing to the lasting memorial of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire; and how that budget will be apportioned between (1) capital costs, and (2) the costs of maintaining the memorial. [HL2478]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is supporting the independent Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission and has committed to funding its work. Once the Memorial Commission has established its vision for a memorial on the Grenfell Tower site, my Department will work to establish and agree an appropriate budget.

Health and Social Care Levy

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the funding to be allocated to the devolved administrations deriving from the health and social care levy may only be spent by those administrations for the purpose of (1) health, and (2) social care. [HL2532]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: For 2022-23, receipts from the increase in National Insurance contributions (NICs) will go to the NHS or equivalent in each part of the UK. This builds on existing arrangements whereby a proportion of NICs is legally required to be allocated in this way. From April 2023, there will similarly be a legal requirement to allocate the Levy revenues to health and social care in each part of the UK.

The overall level of funding provided to the devolved administrations will continue to be determined through the Barnett formula, including at the upcoming spending review.

House of Lords: Table Clerks

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what discussions he has had with the Clerk of the Parliaments regarding the attire of the Table Clerks in the Chamber of the House of Lords, particularly the resumption of wearing horsehair wigs. [HL2734]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Last year, as part of our necessary response to ensure business resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic, six additional members of staff were added to the Table Clerk rota. Full uniform was not worn by these new appointees, due to the significant procurement cost and uncertainties as to the duration of the expanded rota. In light of this the then Clerk of the Parliaments decided that uniform for all Table Clerks should be a formal gown over business attire.

An expanded rota of Table Clerks will remain in place, as it supports the resilience of the Chamber and allows a greater number of staff members to develop knowledge and understanding that is essential to the operation of the House. The costs of procuring and maintaining full uniform for a larger pool of Table Clerks would be significant. The Clerk of the Parliaments has therefore reviewed the situation and has explained to me that the current wearing of a uniform of formal gown over business attire allows Table Clerks to be identified, and respected, in the Chamber while also being appropriate for Clerks as officials performing their duties in supporting a professional, working House conducting regular business. Full uniform will continue to be worn by those Clerks participating in ceremonial occasions such as Introductions and Prorogation; and for State Opening, at which wigs will also be worn.

Housing: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Future Homes Task Force Delivery Plan to deliver net zero homes. [HL2600]

Lord Greenhalgh: On the 27th July, the industry-led Future Homes Task Force published a Delivery Plan that sets out the action needed from industry to deliver new homes in line with government's

climate, environmental and sustainability targets by 2050. Relevant government departments (MHCLG, BEIS and Defra) were consulted on the development of the Delivery Plan, which aligns with upcoming regulation such as the Future Homes Standard and with wider environmental policies and priorities such as those on bio-diversity net gain and water efficiency.

The Task Force also announced the creation of the industry-led Future Homes Hub to oversee implementation of the Delivery Plan. The Future Homes Hub will help industry by coordinating pilot developments and prototypes, identifying operational solutions, carrying out research and analysis into delivery challenges and producing technical guidance. The knowledge and outputs from the Hub's work will be freely shared with industry to help minimise costs and support effective delivery, which will be particularly helpful for SMEs.

It is right that industry leads this work and steps up where necessary to ensure it can meet the challenges associated with the country's net zero ambitions. Government is pleased to support the work of the Future Homes Hub and senior officials from MHCLG, BEIS, Defra and Homes England sit on the Hub's board in non-executive roles, helping advise on its programme of work and offering strategic guidance.

Housing: Prices

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of changes in the level of house prices on the UK's economic recovery. [HL2449]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for house prices or the outlook on the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). In its March forecast, the OBR expects that GDP will grow by 4% in 2021 and return to its pre-Covid peak in 2022. The OBR also forecasts annual house price growth of 5% in 2021.

Further details can be found in the OBR's latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook published in March 2021: <https://obr.uk/download/march-2021-economic-and-fiscal-outlook-executive-summary/>

The OBR will publish an updated forecast on 27 October 2021.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also publish estimates of house prices in the UK. The latest available data shows that UK average house prices reached £266,000 in June 2021

Local Government: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 7 December

2020 (HL10627), when they expect to publish the three-month review of the spending of the £30 million allocated on 8 October 2020 to help local authorities in England fund their Covid-19 compliance and enforcement work. [HL2443]

Lord Greenhalgh: In November 2020, a £30 million ringfenced Compliance and Enforcement Grant was allocated to all district and unitary authorities in England to spend on Covid-19 compliance and enforcement related activities. In January 2021 MHCLG issued an activity and spend survey to all councils in receipt of the grant. The responses from this informed a review of how the grant was being utilised.

The Department have no plans to release the findings of the three-month review. Information was provided in confidence by local authorities during the grant period to support the development of Government policy. The information gathered as part of the review was used to inform successive iterations of the 'Local authority Covid-19 compliance and enforcement good practice framework', (attached) which was archived on 19 July 2021 but it still available for reference.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Local authority Covid-19 good practice framework [Local authority Covid-19 compliance and enforcement good practice framework - HL2443.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-06/HL2443>

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the devolved administrations before their announcement of the one-year suspension of the "triple lock" on state pension payment increases. [HL2534]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: One of the benefits covered by the Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Bill - survivors' benefits in Industrial Death Benefit - is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The Department is temporarily delivering them on behalf of the Scottish Ministers under an Agency Agreement which provides that legislative parity must be maintained, of which there are around 300 recipients of these benefits in Scotland. The Secretary of State therefore wrote to the relevant Cabinet Secretary in the Scottish Government ahead of its introduction seeking a decision on whether they would be taking primary legislation in the Scottish Parliament or through a Legislative Consent Motion to allow this Bill to provide the appropriate powers to enable Scottish Ministers to deliver uprating legislation in tandem. The other benefits in the Bill are reserved matters in Scotland.

Social security is a transferred matter in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Executive has the power in section 132A of the Social Security Administration (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 to mirror the Up-rating Order

in Great Britain made under section 150A (in this case, as temporarily amended). Therefore, the draft Bill does not need to extend to Northern Ireland and no primary legislation is required in Northern Ireland. However, the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out that the Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Minister will seek to maintain a single system of social security, to the extent agreed between them. Officials in the Department for Work and Pensions in Great Britain and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland have therefore been in discussion on the issue.

Social security is a reserved matter in Wales.

State Visits: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether House of Lords authorities were consulted ahead of the visit of the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the parliamentary estate. [HL2569]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: No such visit had been planned for the House of Lords part of the parliamentary estate. Neither House routinely consults with the other regarding bookings taken for use of their facilities.

Trade Promotion

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the current annual cost of the Trade Envoy programme is. [HL2418]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: In 2019-20 the cost of the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Programme was £651,387. All costs incurred are subject to departmental restrictions and guidelines which apply to the programme's use of public funds.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government to list the current trade envoys broken down by their membership of the (1) Conservative party, (2) Labour party, (3) Liberal Democrat party, (4) Crossbench group in the House of Lords, and (5) Non-affiliated peers in the House of Lords. [HL2419]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: There are currently 36 Trade Envoys. A full list including their political affiliation is below.

	<i>Trade Envoy</i>	<i>Political party</i>
1	Andrew Selous	Conservative (1)
2	Baroness Hooper	Conservative (1)
3	Baroness Meyer	Conservative (1)
4	Baroness Morris of Bolton	Conservative (1)
5	Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne	Conservative (1)
6	Conor Burns	Conservative (1)

	<i>Trade Envoy</i>	<i>Political party</i>
7	Damien Moore	Conservative (1)
8	Daniel Kawczynski	Conservative (1)
9	Darren Henry	Conservative (1)
10	David Mundell	Conservative (1)
11	Dr. Andrew Murrison	Conservative (1)
12	Felicity Buchan	Conservative (1)
13	Heather Wheeler	Conservative (1)
14	Helen Grant	Conservative (1)
15	Katherine Fletcher	Conservative (1)
16	Laurence Robertson	Conservative (1)
17	Lord Astor of Hever	Conservative (1)
18	Lord Lamont	Conservative (1)
19	Lord Popat	Conservative (1)
20	Lord Risby of Haverhill	Conservative (1)
21	Marco Longhi	Conservative (1)
22	Mark Eastwood	Conservative (1)
23	Mark Garnier	Conservative (1)
24	Mark Menzies	Conservative (1)
25	Martin Vickers	Conservative (1)
26	Richard Graham	Conservative (1)
27	Theo Clarke	Conservative (1)
28	Lord Faulkner	Labour (2)
29	Rushanara Ali	Labour (2)
30	Stephen Timms	Labour (2)
31	Lord Botham	Crossbench (4)
32	Baroness Hoey	Non-affiliated (5)
33	Lord Austin	Non-affiliated (5)
34	Lord Davies of Abersoch	Non-affiliated (5)
35	Lord Walney	Non-affiliated (5)
36	Sir Jeffrey Donaldson	Democratic Unionist Party

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the change in title from the Prime Minister's Trade Envoys to Trade Envoys indicates a change in accountability. [HL2420]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: There has been no change in title or accountability of the '*Prime Minister's Trade Envoys*', however the formal title is occasionally shortened to '*Trade Envoys*' for brevity.

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the impact of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on (1) the value of financial assets, and (2) the number of financial services sector jobs in the UK. [HL2451]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement gives legal certainty for financial services firms to the extent set out in both sides' market access offers and generally in the services chapter and financial services sub-section. The Agreement will benefit financial services firms' clients and the wider economy in which they operate.

In January, the Governor of the Bank of England stated that between 5,000 and 7,000 jobs had moved due to Brexit. Over a million people are employed in UK financial services. ONS data shows that jobs in financial and insurance activities have increased from 1.27 million in June 2016 at the time of the referendum to 1.45 million in June 2021. We continue to work closely with the Bank of England and Financial Conduct Authority to monitor any relocation of financial services activity from the UK to the EU.

In his Mansion House speech on 1 July, the Chancellor set out the government's plans to make the UK the world's most advanced and exciting financial services hub, to create prosperity at home and help the UK project its values on the global stage.

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