

**Session 2022-23
No. 127**



**Monday
13 March 2023**

**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>
Lord True	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Benyon	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Spokesperson, Wales Office, Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office, Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Davies of Gower	Whip
Lord Evans of Rainow	Whip
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Harlech	Whip
Lord Johnson of Lainston	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade
Lord Markham	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Murray of Blidworth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Penn	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Chief Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Monday, 13 March 2023

Non-crime Hate Incidents: Personal Data

[HLWS614]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Rt Hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon Friend, the Home Secretary, has today laid before Parliament the statutory Non-Crime Hate Incidents Draft Code of Practice on the Recording and Retention of Personal Data, which police officers and staff must have regard to. This code is being laid under the provisions of sections 60 and 61 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Government is introducing this code to establish a proportionate and common-sense approach to the recording of non-crime hate incidents. This approach should better protect personal data, emphasise the importance of the right to freedom of expression, and reduce the number of unnecessary non-crime hate incidents that are recorded whilst still ensuring that vulnerable individuals, groups and communities continue to be safeguarded by the police.

This Government fully recognises the sensitivities surrounding the recording of non-crime hate incidents by the police, particularly in relation to concerns that this process infringes on the right to freedom of expression. We know there are concerns that individuals who express lawfully-held views are at risk of becoming the subject of a non-crime hate incident report if their views are considered to be offensive, and that in turn, this may result in their personal data being stored on a policing record. This Government is clear that this should never be the case. The code makes it clear that offending someone is not, in and of itself, a criminal offence, nor does it warrant a non-crime hate incident being recorded. This aligns with this Government's stance that everyone in this country, no matter who they are or what their views are, should be able to engage in lawful debate without police interference.

The code emphasises the importance of free speech with case studies that are designed to assist the police in considering how the right to freedom of expression should be taken into consideration. The code clarifies that debate, humour, satire and personally-held views which are lawfully expressed are not, by themselves, grounds for the recording of a non-crime hate incident. Furthermore, the code sets out that a non-crime hate incident should not be recorded if the report is deemed by the police to be trivial,

irrational, malicious, or if there is no basis to conclude that it was motivated by intentional hostility.

The code provides new personal data-related safeguards, setting out that the personal data of some who is the subject of an NCHI report should only be included in a record if the incident poses a real risk (a) of significant harm to individuals or groups with a protected characteristic, or (b) that a future criminal offence may be committed against individuals or groups with a protected characteristic. For the purposes of the code, protected characteristics are considered to be race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. If this new threshold is not met, personal data should not be recorded, and any personal data previously noted by the police in relation to the incident (for instance, personal information recorded by the initial call-taker) should be deleted. This code therefore ensures that non-crime hate incidents, and relevant personal data, will only be recorded when absolutely necessary. We believe this will increase transparency and public trust in this process.

The Government fully recognises the importance of ensuring that vulnerable individuals, groups and communities continue to be protected by the police; indeed, this is the purpose of non-crime hate incident recording. We are confident that the code does precisely this. We are grateful for the advice provided by the National Police Chiefs' Council, College of Policing and senior police officers during the process of drafting this code. This has allowed us to publish a code that strikes the right balance between respecting the operational importance of this type of recording for the police, whilst improving safeguards for free speech. If someone is targeted because of hostility or prejudice towards their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity, and the criteria in the code are met, the incident can and should be recorded as a non-crime hate incident. This approach will enable the police to intervene as appropriate in order to prevent significant harm or future criminal offences from materialising, whilst ensuring the right to freedom of expression is protected.

A copy of the draft code which has been laid before Parliament will also be published on GOV.UK.

Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill

[HLWS615]

Baroness Penn: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers

Monday, 13 March 2023

A400M Aircraft

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many Atlas C.1 (A400M) aircraft are operational in the UK; and whether they have ordered more to be built. [[HL5924](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The RAF has a fleet of 21 Atlas C.1 (A400M) aircraft with another due for delivery in the summer of 2023. Currently, no additional aircraft have been ordered.

Audit

Asked by *Baroness Altmann*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring forward legislation this year to enable the creation of the new Auditing, Reporting and Governance Authority. [[HL5879](#)]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: The Government will bring forward legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

British Overseas Territories: Military Bases

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that contractors' staff on British overseas bases have appropriate employment conditions, including a living wage, sick and holiday pay, and employment protections such as those against pregnancy discrimination. [[HL5885](#)]

Baroness Goldie: In British overseas bases, the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) operates under UK law, which includes respective employment law and legislation.

UK MOD ensures its terms and conditions under these laws and legislations are extended to any respective subcontracts and subcontractors who hold the employment responsibility.

Community Transport: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure to avoid the closure of Rural Community Transport Providers in Northern Ireland at the end of April 2023; what alternatives they intend to make available to users of these services; and how the steps they are taking will ensure that passengers are able to attend health appointments. [[HL6232](#)]

Lord Caine: In the absence of functioning devolved institutions, Northern Ireland Office officials are working

with their counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive Department of Finance on the budget allocations for the next financial year. Based on the Northern Ireland budget position for the 2022-23 financial year, the expectation is that balancing the 2023-24 budget will be extremely challenging.

The UK Government recognises that there will be impacts on people and businesses in Northern Ireland as a result of the difficult decisions needed in order for Northern Ireland Executive departments to live within their budgets. It remains the UK Government's firm view that the right people to make these decisions are locally elected politicians in a fully functioning Northern Ireland Executive and local Assembly. In the absence of these, it will be for the relevant Northern Ireland Executive department, in this case the Department for Infrastructure, to manage its funding, including provision for rural community transport.

Darfur: Genocide

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to mark the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Darfur; and what assessment they have made of the motive for continuing violence in that region. [[HL5967](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The political and security instability following the 25 October 2021 coup has exacerbated conflict across marginalised regions in Sudan, including Darfur. The UK has consistently urged the Sudanese authorities to deliver on their obligation to protect civilians and to ensure implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, to help address the violence and instability in Darfur. With international partners, we continue to call on all Sudanese actors to commit to the political process and agree a transitional civilian-led government that can return stability to Sudan.

Economic Crime

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to develop a comprehensive strategy to address fraud and financial crime, particularly that committed against older people. [[HL5943](#)]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Fraud Strategy will be published shortly.

EU Law: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the 300 areas of EU law listed in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland of the EU Withdrawal Agreement as still applying to Northern Ireland will be disapplied by the Windsor Framework; and which areas of EU law will still apply to Northern Ireland. [[HL6017](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Only the absolute minimum (less than 3 percent) of EU law continues to apply in Northern Ireland. This is to avoid a hard border and maintain Northern Ireland's unique access to the EU market, alongside its unfettered access to the UK internal market. Under the Windsor Framework, more than 1,700 pages of EU law will be disapplied for UK internal trade.

Food Supply

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the current level of UK self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetables. [HL5931]

Lord Benyon: The UK production to supply ratio for fresh fruit was 15% in 2021. For fresh vegetables, the ratio was 57%.

Foster Care: Registration and Regulation

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask His Majesty's Government what arrangements there are for the registration and regulation of private fostering agencies; whether there is a statutory basis for such registration and regulation; and whether other agencies and local authorities are informed of misconduct by an individual foster carer provided by a private fostering agency. [HL5959]

Baroness Barran: All independent fostering agencies (IFAs) are registered with Ofsted under the Care Standards Act 2000 and must meet the legal requirements set out in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. IFAs are inspected by Ofsted under the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) on a three-year inspection cycle.

Under the National Minimum Standards IFAs have a duty to ensure the welfare of the children in care and a duty to work effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection, such as the responsible authority, schools, hospitals and general practitioners.

Serious incidents must be reported by IFAs to Ofsted, including any serious complaints about an approved foster parent. Local authorities must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel, and by extension the department and Ofsted, within five working days of becoming aware of a serious incident. These incidents are where abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

If a foster carer's approval to foster is terminated, a copy of the notice must be sent to the responsible authority for any child placed by another local authority, and to the relevant local authority if the foster carer lives outside the area of the fostering service.

Government Departments: Electronic Messaging

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will publish the guidance given to civil servants for (1) providing advice to, and (2) communication with, ministers on (a) WhatsApp, (b) Signal, and (c) Telegram, digital channels. [HL6331]

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will publish the guidance provided to (1) ministers, and (2) special advisers, for their use of (a) WhatsApp, (b) Signal, and (c) Telegram, digital channels. [HL6332]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Cabinet Office intends to publish guidance on the use of non-corporate communications channels as soon as possible. This will replace the guidance published in 2013.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government when people who arrived in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme will be able to be re-matched with hosts who offer their homes through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. [HL6187]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: This department is not responsible for the Ukraine Family Scheme route. Details of re-matching for Homes for Ukraine arrivals are available online on gov.uk.

Horticulture: Government Assistance

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the horticultural industry to support the growth of fruit and vegetables. [HL6107]

Lord Benyon: An innovative, productive, and competitive agricultural sector is one of HM Government's key priorities.

Horticultural production was worth £4.8 billion in 2021 and is a vital sector, not only in ensuring the resilience of our food supply chains, but also as a major driver of local economic growth and employment.

Innovation, such as the development of new plant varieties and growing systems, has already allowed growers to extend the growing seasons of a variety of crops, for example strawberries.

So far, Defra has committed over £90 million through the £270 million Farming Innovation Programme for industry-led research and development in agriculture and

horticulture in England. This investment is enabling more farmers, growers and agri-food businesses to become involved in agricultural R&D. This will maximise the impact of R&D investment in innovation and improve the take up of novel approaches on farms. To date, one third of live projects are focussed on horticulture.

The Farming Investment Fund is supporting the growth of fruit and vegetables by providing grants to growers (including related contractors) so they can invest in the equipment, technology and infrastructure that will help their businesses to prosper. This includes robotic or autonomous equipment and systems that will support harvesting, weeding, spraying and plant spacing. In addition, the Water Management Grant supports more efficient use of water on farm helping to secure water supplies for crop irrigation by constructing on-farm reservoirs and adopting best practice irrigation application equipment. A second round of the Water Management Grant is planned for Spring 2023.

Hydrogen: Heating

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Impact Assessment on the Hydrogen Heating Village Grid Conversion Trial which stated that "the trial will largely be funded by Ofgem and BEIS, with some private sector investment", how much of the cost will be paid (1) from public funds, and (2) by billpayers. [HL5964]

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that participants in the hydrogen heating neighbourhood trial and village trial are not disadvantaged by either their participation or their choice of an alternative heating solution; how they will ensure throughout the trial that the financial position of consumers in the trial is no worse than it would have been in had they remained on natural gas; and how much the programme will cost (1) public funds, and (2) billpayers. [HL5965]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to ensuring that the rights of consumers are protected before, during and after the hydrogen heating trials. Nobody in the trial areas will pay more for their heating than they would if they were still connected to natural gas, including those that choose an electric alternative. They will also not be expected to pay for the installation or maintenance of hydrogen-capable appliances, or an alternative heating solution. The Government is working with the regulator Ofgem and the gas networks to deliver these consumer protections through consumer contracts and funding agreements. Consumers will be able to opt-out of the neighbourhood trial at any point and switch back to using natural gas free of charge. Consumer protection for the village trial will be further enhanced through legislation, including measures in the Energy Bill, and subsequent regulations.

The neighbourhood trial is funded by SGN, with contributions from other gas networks, Ofgem and the Scottish Government. The village trial will be funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ofgem and the gas networks. The village trial location and level of public funding will be decided later this year, following the submission of funding applications in March.

Internally Displaced People: Darfur

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what communication there has been between the Home Office and the Country Policy Information Team of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regarding displacements in Darfur; and what assessment they have made of how up to date information held by the Home Office is on this topic. [HL5970]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Country Policy and Information Team (CPIT) in the Home Office maintains regular contact with the British Embassy in Khartoum regarding Sudan, including the situation of Darfuris.

CPIT also monitors open-source information about the country situation, including displacements in Darfur.

CPIT will publish an updated country policy and information note (CPIN) on the risks faced by non-Arab Darfuris in Sudan on GOV.UK shortly.

Internet: Pornography

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of existing laws in preventing the distribution of illegal content, including extreme pornography and prohibited images of children, via online services. [HL5942]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) is an appalling crime that this government is committed to stamping out.

The UK already has some of the most robust legislation in the world to combat online child sexual abuse.

Possession of indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment. In addition, the offence of taking, making, distribution and possession with a view to distribution of any indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child under 18 carries a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

In addition, we have strengthened legislation to ensure that those who arrange (or facilitate) to meet a child under the age of 13 for sexual purposes receive sentences commensurate to their crimes. In the PCSC Act, we have amended Section 14 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to include offences against children under 13 (Sections 5-8) and increased the maximum sentence from 14 years to life imprisonment.

The Government is bringing forward the Online Safety Bill, which will require user-to-user and search services to tackle illegal content. The most stringent obligations relate to child sexual abuse and exploitation. Companies will be required to introduce proactive measures to prevent their users from encountering priority illegal content. This includes extreme pornography and child sexual abuse material.

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to ensuring that the Online Safety Bill empowers Ofcom to take action against any online services publishing illegal pornography, regardless of whether that content is user-generated or not. [HL5944]

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that violent and abusive pornography that would be prohibited from distribution offline is subject to equivalent controls online. [HL5946]

Viscount Camrose: The Online Safety Bill has been designed to bring into scope services which pose the greatest risk of harm to users, and where there is a gap in existing policy responses. Hosting, sharing and discovery of user-generated content give rise to a range of online harms and the Bill is therefore focused on user-to-user services which facilitate this harm. Search services are also in scope as they play a significant role in enabling individuals to access harmful content online.

User-to-user and search services will be required to implement systems and processes to minimise the uploading and sharing of priority illegal content on their services. This includes priority offences relating to sexual images, for example, revenge pornography and extreme pornography. Priority offences reflect the most serious and prevalent illegal content and activity, against which companies must take proactive measures.

Publishers of online content are already directly liable for offences which relate to the possession or distribution of illegal material such as extreme pornography. The criminal law is therefore the most appropriate mechanism for dealing with these providers rather than a regulatory regime, as it is not appropriate for Ofcom to duplicate the role of law enforcement.

The Online Safety Bill will also address children's access to legal pornography through the Bill. It will cover all online sites that offer pornography, including commercial pornography sites, social media, video sharing platforms, forums and search engines. These services will need to prevent children accessing pornography or face enforcement action. This includes content classified as extreme pornography or pornographic content which has been refused a classification by the British Board of Film Classification.

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Online Safety Bill will enable the regulator to proactively

assess online pornography services' compliance with age-verification requirements. [HL5947]

Viscount Camrose: The Online Safety Bill will deliver comprehensive protections for children from online pornography. All sites that offer pornography will need to put in place measures such as age verification to prevent children accessing pornographic content on their services or face enforcement action.

In assessing compliance or the risk of non-compliance, Ofcom will have wide-ranging information gathering and investigation powers. This includes the power to require information from companies and relevant third parties, the power to audit companies and interview employees, as well as enter and inspect companies' premises and seize equipment and/or documents with a warrant. These powers will ensure that Ofcom is able to effectively assess whether companies are fulfilling their regulatory requirements.

Jews: Iran

*Asked by **Lord Shinkwin***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of threat posed by Iran to the Jewish community in the UK. [HL5950]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: There is no secret that Iranian regime has a long history of targeting Jewish and Israeli interests around the world. Their publicly stated animosity towards Jewish and Israeli interests has manifested in a persistent level of threat and, unfortunately, attacks around the world aimed at the representatives, citizens and symbols of Israel and also Jewish communities.

We take any threat to the UK-based Jewish community extremely seriously. The community should be alert but not alarmed. As I said on 20 February, we are taking significant steps to address the activities of the Iranian regime and its operatives in the UK – whether those activities are threatening the Jewish community or any individuals or organisations in this country.

I have instructed the Home Office to lead work on countering Iranian-state threats, making use of the full breadth and expertise of the government and the police, security, and intelligence agencies. Working with a range of partners, the UK government will continue to use all tools at its disposal to protect individuals in the UK against any threats from the Iranian state.

Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

*Asked by **Lord Rogan***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they had a policy in place to allow only one bid per local authority area in Northern Ireland to be awarded funding in Levelling Up Fund Round 2; and whether that policy was in place elsewhere in the UK. [HL6005]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Bids were assessed against the criteria set out in the Levelling Up Fund

prospectus to deliver a shortlist of the strongest bids. Ministers then followed the published decision-making approach outlined in section 3 and section 5 of the Levelling Up Fund technical note.

As set out in the published technical note, the shortlists in Great Britain and Northern Ireland were separate.

Ministers agreed to prioritise a fair spread of approved projects in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This is explained in the explanatory note published on 19 January 2023.

Malaysia: Rohingya

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assistance they provide to Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. [HL5883]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise the status of Rohingya refugees with the Government of Malaysia and regional partners. The UK is a leading donor to the Rohingya response in Bangladesh, providing £345 million total humanitarian support towards the crisis since 2017. We have provided over £25 million for the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities in Rakhine since 2017. This includes direct funding to the refugee camp at Cox's Bazar and to UNHCR, which works with the Malaysian Government on refugee issues. The UK is grateful for Malaysia's support for the first UN Security Council Resolution on the situation in Myanmar.

Mental Health Services: Children

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the total number of referrals to child mental health services in each of the last three years. [HL5726]

Lord Markham: The following table shows the number of children and young people referrals to a mental health service in the last three years.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of referrals</i>
2019/20	397,265
2020/21	527,339
2021/22	743,717

Source: Mental Health Services Data Set, NHS England
Notes:

1. These statistics are calculated as a sum of 12 monthly data releases of referrals starting in the reporting period to children and young people's mental health services, aged 0 to 18 years old from the Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics.

2. This publication provides the timeliest picture available of people using National Health Service funded secondary mental health, learning disabilities and autism services in England. These are experimental statistics which are undergoing development and evaluation.

Military Bases: CCTV

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government why CCTV cameras made by Hikvision and Dahua have not yet been removed from UK army bases, following the direction to do so by the Ministry of Defence in November 2021. [HL5880]

Baroness Goldie: We take the security of our personnel, systems and establishments very seriously and have a range of measures in place to ensure the integrity of our arrangements. These measures are kept under constant review and adjusted according to the threat. It is, however, long standing policy that we do not comment on the detail of those arrangements.

Natural Disasters

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss with the United Nations the effectiveness of global contingency planning for major natural disasters. [HL5891]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government engages regularly with UN agencies on contingency planning for major natural disasters. This includes developing and using early warning tools to predict disasters, approaching early and anticipatory action to help countries prepare for and mitigate the impact of natural disasters and ensuring the speed and effectiveness of humanitarian response when disasters occur. The UK is one of the largest providers of core support to the UN humanitarian agencies, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which allows flexibility to plan ahead of disasters and ensure that systems and capabilities required for rapid response are in place.

NHS Digital: Data Protection

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 6 March (HL5675), how many individual patients had their NHS number, date of birth, and diagnoses shared for potential inclusion in the "flu and COVID-19 cohorts". [HL6195]

Lord Markham: The information requested is not held centrally.

Nigeria: Elections

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussion they have had with the government of Nigeria regarding reports of interference, including intimidation, violence and bribery, in the Nigerian general election held on 25 February; and what assessment they have made of the implications of any interference on security, human rights and national cohesion in that country. [HL5966]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Minister for Africa [Minister Mitchell] advocated for the delivery of free and safe elections when he met with Nigerian presidential candidates and the chairperson of the Nigerian electoral commission. Since 2019, we have provided over £5 million to Nigerian civil society organisations to improve electoral education and build citizens' capacity to hold individuals, parties and institutions to account.

We note the position of opposition parties on the outcome and the concerns expressed by civil society about the election process. The British High Commission in Nigeria has engaged with political parties to encourage those who wish to challenge the process to do so peacefully and through the appropriate legal channel. We encourage the Nigerian authorities to examine all concerns and take action to resolve outstanding issues.

North Wales Coast Line

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government (1) how much they have spent to date, and (2) how much they plan to spend, on the improvements to the Crewe–Holyhead rail line. [HL5926]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The North Wales Mainline has benefitted from investment as part of recent record funding settlements for Network Rail's Wales Route. £50m has been spent on improving the signalling system and track layout, together with improvements to Abergele and Pensarn station. The cases for further improvements to journey times on the line, and for improvements at Chester and Shotton stations are currently being developed and will be considered for funding based on their merits.

Nuclear Power Stations: Wales

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have for the development of the Wylfa (Ynys Môn) and Trawsfynydd (Gwynedd) nuclear power stations. [HL5922]

Lord Callanan: The Government intends to make an announcement on the launch of Great British Nuclear (GBN) soon. GBN will be tasked with helping projects

through every stage of the development process and developing a resilient pipeline of new build projects.

The Government will also develop a new nuclear National Policy Statement, which will cover the siting and policy framework for nuclear electricity generating infrastructure beyond 2025, and will consult on this new NPS in due course.

In the meantime, the Government continues to discuss new projects with viable companies and investors wishing to develop sites, including in North Wales.

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to build miniature nuclear power generators in Wales. [HL5925]

Lord Callanan: In the British Energy Security Strategy, the Government set out its ambitious civil nuclear programme and the Government is committed to ensuring that the UK is one of the best places in the world to invest in new nuclear.

No decisions have yet been taken over the siting of future nuclear projects. However, the Government engages with a range of Welsh stakeholders, including the Welsh Government and Welsh Government-funded bodies, on nuclear issues including Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). The Government will continue to engage on nuclear-related issues.

Out-of-School Education

Asked by *Lord Davies of Brixton*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 20 February (HL5446), why they do not collect or collate information on unregistered alternative education providers. [HL5903]

Baroness Barran: The department stopped maintaining a central voluntary register of unregistered alternative provision providers in 2012. This followed a recommendation by the department's Behaviour Adviser, in the report, Improving Alternative Provision. This report can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180581/DFE-00035-2012.pdf and is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Improving Alternative Provision Report [DFE-00035-2012
Improving Alternative Provision Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-02-27/HL5903>

Asked by *Lord Davies of Brixton*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 20 February (HL5450), what assessment they have made, if any, of the accuracy of the information provided through the

Schools Census in respect of the usage of unregistered alternative education providers. [HL5904]

Baroness Barran: Since the 2022/23 academic year, the department has started to collect data from all schools, via the school census, about the alternative provision they arrange, including in unregistered settings. The first mandatory collection is currently being carried out within the spring census and so the information requested is not yet available.

Asked by Lord Davies of Brixton

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 20 February (HL5445), whether they will publish the responses received to the call for evidence on the use of unregistered alternative education provision, prior to preparation of the commissioned analysis. [HL5905]

Baroness Barran: The government is not planning to publish individual responses submitted to the call for evidence into the use of unregistered alternative provision. A full breakdown of responses received will be published as part of the final analysis report. The report will include the key findings from submitted responses and it will be published later this year.

Asked by Lord Davies of Brixton

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 20 February (HL5445), what enforcement activity they have undertaken in each of the last five years in respect of unregistered alternative education provision against (1) such providers, (2) schools engaging such providers, and (3) local authorities. [HL5906]

Baroness Barran: Unregistered alternative provision are settings that provide alternative provision, but don't meet the threshold to register as independent schools. Unregistered schools are required to register as an independent school if they offer full time education for:

- 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age.
- 1 or more pupils of compulsory school age with an education, health and care plan.
- 1 or more pupils of compulsory school age who are looked-after by the local council.

Ofsted publish statistics on their activity investigating suspected unregistered schools. Since 2016, 956 settings have been investigated. Of these, 33% are classed as alternative provision providers. This information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/unregistered-schools-management-information>.

Politics and Government: Thailand

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect and reassure Thai nationals in the UK given recent attacks in other countries on those seen as

critics of the current and former governments of Thailand. [HL5888]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We continually assess potential threats in the UK, and this Government takes the rights, freedoms, and safety of individuals and communities in the UK very seriously.

Through our excellent police forces and the agencies that work with them, we take a proactive approach to protecting individuals and communities from all manner of threats. Where we identify individuals who may be at heightened risk, we are front-footed in deploying protective security guidance and other measures where necessary.

As you would expect, Home Office officials work closely with the FCDO and DLUHC as well as other government departments in ensuring that the UK is a safe and welcoming place for all those from other countries, including Thai nationals.

Pupil Premium: Travellers

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Education Policy Institute report COVID-19 and Disadvantage Gaps in England 2021, published in December 2022, which found that Gypsy and Traveller pupils were the only ethnic groups whose attainment fell further behind in 2021, whether they will extend the Pupil Premium to cover all Gypsy and Traveller pupils. [HL5963]

Baroness Barran: Pupil premium eligibility will be kept under review, to ensure that funding is targeted at those who most need it.

The department is committed to helping children and young people, including those from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, to catch-up and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In England, the primary and secondary school attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has grown between 2019 and 2022, having narrowed between 2011 and 2019. The disruption to education caused by the pandemic has affected disadvantaged students more than their peers.

We are supporting the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups, through pupil premium funding, which is increasing to almost £2.9 billion in the 2023/24 financial year. In addition, the department has made available almost £5 billion of funding to support education recovery, including through the recovery premium, National Tutoring Programme and the 16-19 Tuition Fund. The department does not design education policy that exclusively targets certain groups of pupils based on ethnicity.

Railways: Fares

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they expect demand-led pricing will work in the railway sector, given that each rail company has a monopoly on its routes. [HL5893]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In the Plan for Rail we set out the intention to simplify fares and allow long distance operators more commercial freedom, and in the Bradshaw Address we committed to trialling demand-based pricing on some London North Eastern Railway services to better manage capacity. Trialling this approach on certain routes will provide useful learning about the passenger experience which we will carefully consider before taking decisions on any wider extension. We will announce more details in due course.

Road Traffic Offences: Cycling

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce tougher penalties for death or serious injury caused by dangerous, careless or inconsiderate cycling. [HL6052]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is considering bringing forward legislation to introduce new offences concerning dangerous cycling, to tackle those rare instances where victims have been killed or seriously injured by irresponsible cycling behaviour. This follows an earlier review exploring the case for specific dangerous cycling offences, a response to which the Government will publish as soon as it can.

Schools: Closures

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will list the 39 schools in England that have been closed in the last three years due to safety concerns, including a breakdown of whether the closure is temporary or permanent; and for those closures that are temporary, (1) how long each closure is expected to last, and (2) where students are being educated while their school is closed. [HL5867]

Baroness Barran: It is not department practice to publicise the names of individual schools that have turned to the department for help in managing an operational issue.

On average, schools that were closed between December 2019 and January 2023 were closed for two days.

The Department works closely with responsible bodies and schools to minimise the impact of closures and ensure continuity of education for pupils. This includes working closely with the responsible body, school and local

authority to find alternative accommodation if pupils cannot be taught on site.

Small Modular Reactors: Rolls-Royce

Asked by *Lord Naseby*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are their reasons for not entering into a contract with Rolls-Royce on small modular reactors. [HL5940]

Lord Callanan: The Government has awarded up to £210m from the Advanced Nuclear Fund to Rolls Royce SMR Ltd to support the development of their Small Modular Reactor design.

The Government intends to initiate a selection process in 2023, with the intention that we will enter negotiations with the most credible projects to enable a potential Government award of support as soon as possible.

South Sudan: Armed Conflict

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government and churches of South Sudan concerning the recent conflict in Abyei; and what steps they will be taking following those discussions. [HL5948]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are monitoring the ongoing violence in Abyei and urge for those responsible to be held accountable. The churches play a critical role in peace-making and building at the local and national level in South Sudan, including in Abyei. We are engaging with the churches to follow up on the messages delivered during the ecumenical visit to Juba from 3 to 5 February. The UK supports the calls of the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland on the Government of South Sudan to end violence and implement the peace agreement.

Sports: Racial Discrimination

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to implement anti-discrimination legislation to help tackle racism in sports. [HL5955]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: There is no place for racism or any other illegal discrimination in sport. Anyone found guilty of using racist slurs at football matches can be charged with a Football Banning Order under the Football Spectators Act 1989, and more severe sentences can be imposed. Further charges may be applicable under the Football (Offences) Act 1991 or the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

In addition to these statutory protections, we are working to increase diversity in sporting organisations and to help the sport sector be more inclusive and welcoming to its spectators and participants, and to the

people in its workforce. We are working with bodies including Sport England and UK Sport in this, as well as to strengthen the handling of issues such as discrimination and racism in sport.

Sudan: Sanctions

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to applying Magnitsky-style sanctions to those responsible for the military coup in Sudan; and what discussions they have had with international allies regarding a coordinated imposition of such sanctions. [HL5969]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK condemned in the strongest terms the coup on 25 October 2021. Following the coup, the UK has consistently urged all Sudanese actors, including the military, to engage constructively in the political process to establish a civilian-led transitional government. The UK, alongside our international partners, continues to consider all options to maintain pressure on those looking to de-rail the current political process, including sanctions. However, we do not speculate about future sanctions, as to do so might reduce their impact.

Supermarkets: Competition

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the role of the Grocery Code Adjudicator in investigating unfair practices of supermarkets in relation to small growers of UK fruit and vegetables. [HL5932]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: The Groceries Code Adjudicator Small enforces the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (the Code) which ensures large grocery retailers treat their direct suppliers, including small growers of fruit and vegetables, lawfully and fairly. The Adjudicator's functions include the investigation of suspected breaches of the Code.

Swine Flu: Disease Control

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the spread of the H5N1 virus. [HL6109]

Lord Benyon: Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control considers the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice and is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#), supported by the [Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza in Wild Birds in England and Wales](#). Current policy reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease and is in line with international standards of best practice for disease control. In summary swift and humane culling of poultry and other captive birds on infected premises, coupled with

rigorous biosecurity, are used to prevent the amplification of avian influenza and minimise the risk of disease spread from infected premises

In addition, to help stop the spread of avian influenza, Avian Influenza Prevention Zones (AIPZs) are in force across the UK. Mandatory housing measures are also in force as an additional requirement of the AIPZs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For areas where an AIPZ is in force it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) to follow strict biosecurity measures to limit the spread of and eradicate the disease, including where mandatory housing measures are a requirement of an AIPZ in force, to keep their birds housed. The enhanced AIPZ biosecurity measures, mandatory housing measures, in addition to a prohibition on poultry gatherings, have been vital in preventing spread and protecting flocks across the country from avian influenza.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Avian Disease Control Strategy [avian-disease-control-strategy.pdf]

Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza [mitigation-strategy-avian-influenza-wild-birds-england-wales.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-03/HL6109>

Thailand: Elections

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage a free, fair, and democratic general election in Thailand in May 2023. [HL5886]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government will monitor the lead up to the general election in Thailand in May. We are observing with interest the political campaign environment and engaging with the Election Commission of Thailand and across political parties contesting the election. The UK Government is funding election-monitoring organisations to provide training of election observers across Thailand and conducting a pre-election assessment of the current state of election management bodies and other actors.

Thailand: Trials

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Thailand regarding the treatment of child defendants, particularly with respect to trials under Section 112 of the Thai Criminal Code. [HL5887]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to monitor use of lèse-majesté and other defamation-related laws in Thailand. We have raised issues about recent charges brought against protesters and

critical voices, and the use of pre-trial detention, with the Thai authorities. We also regularly observe public court hearings involving those prosecuted for their political participation and expression to reinforce the importance of due process, and visibly supporting and promoting the work of local human rights defenders.

Thirsk Station: Disability

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government what proposals they have to improve access for disabled passengers at Thirsk Station; and what is their timetable for such improvements. [HL5930]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We are assessing over 300 nominations, including one for Thirsk station, for the next tranche of the Access for All programme. We hope to be in a position to announce successful projects later this year.

Transcaucasus: Roads

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent reports of the joint rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for both Armenia and Azerbaijan, in particular regarding supplies of gas and electricity, safe transit through the Lachin corridor, and cross-border attacks. [HL5993]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: During his visit to Baku on 22 and 23 February the Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty MP, highlighted the urgent need for the re-opening of the Lachin Corridor given the risk of humanitarian consequences resulting from its continued closure, and for Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in negotiations to settle all outstanding matters between them in order to secure stability and peace in the region. During his upcoming visit to Yerevan the Minister will deliver similar messages to representatives from the Armenian Government.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government who will be responsible for the proposed red and green lanes for goods entering Northern Ireland; and which (1) government, or (2) agency, will have control over their operation. [HL6020]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Authorities in the United Kingdom will, as they do today, administer all arrangements under the Windsor Framework within the United Kingdom.

UK Relations with EU

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the protocols which determine the appropriateness of arranging a one-to-one meeting for the President of the European Commission with HM The King. [HL5896]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is customary for Heads of State to meet visiting Heads of State, or equivalent foreign leaders, during official visits. Official visits to the UK by foreign leaders are undertaken on the advice of His Majesty's Government.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government which official or officials recommended that the President of the European Commission should have a high-level political meeting with HM The King. [HL5897]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: His Majesty's Government operates on the principle of collective responsibility. The Government would not normally comment on the internal processes of how such advice is determined.

Universal Credit: Deductions

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask His Majesty's Government how many universal credit claims were subject to deductions in the most recent month for which data is available, broken down by parliamentary constituency; how much was the (1) total, and (2) average sum of, deductions in each constituency; what proportion of those sums was deducted to repay advance payments; and how many universal credit claimants were subject to deductions as a result of overpayments where the fault lay entirely with the relevant government department or agency. [HL5911]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: I refer the Noble Peer to the answers I gave on the 3rd and 6th of March to questions HL5652 and HL5656.

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask His Majesty's Government whether all universal credit claimants subject to a deduction are automatically informed of their option to seek a waiver; how many universal credit claimants requested a deductions waiver in the most recent six months for which data is available; and of those requests, what proportion were successful. [HL5912]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: During the last 6-month period ending January 2023, 94 Universal Credit claimants had asked for their debts to be waived. Of these, 14 cases were fully waived and a further 5 cases were partially waived.

Whilst Universal Credit claimants are not automatically informed of their option to seek a waiver, anyone who feels they cannot afford the proposed rate of recovery is

encouraged to contact the department to discuss their situation.

The DWP remains committed to working with anyone who is struggling with their repayment terms, and has a well-established process for working with individuals to support them to manage their debts.

Our agents will always look to negotiate affordable and sustainable repayment plans. This includes working with individuals to review their financial circumstances. In most instances, a temporary reduction in their rate of repayment can also be agreed. There is no minimum amount that a claimant has to pay. Other options agents can consider where appropriate is to suspend repayments or refer a case for consideration of waiver.

In addition, customers are routinely referred to the Money Advisor Network, who work in partnership with the DWP, to offer free independent and impartial money and debt advice. We also remain committed to His Majesty's Treasury's Beathing Space policy, which provides those with problem debt the right to legal protections from creditor action for a period of 60 days to

enable them to receive debt advice and enter into an appropriate debt solution.

Windsor Framework

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their proposed timetable for implementing each element of the Windsor Framework. [HL6018]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will set out full details of future arrangements in due course. As we set out in the Government's Command Paper, for some arrangements we will provide time for businesses and operators to prepare - as on parcels, where the arrangements will be in place from October 2024. Others will be phased, as we have set out for the agrifood retail green lane. And some can be taken forward straight away, as with legislation to ensure that Northern Ireland will be able to apply zero rates of VAT to the installation of energy-saving materials.

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