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**Monday
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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<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 Camrose	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Monday, 20 March 2023

Ajax Payments

[HLWS638]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence Procurement (Alex Chalk) has today made the following written ministerial statement:

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

The Ajax Platform

Ajax is part of our £41 billion investment in British Army equipment and support over the next decade, delivering critical modernisation to address the threats of today and the future. The Ajax Programme will deliver 589 vehicles to the British Army made up of 6 variants allowing the Army to operate in all weathers, 24 hours a day.

The range and capabilities of the sensors on the platform and the on-board software will deliver a step-change in the surveillance capability of the Army. Ajax will provide a world leading competitive advantage, from its suite of cutting-edge sensors, modular armour packs and its 40mm stabilised cannon.

Recovering the programme

The Ministry of Defence have openly acknowledged the problems previously faced by the Ajax programme. Alongside General Dynamics, the Ministry of Defence has successfully completed User Validations Trials to validate the design modifications which have addressed the noise and vibration concerns, allowing the commencement of programmed Reliability Growth Trials on 31 January.

Reliability Growth Trials are a standard part of the acquisition process for military equipment of this nature. These trials stress test the durability of the vehicle's platform and components through a series of battlefield missions that represent years of activity on the platform. Since starting, the AJAX, APOLLO, ATLAS and ARES variants have driven over 2,260 kilometres through different terrains, completing a variety of representative battlefield tasks such as operating across a range of speeds and terrains, firing weapon systems, using the vehicles systems and communications and completing specialist tasks such as vehicle recoveries and repairs using the integrated crane. Reliability Growth Trials are progressing well. No fundamental design issues have arisen to date. These trials are part of a broader trials programme aimed at validating that contracted vehicle requirements are met.

The MOD have developed with General Dynamics a revised schedule for the delivery of vehicles that is, subject to contract amendment, robust, realistic, and achievable. Revised key delivery milestones set a meaningful Initial Operating Capability of a trained and

deployable squadron. This is scheduled to be achieved between July and December 2025. Full Operating Capability will be met when the Army has trained and converted forces to the Ajax platform to deliver Armoured Cavalry capability to the Deep Reconnaissance Strike Brigade and its two Armoured Brigade Combat Teams. This is scheduled to be achieved between October 2028 and September 2029.

The ability to deliver against this new schedule has been extensively scrutinised and assured within the department and externally. A recent review by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority concluded the programme's successful delivery is feasible, re-grading the Ajax programme from Red to Amber.

Resuming Contract Payments

The Ministry of Defence remains clear it will only accept vehicles that comply with General Dynamics' contractual obligations. The department has withheld payments for work completed and had not made a payment since December 2020. Given the satisfactory progress against the programme, the department will resume payments this month, starting with a payment of £480 million. This is approximately half of what has been held back since December 2020. Restarting payments to General Dynamics reflects the fact that the programme continues to return to a firm footing and supports the delivery of the schedule to deliver operational capability. The payment will cascade to the UK-wide supply chain of more than 230 companies, reinforcing confidence the programme is progressing and providing for more than 4000 jobs, including hundreds in South Wales.

Future payments will be made against the new schedule and its milestones, conditional on the delivery of compliant and deployable Ajax vehicles and continued progress of remaining trials activity. We have a robust firm price contract for the delivery of 589 vehicles, which will ensure that General Dynamics are incentivised to deliver against agreed outcomes. As such, the whole programme remains within its originally approved budget.

Learning Lessons

The Ajax programme is turning a corner, but this does not remove the need for the department to identify and learn lessons. We have always been clear that we will not shy away from taking action to change the culture and processes across Defence as necessary. We look forward to receiving the finalised report from Clive Sheldon KC on the Ajax Lessons Learned Review and publishing it as soon as practicable.

Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group: Fifth Annual Report

[HLWS633]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Today I am pleased to announce the publication of the fifth annual report of the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group. The Group provides Ministers with independent advice on matters relating to ethical issues in forensic science and biometrics and considers issues in data ethics.

I would like to thank the Group for their valuable advice concerning the use and retention of human biometric identifiers, and regarding the use and implementation of projects involving both large and complex datasets.

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group have continued to show commitment to advising the Home Office Biometrics Programme on matters regarding changes to biometric regulations and biometric enrolment.

I am grateful to the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group for maintaining strong relationships with internal Home Office teams in order to establish a strong presence and to identify a range of projects, within their remit, which can benefit from expert ethical guidance.

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group annual report can be viewed on the website of the Group at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/biometrics-and-forensics-ethics-group> and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago

[HLWS630]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Since the Written Ministerial Statement made on 3 November 2022, the UK and Mauritius have held constructive negotiations on 23 to 24 November 2022, 11 to 12 January 2023 and 23 to 24 February 2023 on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)/Chagos Archipelago. These discussions have built understanding between the two sides, and covered issues relating to ensuring the continued effective operation of the joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia; resettlement of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago; strengthening our cooperation on a range of issues such as environmental and marine protection, improving security and tackling illegal activities in the region.

As agreed at the outset of negotiations, the UK and Mauritius have taken stock of negotiations and agreed next steps. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) and Prime Minister Jugnauth spoke on 14 February. The Prime Ministers welcomed the progress to date and agreed to continue negotiations, with a view to arriving at an agreement in the coming months.

Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review: Publication and Interim Response

[HLWS634]

Lord Bellamy: My Right Honourable Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice has made the following statement:

Tackling violence against women and girls is a top priority for this Government and we are committed to ensuring that the most serious offenders spend longer in prison. Women should feel safe in their own home and our sentencing framework must reflect the seriousness of violence and abuse committed by those closest to them.

The Government commissioned an independent expert, Clare Wade KC, to review sentencing in domestic homicide cases to establish whether current law and sentencing guidelines are fit for purpose and identify options for reform.

Today, I am publishing Ms Wade KC's Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review (the 'Wade Review') and announcing a package of proposed reforms to change the law so that sentencing reflects the seriousness of domestic homicides. The published review can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-homicide-sentencing-review>.

The Wade Review makes a number of other recommendations and the government's position will be outlined in a full response to be published before the summer recess. The measures announced today demonstrate our commitment to delivering tougher sentences for the perpetrators of these horrific crimes and allow for necessary legislation to be introduced as soon as possible. All recommendations in the review and the measures announced today apply to England and Wales.

We will increase sentences for murderers with a history of controlling or coercive behaviour against the victim.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced the criminal offence of controlling or coercive behaviour. Controlling or coercive behaviour can comprise economic, emotional or psychological abuse. It does not relate to a single incident, but a purposeful pattern of behaviour over time. Controlling or coercive behaviour by the perpetrator towards the victim was identified in 51% of the murder cases analysed for this Review.

Despite around a quarter of all homicides being classed as domestic, the legislation which sets out the sentencing framework for murder does not currently specifically account for the abuse that the victims in these cases often experience before death.

The review recommends that a history of coercive or controlling behaviour should be added to the statutory aggravating factors to murder. We will introduce legislation to make this change as soon as possible to ensure abuse experienced before death is properly considered and serious offenders are kept off our streets for longer.

We will consider further reform by consulting on whether the starting point should be 25 years for murders preceded by controlling or coercive behaviour.

While the addition of a history of coercive or controlling behaviour as a statutory aggravating factor to murder will be an immediate step to increase sentences, we do not rule out further reform to ensure perpetrators are kept behind bars for longer.

We will launch a public consultation this summer seeking views on whether there should be a starting point of 25 years for cases of murder where the perpetrator has controlled or coerced the victim before killing them. The current sentencing framework recognises the particular seriousness of the illegal possession and use of knives in public with a 25-year starting point for murders where a weapon used has been taken to the scene with intent. It is important that this starting point is maintained and therefore we will not be accepting the recommendation made in the Wade Review to disapply it from domestic cases. The sentencing framework must recognise the seriousness of anyone who walks onto our streets with a knife, intending to use it to cause harm. However, the changes announced today will ensure that the framework also recognises the particular seriousness of domestic murder, and this consultation will ensure all reform options have been fully explored.

We will make 'overkill' a statutory aggravating factor in the sentencing framework for murder.

Overkill is defined in the Wade Review and wider literature as the use of excessive or gratuitous violence, beyond that necessary to kill. It amounts to violation of the body and causes intense distress to the families of victims. Overkill is prevalent in domestic murders and was identified in 60% of the cases analysed for this Review.

The Wade Review recommends that overkill should be added to the statutory aggravating factors to murder. This would mean that a judge *must* consider increasing an offender's minimum custodial term where overkill has occurred. We will introduce legislation to make this change as soon as possible. It will ensure that the horror of overkill is recognised in statute and that the anguish it causes the families of victims is taken into account when sentencing such cases.

Building on our ban of the 'rough sex defence' in the Domestic Abuse Act, we want to see longer sentences for perpetrators of so-called rough sex manslaughter. We are requesting that the Sentencing Council update their guidelines and will keep under review the need for legislation.

The government is clear the 'rough sex defence' is not recognised in law as a person is legally unable to consent to "serious harm", including where it results in death. However, there continues to be concern about apparent low sentences given in some cases of manslaughter where consent to so-called rough sex is argued.

The review recommends manslaughter sentencing guidelines should be amended to consider the offender highly culpable where death occurs during violence alleged to be consensual during a sexual encounter, and therefore impose a higher sentence.

The production or revision of sentencing guidelines is a matter for the independent Sentencing Council. However, today I will ask the Council, which has a statutory duty to consider my request, to consider revising sentencing guidelines to reflect the recommendation made in the

Wade Review. While this is our preferred approach, we will keep legislative options under review to ensure we can deliver reform.

These measures build on our zero-tolerance approach to violence against women and girls by ensuring that sentencing delivers justice for the victims and families.

I am very grateful to Clare Wade KC for her work on this review. I would also like to pay tribute to Carole Gould and Julie Devey for their tireless campaigning after the tragic murders of their daughters, Ellie Gould and Poppy Devey-Waterhouse.'

English Freeports

[HLWS640]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My Honourable friend the Minister for Levelling Up (Dehenna Davison MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I have the pleasure of announcing that Thames Freeport has received final government approval, in a massive boost to South Essex and the wider region. This is a pivotal landmark for the Freeports programme and comes less than 4 months after I announced the first group to receive approval. The speed of progress sends a clear message: the Government is backing these areas to grow and thrive.

Freeports form an important part of this Government's economic strategy and will catalyse investment through a combination of tax reliefs, public funding, and government support. These measures will drive growth, create jobs and, in turn, transform opportunities for local communities: a real example of levelling up in action.

The Thames Freeport will now receive up to £25 million in seed funding and potentially hundreds of millions in locally retained business rates to upgrade local infrastructure and stimulate regeneration. This is alongside generous tax reliefs and a simplified customs procedure, all backed by a package of trade and innovation support for businesses located there.

Armed with these tools, the Thames Freeport will drive investment in and around the ports of South Essex and Ford's world-class Dagenham Engine Plant. This will bring jobs of the future – in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and hydrogen – to local communities.

And this is only the beginning. Across government, we are working closely with the English Freeports to support them to achieve their objectives and deliver transformational benefits for their local areas.

We also recently announced two successful Green Freeports in Scotland and we will be announcing the outcome of the Welsh competition shortly. Discussions continue with our stakeholders in Northern Ireland about how we can extend the benefits associated with the Freeport programme there.

This is an incredibly exciting time for UK Freeports and the wider levelling up agenda as we start to see local areas bring their plans to life with big private investments,

upgrades to local infrastructure, and bold regeneration initiatives in those areas that need a boost, creating real impacts for local people.

Help to Claim

[HLWS632]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Employment (Guy Opperman MP) has made the following Written Statement:

I am today announcing that the current Help to Claim support arrangements have been extended to 31st March 2024. Help to Claim provides tailored practical support to individuals to make their Universal Credit Claim on-line.

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland will continue to deliver independent support following a further £22.2 million investment. The provision will continue to cover England, Scotland, and Wales for 12 months, and ensures that free confidential and impartial support is available to help people make a new Universal Credit claim and manage their claim, up to receiving their first correct payment.

Since April 2019, Help to Claim has supported over 800,000 people, with 9 in 10 people rating their overall experience as good or very good and would recommend it to friends and family.

From April 2023, the support will continue to be provided through telephony and digital channels. For those individuals who are unable to access support via these channels, they will continue to be able to go to their local Jobcentre, where staff will identify the right support to meet their needs. This is already available to those individuals who choose to seek support from the Department directly in making a claim to Universal Credit.

The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all our claimants, including the most vulnerable in society, in both making and maintaining their claim.

The Department is currently considering the support required from April 2024.

Infrastructure and Environment Consultation

[HLWS631]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I have launched two formal consultations on proposals to support measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Infrastructure Levy Technical Consultation

Developer contributions play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of new development.

The government wants to improve the current system of developer contributions in England to ensure that communities receive a fairer contribution of the profit that typically accrues to landowners and developers. We want to end protracted negotiation of section 106 agreements which hold up development and create confusion about what infrastructure will be provided and what levels of affordable housing will be delivered.

Through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the Government is seeking powers to create a new Infrastructure Levy in England. Through the Levy we are aiming to create a swifter, more transparent and streamlined system to fund the provision of affordable housing and important infrastructure such as schools, roads, active travel routes and GP surgeries that support new development.

The detailed design of the Levy will be set out in regulations. Today I have launched a technical consultation which will inform the development of the detailed policy that will be set out in those regulations. A further consultation will be carried out on the draft regulations when they are ready and before they are made.

This consultation closes on 9 June 2023.

Environmental Outcome Reports

Over the past 50 years, much of the UK's wildlife-rich habitat has been lost or degraded and many of our once common species are in long-term decline. This is despite efforts to address environmental issues using tools such as the EU derived systems of strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill contains powers to bring forward a new framework for environmental assessment. The proposals are designed to make sure that the value and rigour of environmental assessment is retained and improved, while allowing us to push for better environmental outcomes.

The EU derived processes of assessment are overly bureaucratic and lack transparency. Users have told us reports are inaccessible and cumbersome, with important details lost in the thousands of pages. There is too much uncertainty in the process, and gold-plating driven by fear of legal challenge results in excessive reporting rather than clarity about the genuine effects of development on the environment which should be of concern to the decision-maker and communities. In combination, these issues with process have diluted, and undermined, the original purpose of assessment as a tool for protecting the environment.

In the new system, Parliament will set clear environmental outcomes against which projects must be considered, introducing clarity and certainty for everyone involved in the process. The reforms will streamline and simplify the assessment process and address the issue of

risk aversion by being clear what assessment should cover, and how assessment should be carried out.

This consultation sets out how these powers could be used to ensure Environmental Outcome Reports deliver on our ambition to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

Feedback from this consultation will be used to progress the development of the new assessment framework.

I have also taken this opportunity to publish our post-implementation reviews of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

This consultation closes on 9 June 2023.

Investigatory Powers Commissioner: 2021 Annual Report

[HLWS639]

Lord True: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I have today laid before the House of Commons a copy of the Annual Report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson. The report covers the activities of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), the Office of Communications Data Authorisations (OCDA) and the Technology Advisory Panel (TAP) for 2021. I will also be sending a copy of this report to Scottish Ministers as required under section 234(8) of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA).

This report demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to ensuring a high level of compliance with the regulations governing the use of investigatory powers. Sir Brian Leveson oversees the use of investigatory powers by over 600 public authorities, including the intelligence and security services and law enforcement agencies. He notes that he is continually impressed with the dedication and professionalism of the officials working within those bodies and that regulatory compliance continues to be treated as a high priority.

The Annual Report contains a reference to an error identified in the Home Office's arrangements for warrants authorised out of hours. IPCO were notified of this error immediately upon its discovery in November 2021 and the Home Office immediately put in place arrangements, which the Investigatory Powers Commissioner was content with, to rectify the problem.

As required under section 234(6)(b) of the IPA, I wish to notify the House that there is material considered too sensitive for the open report on which I have been briefed separately. I am satisfied that, following consultation with relevant government departments and agencies, the contents of this report are not prejudicial to national security or ongoing investigations.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the current and previous Commissioners and their staff for their work. In particular, I am pleased that Sir Brian Leveson agreed to another three-year term from 21 October 2022. I also note the appointment of Dame Muffy Calder as the new Chair of IPCO's Technology Advisory Panel and welcome the expertise she and her colleagues will provide on emerging technology.

Maintaining public trust and confidence in the exercise of the investigatory powers vital for national security and public safety is a top priority for the Government. This report demonstrates the high quality of the oversight of our intelligence and security agencies' use of the most intrusive powers. I am satisfied that our oversight arrangements are amongst the strongest and most effective in the world.

I commend this report to the House.

Resilience Update

[HLWS641]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oliver Dowden CBE MP, has today made the following statement:

Today, I can confirm that the Government has launched phase one of the Emergency Alerts system - a UK-wide capability based on Cell Broadcasting technology developed by the Cabinet Office and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology in conjunction with Mobile Network Operators.

The system launch commenced on Sunday 19 March and will allow emergency responders to send Emergency Alerts, with a distinctive message appearance and tone, to every compatible mobile device within a selected geographical area at very short notice, providing a highly flexible capability for prompting quick action from the public. In order to test the technology, the pilot will focus only on notifying the public of the most serious severe weather and flooding risks over the first three months, followed by a review process.

This system will transform the United Kingdom's emergency warning and informing capability - providing a means to provide urgent information to nearly 90% of mobile phones within a defined area. This area can be as limited as an electoral ward, or expanded as far as the whole of the United Kingdom. The technology has been used successfully in a number of other countries, such as the United States, Canada and Japan, where it has been proven to save lives. Ahead of the launch, the government has worked in partnership with the Devolved Administrations and Local Resilience Forums to ensure that relevant emergency responders across the United Kingdom have an understanding of the capability.

There will be a very high threshold for its use based on strict criteria centred on an immediate risk to life. Despite this, members of the public will be able to opt-out of the system if they do not wish to receive Emergency Alerts.

The system is secure, with alerts only able to be sent by authorised governmental and emergency services users.

We have worked closely with our devolved partners to ensure the capability is available throughout the UK and this close collaboration will continue throughout the pilot phase. The UK Government will issue alerts for incidents in England, or that relate to reserved matters. Alerts to be released in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland will be communicated in advance to resilience officials in the relevant devolved government. On matters that are devolved, Ministers from the relevant administrations may approve the alert.

A communications campaign will lead up to a UK-wide national message on 23 April. This will seek to maximise public awareness and familiarise people with the format and style of the message. Our research shows that other countries have found such test messages to be highly effective in improving public understanding. This alert will be simultaneously broadcast to all compatible devices and will be sent in both English and Welsh to recipients in Wales.

This important development will allow us to validate the effectiveness of the system and build familiarity and trust, laying the foundations for the potential wider use of Emergency Alerts in the future.

Trade and Co-operation Agreement Partnership Council: Second Meeting

[HLWS637]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The next meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council will take place in London on 24 March 2023, with delegations attending in person and by video conference.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Foreign Secretary the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP and Vice President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include:

1. Opening remarks by the co-Chairs and adoption of the agenda
2. Energy
 - i) Electricity trading (Article 312 TCA).
 - ii) Security of supply cooperation and working arrangements for TSOs (Articles 315 and 317 TCA).
 - iii) EU Green Deal Industrial Plan.
3. Regulation
 - i) MoU on Financial Services.
 - ii) Working Groups (Article 9 TCA).
 - iii) Intellectual Property.
 - iv) UK Retained EU Law Bill.
 - v) Bill of Rights Bill.

4. Security

- i) Cooperation on cybersecurity (Article 703 TCA).
- ii) Cooperation on counterterrorism (Article 768 TCA).
- iii) Passenger Name Records (Article 552(4) TCA).

5. Union Programmes

6. AOB

7. Concluding remarks by the co-chairs.

UK-Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement

[HLWS635]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Kemi Badenoch MP) has today made the following statement:

Today the UK has signed a Digital Trade Agreement (DTA) with Ukraine to support Ukraine's economy and post-conflict reconstruction and cement the UK's position as a global leader in digital trade.

Ukraine's recovery from Putin's illegal and barbaric war will be a symbol of the power of freedom and democracy over autocracy. The UK-Ukraine Comprehensive Digital Trade Agreement is one way in which this Government is doing everything in our power to support Ukraine's brave fight. Trading digitally is particularly important in the current conflict, where damage to Ukrainian infrastructure makes it harder to trade physically. Digital tools and technologies can ensure that Ukraine can continue to access vital goods and services.

Ukraine identified greater digitalisation of the economy as one of their main areas of focus for recovery and modernisation. This is why we have worked tirelessly together to deliver a modern digital treaty that is the deepest and most comprehensive ever negotiated. Following signature, it will be laid before Parliament and published online. The Agreement should come into force later this year once both the UK and Ukraine have completed our respective domestic procedures.

This Agreement will enhance UK-Ukraine cooperation on cybersecurity, make it easier to provide digitally delivered goods and services, guarantee the free flow of financial and other trusted data, and enhance collaboration on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. The UK's services exports to Ukraine are increasingly digitised, with UK exports of digitally-delivered services amounting to £132 million in 2020 – 73% of all UK services exports to Ukraine. This DTA will enable UK and Ukrainian businesses to trade in each other's markets more easily, and help Ukrainian businesses grow and recover from the impact of this cruel war.

The dream of a new Ukraine is not only one of freedom and democracy, but also one of prosperity driven by a modern digital economy and the UK is proud to play its role in making this dream a reality.

Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: Tenth Meeting

[HLWS636]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The next meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee will take place in London on 24 March 2023, with delegations attending in person and by video conference.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Foreign Secretary the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP and Vice President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include:

1. Welcome and opening remarks from the co-chairs
 - 1.1. Formal adoption of the agenda.
 - 1.2. Stocktake of Specialised Committee activity 21 February 2022 – 24 March 2023.
2. Update on Withdrawal Agreement Implementation in accordance with Article 164 of the Withdrawal Agreement
 - 2.1. Citizens' Rights.
 - 2.2. The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland / The Windsor Framework.
3. Decisions and Recommendations for Joint Committee adoption
 - 3.1. Decision No X/2023 laying down arrangements relating to the Windsor Framework.
 - 3.2. Recommendation No X/2023 on market surveillance and enforcement.
 - 3.3. Recommendation No X/2023 on Article 13(3a) of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.
Joint Declaration to be made by the Union and the United Kingdom
 - 3.4. Joint Declaration No XX/2023.
 - 3.5. Joint Declaration on the application of Article 10(1) of the Windsor Framework.
 - 3.6. Joint Declaration on Article 13(3a) of the Windsor Framework.

3.7. Joint Declaration number X.

3.8. Joint Declaration on the VAT regime for goods not being at risk for the Union's internal market and on the VAT arrangements for cross border refunds.

United Kingdom Unilateral Declarations and Union Unilateral Declarations taking note

3.9. Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom Involvement of the institutions of the 1998 Agreement (Annex 1 to the Decision No X/2023 laying down arrangements relating to the Windsor Framework).

3.10. Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on market surveillance and enforcement.

3.10.1 Unilateral Declaration by the Union taking note of the Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on market surveillance and enforcement.

3.11. Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on export procedures for goods moving from Northern Ireland to other parts of the United Kingdom.

3.11.1. Unilateral Declaration by the Union taking note of the Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on export procedures for goods moving from Northern Ireland to other parts of the United Kingdom.

3.12. Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on the democratic consent mechanism in Article 18 of the Windsor Framework.

3.12.1. Unilateral Declaration by the Union taking note of the Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on the democratic consent mechanism in Article 18 of the Windsor Framework.

3.13. Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on strengthening enforcement action for goods moved in parcels from another part of the United Kingdom to Northern Ireland.

3.13.1. Unilateral Declaration by the Union taking note of the Unilateral Declaration by the United Kingdom on strengthening enforcement action for goods moved in parcels from another part of the United Kingdom to Northern Ireland.

4. AOB.

5. Concluding remarks.

Written Answers

Monday, 20 March 2023

A12 and A13: Litter

Asked by *Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the state of litter collection on (a) the A13, and (b) the A12, and (2) whether National Highways is meeting its obligations to keep these roads clean. [HL6389]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: National Highways is responsible for keeping the A13 clear of litter and refuse as far as is practicable. Relevant Local Authorities hold this responsibility along the A12. National Highways has committed to report a litter performance indicator during the second Road Investment Strategy 2020-25. Specific regional assessments are the responsibility of National Highways and relevant local duty bodies. In 2021/22 National Highways reported that 60.8% of relevant parts of the Strategic Road Network had no litter, refuse or detritus, or was predominately free of litter, refuse or detritus apart from some small items.

Adoption: Children in Care

Asked by *Lord Laming*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve the rate of adoption of children in care, when adoption is in the child's best interests. [HL6149]

Baroness Barran: As set out in the department's Adoption Strategy: Achieving Excellence Everywhere, we are committed to improving the matching of approved adopters with children waiting to be found new homes. The strategy can be found attached.

£5 million has been committed for 2022 to 2025 to support Regional Adoption Agency Leaders to focus specifically on reducing the number of children who wait over 18 months for homes from the time of a court placement order being given. Some progress has already been made. This number has fallen from 390 in March 2020 to 240 in September 2022, but the department wants to see further and faster progress.

In addition, government funded recruitment campaigns are helping to provide a greater sufficiency of adopters, as well as targeted campaigns with a focus on recruiting adopters who are more likely to give a loving home to the children who wait the longest to be adopted.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL6149_pdf [Adoption_strategy_.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-06/HL6149>

Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether manufacturers of non sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) products in Great Britain will be able to transport completed product, intended for end sale in Northern Ireland, through the proposed green lane under the Windsor Framework. [HL6176]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Yes.

Agriculture: Education

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote agriculture in the (1) primary, and (2) secondary, school curriculum; and how much funding they have allocated for this purpose since 2007. [HL6167]

Baroness Barran: There are opportunities within the geography and science curriculum to teach about farming, although farming does not feature as a stand alone topic in the national curriculum. The national curriculum is a framework designed to give teachers the freedom and flexibility to cover particular topics in greater depth if they wish.

In geography, schools must teach pupils to describe and understand key aspects of human geography, including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water. This could include teaching about the role of farming in producing food.

At secondary, pupils are taught to understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the climate, which could include teaching about farming.

Both the Geographical Association and Royal Geographical Society have resources available for teachers which explain the importance of farming, including resources linked to farm visits, farming practice in other countries, the importance of soil, and many other topics.

As part of the Design and Technology curriculum for 5 to 14 year olds, cooking and nutrition education is compulsory in state maintained schools. Schools are required to teach pupils where food comes from, understand source and seasonality, and know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed. The curriculum aims to teach children how to cook and how to apply the principles of healthy eating and good nutrition. It recognises that cooking is an important life skill that helps children to feed themselves and others healthy and affordable food.

In Key Stage 4 biology, pupils are taught the importance of selective breeding of plants and animals in agriculture.

Asylum

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask His Majesty's Government what percentage of asylum seekers arriving in the UK by unofficial transit routes were eventually successful in their asylum claims in each of the last five years. [HL6161]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office publishes statistics on the asylum outcomes of small boat arrivals in the 'Irregular migration to the UK statistics' report on gov.uk. The latest data is in the 'Irregular migration to the UK, year ending December 2022' release.

The Home Office does not publish breakdowns for the asylum outcomes of people arriving by other irregular routes.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

'Irregular migration to the UK - Dec 2022 [irregular-migration-to-the-UK-detailed-dataset-year-ending-December-2022.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-06/HL6161>

Asylum: Personal Records

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask His Majesty's Government what dispensations they provide to asylum seekers arriving in the UK who have lost any identifying documentation en route. [HL6163]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The effect on credibility of the failure or inability to provide evidence, such as documentation, will depend on all the circumstances, including on the nature of the evidence requested and whether it is reasonable to expect the claimant to be able to disclose or obtain it.

Avian Influenza: Cambodia

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Exeter**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the dangers of the spread of the H5N1 virus, following the death of a girl in Cambodia. [HL6108]

Lord Markham: The World Health Organization (WHO) carried out a risk assessment of avian influenza (H5N1) following the Cambodian fatality and assessed the risk to the general population to be low. The UK Health Security Agency continues to investigate the risk to human health of H5N1. The risk analysis has not changed and aligns with the current WHO assessment.

Cameroon: Peace Negotiations

Asked by **Lord Boateng**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prospects of external mediation of a peace process in Cameroon following the government of Cameroon's rejection of the government of Canada's initiative to mediate talks between parties to the current internal conflict. [HL6184]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Inclusive dialogue is critical to achieving a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the North-West South-West regions of Cameroon. The UK continues to raise this with the Government of Cameroon and to encourage commitment to a peace process. The Minister of State for Development and Africa [Minister Mitchell], met with Cameroon's Minister of Defence in January and the Deputy Foreign Minister in March to press for continued mediation efforts. The UK is also responding to the impacts of the conflict with humanitarian assistance.

Civil Servants: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Blencathra**

To ask His Majesty's Government what internal disciplinary action has been taken against officials who were fined for breaking Covid rules. [HL5978]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Metropolitan Police have made clear that they have issued Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in private and the identities of recipients will not be released to the public or to their employer.

In line with the practice of successive administrations, the Government does not comment on individual personnel matters.

Committee on Climate Change: Public Appointments

Asked by **Lord Lilley**

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the (1) timetable, and (2) process, for appointing a new Chair of the Climate Change Committee; and how many applications were received for this post when it was advertised in July 2022. [HL6120]

Lord Callanan: Under the Climate Change Act 2008, the Department's Secretary of State makes appointments to the Climate Change Committee jointly with his devolved counterparts. The Committee Chair's role was first advertised last summer. Due to the limited number of applicants demonstrating sufficient experience, the appointing parties agreed to re-advertise using executive search services. The updated advertisement is due to go live this month.

The role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. In terms of process, the appointing parties follow the Governance Code for Public Appointments, including establishing an Advisory Assessment Panel that informs Ministers of progress throughout the competition.

Community Care: Standards

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Care Quality Commission is responsible for ensuring entrants to England on Health and Social Care visas and work permits are employed under the same terms and conditions as UK domiciled staff; and if not, who is responsible for their conditions of employment. [HL6335]

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Care Quality Commission is responsible for ensuring that home-based health and community care meets acceptable national standards; and if not, who is. [HL6336]

Lord Markham: The Care Quality Commission (CQC) do not have a role to routinely ensure that entrants to England on Health and Social Care visas and work permits are employed under the same terms and conditions as United Kingdom domiciled staff. However, as part of CQC's regulatory role, staffing governance is considered during CQC inspections at providers. If CQC identify areas of incorrect practice they would work with relevant agencies such as the Home Office to rectify any issues raised.

CQC regulate all health and care services that want to conduct a Regulated Activity, as defined by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. CQC's scope of registration document defines the types of organisations which need to register, including domiciliary care providers, community nursing services or integrated care teams, including district nursing, community matrons and specialist nursing services, community therapy services such as occupational therapy and physiotherapy, community intermediate care, community rehabilitation or reablement services and community outpatient and diagnostic services.

All services are regulated by CQC to ensure they meet the minimum fundamental standards of care. CQC's regulatory frameworks refer to national best practice, and CQC expect regulated providers to demonstrate how they meet these, or how alternative methods achieve the same or better outcomes for people using services.

Countryside: Access

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the rights of walkers in England in accessing the countryside. [HL6314]

Lord Benyon: The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that walkers have the right to access the countryside, and there is legislation and mapping tools in place to support this. The Highways Act 1980 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provide for the creation of new public rights of way, recording of existing rights of way and changes to the network. Similarly, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created open access land where walkers can roam freely.

The Government has developed Open Access maps, which allow walkers to identify areas of open access land, as well as Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) which require local authorities to assess and improve the condition of existing rights of way. The government has also provided funding through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to support local authorities in delivering their ROWIPs.

Countryside: Disability

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve access to the countryside for people who use wheelchairs in England. [HL6313]

Lord Benyon: The Government has taken steps to improve access to the countryside for people who use wheelchairs in England such as committing to make the England Coast Path as easy to use as possible for those with disabilities. Our Access for All programme has committed £14.5m to make targeted access improvements in our protected landscapes, national trails, forests and the wider countryside to help bring the benefits of spending time in nature to everyone. For example, supporting Miles without Stiles programme to improve accessibility in the Peak District National Park.

Additionally, the Government has extended its Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to improve accessibility in our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including installing interpretation panels, replacing gates and stiles to improve access for people who use wheelchairs, and creating new permissive paths on farms and estates.

Cycling: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Swire

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether existing legislation relating to cycling in urban areas is fit for purpose. [HL6222]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The rules of the road for people who cycle, in both the urban and rural environment, are set out in The Highway Code. The elements of the Code that relate to walking and cycling were updated in 2022 following a public consultation. The Government is satisfied that the rules are fit for purpose, and enforcement of any breaches of them is a matter for the police.

The Government is considering bringing forward legislation to introduce new offences in relation to dangerous cycling, to tackle cases 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, to which the Department will publish a response as soon as it can.

Electronic Cigarettes: Children

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children smoking e-cigarettes; and what plans they have to put an age limit on sales. [HL6219]

Lord Markham: There has been an increase in vaping and e-cigarette use amongst children aged 11 to 15 years old, as shown in the latest National Health Service Smoking Drinking and Drug Use survey data, which is available in an online-only format. This found that in 2021, 9% of pupils aged 11 to 15 years old were current vapers, compared to 6% in 2018, and 4% were regular users, compared to 2% in 2018. We already have an age limit on sales of vapes, with the Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 making it an offence to sell vapes to persons aged under 18 and for an adult to purchase them on behalf of a person aged under 18.

Electronic Cigarettes: Standards

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the companies that produce and sell e-cigarettes (1) have, and (2) have not, signed up to a voluntary code to seek a licence so that the products meet standards of safety and quality. [HL6220]

Lord Markham: The Department does not collect this information. Producers wishing to supply vapes and e-cigarettes on the United Kingdom market must comply with the product standards and safety requirements set out in the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. This includes notifying their products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency before they are placed on the UK market.

Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of Energy Performance Certificates. [HL6130]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Government continues to keep the effectiveness of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) under review.

Eritrea: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in Eritrea (1) to uphold the democratic freedoms of Eritreans, and (2) to ensure that cross-border access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance remains open for civil society organisations working in Eritrea. [HL6131]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The British Embassy in Asmara regularly raises human rights issues with the Eritrean Government, encouraging the full implementation of the agreed recommendations of the 2019 UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review. This year the UK, working in partnership with UNICEF, provided £700,000 to support integrated nutrition, health, and sanitation programmes that will reach 200,000 women and children across Eritrea. Throughout the conflict in northern Ethiopia, the UK consistently called for unfettered humanitarian access to all those impacted by the conflict, including through statements at the UN Security Council and UN Human Rights Council.

Eurostar: Immigration Controls

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to (1) the remarks by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 28 February (HL Deb col 125) that "the service standard of a wait of no longer than 25 minutes for Border Force officers has been maintained throughout that period", and (2) the statement made by the chief executive of Eurostar, Gwendoline Cazenave, on 24 January that Eurostar are running trains more than a third empty, what is the current service standard of UK Border Force for each of the hours of operation in (a) St Pancras, (b) Paris, (c) Brussels, and (d) Amsterdam; and whether the same service could be achieved if Eurostar were able to run the trains full. [HL6133]

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to (1) the remarks by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 28 February (HL Deb col 125) that "the service standard of a wait of no longer than 25 minutes for Border Force officers has been maintained throughout that period", and (2) the statement made by the chief executive of Eurostar, Gwendoline Cazenave, on 24 January that Eurostar are running trains more than a third empty, what discussions they are having with the governments of (a) France, (b) Belgium, and (c) the Netherlands, to facilitate increasing the passenger throughput; and what support they are giving to Eurostar to enable them to carry the full capacity of their trains without delay. [HL6134]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Border Force operate the same service standards across all international airports, ports and rail termini. The Border Force operation across

international rail operates within published service standard levels. Border Force are only one part of a port ecosystem and we are unable to speculate on Eurostar commercial operations or the wider operation and capacity of port infrastructure and processes outside of our control.

We have regular engagement with partner countries and continue to discuss with them, and Eurostar, future border arrangements and infrastructure availability’.

Food: Arsenic

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government, following changes in EU standards regarding the maximum level of arsenic in food, what plans they have to amend the standards for maximum level of arsenic in food. [HL6291]

Lord Markham: There are no immediate plans to revise the standards for arsenic in food. To protect consumers there are currently maximum levels in place for inorganic arsenic in foods such as rice which contribute to overall consumer exposure. We will always maintain strong rules on arsenic levels in food and keep our position under very close review guided by the risk analysis undertaken by the Food Standards Agency. We work closely with regulators across Europe and the rest of the world to ensure that we take account of global best practice and prioritise safety for our citizens.

Forests

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reverse the reported historic deforestation of native woodland ecosystems; and what funding they are providing for that. [HL6282]

Lord Benyon: We have legislated a statutory tree and woodland target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover of England to 16.5% by 2050. By laying a statutory long-term tree and woodland target before Parliament we have ensured trees and woodlands will remain a government priority through to 2050.

Forestry England continue to restore plantations on ancient woodland sites with restoration of around 20,000ha being carried out over the last 10 years. Work on restoring other habitats on the public estate continues. By 2050 and beyond we will, improve the condition of the majority of native woodland to make sure they're either in favourable ecological condition or improving by 2030. We will also restore or gradually restore the majority of plantations on ancient woodland sites to native woodland by 2030.

Funerals

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current range of waiting times for funerals; and whether they will investigate the reasons for delays in areas of the UK with the longest wait times. [HL6074]

Lord Bellamy: The Government does not have operational responsibility for the provision of funeral services and as such does not collate information on waiting times for funerals.

However, we are aware of some areas experiencing longer waiting times for funeral services and we are working with other government departments and the sector to address capacity and resilience issues within the death management system.

Health: Disadvantaged

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) regarding the types of products or disease areas it plans to focus on in piloting new approaches to assessing their impact on health inequalities in the population. [HL6214]

Lord Markham: The Department has had no such discussions. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that its revised Equalities and Health Inequalities Assessment (EHIA) was developed and piloted in the Centre for Guidelines. Pilot topics include type two diabetes, weight management, breast cancer and atopic dermatitis in children aged under 12 years old.

Once fully implemented, it is expected that this approach to consideration of health inequalities will be expanded across NICE guidance topics. Operational improvements to expand the EHIA to technology appraisals are in development, NICE does not currently expect to restrict this approach to specific topics.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce poverty-related health inequalities. [HL6283]

Lord Markham: The Government announced on 24 January 2023 that it will publish a Major Conditions Strategy, with an interim report to be published in the summer. The strategy will set out a policy agenda undertaking a shift to integrated, whole-person care, and will also apply a geographical lens to each condition to address regional disparities in health outcomes, supporting the levelling up mission to narrow the gap in

healthy life expectancy by 2030. Interventions set out in the strategy will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the Government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health-related labour market inactivity.

Home Office: Staff

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government how many asylum decision-takers were employed by the Home Office in (1) 2015, (2) 2018, and (3) 2021. [HL6162]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The number of asylum decision makers employed by the Home Office each year between 2010/11 to 2021/22 can be found in the ASY_04 tab of the published immigration statistics located here: Immigration and protection data: Q4 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We are taking immediate action to accelerate decision-making. Over the last 2 years we have doubled the number of asylum decision makers and we are continuing to recruit 2,500 more by September. We have also implemented a recruitment and retention allowance which has reduced decision maker attrition and helped to maintain experience.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

ASY_04 - Table [ASY_04.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-06/HL6162>

House of Lords: Shops

Asked by Lord Dobbs

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many products originating from China are stocked by the House of Lords gift shop outlets; and what plans there are to reduce or to remove entirely all such products. [HL6238]

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf.

The gift shop does not trade directly with any suppliers from China. However, the shop sells 14 product lines originating from China. In other instances it may not be possible to certify the source. All suppliers carry trading accreditations related to labour rights, health and safety, the environment and business ethics. There are currently no plans to change these suppliers, although the gift shop regularly reviews its choice of suppliers.

Hydrogen: Heating

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect the neighbourhood trial, referred to in the impact assessment on the Hydrogen Heating Village Grid

Conversion, published on 6 July 2022, to (1) commence, (2) conclude, and (3) report; and what measures they will use to evaluate its success. [HL6180]

Lord Callanan: The neighbourhood trial is SGN's H100 Fife project in Levenmouth. SGN plans to deliver hydrogen to consumers in mid-2024 and conclude by 2027. SGN provides evidence and regular progress updates to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ofgem and the Health and Safety Executive. They also produce an annual report in accordance with conditions set by Ofgem, who part funds the project

H100's evidence is already shaping plans for the village trial, including on costs and regulatory challenges. Alongside evidence from the village trial, H100 will inform the Government's strategic decisions in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising heat.

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government why they are taking powers to impose a village trial of hydrogen heating before the completion of the neighbourhood trial and the publication of the analysis of the findings from that trial. [HL6181]

Lord Callanan: The neighbourhood trial will transport hydrogen through pipes laid parallel with the existing natural gas network. It is providing valuable evidence on costs, regulatory changes, risk management and consumer engagement. This work is informing the design and delivery of the village trial. The village trial is providing evidence on a greater number and diversity of consumers and building types, and on the process of converting the gas network. Evidence from both trials will inform Government's 2026 strategic decisions on the role of hydrogen in heat decarbonisation.

Import Duties: Urine Drainage Bags

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to ask HMRC to work with the World Customs Organisation's Harmonised System Committee to reclassify urine drainage bags as medical devices for import tariff purposes. [HL6115]

Baroness Penn: HMRC has reviewed the classification of urine drainage bags and consider the classification 3926 to be correct. This is in line with classification decisions previously issued by the World Customs Organization, which member countries are expected to follow.

Businesses who wish to make representations to reduce the UK import duty rate for these goods, or to make an application for a temporary suspension of import duties, may contact the Department for Business and Trade via:

TariffSuspensions@trade.gov.uk

Covid-19 critical goods, which include Urine drainage bags, are currently subject to a 0 per cent rate of Customs duty until the end of 2023.

Inland Waterways: Freight

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the guidelines followed by the Environment Agency so that priority is given to proposals and planning applications that enable access to freight transported on waterways, rather than roads; and what account the Environment Agency takes of the emission reductions and health benefits of moving freight from roads to waterways. [HL5858]

Lord Benyon: The Department for Transport operates two freight revenue grant schemes to encourage modal shift from road to rail or water. These are Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) for rail and inland waterways and Waterborne Freight Grant (WFG) for coastal and short sea shipping.

MSRS assists companies with the operating costs associated with running rail or inland water freight transport instead of road, where rail or inland waterway transport is more expensive. WFG can assist a company with the operating costs associated with running waterborne freight transport instead of road, where transport by water is more expensive.

The Government has committed £20 million per year towards these two schemes.

The MSRS grants are awarded through a competitive bid round process and applications are considered for funding on the basis of value for money.

The amount of grant is capped by the estimated benefit of the mode shift, calculated by using Mode Shift Benefit Values (MSBs). The MSBs are an estimate of the economic, environmental and other social benefits of removing one lorry mile of freight from the road and transferring it to rail or water.

The MSRS grant scheme helps remove up to 900,000 lorry journeys per year from Britain's roads, saving up to 58,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions and has been a vital tool for supporting the Government's environmental priorities.

Job Sikhala

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the arrest and detention of Zimbabwean MP Job Sikhala, and (2) its implications for the prospects of a free and fair election in that country in the coming year. [HL6185]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is aware of the trend of lengthy detention of government critics in Zimbabwe. We continue to monitor the ongoing detention of Job Sikhala MP, including through direct observation of court hearings. As the British Ambassador publicly stated on October 2, the UK is committed to the fundamental right to peaceful assembly and association as enshrined in Zimbabwe's constitution. It is for the people of Zimbabwe to choose their government through

peaceful, credible and inclusive elections. We encourage the Government of Zimbabwe to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Electoral Observation Missions and to allow space for political opposition and civil society organisations to operate freely ahead of elections in 2023.

Motorways: Litter

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prosecutions there have been of individuals dropping or dumping litter on motorways in England in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [HL6387]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Prosecutions for littering offences on motorways are carried out by appropriate organisations for each case, including Local Authorities, the Police, the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency and the Environment Agency. Therefore, Government does not hold a total number for prosecutions. Each individual organisation noted may have relevant numbers regarding the amount of prosecutions for littering offences on motorways in England in each of the past five years.

National Highways

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the overall performance of National Highways. [HL6390]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: National Highways is making progress towards its performance and delivery targets in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2, 2020-2025).

Since the start of RIS2 National Highways has started work on 11 schemes, four of which were started ahead of the committed date. It has also completed work on 19 schemes that have opened to traffic and continues to deliver on 16 schemes that are currently in construction.

There have however been legal challenges to planning consent for several schemes, concerns around smart motorways and high levels of inflation that have had a significant impact on overall delivery of the portfolio both in terms of cost and schedule.

National Highways and the Department have taken steps to address, learn from and respond to these challenges. Consequently, this has resulted in the need to replan 22 of the 69 major enhancements to ensure the Capital Portfolio remains deliverable and affordable.

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), which dataset(s) was the source of the SNOMED CT codes and dates shared; and why

unprotected NHS numbers and unprotected dates of birth were included. [HL6196]

Lord Markham: Cohorting as a Service uses SNOMED CT Codes from general practitioner (GP) practice extracts, with data being collected using the General Practice Extraction service. This collection is supported by the British Medical Association, Royal College of General Practitioners and National Data Guardian, and collects a specific set of patient data from GP practices in England on a fortnightly basis.

The data includes personally identifiable information such as National Health Service number and date of birth because the information is required for delivering direct care. The NHS England vaccination programme uses the information to identify and contact patients who fall within clinically 'at-risk' groups within an age group.

The Secretary of State or NHS England issue Directions for information collection, then approval for collection is obtained, confirming that the Information Standard, Collection or Extraction has been through assessment and is demonstrated to meet the quality assurance criteria set by the Data Alliance Partnership Board.

NHS: Pensions

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will respond to the NHS Pension Scheme: proposed amendments to scheme regulations consultation, which ran from 5 December 2022 to 30 January 2023. [HL6204]

Lord Markham: The Department published its response to the consultation on amendments to the NHS Pension Scheme on 7 March 2023 in an online-only format. Overall, the proposed changes were well received and most of the respondents agreed that they should be implemented. The Department therefore intends to proceed with the proposals it set out.

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed changes to the NHS Pension Scheme on the retention of (1) trauma, and (2) orthopaedic, surgeons. [HL6205]

Lord Markham: The Department recently consulted on a range of pensions measures, including new retirement flexibilities to enable National Health Service staff to work more flexibly up to and beyond retirement age, and changes to scheme rules to address inflation. The Department confirmed on 7 March 2023 that it intends to implement the measures as planned.

The changes will remove barriers for experienced staff, including trauma and orthopaedic surgeons, retiring and returning to work and will allow them to draw down some or all of their pension but continue working and building more pension benefits. Staff affected by Annual Allowance (AA) charges will be able to reduce

pensionable pay on partial retirement to avoid AA charges without necessarily reducing overall work commitments.

By fixing the unintended impacts of inflation, the changes will also help to retain senior clinicians affected by pension tax who might otherwise reduce their workloads or take early retirement.

Offences against Children

Asked by Lord Laming

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that every police force in England has specialist child protection teams. [HL6148]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The allocation of resources within forces is an operational decision for Chief Constables. To ensure that all forces have adequate children's safeguarding measures in place, the police are held to account by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which scrutinises how well all police forces across England and Wales are responding to and safeguarding vulnerable children through its rolling programme of inspections.

The Government is committed to improving the policing response to child protection, funding national programmes to develop and deliver an effective and victim-focused response safeguarding children. This includes a Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme which identifies and shares best practice across police forces, the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme which helps police to uncover more offending against children, as well as a range of officer training programmes across all ranks to improve their confidence and capability to investigate and respond to child protection and safeguarding cases.

Orthopaedics: Waiting Lists

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost to the economy of the 55 per cent of patients waiting for orthopaedic treatment who are economically inactive due to their condition. [HL6260]

Lord Markham: No formal estimate has been made. The COVID-19 pandemic has put enormous pressures on the National Health Service with elective waiting lists growing to over 7.2 million patients, but the Department remains committed to ensuring people get the right care at the right time. That is why we are delivering record staffing numbers and putting in record levels of funding, to help the NHS recover and transform services.

Having virtually met our target to eliminate long waits of two years or more for elective procedures in July, our next ambition is to eliminate waits of eighteen months or more by April 2023.

Palestinians: Elections

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority on calling an election at the earliest possible date and ensuring that any such election is free, fair and subject to international monitoring. [HL6145]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly remind the Palestinian leadership of the need for democratic renewal through free and fair national elections held across the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including East Jerusalem, as set out in the Oslo Accords. The Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy their democratic rights. I reinforced this message during my visit to Israel and the OPTs on 10-13 January. The Foreign Secretary has also raised this with Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Malki in their phone call on 7 March.

Pedestrians: Prosecutions

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Attorney General will review the sentence of three years for manslaughter given to a pedestrian who remonstrated with a cyclist riding on the pavement on the basis that it is unduly harsh. [HL6075]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: It is believed this is a reference to the case of Auriol Grey who was sentenced at Peterborough Crown Court on 2 March 2023 to 3 years' imprisonment for manslaughter. The Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme works only to increase sentences that are too low so that they appear unduly lenient. The Law Officers cannot consider whether a sentence is unduly harsh or take any action if it appears to be so. An offender may appeal against their sentence if they consider it to be manifestly excessive.

Pets: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government what documents will need to be completed by pet owners in Northern Ireland to enable them to bring their pets to and from Great Britain under the Windsor Framework. [HL6174]

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government how the (1) rules, and (2) processes, for transport of pets to and from Great Britain will differ under the Windsor Framework from the position prior to 2019. [HL6175]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are no documentary requirements whatsoever for Northern Irish pets moving to Great Britain and back to Northern Ireland. Pet owners in Great Britain will be able to travel with their pets without costs, burdens or health treatments. For pet owners visiting Northern Ireland from Great Britain, the only requirement will be to confirm that the

pet is microchipped and will not move into the EU. This will be in the form of a travel document issued for the lifetime of a pet, available online and electronically in a matter of minutes; or an equally seamless process built into the booking process for a flight or ferry. This avoids cumbersome bureaucracy and unnecessary checks, meaning efforts can be focused on real-world welfare, disease or smuggling risks with checks on Great Britain-Northern Ireland movements, operating on a risk and intelligence-led basis.

Plastics: Seas and Oceans

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the new study by the Five Gyres Institute published in the journal Plos One on 8 March, concerning the increase in the amount of microplastic in the world's oceans in the past 15 years; and what steps they will take, with international partners, in response to that report. [HL6363]

Lord Benyon: Marine litter, including microplastics, is one of the greatest environmental challenges we are currently facing, reiterated by the new study by the Five Gyres Institute. Whilst we have not yet made an assessment of the findings of this latest study, we will continue to draw from a wide range of evidence and assessments to develop our policy, including any new research, enabling us to take the best possible action domestically, regionally and internationally to tackle the issue of marine microplastics and improve our understanding of their sources, pathways, impacts, distribution and abundance.

Domestically, we are working to prevent plastic from entering the environment in the first place by eliminating the most problematic plastics; we have already banned microbeads in rinse-off personal care products and we have funded research to examine wider sources of microplastics, including tyres and textiles. This research will help to inform future policy.

As a Contracting Party to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the UK participates in monitoring programmes to assess regional trends in marine litter. Technical experts from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) have been leading an expert group to develop a new indicator for microlitter (including microplastics) in seafloor sediments, which could be used in future to inform regional policy.

The UK is a leading voice in tackling marine plastic pollution, co-sponsoring the proposal to prepare a new international, legally binding plastics treaty and taking an ambitious stance at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC1) in November last year. At INC1, the UK supported a treaty that will restrain the production and consumption of plastic to sustainable levels, address plastic design and encourage more recycling and re-use of

plastic, in order to end plastic pollution, including microplastic pollution.

Prescription Drugs: Addictions

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will fund a national helpline and website for people suffering from prescribed drug dependency, as recommended by Public Health England in 2019. [HL6319]

Lord Markham: This helpline recommendation formed part of a wider set of actions to improve the support available from the healthcare system to people who are dependent on prescription drugs. NHS England has been the facilitator of system partners in their work to deliver the review recommendations. In March 2023, NHS England published '*Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: Framework for action for ICBs and primary care*'. A copy is attached. This document includes five actions, resources and case studies that will help systems to develop plans that can support people who are taking medicines associated with dependence and withdrawal symptoms.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

NHS England prescribed medicines guidance [NHS England Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-09/HL6319>

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to support the provision of tapering strips which enable patients to withdraw from prescribed drugs slowly and safely. [HL6320]

Lord Markham: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline '*Medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: safe prescribing and withdrawal management for adults*' includes information for both health professionals and patients on the safe withdrawal from medicines. As part of the evidence review for this guideline, tapering strips were considered for their potential use in decreasing patient doses and withdrawing from antidepressants but no evidence was identified.

A recommendation was made in the final guideline for further research on the effectiveness of equipment, technologies, practical aids and medicine formulations in supporting people to manage dose reductions, compared with usual practice. NICE keeps its guidance under review to ensure that it reflects any developments in the evidence base. A copy of this guidance is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

NICE guidance on medicines dependence/withdrawal [medicines-associated-with-dependence-or-withdrawal-symptoms-safe-prescribing-and-withdrawal-management-for-adults-pdf-66143776880581.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-09/HL6320>

Prison Sentences

Asked by *Lord Moylan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the number of people who will be in prison serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence, in each of the next five years. [HL6091]

Asked by *Lord Moylan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the number of people who will be in prison serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence having never been released from custody, in each of the next five years. [HL6092]

Asked by *Lord Moylan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the number of people who will be in prison serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence having been recalled to custody, in each of the next five years. [HL6093]

Asked by *Lord Moylan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the number of (1) first releases from custody, (2) recalls to custody, and (3) re-releases from custody having been recalled, of people serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence, in each of the next five years. [HL6094]

Lord Bellamy: The Government is committed to the protection of the public and the effective management of offenders. By law, prisoners serving indeterminate sentences who have completed their tariff will be released only when the Parole Board concludes that it is no longer necessary on the grounds of public protection for them to remain confined.

The HM Prison and Probation Service IPP Action Plan remains the route by which IPP offenders can be supported to progress towards safe release. As per the Government's response to the Justice Select Committee's report on the IPP sentence, work to refresh the Action Plan is already underway.

The modelling of the IPP population will be revised to take account of any potential impact delivered through the refreshed IPP Action Plan, due to be published at the end of March. The Action Plan promotes the progression of offenders serving the IPP sentence. Future prison population forecasts will factor in the impact of the refreshed Action Plan.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will notify Afghan refugees in the UK starting with those who arrived under the Afghans Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3 of how they can apply to be reunited with close family members, regardless of where such family members are now located. [HL6117]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: In line with our existing policy, those resettled under the ACRS may be able to be accompanied by their immediate family members (their spouse or partner, and dependent children under 18).

The government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable and at-risk people fleeing Afghanistan. The situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave Afghanistan.

This includes the eligible family members of those being resettled under the ACRS. For those evacuated from Afghanistan under the ACRS without their immediate family members, further information will be made available in due course about options for reuniting with them.

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burterset**

To ask His Majesty's Government why only 22 Afghans have been resettled under Pathway 2 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme as of December 2022. [HL6150]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will see up to 20,000 people from Afghanistan and the region resettled to the UK over the coming years.

Under the second pathway, which opened in 2022, we have now begun to receive the first referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of vulnerable refugees who have fled Afghanistan for resettlement to the UK. Further detail can be found on the UNHCR website: UNHCR UK Information and Links on Afghanistan Situation - UNHCR United Kingdom

We will continue to receive referrals to the scheme in coming years.

The pace of actual arrivals will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from UNHCR and the availability of suitable accommodation and support in the UK. As with existing and previous resettlement schemes, we will manage flows based on need and in support of the wellbeing of the people and communities involved.

Those referred will be assessed for resettlement by UNHCR using their established processes.

Roads: Accidents

Asked by **Lord Hogan-Howe**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many road traffic collisions involving a cyclist and a pedestrian were reported to the police in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and what was the recorded severity of the injuries resulting from those collisions. [HL6252]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The number of reported personal injury collisions between a pedal cyclist and a pedestrian in England and Wales, and the resulting casualties by severity of injury, in each of the last 5 years for which data are available is shown in the table.

Year	Total collisions	Total casualties	Fatalities	Seriously injured casualties	Slightly injured casualties
2017	488	626	4	147	475
2018	428	544	1	159	384
2019	362	448	4	144	300
2020	278	343	4	112	227
2021	384	462	0	140	322

Schools: Absenteeism

Asked by **Lord Laming**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce persistent truanting in schools. [HL6147]

Baroness Barran: The government has a comprehensive attendance strategy to ensure that absence is minimised. The department has recently published guidance setting out how we expect schools, trusts and local authorities to work together to improve attendance, which is available in the attached document.

The guidance is clear that schools should develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, have a clear school attendance policy, and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.

The guidance sets out that schools are expected to use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so that all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. To help schools to do this, the department has recently launched new functionality which allows mainstream schools that are sharing daily attendance data to compare attendance with other schools within their own local authority. This can be seen under the 'compare your attendance tab' via GOV.UK's 'View your education data' site at: <https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/>. The tool will help schools to identify strengths and priorities and signpost to additional guidance and support.

The department has employed expert attendance advisers who are playing an important role working closely with local authorities and a number of multi-academy trusts with higher levels of persistent absence to review their current practice and support them to develop plans to improve. The department has also recently launched a £2.32 million attendance mentor pilot to deliver intensive one-to-one support to a group of persistently and severely absent pupils. The pilot will run for three years supporting a total of 1,665 pupils. The findings from this pilot should enable schools, trusts, and local authorities to address persistent and severe absence more effectively.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has also established an Alliance of national leaders from education, children's social care and other relevant services to work together to raise school attendance and reduce persistent absence. Schools and local authorities can also use a range of measures to provide support for and/or sanctions against parents when their child's irregular attendance in school becomes a problem. These measures are used to reinforce parents' responsibilities and to support them in improving their child's attendance at school.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL6147_pdf
[Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-06/HL6147>

Schools: Migrants

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they adjust the schools curriculum to meet the needs of areas with a high number of immigrants. [HL6164]

Baroness Barran: Maintained schools in England are legally required to follow the National Curriculum as a piece of statutory guidance.

Within a broad statutory framework, schools have considerable flexibility to organise the content and delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils.

In addition to meeting their statutory duties, schools are also free to include additional subjects or topics they deem relevant for their pupils, as part of the school's wider curriculum.

Academies and free schools have greater freedom and autonomy in how they operate for areas such as the curriculum, but they are expected to teach a curriculum that is comparable in breadth and ambition to the National Curriculum.

Small Businesses: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them transition to net zero. [HL6165]

Lord Callanan: Over 3,700 UK small businesses have joined the UN's Race to Zero initiative, accounting for 70% of the current global total. This is in addition to two thirds of the FTSE 100.

The Government supports SMEs by promoting the UK Business Climate Hub, which is embedded on the SME Climate Hub, and forms part of the global Race to Zero campaign. Here businesses can access a suite of tools for measuring, reducing and reporting on their emissions. These include a carbon calculator tool developed by Google.org and Normative, and the Climate Fit modular education course.

South Sudan: Land Mines

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 7 March (HL5764), whether they will now answer the question put; namely, what assistance they will provide to the government of South Sudan to enable that country to meet its international obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to become free of landmines. [HL6210]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Global Mine Action Programme (GMAP), the FCDO's main vehicle for clearing landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), has a long-standing commitment to funding demining in South Sudan. Between 2018 and 2022, GMAP provided funding for UK NGO the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to clear 1,829,632 square metres of land in South Sudan. GMAP signed a new contract with MAG for Financial Year 22/23, which, as of end December 2022, had cleared an additional 168,563 square metres of land there. We are currently negotiating with MAG a new contract for South Sudan to run from April 2023.

Special Educational Needs: Reviews

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will respond to their SEND review: right support, right place, right time consultation, which ran from 29 March 2022 to 22 July 2022. [HL5876]

Baroness Barran: On 2 March the department published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

(SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan in response to the SEND Review Green Paper. This outlines the department's mission for the SEND and AP system to fulfil children's potential, build trust and provide financial sustainability.

Teachers: Training

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that teacher training includes, as standard, specific training on teaching young people with special educational needs and disabilities. [HL5981]

Baroness Barran: The Teachers' Standards set clear expectations that teachers must understand the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). All trainees who achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) must demonstrate that they can adapt teaching to respond to the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

Initial teacher training (ITT) courses must be designed so that teacher trainees can demonstrate that they meet all the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level, including the requirement in Standard 5, that all teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

To support all teachers to meet these standards, the Department has implemented high quality teacher training reforms which begin with ITT and continues into early career teaching, through to the reformed suite of leadership and specialist national professional qualifications (NPQ), ensuring that teachers have the skills to support all pupils to succeed, including those with SEND.

Since 2020 the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (CCF) has included content on adapting teaching to the strengths and needs of all pupils, and since delivery started from 2021, the Early Career Framework has built on that learning for Early Career Teachers. These reforms support our ambition that all new teachers starting in the profession learn how to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

On 2 March 2023, we published the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan in response to the Green Paper published in March last year. This outlines the department's mission for the SEND and AP system to fulfil children's potential, build parents' trust and provide financial sustainability. We are also building a confident expert workforce, training up to 5,000 new early years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). Furthermore, an over 50% increase in high needs funding to over £10 billion by 2023-24, compared to £6.1 billion in 2018-19, will help children and young people with SEND in both special schools and mainstream schools receive the right support.

As part of that plan, the department will be conducting a review of the ITT Core Content Framework and Early

Career Framework together this year, which will consider further opportunities to improve how the frameworks support new teachers to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

Turkey: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will be represented by observers at the Kobani trial in Turkey of members of the Peoples' Democratic Party. [HL6200]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: British Embassy officials have been monitoring the Kobane trials in person and, whenever possible, will continue to do so, alongside other like-minded missions. We follow events in Turkey carefully, particularly government moves to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP), the lifting of immunity for its MPs, and the replacement of opposition mayors by state-appointed officials. While these decisions are for the Turkish Government, we expect Turkey to undertake legal processes fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

UEFA Champions League Final 2022 Independent Review

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 March (HL5638), what steps they plan to take, if any, to support the implementation of recommendations related to policing at future UEFA Champions League Finals in the independent review of the 2022 UEFA Champions League Final, chaired by Dr Tiago Brandão Rodrigues, particularly (1) Recommendation 7, and (2) Recommendation 8; and whether they intend to ask the government of France to seek from the French police (a) a response to these recommendations, and (b) an apology to Liverpool FC fans for the treatment they received. [HL6183]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: HMG has been clear that the events at last year's Champions League Final were unacceptable. We welcome the French Government's apologies to fans and acknowledgement that mistakes were made. While it is for the French authorities to implement the recommendations made in subsequent reviews, we continually engage with them on major event security, including lessons from the management of the Champions League Final.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the (1) opportunities for, and (2) restrictions on, consumers in

Northern Ireland seeking to (a) purchase, and (b) have delivered, (i) plants, (ii) trees, and (iii) seed potatoes, from Great Britain under the Windsor Framework. [HL6173]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Under the Windsor Framework, growers in Northern Ireland can access seed potatoes from GB which remain prohibited in Ireland. This was not possible under the old Protocol. Garden centres, farmers and gardeners can access GB plants, trees and other products considerably more easily than in Ireland. Instead of full EU certification, all plants and seeds, including seed potatoes will move under a similar mechanism to the UK-wide plant passport scheme, in line with traders throughout the UK. That means rather than paying £150 per movement into Northern Ireland, growers and businesses serving Northern Ireland consumers can pay £120 a year to be part of the UK scheme.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the percentage of goods going through the green lane that will be routinely checked under the Windsor Framework. [HL6177]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Trusted traders will not face routine checks on goods moving in the green lane. The only checks will be risk-based and intelligence-led, such as to target smuggling or criminality in the green lane.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the (1) threshold, and (2) criteria, for a business to qualify for trusted trader status under the Windsor Framework. [HL6172]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Windsor Framework significantly expands the range of businesses who can benefit from trusted trader status. Businesses throughout the United Kingdom will now be eligible - moving away from the previous restrictions that required a physical premises in Northern Ireland. Criteria for businesses to qualify includes basic record keeping of goods movements, a good compliance record and no history of serious criminal offences related to their economic activity. There is no threshold for a business to be eligible for the scheme.

Ukraine: Abduction

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Russia has transferred thousands of children from Ukraine to Russia for "re-education"; what are the relevant provisions of the UN Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in respect of any such actions; and what steps, if any, they plan to take in response to these reports. [HL6182]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Conflict Observatory report supports growing evidence of large-scale forced transfers of Ukrainian civilians. The UK calls on Russia to cease this practice. Forcibly transferring children of one group to another may constitute genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. We are supporting Ukraine's domestic investigations and the International Criminal Court investigations into war crimes, and Ukraine's application against Russia before the International Court of Justice. On 8 March, I met the UN Special Representative for Children & Armed Conflict to discuss the international response. On 16 June 2022, we sanctioned the Russian Children's Rights Commissioner for her role in the forced transfers.

Ukraine: Ammunition

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any of the ammunition currently being supplied to Ukraine contains depleted uranium. [HL6144]

Baroness Goldie: Alongside our granting of a squadron of Challenger 2 main battle tanks to Ukraine, we will be providing ammunition including armour piercing rounds which contain depleted uranium. Such rounds are highly effective in defeating modern tanks and armoured vehicles.

Urine Drainage Bags

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have received from (1) the MedTech Directorate, (2) the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, (3) HMRC, and (4) the Department for Business and Trade, about (a) the import of urine drainage bags, (b) the security of supply of such devices, and (c) the cost to the NHS of imposing tariffs on such imports. [HL6116]

Lord Markham: Information relating to representations made on this matter by different Departments and agencies is not held centrally. In 2021, the Government implemented temporary tariff suspensions on a set of goods, including urine drainage bags, to support the healthcare response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government has extended the majority of these suspensions until 31 December 2023. We have recently received stakeholder feedback on tariffs on urine drainage bags and are considering the evidence provided alongside wider United Kingdom Government analysis.

Visas: Ministers of Religion

Asked by *Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) religious workers visas, and (2) Minister of Religion visas, have been issued to Iranian subjects since July 2015; who were those visas issued to; and what plans they have, if any, to review this system. [HL6140]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visas in the Immigration system statistics quarterly release. Data on 'Religious Worker (previously Tier 5)' visas issued to Iranian nationals are published in table Vis_D02 of the 'Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes' detailed datasets. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to Q4 (October to December) 2022.

We are unable to discuss individual cases for GDPR reasons.

There are no plans to review the Immigration Rules governing Religious Workers or Ministers of Religion.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes [entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2022 v3.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-06/HL6140>

Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Department of Health and Social Care's ongoing Voluntary Pricing and Access Scheme (VPAS) pre-negotiation workshops, how the discussions and insights gathered from (1) industry, and (2) civil society, will inform negotiations for VPAS 2024. [HL6112]

Lord Markham: The Department invited a range of stakeholders including industry bodies, patient organisations and civil society organisations to workshops which took place from January 2023 until March 2023. These workshops were a listening exercise that aimed to illicit a diverse range of perspectives. The insights taken from these workshops will be used to inform the preparations for negotiation of a successor to the 2019 voluntary scheme for branded medicines and pricing access.

Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access: Life Sciences

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Department of Health and Social Care's ongoing

Voluntary Price and Access Scheme (VPAS) pre-negotiation workshops, what assessment they have made of the (1) the impact of VPAS 2019 on the UK life science sector, and (2) the implications for their negotiations on VPAS 2024. [HL6113]

Lord Markham: The Government is working to better understand the impacts of the operation of the current voluntary scheme for branded medicines pricing and access (VPAS) on the United Kingdom life sciences industry. We are in direct conversations with pharmaceutical companies, including in the recent pre-negotiation workshops, as well as with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and the Department for Business and Trade about the business environment for life sciences.

The Government is open to ideas about how a successor to VPAS should operate from 2024 onwards. We are working with industry to agree a mutually beneficial successor that supports better patient outcomes; ensures the sustainability of National Health Service spend on branded medicines; and enables a strong UK life sciences industry.

Yang Chih-yuan

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the treatment of Taiwanese national and activist Yang Chih-yuan, who was arrested in Zhejiang, China, in August 2022, meets international standards on the treatment of prisoners, including the United Nations' Nelson Mandela Rules. [HL6146]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are increasing restrictions on civil and political rights and freedom of expression in China. The UK Government continues to monitor the treatment of prisoners in China, including Yang Chih-yuan. We regularly raise human rights and freedom of speech concerns directly with the Chinese authorities and in multilateral fora. Most recently, the Foreign Secretary did so in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart on 20 February 2023.

Zimbabwe: Elections

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the government of Zimbabwe to monitor elections in that country; and what steps they have taken to support any initiative by (1) the African Union, or (2) other multilateral (a) governmental, or (b) non-governmental, organisations in respect of those elections. [HL6186]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is working alongside international partners to prepare support for domestic and international election observation missions however, as is standard practice, invitations for observation mission will not be issued by the Government of Zimbabwe until the election date is

announced. Alongside a small British Embassy Harare electoral monitoring mission, we hope to see larger electoral missions from the African Union, Southern

African Development Community, EU, Commonwealth and other NGOs.

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