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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Lord Agnew of Oulton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>Lord Ashton of Hyde</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Lord Bates</b>	Minister of State, Department for International Development
<b>Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office
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<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Lord Young of Cookham</b>	Whip
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 19 July 2018

## British Council: Tailored Review

[HLWS853]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mark Field), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I am announcing today the start of a Tailored Review of the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Established by Royal Charter in 1940, the British Council builds relationships and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries.

As a Non-Department Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), the British Council is required to undergo a Tailored Review at least once in every parliament. The principal aims of Tailored Reviews are to ensure public bodies remain fit for purpose, are well governed and properly accountable for what they do.

The Review will provide a robust scrutiny of, and assurance on, the continuing need for the British Council – both its function and its form. It will then assess the governance and control arrangements in place to ensure they are compliant with the recognised principles of good corporate governance and delivering good value for money. The structure, efficiency and effectiveness of the British Council will be considered throughout the Review.

A Challenge Panel, chaired by a FCO Non-Executive Director, will examine the findings of both stages of the Review.

The Review will follow guidance published in 2016 by the Cabinet Office: 'Tailored Reviews: guidance on reviews of public bodies' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tailored-reviews-of-public-bodies-guidance>. The Terms of Reference for the review can be found on gov.uk.

In conducting this Tailored Review, officials will engage with a broad range of stakeholders across the UK and overseas, including across UK Government, Devolved Administrations, foreign governments, business and civil society, as well as with the British Council's own staff and management.

I shall inform the House of the outcome of the Review when it is completed and copies of the report of the Review will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## Contingent Liability

[HLWS863]

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and

Sport (Rt Hon Jeremy Wright) has made the following Written Statement:

A minute has been laid before Parliament regarding the live broadcast of the England men's team Semi-Final match at the 2018 Football World Cup in Hyde Park on the 11th July, and specifically in relation to incurring a contingent liability.

The Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) directed the Royal Parks (TRP) to host an event which showed the live broadcast of the England men's team Semi-Final match at the 2018 Football World Cup on large television screens in Hyde Park on 11th July. The Department provided an indemnity agreement to the TRP; in order to meet the short timescale to organise this event, it was necessary to give commitments in relation to such liabilities urgently.

DCMS agreed to indemnify TRP for net costs and there is an agreement regarding any such indemnity costs between DCMS and the Greater London Authority and the Football Association.

The Treasury approved the proposal in principle. Authority for any expenditure required under the liability will be sought through the normal Supply procedure. A full departmental Minute has been laid providing more detail on this contingent liability as provided to TRP on the 8th July.

## Electoral Integrity

[HLWS859]

**Lord Young of Cookham:** The Minister for the Constitution has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Today, the Cabinet Office published its evaluation and it shows that Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Watford and Woking delivered successful voter ID pilots. We know that because the evidence shows that the majority of voters who turned up to vote without ID returned later with ID without problem. When surveyed, polling station staff overwhelmingly judged that they had been able to successfully deliver the ID requirements in their polling stations, with 99% satisfaction rates amongst administrators in four of the five local authorities - Bromley, Swindon, Woking and Gosport - and 97% in the fifth, Watford.

Locally issued ID was made available free of charge whenever an elector was unsure they were able to produce the required ID. In one local authority, this was issued to ten people who were homeless. They were also able to use the ID to register at the local job centre. The amount of voters who felt the security of elections improved increased consistently in the areas where electors had to show photographic ID. Confidence and satisfaction in the process of voting itself significantly increased post election day where voters had to show photographic ID.

Overall, voters' views of election day were largely positive across all of the pilots and the main reason for

not voting was that people were too busy or had other commitments.

Alongside the Government's evaluation, the Electoral Commission will publish their evaluation on the voter ID pilots today.

Peterborough, Slough and Tower Hamlets tested additional measures to improve the security and integrity of the postal vote process and ensured that additional guidance on preventing electoral fraud was given to every postal vote applicant. The local authorities found value in the pilot as an elector engagement exercise, given the positive feedback they received from electors in reaction to being contacted.

Electoral fraud is not a victimless crime. We owe it to voters to ensure they know their voices are being heard and their right to vote is being protected. We have worked with the Electoral Commission and Crimestoppers to support the 'Your Vote is Yours alone' campaign that ran alongside the local elections to encourage the reporting of suspected electoral crime.

The improvement we will make to the security and integrity of our voting process in Great Britain will bring us in line with many other countries where voters provide confirmation of their identity and where there is a reasonable expectation that someone's vote should be properly protected and that doing so guards democracy and confidence for everyone.

Indeed, within the United Kingdom, the experience of Northern Ireland, where paper ID has been required since 1985 and photo ID since 2003, illustrates that there should be no issue for voters - once the requirement has become established.

I am absolutely clear that requiring voter ID in polling stations is a timely and reasonable measure that will sustain confidence in our voting process and we are inviting expressions of interest from local authorities to run further pilots at the Local Government elections in May 2019.

We are committed to improving the security of everyone's votes, strengthening our elections and ensuring that people have confidence in our democracy, whilst putting equality and inclusivity at the centre of our electoral system.

## EU Trade Agreement Impact Analysis and Process

[HLWS854]

**Baroness Fairhead:** My Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (George Hollingbery MP) has today made the following statement.

I am pleased to announce that my Department will today publish an impact assessment for the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA). I have separately written to the Scrutiny Committees in both Houses of Parliament such that they can consider this evidence as part of their important review of this Agreement. A copy of this

impact assessment will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Negotiations with Singapore concluded in October 2014. The European Commission has now presented the final negotiated texts to the Council of the European Union (Council). The Council will now decide whether to adopt the necessary Council Decision authorising signature and conclusion, with a vote in October 2018.

The Agreement is expected to promote bilateral trade and economic growth between the EU and Singapore by eliminating most tariffs and reducing non-tariff measures that businesses face when trading goods and services and when investing.

I will also today lay the European Union (Definition of Treaties) (Economic Partnership Agreements and Trade Agreement) (Eastern and Southern Africa States, Southern African Development Community States, Ghana and Ecuador) Order 2018 to designate the Ecuador – EU Andean Accession and these Economic Partnership Agreements as Treaties in accordance with the European Communities Act 1972.

The EU, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru signed the Protocol of Accession of Ecuador to the EU-Andean Free Trade Agreement (known as the EU-Andean FTA) on 11 November 2016. The protocol has been provisionally applied since 1 January 2017.

On the 28 July 2016, the EU signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Ghana. The EPA has been provisionally applied since 15 December 2016.

On the 10 June 2016, the EU signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with 6 countries from the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland (now known as Eswatini) (the 'SADC EPA states'). The EPA has been provisionally applied since 10 October 2016, except in the case of Mozambique, where it has been provisionally applied since 4 February 2018.

On the 24 August 2009, the EU signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Eastern and Southern Africa countries: Madagascar, Mauritius, the Seychelles and Zimbabwe (the 'ESA countries'). In July 2017, the Comoros signed the Agreement, and they are currently in the process of ratification. The EPA has been provisionally applied since 14 May 2012, except in the case of the Comoros, where it will be applied pending ratification by the government of the Comoros. These agreements require ratification by the EU Member States to come fully into effect.

I will lay this Order concurrently with the laying of the text of the Agreements as Command Papers under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act for scrutiny. This is in effect the start of the formal process of ratification of the Agreements in the UK.

These Agreements will boost the economies of the UK, the EU, and partner countries by promoting trade and economic growth. The European Union's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) have a development focus that goes beyond trade, by including co-operation

and assistance for partner countries. They aim to promote trade – and ultimately contribute, through increased trade and investment, to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

I will also lay before the House an Explanatory Memorandum to this Order. This explains the background and rationale of the Agreements and ratification. At the same time, we are publishing our economic impact assessments of these Agreements. Copies of these documents are being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Government remains committed to supporting the EU's ambitious trade and development agendas including the EU Free Trade Agreements it is putting in place. The UK ratification of these Agreements whilst the UK is still an EU Member State is a sound demonstration of this commitment.

The Government has been clear it will seek a seamless transition to replicate the effects of the Agreements when we leave the EU in line with our policy.

### **Gangmasters Licensing Authority and Disclosure and Barring Service: Annual Reports**

[HLWS857]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability (Victoria Atkins) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today the Annual Reports and Accounts for the Gangmasters Licensing Authority 2016-2017 [HC 1402] and the Disclosure and Barring Service 2017-18 [HC 1367] are being laid before the House and will be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Copies of both reports will also be available in the Vote Office.

The 2018-2019 Business Plan for the Disclosure and Barring Service is also being published today and a copy will be placed in the House Library and will be made available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Grenfell**

[HLWS862]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (James Brokenshire), has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Honourable Members will have been moved by the strength, courage and dignity demonstrated by those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire during the commemoration that took place last month marking one year on. I wanted to update the House before the summer recess on the critical work the Government is undertaking in response to the tragedy and broader building safety work.

First, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government continues to work closely with the Royal

Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to ensure the bereaved and survivors are given the support they need. This includes practical, long-term emotional, and, in some cases, mental health support to ensure all the bereaved and survivors are settled and comfortable in new permanent accommodation.

The latest position is that of 204 households from Grenfell Tower and Walk who need rehousing, 200 households (over 98 per cent) have accepted an offer of either permanent or temporary accommodation. 142 households have now moved in; of which 96 have moved into their permanent homes and 46 households are currently living in good quality interim accommodation. The number of households in hotels has reduced to 40, with 19 in serviced apartments and three living with friends and family. My Department is working closely with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to ensure that the properties acquired for the survivors are safe and ready to move into and I have been assured by the Council that the majority of that work is now complete. 24 properties that have been accepted by residents are still being finalised and the vast majority of these are expected to be completed over the summer. I am also continuing to focus on the support that is available to those moving into their new homes; through working with the Council to provide a strong package of resettlement support. This includes a range of elements, from helping to provide furniture, packing and removals, support to join community groups in a new local area, and drop-in counselling sessions.

Our support and commitment to the bereaved, victims and wider community remains steadfast.

Second, I wanted to update the House on the work we are doing to ensure residents of high-rise buildings are safe and feel safe, now, and in the future. The Government is committed to learning lessons from the Grenfell fire and delivering far-reaching change to ensure similar devastation cannot happen again.

In the days following the tragedy, we set up a Building Safety Programme as part of our response. Key initial actions to guide and support this work included:

- establishing an Expert Panel, chaired by Sir Ken Knight, and an industry response group to advise on and support urgent safety and remediation work; and
- commissioning an independent, forward-looking review of the building regulations and fire safety system, led by Dame Judith Hackitt.

The report by Dame Judith, Building a Safer Future, was published on 17 May. As I said in my statement to the House that day, its publication was a watershed moment for everyone who has a stake in ensuring the people living in buildings like Grenfell Tower are safe, and feel safe. Dame Judith called for major reform and a change of culture. The onus should clearly be on everyone involved to manage risk at every stage, and government should do more to set and enforce high standards. The Government agrees with that assessment and supports the

principles behind the report's recommendations for a more effective system.

As Dame Judith acknowledged, delivering fundamental system reform – including changes to the law – will take time and, as I said in May, I will set out our detailed implementation plan in the autumn. But we can, and must, start changing the culture and practice right now. We are therefore delivering key elements of the report.

First, I am pleased to announce that my Department is today publishing the clarified building regulations fire safety guidance (Approved Document B) for consultation. The revised guidance will be easier to use and reduce the risk of misinterpretation by those carrying out and inspecting building work. It is a vital first step on the road to reform. A link to the consultation is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety-clarification-of-statutory-guidance-approved-document-b> and I am placing the documents in the library of the House.

I am clear we will not hesitate to go further than the Hackitt recommendations where we deem it necessary. Not only have we launched a consultation on proposals to restrict or ban the use of so-called desk top studies (assessments in lieu of tests) for cladding materials, as recommended by Hackitt, but we have also launched a consultation on proposals to ban the use of combustible materials in the exterior wall construction of high-rise buildings. I have also listened to calls from a number of colleagues, experts and organisations that a wider review of Approved Document B is necessary to ensure the guidance reflects innovations in the construction sector and the latest understanding of fire behaviour and protection. With this in mind, I am today announcing the Government will carry out a wider technical review of the guidance on fire safety. We will publish a call for evidence in the autumn inviting views on the technical issues and further improvements that could be made in the Approved Document.

Reforming the regulatory system requires change across all its aspects. In relation to building safety, I can announce we will introduce a mandatory requirement on landlords in the private rented sector to ensure electrical installations in their property are inspected every five years. This will help drive up standards across the private rented sector and reduce deaths and injuries due to electric shocks and fires caused by electric faults.

We are committed to establishing a more effective regulatory regime for fire and building safety. We have started work with building control bodies, National Fire Chiefs Council, the Health and Safety Executive and others to consider options for a Joint Competent Authority and stronger regime as per the recommendations in the report, and we will set out our implementation plan in the autumn.

The Hackitt Review identified a lack of leadership within the construction and fire safety industries as a contributory failure on building safety. I want the construction industry to drive action on building safety now, leading from the front and changing practice and

behaviour. We know there are many who are already doing the right thing, and I want to encourage more in the industry to do the same.

I am pleased we have already had support on this and today I can announce that Wilmott Dixon, Keir, L&Q and Salix have agreed to be the first of the early adopters on building safety. This is a commitment to prioritising building safety. These organisations will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to trial ways of working in line with the Hackitt recommendations and assess benefits in the buildings they are constructing or managing. We would welcome others in industry coming forward to join them.

We also need to ensure residents are given a voice in the system. This is necessary to provide reassurance and recourse across all tenures by providing: greater transparency of information on building safety; better involvement in decision-making through the support of resident associations and tenant panels and a no-risk route of escalation and redress. This was echoed in feedback from tenant events held to inform the Social Housing Green Paper. We are considering options for addressing these concerns, including through the forthcoming Green Paper.

I can also announce today I intend to set up a residents' reference panel for the life of the Building Safety Programme. This indicates our commitment to residents, and ensures policy is grounded in the experiences of those who live in high-rise buildings.

The Hackitt Review also called for the construction and fire safety industries to show more effective leadership in raising the competence of those working on high-rise buildings. I have been pleased to see both the construction and fire sectors come together quickly in the response to this challenge set by Dame Judith, under the stewardship of the Construction Industry Council. We remain in close contact with the industry to see the progress of their proposals on competence, and will stand ready to provide support as required.

I also welcome the work of the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council on setting up a new independent Fire Standards Board to produce and own professional standards for fire and rescue services in England. This forms part of the Government's fire reform programme which will make services more accountable, effective and professional. Work is underway to form the board by late summer, with work on the first standards beginning shortly thereafter.

To provide additional oversight of the industry's work, I intend to set up an Industry Safety Steering Group. This group will hold industry to account for making cultural change happen, and I can announce today that this will be chaired by Dame Judith Hackitt.

Our focus on delivering the systemic reforms envisaged by the Hackitt Review will not distract from the critical work of ensuring people are safe in their homes. Guided by advice from our Expert Panel, we continue to work closely with fire and rescue services, local authorities and

landlords to identify high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding, ensure interim measures are in place to reduce risks, and give building owners clear advice about what they need to do to make buildings safe.

My written statement of 28 June provided an update on our work to identify, test and remediate unsafe cladding systems on high-rise buildings. I announced in that statement the further steps I would be taking to promote swifter action by building owners to remove potentially unsafe cladding on private sector high-rise residential buildings. I expect to chair the first meeting of the new private sector remediation taskforce which will oversee this activity before summer recess. Since 28 June two additional roundtables have been held with industry to work on solutions for individual building owners who cannot resolve building remediation themselves. This work with industry will continue over the summer.

We will also take further steps to ensure there is clarity for building owners about the circumstances in which buildings should be remediated. These steps will include the production of clear guidance about the circumstances in which decorative or small amounts of Aluminium Composite Material cladding should be remediated. My department has also written to all relevant building owners to remind them of their responsibilities and I am pleased to be able to report that the National House Building Council has accepted a warranty claim for the New Capital Quay development. I call on others to follow their lead.

Further to my update on building safety on 16 May, my department is continuing to monitor and facilitate action taken by those who purchased Manse Masterdor fire doors. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is working with the Local Government Association and National Housing Federation to provide advice and support to building owners with these doors.

In my update of 16 May I also reported that Synseal, the company that took over the Manse Masterdor business, were working with Trading Standards to ensure their products met relevant standards and had withdrawn their composite 30 minute fire door range. Following further testing of their fire doors, Synseal has informed my department they have withdrawn their composite and timber fire door range from the market as it does not consistently meet the minimum standard. Based on advice sought from the Expert Panel, Synseal have written to all customers of Masterdor Limited (a subsidiary of Synseal) asking building owners to review the fire risk assessment of their buildings to determine how quickly these doors should be replaced. The Expert Panel have advised me there is no change to the risk to public safety and the failure of Masterdor Limited fire doors remains a product standards issue which is being overseen by Trading Standards. My department is working closely with Trading Standards on this issue.

Local fire and rescue services continue to provide advice locally and the National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, are monitoring assessments and the action

being taken by customers of Manse Masterdor and Masterdor Limited.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will continue its investigation into the wider fire door market, where we are testing doors from at least 20 suppliers over the next six months.

Nothing is more important than ensuring that people are safe and feel safe in their homes. We have made progress but there is much left to do. I shall provide a further update to the House on this work in the autumn.

## **Human Fertilisation & Embryology Act 2008: Remedial Order**

[HLWS865]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Jackie Doyle-Price) has made the following statement:

We are today laying a revised non-urgent remedial order, which will enable a sole applicant to apply for a parental order, which transfers legal parenthood after a surrogacy arrangement.

The Joint Committee for Human Rights (JCHR) published its report about the initial draft remedial order on 2 March 2018. The Government has carefully considered the issues raised in the report and has accepted the recommendations made by JCHR. We have taken additional action so that the revised order ensures that a biological parent in a surrogacy arrangement is not blocked by their relationship status from obtaining legal parenthood.

Surrogacy has an increasingly important role to play in our society, helping to create much-wanted new families for a range of people. The UK Government recognises the value of this in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where family structures, attitudes and life-styles are much more diverse.

The revised remedial order reflects an equal approach for a sole applicant or a couple in obtaining legal parenthood after a surrogacy arrangement. The order will allow a six month period where an existing sole applicant can retrospectively apply for a parental order for a child born through surrogacy.

It will be for the Joint Committee on Human Rights to further scrutinise the revised order, take views from Parliamentarians and stakeholders and advise the Government and Parliament on the appropriateness of the order. The Committee will have 60 days to undertake these considerations and then make recommendations to Parliament, before debates in both Houses.

## **Immigration**

[HLWS858]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sajid Javid) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today publishing a consultation paper on the design of a compensation scheme that will help to right the wrongs suffered by those of the Windrush generation who have faced difficulties and suffered losses as a result of measures that are in place to tackle illegal immigration [Cm 9654].

I have been very clear both that the Government deeply regrets what has happened to some of the Windrush generation and that we are determined to put it right. A series of measures are in place to help achieve this. We are supporting those affected directly to gain confirmation of their immigration status. The Windrush taskforce, established in April, has provided documentation to over 2,000 people to demonstrate their right to live in the UK. We are conducting a Lessons Learned review, with independent oversight and challenge, to look at what happened and what the HO can do to ensure that it acts differently in future. Today I am also fulfilling the commitment to publish the terms of reference and methodology for that Review by summer recess and a copy of each will be placed in the House Library. The review aims to complete its findings by the end of March 2019 and I can confirm that the findings from the review will be published.

We also committed to establish a compensation scheme for those who have suffered loss as a result of these difficulties. On 10 May I launched a Call for Evidence, to help us understand what went wrong, when and the effects it has had on people's lives. That closed on 8 June and we received over 650 responses. I have been moved by the stories people have told. There has been genuine suffering, which should never have happened. I am also inspired by the way many of the respondents moved half way round the world to help rebuild the UK, and established their homes and lives here. It is also clear from these stories that these are strong communities which support each other and contribute significantly to the life and prosperity of the UK.

I want to move quickly, but carefully, from this initial Call for Evidence to the next stage. Based on the Call for Evidence and the independent advice we are receiving from Martin Forde QC, we have designed a consultation exercise to help us build and set up a compensation scheme. We are suggesting the scheme should be open to anyone who would be eligible for assistance of any type under the existing Windrush Scheme being operated by the taskforce, and we are consulting on the types of losses and impacts that we should compensate for.

We received representations to extend the initial Call for Evidence and therefore I am keen to ensure that the consultation exercise is thorough and allows sufficient opportunity for everyone who wants to respond, to do so. The consultation will last 12 weeks, closing on 11 October 2018. We are encouraging responses from a wide range of people, but particularly the communities affected. I am working with the Caribbean High Commissioners to ensure the consultation reaches the right people abroad. The consultation document will be

accessible online and offline. My officials will promote the consultation using appropriate media channels including social media. Throughout the consultation period we will engage with key stakeholders and community organisations to encourage responses, providing copies of the document and guidance for it to be completed, along with the offer of dedicated events with Home Office staff within community groups to facilitate responses. The independent advisor to the scheme, Martin Forde QC, will be talking directly to individuals affected and their representatives, as well as community leaders.

Following the consultation my priority will be to establish a scheme which will pay appropriate compensation as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will continue to offer people direct support to establish their immigration status.

### **Independent Office for Police Conduct: Annual Report**

[HLWS855]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Nick Hurd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today, along with my rt hon Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, publishing the 2017-2018 Annual Report and Accounts for the Independent Office for Police Conduct [HC 1331]. This will be laid before the House and published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). The report will also be available in the Vote Office.

### **Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012: Annual Report**

[HLWS867]

**Lord Bates:** My honourable friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Annual Report to Parliament under the Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012 for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 has today been laid before Parliament.

The report is prepared in line with the requirements set out in the Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012 that the government reports annually to Parliament on the financial assistance given under the act.

Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office.

### **Jordan: Policing Support**

[HLWS852]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Jeremy Hunt), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The United Kingdom is strongly committed to supporting Jordan's security and stability. Through a Conflict Stability and Security Fund project worth £9 million over two years, the UK is helping the Jordanian Public Security Directorate (PSD) and Gendarmerie to develop its community policing, critical incident response and investigative counter-terrorist policing capabilities. The support delivers against the objectives of Her Majesty's Government, in particular our security objective, on building Jordanian capability to enhance both its own security and its ability to tackle internal and regional threats in a manner compliant with human rights.

In order to reach this objective, the British Embassy in Amman is granting equipment totalling £742,853.24 for support to the PSD and Gendarmerie. This includes infrastructure, vehicles, and IT equipment (hardware and software).

The provision of this assistance is fully in line with this Government's security and stability objectives in the Middle East. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials carry out regular reviews of our programmes in Jordan to ensure that objectives are being met, and that value for money is being achieved.

### Legal Aid (Inquests)

[HLWS866]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Lucy Frazer QC) has made the following Written Statement.

The Secretary of State for Justice and I are today launching a call for evidence which seeks information on the experience of bereaved families at inquests.

An inquest is a distinct judicial process. It can be a traumatic ordeal for the bereaved, both in hearing how their loved ones died and through the frustration in the search for answers. That search for the truth, the answers to the unknown questions, is important in helping the bereaved to understand and make sense of tragedies such as this.

The inquest itself is meant to be an inquisitorial process and as such, most inquest hearings are conducted without the need for publicly funded representation. That must be right to ensure they are as accessible as possible to both the bereaved and the wider public. Of course, early legal advice may sometimes be needed and helpful. That is why we have protected early legal advice to support the bereaved in preparing inquests, ensuring that it remains within the scope of legal aid. It may also be that publicly-funded representation at the inquest hearing itself is necessary in certain exceptional circumstances, and if that is the case it should be provided.

Recently, concerns have been levelled against this existing availability of legal aid for inquests. In light of this, the Ministry of Justice is conducting a review of the current system. This call for evidence forms a key part of this work.

The central aim of this paper is to consider what is needed to ensure that bereaved people have access to the necessary levels of support they need to understand and properly participate at every stage of the proceedings.

The paper seeks to widen our existing evidence base. In particular, we are interested in finding out more about death in custody cases, and cases where there is state involvement in the process. It also seeks to better understand the circumstances in which families may require legal representation to allow for a fair inquest process, and whether changes need to be made to current eligibility criteria.

The paper also includes questions on what can be done beyond the provision of legal aid, to make inquests less adversarial and more sensitive to the needs of bereaved families. This includes looking at the number and actions of lawyers and the style of questioning adopted.

Responses will be used to help us consider whether changes need to be made to existing policies. Any prospective policy options will be presented in a public consultation.

The Government welcomes responses from bereaved people, charities, arms-length bodies, the legal profession, experts, and professionals across the system who have experience or involvement in the inquest process.

The call for evidence exercise will run for 8 weeks to 31 August 2018.

A copy of the consultation paper will be placed in the libraries of the house and will be available online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

### Modernising Defence Programme

[HLWS861]

**Earl Howe:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In January, together with the Prime Minister and Chancellor, I launched the Government's Modernising Defence Programme (MDP). The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is now able to share our headline conclusions. Throughout the MDP, the Department has worked with colleagues across Whitehall, with academics, subject matter experts, allies and partners and ran a public consultation exercise.

The MDP was launched after the National Security Capability Review acknowledged the increasing security challenges we are facing. Its purpose was to deliver better military capability to meet the increasing threat environment and value for money in a sustainable and affordable way. Defence protects our people, projects our global influence, and promotes our prosperity. And, at this key moment as the UK leaves the European Union, Defence and the Armed Forces will continue to deliver security in Europe and further afield, helping to make Global Britain a reality.

Threats and risks to national security have diversified and become more complex since 2015. Although we anticipated many of the threats and risks we now face, we underestimated the pace at which they would intensify and combine to challenge UK national security at home and threaten the rules-based international order that has delivered peace, security and prosperity over many decades. And, we did not fully understand the ways in which they would interact with each other.

Alongside this, the character of warfare has changed since 2015. We are in a period of constant aggressive competition between states, often developing into undeclared confrontation and, in some cases, proxy conflicts. Technology, especially digital technology, is developing at a breath-taking pace, making pervasive many capabilities once only imagined in science fiction.

Our adversaries are working to take advantage of this contested environment by systematically identifying and exploiting our vulnerabilities and those of our allies and partners. Peer and near-peer states are investing heavily in both conventional and emerging technologies, and are increasingly adopting hybrid or asymmetric approaches to gain advantage. This has included attacking our digital networks and those of our allies, and operating in unconventional and legally questionable ways. Broader developments in the world including demographic change, increasing urbanisation, the risk of pandemics, resource and environmental pressures will all contribute to a global strategic context which will become more complex.

All this means that the challenges to our national security and prosperity – and to our allies' and partners' security and prosperity – are increasingly complex, ambiguous, destabilising and potentially catastrophic.

Work in the first phase of the MDP has reviewed this changing strategic context and how our Armed Forces need to be able to respond. We have reviewed our existing capability plans, and begun to shape new policy approaches and identify investment priorities, and through workstreams, we have developed a blueprint for a major programme of top-down transformative reform to defence.

In all of this, we have been guided by the three key roles that our Armed Forces should be able to fulfil in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

1. Contribute to strengthening global security through our leading role in NATO, and provide the structures and capabilities to defend the UK;

2. Meet the challenges of the wider threats to international security and stability, including through operations and activities alongside our global allies and partners. Defence must be engaged and outward looking, meeting the challenges of our age, from state-based competition and confrontation, violent extremism and terrorism, instability and crises in Africa and Asia, illegal and irregular migration, serious and organised crime, to climate change and environmental disasters.

3. Act independently, when appropriate, to protect UK interests and citizens overseas, leading multi-national operations and developing strong defence relationships with partners around the world.

#### *Headline conclusions*

1. *Our Armed Forces need to be ready and able to match the pace at which our adversaries now move.*

The pace at which our adversaries can act against us has grown quickly since SDSR 2015. Today, our adversaries disguise their actions by launching attacks that are hard to attribute, or by operating below the conventional threshold for a decisive, collective response. Whilst our Armed Forces already protect us against these challenges every hour of every day, we need to be able to respond to this new character of warfare, both in the traditional land, sea and air domains, as well as in the new domains of space and cyber. The MDP will make sure that the Armed Forces can continue to protect our prosperity and security, whilst reinforcing Britain's place in the world.

To defend our national security, we should make the best possible use of the unique mix of hard and soft power that makes the UK a major global actor: from our economic levers to our wider diplomatic and cultural influence on the world's stage. This integrated, collective approach to national security is captured in the Government's Fusion Doctrine. Defence has a vital and increasing role in underwriting it, including through contributing to deterring and disrupting hostile state activity, delivering the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy in the UK and overseas, or supporting wider security and prosperity objectives.

The Armed Forces have a unique network of alliances and friendships spanning every corner of every continent. We have made significant progress in making Defence more 'international by design', and we will look at how we could do more. We have already strengthened relationships with key allies and partners, including through ambitious capability collaborations, and we will seek to go further still. We will consider our global defence network, to make sure we have the right military and civilian staff deployed around the world. We will seek to optimise our programme of world-class international education and training, which is so highly valued by our allies and partners, and gives the UK competitive advantage and strategic influence across the globe. And we will continue to lead multinational forces and deepen our relationships across the globe.

Most importantly, we need to make sure we can respond rapidly to future crises on our terms. Our elite and high-readiness forces are critical in this regard, enabled by collective training and our high-end exercise programme. We will consider how we can rebalance our training and equipment to mainland Europe, the Far East and the Middle East and review our overseas basing to improve our interoperability with allies and partners. NATO's Readiness Initiative will also play an important role in this endeavour. Equally, our ability to respond rapidly will depend on an improved understanding and anticipation of the strategic confrontations that define this

era: we will therefore build a Strategic Net Assessment capability in the MOD. Strategic Net Assessment looks across all dimensions of competition – political, economic, military, resources – to assess how the choices of both friends and foes may play out over the short, medium and long-term. Its conclusions can be used to develop more nuanced and better-informed strategy, so we can better anticipate our adversaries' actions and counter them more effectively.

As outlined in SDSR 2015, protecting our security safeguards our prosperity, so our Armed Forces will continue to provide the assurance and reassurance for our global trade and development commitments, and support our ambitions for Global Britain. As we continue our commitment to Defence investment we will consider a much more agile approach to the development of future equipment, with a clear focus on the increasing flexibility required to maintain strategic advantage over our adversaries.

### *2. A fighting force fit for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

We intend to modernise our force structure so that it is better able to meet the increasing threats we face. The key design principles of Joint Force 2025 are right; we want Armed Forces able to operate with agility and pace in the information age. Our Armed Forces need to be able to meet a full range of missions now and into the future. This includes, if necessary, warfighting operations under NATO Article 5 and further afield.

We need to be able to meet future threats and face down our adversaries to continue to protect our prosperity and security. We may need to accelerate elements of the programme to meet the most acute threats sooner. Equally, we might want to introduce new capabilities or equipment that provide significant advantage in the immediate term. We intend, in each case, to look to the right balance of conventional and novel capabilities to meet the threats we face.

Alongside this, we will consider how to improve our resilience, so that our networks and systems across defence are protected against cyber-attack and infiltration, and our submarines can continue to avoid detection. We will also strengthen our equipment, training and facilities, like the investment we are making in a Chemical Weapons Defence Centre to counter Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear threats like we saw in Salisbury and Amesbury. Through advancing our resilience we will make sure our forces and bases are better protected.

A fighting force fit for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century also means our Armed Forces need to be able to operate in the space domain. So, to guide future investment in our satellites and wider space capabilities we will publish a Space Strategy.

To operate effectively in the information age, we need 'information advantage'. Conflicts of the future will increasingly be won and lost based on who uses information technology most effectively: sensors, computing, communication, cyber and machine learning,

artificial intelligence and autonomy. We will consider how to enhance our ability to collect, analyse, disseminate and act very rapidly on the vast quantities of data that characterise the contemporary operating environment. That will allow us to understand how our adversaries are thinking, how they may choose to act against us, and how we can deter or defeat them.

We are also looking at how to update the way we fight. For much of the last two decades, the UK has been conducting or contributing to significant overseas operations, in Afghanistan, Iraq and the wider Middle East. Our adversaries have learned a lot about how we operate, and how they can disrupt our preferred methods. So, we are considering what a more active and dynamic approach to operations in all five domains – land, sea, air, space and cyberspace – should look like.

At the same time, we will consider how to modernise our approach to technology and innovation. By taking a more coordinated approach to technology and experimentation, with better central oversight, we may be able to pursue opportunities for modernisation more aggressively and accept higher levels of risk pursuing novel ideas. We intend to invest in a series of 'Spearhead' initiatives on key new technologies and increase our spending on innovation, science and technology. Pursuing this approach will allow us to become quicker at turning advances in research and development into strategic advantage. In support of this, we will publish a 'Defence Technology Framework', setting out the Department's technology priorities so that we can focus efforts and guide strategy, investment and plans across Defence as a whole.

And we should also ensure that we use the combined talents of our Whole Force of Regulars, Reserves, civil servants and industry partners more effectively. The character of conflict and the world of work more generally are changing, so Defence will need to up-skill our people, harness the advantages offered by Reserves, and reflect the expectations of the modern workforce.

### *3. Transforming the business of Defence to deliver a robust, credible, modern and affordable force*

We are re-setting and re-energising the way MOD is led, organised and managed, with clearer responsibilities and accountabilities to deliver better value for money. We will embrace approaches, processes, technologies and best practice with a proven track record of success elsewhere. We will encourage a culture of experimentation, and change our acquisition and commercial processes to better support the rapid and incremental adoption of new and emerging technologies.

To help create financial headroom for the additional modernisation, we will consider how to deliver greater efficiency by adopting ambitious, digitally-enabled business modernisation. In parallel, we will consider removing existing areas of overlap and duplication within our force structure and burden-sharing more effectively with allies and partners.

We intend to adopt a more collaborative and demanding approach to our relationship with industry, centred around an agreed set of productivity, efficiency, skills and innovation challenges that we need to meet together. At the same time, in the next stages of our work we will consider what we might do to grow even further the already considerable contribution that Defence makes to UK prosperity. The important work conducted by the Honourable Member for Ludlow, Philip Dunne MP, in his independent report can inform these considerations.

#### *Conclusion*

The first phase of the MDP has looked to set the direction we intend to take. It has clarified three key themes we should consider in the next phase: firstly, our Armed Forces need to be ready and able to match the pace at which our adversaries now move. Secondly, our Armed Forces need to be a fighting force fit for the challenges of the 21st century. And, finally, we need to transform the business of Defence to deliver a robust, credible, modern and affordable force.

The Prime Minister, Chancellor and I will continue to work closely throughout the next phase of the MDP, and I will keep the House updated as decisions are made.

We will continue to meet our commitment to our partners and maintain a full spectrum of nuclear, conventional and cyber capabilities to match our global ambition. With one of the largest Defence budgets in the world, and the highest in Europe, our Defence budget is increasing in real terms by £1 billion a year during this Parliament. The stage is now set for the next phase of this programme of work to ensure UK defence and our Armed Forces can continue to keep our country safe, our people and interests around the world secure, and help ensure that the UK can continue to play a major role on the world stage.

## OSCE

[HLWS851]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I represented the United Kingdom at the 24th Ministerial Council Meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held in Vienna on 7-8 December 2017, hosted by Austrian Chair-in-Office, Sebastian Kurz. The Council is the top decision-making body of the OSCE and was attended by Ministers from across its 57 participating states. A number of new commitments were agreed, including on combating trafficking in human beings, on small arms and light weapons, and on reducing the risk of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

In my intervention at the Ministerial Council, I reaffirmed the United Kingdom's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. I condemned Russia's

destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea, and we co-sponsored an event in the margins of the Ministerial Council for Crimean Tatar leaders. The United Kingdom is the second largest contributor of secondees to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), which plays a crucial role in monitoring the ceasefire and events on the ground. I paid tribute during my intervention to SMM paramedic Joseph Stone, who tragically lost his life on patrol in April 2017. The United Kingdom continues to call on all parties to ensure the safety both of our monitors and of civilians in Eastern Ukraine.

The 2017 Ministerial Council discussed the continuation of the Structured Dialogue launched in 2016, aimed at reducing risk of military conflict. We welcome the Dialogue as an opportunity to rebuild trust among all stakeholders of European Security in the OSCE area. The process will take time, but we value the work done so far, including discussions on threat perceptions, challenges to the rules-based order, military-to-military contact, and trends in military force postures and exercises. At the Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom delivered a statement on behalf of 29 Allies restating the importance of enhancing military transparency, and of full implementation and updating of relevant commitments.

The OSCE is a vital forum for addressing the 'protracted conflicts' which remain a threat to European security, and during the Ministerial Council I reiterated our firm support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Government welcomes progress on confidence building measures relating to the conflict in Moldova agreed in the 5+2 format meetings in Vienna in 2017 and in Rome in 2018. We also continue to support the Minsk Co-Chairs in their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Government remains committed to the security and stability of the Western Balkans. We provide over 5 million Euros per annum to OSCE's extensive field presence in the Western Balkans through assessed contributions and also give extra-budgetary funding to support work on media freedom, electoral reform, safe storage of small arms and light weapons, strengthening the rule of law, and processing of war crimes cases. The office of the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media chaired a discussion on media freedom at the Western Balkans Summit in London on 9-10 July. The Government also supports security and stability in Central Asia through our assessed contributions and through extra-budgetary funding to OSCE field missions, supporting work in areas such as judicial independence, rule of law, border controls, counter-terrorism, cyber security, and freedom of religion or belief.

The United Kingdom is using its second year chairing the OSCE Human Dimension Committee to support the 2017 Italian Chairmanship and promote discussion of issues relevant to everyday lives across the OSCE area in the field of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy. 2018 meetings have covered issues such as Human Rights Defenders, Freedom of Religion or Belief,

and Roma and Sinti Girls' Education. The Committee has also addressed cross-dimensional issues such as human trafficking and violence against women. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Post-Holocaust Issues, Lord Pickles, spoke at an OSCE Chairmanship conference on Anti-Semitism in Rome in January and a UK-led event on racism in Vienna in May. Throughout this period, the United Kingdom, with EU partners, has continued to raise human rights concerns at the OSCE. At the Ministerial Council, the UK joined a Declaration by 44 states expressing concern at deteriorating respect for human rights and space for civil society in parts of the OSCE region.

OSCE work on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, along with counter-terrorism and cyber security, plays an important role in pursuit of our security objectives. We continue to promote efforts in the OSCE to strengthen and modernise conventional arms control in Europe, based on principles such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, reciprocity, transparency, and host nation consent. We welcome the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision to reinforce and expand efforts to reduce the threat posed by small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition.

I was able to underline the UK's commitment to European Security, the OSCE and to multilateral cooperation when I met the new OSCE Secretary General, Thomas Greminger, during his visit to London in May.

Slovakia has begun preparations for its OSCE Chairmanship, which starts in January 2019. We look forward to working with them to promote shared priorities, uphold shared principles and commitments and to increase security and cooperation in Europe.

## Relationships and Sex Education

[HLWS864]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Damian Hinds) has made the following written ministerial statement.

Children and young people today are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their lives in a positive way. Ensuring children and young people have this knowledge contributes to Government's effort to eradicate problems like sexual harassment and violence.

We have engaged thoroughly with a wide range of organisations, supported by experienced head teacher Ian Bauckham CBE. Between November 2017 and March 2018, Ian led a wide-ranging stakeholder engagement process with many experts. In addition, the department launched a call for evidence to seek public views from adults and young people—over 23,000 people responded and the level of consensus has been encouraging. We are

pleased today to be able to announce the key decisions and launch a consultation on the detail of the regulations and guidance.

For Relationships Education and RSE, the aim is to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds, starting with the family and friends, and moving out to other kinds of relationships, including online. It is essential that we ensure young people can keep themselves safe online, from the basics of who and what to trust and how personal information is used, through to how to ensure online relationships are healthy and safe.

A guiding principle is that teaching will start from the basis that children and young people, at age appropriate points, need to know the laws relating to relationships and sex that govern society to ensure they act appropriately and can be safe. This includes LGBT, which is a strong feature of the new subjects at age appropriate points. The draft guidance sets out core required content, but leaves flexibility for schools to design a curriculum that builds on this and is right for their pupils, bearing in mind their age and religious backgrounds. It enables schools with a religious character to deliver and expand on the core content by reflecting the teachings of their faith.

We are also proposing to introduce compulsory content on Health Education. This supports the findings from the call for evidence and engagement process, where giving children and young people the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing – particularly their mental wellbeing – was a priority. This directly supports the Green Paper published jointly by the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care on children and young people's mental health, as well as our manifesto commitment to ensure all young people are taught about mental wellbeing. The focus on physical health also supports Government's activity to tackle childhood obesity.

Financial education is already in the curriculum, in maths and citizenship, and careers education is an important part of our Careers Strategy. For these reasons, we do not consider that economic education should be made compulsory. We are committed, however, to improving provision of financial and careers education and will work with stakeholders to do so.

We know that many schools successfully cover this content in a broader PSHE programme. They should continue to do so, adapting their programme to the new requirements rather than starting from scratch. Schools are also free to develop alternative, innovative ways to ensure that pupils receive this education and we want good practice to be shared so that all schools can benefit.

We have previously committed to parents having a right to withdraw their children from sex education in RSE, but not relationships education in primary or secondary. A right for parents to withdraw their child up to 18 years of age is no longer compatible with English case law or the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also clear that allowing parents to withdraw their child up to age 16

would not allow the child to opt in to sex education before the legal age of consent.

We therefore propose to give parents the right to request their child be withdrawn from sex education delivered as part of RSE. The draft guidance sets out that unless there are exceptional circumstances, the parents' request should be granted until three terms before the pupil turns 16. At that point, if the child wishes to have sex education, the head teacher should ensure they receive it in one of those terms. This preserves the parental right in most cases, but also balances it with the child's right to opt in to sex education when they are competent to do so.

This is a very important change to the curriculum that has to be delivered well, and whilst many schools will be able to quickly adapt their existing teaching it is essential that those schools that need more time to plan and prepare their staff get that time. It is our intention that as many schools as possible will start teaching the subjects from September 2019. We will be working with those schools, as well as with MATs, dioceses and education unions, to help them to do so. All schools will be required to teach the new subjects from September 2020. This is in line with the department's approach to any significant changes to the curriculum and will enable us to learn lessons from the early adopter schools and share good practice across the sector. We will be seeking views through the consultation to test the right focus for a school support package as we know that it is crucial for schools and teachers to be confident and well-prepared.

We are keen to hear as many views as possible through the consultation, which will be open until early November, and the final regulations will be laid in both Houses, allowing for a full and considered debate. There was strong cross-party support for the introduction of these subjects we are confident that we can continue to work together on this important reform. We believe that our proposals are an historic step in education that will equip children and young people with the knowledge and support they need to form healthy relationships, lead healthy lives and be safe and happy in modern Britain.

## Securing the Tax Base

[HLWS860]

**Lord Bates:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The government is fully committed to doing what is necessary to protect the Exchequer and maintain fairness in the tax system. Therefore, the government is announcing today that legislation will be brought forward later in the year which corrects a number of loopholes and omissions.

### *VAT off-shore looping arrangement*

The government is announcing today that secondary legislation will be introduced later in the year to tackle VAT avoidance which takes advantage of a particular type of off-shore looping arrangement, as well as

examining further measures to tackle variations of this type of avoidance. By taking this action, the government will maintain fairness in the tax system and will protect up to £100 million of future annual tax revenues. The government is also considering additional measures to protect further tax from being lost on variations of these schemes, which could be adopted extensively across the VAT exempt sectors.

### *Off-shore looping avoidance*

Providers of financial services generally cannot reclaim the VAT they incur on their costs because their services are VAT exempt. An off-shore loop is a cross-border structure that enables these VAT costs to be recovered by routing services primarily carried out in the UK via a body located in a non-VAT territory. Those services are then used to provide insurance and other financial services back into the UK market. This is contrary to the intention of the VAT system and distorts competition to the disadvantage of domestic UK suppliers.

### *Targeted action*

This measure addresses a particular version of off-shore looping which is currently found almost exclusively in the insurance sector and involves looping supplies via non-VAT territories. While this scheme is currently the subject of litigation, the government has decided to legislate to put the issue beyond doubt and prevent any ongoing distortion of competition through use of this scheme.

The government will amend UK law using secondary legislation later in the year. This will reduce the scope of the current VAT relief for exporters of financial services by excluding financial intermediation in supplies made ultimately to UK customers. This will mean that the UK providers of these financial services will no longer be able to gain a VAT advantage by acting as an agent for an overseas associate when the services are in fact being provided to their UK customers. The draft legislation and explanatory note will be published today and will be available on the gov.uk website.

### *Further action*

The government is also examining further legislative options for closing other versions of avoidance schemes involving such arrangements. This would ensure that revenue is protected in the future and that the system is fair for all and that those that seek to benefit from this type of arrangement do not get an unfair advantage.

Another variant of off-shore looping, involving the provision of repair services to insurers, was addressed in 2016. Alongside that, the government also considered further action, particularly in respect of the application of the VAT use and enjoyment provisions, but concluded that further change was not merited at that time. However, given the additional risks since identified, the scope of the options now under consideration will be much broader, including the use of measures outside of the UK VAT system altogether. Further details will be set out as part of the normal tax making process.

*Interest for late payment and repayment of taxes*

Additionally, the government is announcing today that it will introduce retrospective legislation in the Finance Bill 2018-19 to correct omissions from enactments that enable HMRC to charge interest for late payment of taxes and to pay interest on repayments to taxpayers. This legislation will also include interest charged as part of the diverted profits tax regime. By taking this action, the government will guarantee the integrity of the tax base.

The legislation will apply retrospectively to cover all relevant interest charged or applied and will not change either the interest rate or amounts charged or repaid by HMRC to date. The legislation will apply to all taxpayers and any existing or future claim or appeal where these omissions have been identified.

The main taxes affected are corporation tax, stamp duty and stamp duty land tax. Further detail can be found in the accompanying draft clause and explanatory note.

**Service Personnel**

[HLWS856]

**Earl Howe:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

On 12 March 2018, I announced that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) would be looking to mitigate the impact of income tax rises in Scotland affecting thousands of Armed Forces personnel in Scotland. New income tax bands and increased tax levels for Tax Year 2018-19, as compared to the rest of the UK, will result in the majority of military personnel living in Scotland, those earning more than £26,000 per annum, paying more tax this year in comparison to their counterparts living in the rest of the UK.

It has been decided that for this tax year the MOD will make a financial mitigation payment to all those Regular Service personnel negatively impacted by Scottish tax by

£12 a year (or £1 a month) or higher. However, it has also been decided the amount of mitigation provided will be capped at £1,500. The financial mitigation payment will be paid retrospectively after the end of the tax year. It will be grossed up to ensure that when income tax and national insurance deductions are made the value of the payment closely matches the difference in tax experienced up to the £1,500 cap.

The MOD will continue to review the situation and decide each tax year whether the impact on UK Armed Forces warrants an offer of financial mitigation to support Service personnel in Scotland.

It is estimated that these payments will be made to up to 8,000 Regular Service personnel and will cost the MOD in the region of £4 million in Financial Year 2019-20.

**WTO: UK Goods Schedule**

[HLWS850]

**Baroness Fairhead:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Dr Liam Fox) has today made the following statement:

I have previously informed the House that in order to fulfil our obligations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as we leave the European Union we will prepare UK-specific schedules of concessions and commitments. I have today sent to the secretariat of the WTO the UK schedule for goods and I will place a copy in the library.

This schedule replicates, as far as possible, our current obligations. We see this as a technical exercise for which the WTO's 1980 procedures provide the appropriate legal mechanism. That will be our first step.

Presenting our own UK Schedules at the WTO is a necessary part of our leaving the EU. It does not in any way prejudice the outcome of the eventual UK-EU trading arrangements.

## Written Answers

Thursday, 19 July 2018

### Afghanistan: Sikhs

Asked by *Lord Singh of Wimbledon*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the suicide bombing resulting in the death of 19 Sikhs in Jalalabad, Afghanistan in July, what discussions they intend to have with Afghan authorities to safeguard the security and right to freedom of belief of the country's remaining Sikh population. [HL9307]

Asked by *Lord Singh of Wimbledon*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the suicide bombing resulting in the death of 19 Sikhs in Jalalabad, Afghanistan in July, what representations they intend to make to the government of India to encourage it to offer asylum or safe passage to Sikhs wishing to leave Afghanistan. [HL9308]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government condemned the 1 July attack on a group of Sikhs and Hindus in Jalalabad. The Minister for Asia and the Pacific publicly described it as "a despicable attack on Afghanistan's historic Sikh and Hindu community". As part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission, the UK supports the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in its efforts to improve security for all communities in Afghanistan. NATO's Resolute Support Mission is also assisting the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces with security planning for the upcoming elections. The UK regularly raises human rights issues with the Government of Afghanistan, including the need to protect the rights of all ethnic and religious groups in line with the constitution.

### Apprentices

Asked by *Lord Allen of Kensington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the underlying causes of the reduction in apprenticeship starts; and what action they intend to take to increase the number of those undertaking apprenticeships. [HL9257]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The government is moving away from old apprenticeship frameworks, which employers said were often not equipping apprentices to do the job, towards new, higher quality apprenticeship standards being designed by employers themselves.

We are making sure that apprenticeships at every level are providing high quality training. Our reforms are making apprenticeships longer, more relevant, with additional off the job training and more rigorous assessments. The 20% off the job training rule, the shift to higher quality standards with a longer average duration, and the drop off in frameworks, have already contributed to a 20% rise in expected apprenticeship training hours

over the past year. Apprenticeships on the new apprenticeship standards make up 37% of overall starts, compared to 3% this time last year.

We will continue to work closely with employers to help them take advantage of the reforms in order to grow their apprenticeship programmes and invest in the long-term skills needs of their businesses. We recently introduced the ability for levy-paying employers to transfer up to 10% of their funds to other employers, supporting further growth in starts. We meet regularly and frequently with business groups, giving them the opportunity to let us know what more we can do to make the reforms work better for them.

The department recently published an update on the progress of Apprenticeships reform. Please find a copy attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL9257\_Progress\_report\_on\_Apprenticeships\_Reform  
[HL9257\_Progress\_report\_on\_the\_Apprenticeships\_Reform\_Programme\_May\_2018.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-05/HL9257>

### Attorney General: Reviews

Asked by *Lord Watts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many independent reviews the Attorney General's Office has commissioned into its policy or administration over the last year; and what was the total cost of those reviews. [HL9524]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** In the last year, no independent reviews have been commissioned into the policy or administration of the Attorney General's Office.

### Aviation: Taiwan

Asked by *Lord Steel of Aikwood*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will take measures to protect British Airways and any other UK companies from being pressured into changing the designation of Taiwan to Taiwan, China. [HL9452]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Her Majesty's Government's long-standing policy on Taiwan has not changed. The British government refers to Taiwan as simply "Taiwan" and, when included in a list of places, does so under an inclusive heading, such as "country/territory" or "world locations". When guidance has been sought from Her Majesty's Government on the terminology to use, we have been clear about the British Government's terminology for Taiwan.

Private companies and organisations should be able to decide the terminology that they use to list destinations. UK companies should not be placed under political pressure to make changes. Foreign and Commonwealth

Office Officials have registered our concern with the Chinese Government on this point.

### **Bahrain: Technical Assistance**

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 July (HL8932), whether they had the same duty to maintain the confidence and confidentiality of their partners between 2013 and 2016 as now; and if so, why they released details about the implementers and beneficiaries of UK technical assistance in Bahrain in 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16 but cannot release such details for 2017–18. [HL9402]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Decisions to release information related to any Government activity are taken according to the current context and on a case by case basis. The disclosure of information for the years mentioned was appropriate at the time.

### **Brexit: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Baroness Deech*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the draft withdrawal agreement published on 28 February by the European Commission, what assessment they have made of (1) the possibility of Northern Ireland remaining subject to some EU laws after Brexit without any elected representation in the EU institutions, and (2) whether such an outcome would be consistent with British obligations under Article 3, Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as interpreted and applied in the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Matthews v UK*, 1999. [HL9276]

**Lord Callanan:** Following our exit from the EU, the UK will no longer be a Member State and will no longer have elected representation in the EU institutions. With regard to the Northern Ireland Protocol to the draft Withdrawal Agreement, the UK has been clear, and has reaffirmed, that we are committed to turning all of the commitments in the December Joint Report into legally binding text in the Withdrawal Agreement. Negotiations are ongoing and the Government has set out our proposed approach on the customs element of the backstop, the Temporary Customs Arrangement. The Government is committed to accelerating discussions on the backstop, alongside intensifying negotiations on the future relationship.

Any negotiated outcomes will need to be compatible with our international obligations under the European Convention of Human Rights.

### **Bulgaria: Human Rights**

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to make representations to the government of Bulgaria

following the report by the US Department of State, Bulgaria 2017 Human Rights Report, which stated that there were high levels of corruption and a lack of judicial independence in that country. [HL9329]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Embassy in Sofia has long-standing engagement with the Bulgarian Government and other institutions on the issues raised in the report, both bilaterally and through the European Commission's Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM).

### **College Green**

*Asked by Lord Clark of Windermere*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what representations, if any, he has made to Westminster City Council about ensuring members of the House have access to the footpath across College Green. [HL9370]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** College Green is owned by the House of Commons, with access to it controlled by Black Rod, or the Yeoman Usher acting as Black Rod's deputy, on behalf of the House of Commons. I have not therefore made any representations to Westminster City Council about ensuring members of the House of Lords have access to the footpath across College Green.

### **Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust**

*Asked by Baroness Hollins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) patient safety in the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, and (2) the procedures to ensure that whistle-blowers are protected and that any medical negligence is exposed. [HL9285]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has advised us that it conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Trust in March 2015, a focused inspection in September 2016, and these were followed by the CQC issuing requirement notices regarding breaches of regulations.

The CQC carried out an unannounced inspection of eight core services and two additional services in April 2018 at University Hospital, Coventry, and three core services at Hospital St Cross, Rugby in May 2018, as well as further unannounced inspections in May 2018. The CQC is compiling its report findings with a view to publishing the inspection report in August or September 2018.

The Government supports the right of staff working in the National Health Service to raise concerns and expects all NHS organisations to support staff that wish to do so. All NHS trusts and foundation trusts are required to have Freedom to Speak up Guardians to whom employees can raise concerns about patient safety in confidence.

In May 2018, the Government introduced legislation to further protect prospective employees into the NHS from discrimination if the individual is perceived to have been a whistleblower. This legislation was a recommendation from Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up review, published in February 2015.

*Asked by Baroness Hollins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that media allegations of incompetent brain and other surgery at Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust have been investigated. [HL9286]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** Patient safety is a critical priority, and a culture that seeks out opportunities for learning and improvement is vital for making care safer for patients.

NHS Improvement is in regular contact with University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust and has received assurances from the Trust that the allegations relating to neurological surgery are subject to independent review, either through the Royal College of Surgeons or through ongoing coroner's cases. NHS Improvement is confident that all media allegations have been fully investigated.

NHS Improvement has also taken robust steps in line with their whistleblowing policy to ensure that these matters are looked into thoroughly.

### Drugs: Marketing

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions have been held between the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy about the impact of the fee structure introduced by SecurMed, the UK's National Medicines Verification Organisation, on small and medium-sized enterprises. [HL9289]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** There have been no specific discussions about the impact of SecurMed's fee structure.

The Department and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency are responsible for supervising SecurMed and ensuring that they are complying with the regulation in a fair and proportionate way.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have carried out an impact assessment on the effect of SecurMed's fee structure on small and medium-sized enterprises; and if so, whether they will place a copy of that assessment in the Library of the House. [HL9290]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Department and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency have not carried out an impact assessment on the effect of SecurMed's fee structure on small and medium-sized

enterprises. In a supervisory capacity, our aim is to ensure that SecurMed is complying with the regulation in a fair and proportionate way. In considering SecurMed's fee structure we took account of:

- the European Medicines Verification Organisation's blue print (resulting from their assessment of different cost-allocation models);
- aligning the United Kingdom's approach with other European Union National Medicines Verification Organisations; and
- seeking to ensure that the fee model is fit for purpose for the UK.

### Female Genital Mutilation: Health Services

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have considered the continuation of funding to the specialised Female Genital Mutilation service at the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. [HL9316]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The NHS North West London Collaboration of clinical commissioning groups fund the Female Genital Mutilation clinic at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and there are no plans to discontinue this service.

### Gambling: Advertising

*Asked by Lord Chadlington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the action by the government of Italy to impose a ban on all gambling-related advertisements from June 2019; and whether they plan to implement a ban in this regard in the UK. [HL9330]

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** We considered advertising as part of our Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility and published our response on 17 May. The Review looked at the existing protections around gambling advertising across all media and set out a package of initiatives to strengthen them further, including tougher guidance from the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP) on protecting vulnerable people and children and young people.

We do not propose to bring forward legislation on gambling advertising but we will keep these issues under review. This will include examining any new evidence emerging from research and from initiatives in other countries.

### Gaza: Contraceptives

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the banning of condoms being imported into Gaza. [HL9357]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made any representations about this specific issue, we continue to urge Israel to ease movement and access restrictions in Gaza, including through the Kerem Shalom goods crossing. We support Israel's right to prevent goods entering Gaza that could be used for violent purposes, but this should not prevent the entry of basic goods required for the health and wellbeing of the Gazan population.

### Gulf Strategy Unit

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 11 July (HL9045), what funding was allocated to each non-staffing line of the budget for the Gulf Strategy Integrated Delivery Team for 2017–18. [HL9450]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The budget for the Gulf Strategy Integrated Delivery Team is allocated to staffing in its entirety.

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the grades of the six members of staff who make up the Gulf Strategy Integrated Delivery Team for 2017–18. [HL9451]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Gulf Strategy Integrated Delivery Team included one member of staff at SMS1 grade and five others at less senior grades.

### House of Lords: Staff

*Asked by Lord Clark of Windermere*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many members of House of Lords staff are paid more than the Prime Minister. [HL9369]

**Lord McFall of Alcluth:** One member of House of Lords staff, the Clerk of the Parliaments, is paid more than the Prime Minister. The Clerk of the Parliaments' salary is linked to the Judicial Salary Group, as published each year by the Government. In 2017-18, the relevant salary group, JG4, was set at £181,566.

Full details of the salaries of all House of Lords Management Board members are published in the remuneration report in each year's Annual Report and Resource Accounts, which is available on the website: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/lords/house-lords-administration/how-the-lords-is-run/business-and-financial-information/business-plans-annual-reports-and-accounts/>

### Immigration: Windrush Generation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are considering alternative measures to support those who

are in immediate financial trouble as a result of the Windrush scandal. [HL9312]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The first priority for any Windrush migrants that may have experienced problems in obtaining documents confirming their immigration status is to help them secure that status. That is why the Government quickly established the Windrush Taskforce, which has a dedicated team for vulnerable people and a fast-track service for the payment of benefits, working closely in a co-ordinated manner with DWP.

A compensation scheme for those of the Windrush generation that might have been affected is in the process of being established. The call for evidence for that scheme ended on 8 June and the Home Office are now preparing to launch the next stage of consultation, working with affected communities. The scheme will be set up as soon as possible after we have consulted.

In the meantime the Home Office will work with organisations in the Third Sector, who have considerable experience and expertise in supporting those in financial difficulties, with a view to providing tailored advice to people in the Windrush cohort.

### Islamic State: Prosecutions

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 14 March (HL5931, HL5932 and HL5933), what progress has been made in assessing the capacity of the Iraqi courts to prosecute Daesh in pursuance of UN Security Council Resolution 2379. [HL9465]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UN will soon deploy a Needs Assessment Mission to Iraq to assess capacity building needs and advise where Member States and the UN should target their support. We look forward to the UN reporting on their findings. The UK is also working directly with the Iraqi judiciary to build their capacity, as called upon by UN Security Council Resolution 2379. A Special Advisor, Karim Khan QC, has been appointed to lead the UN Investigative Team established by the Resolution. The Special Advisor will deploy with the Investigative Team to Iraq to gather evidence and support the work of the Iraqi judiciary.

### Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel if Israel follows through with its plan to demolish Khan al-Ahmar; and whether they will take action to prevent further threats to villages in occupied Palestinian territory. [HL9354]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome the news that on 5 July Israel's Supreme Court granted a conditional injunction that temporarily prohibits the

demolition of Khan al-Ahmar. The UK and international partners will continue to call on Israel to: abandon demolition plans for Khan al-Ahmar, cease their policy of demolitions of communities throughout Area C, and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. The Minister for the Middle East reiterated UK concerns about the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar to the Israeli ambassador and called on the Israeli authorities to reconsider these plans.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect Palestinian minors and their families following reports that the government of Israel is imposing fines as well as prison sentences on children under 16 years of age. [HL9355]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK continues to make representations to the Israeli authorities on the issue of children in detention. I raised this matter with Israeli Justice Minister Shaked during my visit to Israel on 11 April 2018. The Minister for the Middle East also responded to a Westminster Hall debate on the topic of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention on 7 February 2018. He reiterated that the issues around children in detention continue to be a human rights priority for the UK.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect Palestinians living in occupied territory from having their crops and livelihoods attacked by Israeli settlers supported by Israeli military personnel. [HL9356]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We condemn any violence by settlers against Palestinians. Settler violence must be tackled firmly. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to tackle settler violence, and urge thorough investigation of every instance and to bring those responsible to justice. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces' providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the freezing and transfer of funds to the Palestinian Authority. [HL9359]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned about the impact of legislation passed by the Israeli Knesset on 2 July that would see Israel withhold the equivalent of 7% of the Palestinian Authority's budget. Whilst the UK has reservations that the prisoner payment system is not sufficiently needs-based nor transparent, the Palestinian Authority's financial stability remains in the best interests for all concerned. The Minister for Middle East raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador on 20 June.

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about Israeli forces demolishing the homes of Palestinians as a form of punishment. [HL9409]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have serious concerns about the use of punitive demolitions by the Israeli authorities to destroy the homes belonging to suspected Palestinian terrorists or their families. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have registered concerns about this policy with Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

### **Johan Teterissa**

*Asked by Lord Collins of Highbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have had any recent discussions with the government of Indonesia regarding the imprisonment and treatment of Johan Teterissa. [HL9331]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Ministers and Embassy officials routinely raise human rights issues with the Indonesian Government. Most recently, the Minister for Asia and the Pacific, the Rt. Hon. Mark Field MP and I discussed the death penalty and rights of LGBT people with the Indonesian Ambassador to the UK. We have not to date raised the specific case of Johan Teterissa. While we will continue to press for further progress, it is worth noting that under the current administration the number of prisoners held on political grounds has decreased significantly.

*Asked by Lord Collins of Highbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent reports regarding the imprisonment and treatment of Johan Teterissa in Indonesia. [HL9332]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Ministers and Embassy officials routinely raise human rights issues with the Indonesian Government. Most recently, the Minister for Asia and the Pacific, the Rt. Hon. Mark Field MP and I discussed the death penalty and rights of LGBT people with the Indonesian Ambassador to the UK. We have not to date raised the specific case of Johan Teterissa. While we will continue to press for further progress, it is worth noting that under the current administration the number of prisoners held on political grounds has decreased significantly.

### **Mental Illness: Prisoners**

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide improved mental health care for

prisoners following the estimates produced by the Centre for Mental Health, published in June, which suggest that there are 21,000 mentally ill people in prison but only 3,600 beds available for mental health patients. [HL9270]

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to carry out a review into the number of prisoners with mental health issues in the UK in order to establish ways in which those suffering from serious mental health problems can be diverted to mental health care outside prison before or on release. [HL9271]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** We recognise that there are high numbers of people in prison with mental ill health, and it is essential that they are treated in the most appropriate environment for their needs.

Whilst some prisoners may be mentally unwell, and despite sometimes complex emotional and behavioural needs, it may not be clinically appropriate for them to be transferred to a mental health inpatient bed. There may be other services more appropriate to their needs that can be delivered outside inpatient mental health facilities.

There are no plans for a review. However there is already work underway to ensure people are diverted to mental health care services outside prison either before or on their release, and to improve mental health services within prisons.

Liaison and Diversion services operate at police stations and courts, to identify and assess people with vulnerabilities (substance misuse, mental health problems) and refer them into appropriate services and, where appropriate, away from the justice system altogether. Information from Liaison and Diversion assessments is used by the police and courts to inform sentencing decisions. These services cover 82% of the population with full roll out expected by 2020.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice have worked with NHS England and Public Health England to develop a Community Sentence Treatment Requirement 'protocol'. The protocol aims to increase the use of community sentences with drug, alcohol and mental health treatment requirements as an alternative to custody to improve health outcomes and reduce reoffending. It sets out what is expected from all involved agencies to ensure improved access to mental health and substance misuse treatment for offenders who need it.

Work is also underway to improve support for prisoners whilst they are in prison. NHS England is focussing on an offender mental health pathway which will ensure that offenders are directed to the most appropriate intervention to their needs at the right time in the criminal justice system. The programme of work includes ensuring timely and appropriate transfers to a mental health hospital, timely remission to prison as part of a planned episode of

care, and to ensure that those requiring treatment for mental ill health have access to high quality care.

New service specifications have been published for both low and medium secure hospitals as well as prison mental health services. The Prison Mental Health Specification embeds the Quality Standards for Prison Mental Health Services developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists to ensure high quality care for all. Draft guidance for timely and appropriate transfers and remissions of care to and from a mental health hospital is currently in production.

Following release from prison, NHS England is working with partners to develop better pathways of care from custody. Drawing on learning from existing services we are investigating how best to ensure continuity of care post custody.

## Nigeria: Violence

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that communities in Plateau State, Nigeria, who have been victims of attacks by Fulani herder militia have been searched for weapons though the perpetrators of such attacks have not. [HL9363]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are deeply concerned about the escalating inter-communal violence across Nigeria including in Plateau State. The situation is complex and access to information is limited. We do not have information about which groups have been searched for weapons. We welcome President Buhari's strong condemnation of these attacks and his commitment to bring the perpetrators to justice. We call for solutions that meet the needs of all affected communities and prevent further violence.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent disclosure during a plenary session of the Nigerian House of Representatives that 52 villages in four local government areas in Plateau State have been occupied by the herder militia responsible for the deaths of 238 residents of those villages. [HL9364]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are deeply concerned about the escalating violence in parts of the Central and Middle Belt regions of Nigeria, including in Plateau State. The situation is complex and access to information is limited. We are not able to verify whether villages in Plateau State have been occupied by herders. We welcome President Buhari's strong condemnation of the violence and his commitment to bring the perpetrators to justice. We call for solutions that meet the needs of all affected communities and prevent further violence.

### Non-domestic Rates

*Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the business rates system; and when they expect to make any resulting changes to the system of business rates in England. [HL9256]

**Lord Bates:** The government concluded a fundamental review of business rates at Budget 2016 and decided that business rates should remain as a property tax. Respondents to the review agreed that property based taxes were easy to collect, difficult to avoid, relatively stable compared to other taxes and had a clear link with local authority spending. They also raise revenue in a way that is less distortionary than some other taxes. There was no consensus on an alternative tax base. Following the review, the government introduced reforms and reductions worth over £10bn by 2023 to cut the burden of business rates.

### Northern Ireland Office: Reviews

*Asked by Lord Watts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many independent reviews the Northern Ireland Office has commissioned into its policy or administration over the last year; and what was the total cost of those reviews. [HL9525]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** The Northern Ireland Office has not commissioned any independent reviews into its policy or administration over the last year.

### Palestinians: Water Supply

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they will take to protect communities in the Jordan valley whose water supplies are destroyed or confiscated by Israeli forces. [HL9410]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain concerned about the quality and quantity of water available to residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It is essential that the Israelis and Palestinians discuss this issue and ensure that there is a just solution on shared water resources as part of any final status agreement. UK officials are in regular contact with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the UN, World Bank, EU and other development actors on this issue. The UK has raised concerns over access to water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities, stressing the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to improve the current situation and ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank and Gaza.

### Personal Independence Payment

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Buscombe on 4 July (HL9015), what assessment, if any, they have made of (1) the relevance of ethnicity in ensuring good management of claims for Personal Independence Payments; and (2) on what basis gender is considered relevant for the collection of data and good management of claims, while ethnicity is not. [HL9263]

**Baroness Buscombe:** Whilst designing Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the Department considered the relevance of what data should be collected and recorded to support the good management of a PIP claim. PIP is based on needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability so ethnicity is not a factor in the decision making process in PIP. However, DWP does collect data on ethnicity from other sources, such as the Family Resources Survey, and are considering how we can better use this information, and review other activities, to give assurance that the assessment process does not disproportionately impact on BAME communities

### Poland: Judiciary

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to make representations to the government of Poland following the decision by the EU Commission to initiate Article 7.1 against Poland on the grounds that the independence of Poland's judiciary has been undermined. [HL9328]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK places great importance on respect for the rule of law, while making clear our position that constitutional arrangements are primarily a matter for national governments, within the framework of international norms. We discuss Rule of Law in private with Polish counterparts, most recently the former Foreign Secretary with the Polish Foreign Minister in June. The British Embassy in Warsaw also discuss the matter with Polish officials.

### Prisoners: Older People

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address the number of prisoners over the age of 70; and to ensure that prisons have necessary and adequate facilities for elderly inmates. [HL9273]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Government is aware of the changing demographic of the prisoner population, with the number of prisoners aged over 50 rising both in terms of numbers and as a proportion of the prison population.

Within the older prisoner cohort, there were 1,665 prisoners aged 70 or over at 31 March 2018, approximately 2% of the total.

In response to these changes, the Government is reviewing the provision for older prisoners and how best to meet their needs.

The Government has developed Models for Operational Delivery (MODs) for each prison type and for specialist cohorts, including older prisoners to support the transformation of the adult male estate. MODs are based on data and evidence to support governors in delivering effective and efficient services according to the function and cohorts their prison will hold. This specialist MOD has been developed in recognition of the sizeable and growing proportion of older prisoners, who are more likely to suffer health problems, have higher rates of disability and can struggle to access activities and services. The MOD addresses how services and interventions may be tailored to enable all older prisoners to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing, and their independence.

### **Public Sector: Procurement**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what efforts they are making to ensure that their public procurement policies do not involve supply chains in which slave labour is used. [HL9416]

**Lord Young of Cookham:** The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery in both private and public sector supply chains. Since 1 October 2015, commercial organisations which have an annual turnover of £36 million or more have been required, under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, to prepare a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year. The statement must set out the steps taken to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within its own business or supply chains.

The Government has published a Supplier Code of Conduct to make clear the standards and behaviours that are expected of our suppliers when they work with government and we will now develop proposals for the government's biggest suppliers to publish data and provide action plans for how they plan to address key social issues, including the scourge of modern slavery.

In addition, the Government's Standard Selection Questionnaire includes Mandatory Exclusion Grounds if an organisation or an associated individual has been convicted of child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings, within the last 5 years.

The Home Office and the Crown Commercial Service will be developing further guidance to support contracting authorities to identify, and mitigate against, modern slavery risks in supply chains.

### **Religious Freedom**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to propose the establishment of an international day commemorating the victims and survivors of religious persecution to be held annually on 3 August. [HL9365]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government believes that the custom of commemorating the International Day of Religious Freedom on 27 October is becoming increasingly well established, and provides a suitable focus for marking this universal human right. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office actively encourages its diplomatic network to mark this day where local conditions allow. The Government therefore has no plans to support moves to establish an official United Nations Day on this theme.

### **Reoffenders**

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to reduce the reoffending rate of prisoners in the UK, given the cost of recidivism to the wider economy. [HL9275]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Government has several plans underway to reduce the reoffending rate in the UK and the associated £15billion cost to society.

Prisons must be places of rehabilitation and we have announced an extra £30million of funding to enhance safety, security and decency across the estate.

On 24 May we launched the Education and Employment Strategy to create a system in which each prisoner is set on a path to employment.

On 27 June we published a strategy which sets out the Government's commitment to a new programme of work for female offenders to enable their rehabilitation.

The new National Partnership Agreement (NPA) was published on 10 April 2018 confirms our commitment to work collaboratively to deliver safe, legal, decent and effective care that improves prisoners' health and thus rehabilitation.

The Cabinet Office has established a new cross-government Reducing Reoffending Board to tackle some of the main causes of reoffending including employment, health and accommodation.

We are also working closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to support their Rough Sleeping Strategy which aims to eliminate rough sleeping by 2027.

### **Russia: Subversion**

*Asked by Lord Rennard*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which Russia may be

seeking to promote far-right parties in different European countries in order to promote the break up of the EU. [HL9351]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We know that Russia has a history of interfering in other countries, whether the botched coup in Montenegro, repeated cyber-attacks on other states or seeking to influence others' democratic processes. We also know the Kremlin persistently uses disinformation to destabilise states. Managing this is a long-term priority for the UK, and we will continue to work with international partners, primarily through the EU, G7 and NATO, to constrain the effects of Russian behaviour.

### Sanctions

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any online resources exist that give current and complete lists of goods, individuals or entities on sanctions lists worldwide. [HL9362]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The publication of lists of goods, individuals or entities on sanctions lists is the responsibility of those individual countries and multilateral institutions which impose and implement sanctions. I am not aware of the existence of a single global list. The UK currently imposes multilateral sanctions through the European Union, which publishes information on its website. The UK publishes details of UN and EU sanctions that it implements on the GOV.UK website.

### Saudi Arabia: Females

*Asked by Lord Hoyle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have raised with the government of Saudi Arabia the question of the continued detention of women who campaigned against the ban on female drivers in Saudi Arabia; and if so, what response they received. [HL9379]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is very concerned about the arrests and detentions of the women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister, the former Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor have raised our concerns with the Saudi authorities. We continue to raise our concerns at all levels, most recently in July. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa also raised our concerns during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia on 16 July.

### SecurMed: Operating Costs

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the annual running costs of SecurMed, the UK's National Medicines Verification Organisation. [HL9291]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Department and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency have not made an assessment of SecurMed's annual running costs. As part of our supervisory role, we continue to review SecurMed's activities to ensure that they are complying with the Regulation in a fair and proportionate way and this includes scrutiny of their estimated running costs. As a not-for-profit company, if SecurMed's income exceeds its needs, the excess will have to be returned to Marketing Authorisation Holders.

### Sentencing: Females

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to review the use of short prison sentences for offenders who commit non-violent offences, following the report by the Prison Reform Trust Prison: the facts, published in 2017, which found that the use of community sentences has nearly halved since 2006, and that people serving prison sentences of fewer than 12 months have a reoffending rate that is 7 per cent higher than similar offenders serving a community sentence. [HL9272]

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the report by the Prison Reform Trust Prison: the facts, which found that 70 per cent of sentences given to women in 2016 were for six months or fewer and 84 per cent of women entering prison had committed a non-violent crime, they have any plans to review the passing of short sentences on women and to promote the use of community sentences and restorative justice for women who commit crime. [HL9274]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Protecting the public will always be our top priority. Under this government, the most serious offenders are more likely to go to prison, and for longer, helping protect the public and keep communities safe.

There is persuasive evidence that short custodial sentences do not work in terms of rehabilitation and that community sentences, in certain circumstances, are more effective in reducing reoffending, and therefore keeping the public safe. The MoJ study 'The impact of short custodial sentences, community orders and suspended sentence orders on re-offending' published in 2015 found that over a 1-year follow up period, a higher proportion of people re-offended having been sentenced to custody of under 12 months without supervision on release than other similar people given community orders (around 3 percentage points).

We will therefore be looking at what more we can do to emphasise that short custodial sentences should be viewed as a last resort. We also want to ensure that the public and judiciary have confidence in non-custodial sentences, such as effective community orders, which directly tackle the causes of reoffending, including alcohol or drug abuse.

On 27 June we published our strategy for female offenders, which sets out the Government's commitment to a new programme of work for female offenders.

We have committed to a pilot for residential women's centres in at least five sites across England and Wales. The aim of the pilot will be to develop a robust evidence base about what could be effective, sustainable and scalable models for improving outcomes for female offenders and reducing the numbers and frequency of women entering and re-entering custody on short custodial sentences.

### Social Services: Children

*Asked by Lord Ouseley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy and efficacy of children's services in the light of the number of children being placed in child protection and being received into local authority care. [HL9306]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Ofsted assesses the effectiveness of all local authority children's social care services departments in England through its inspection programme. Nearly two thirds of the country's most vulnerable children are being served by local authorities where care is not yet rated as 'Good'. The government acts quickly and decisively to intervene in local authorities found to be failing in their delivery of children's services but we want to do more to get ahead of failure and develop a system where improvement for children's social care is continuous and sustainable. We are investing more than £250 million through our Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice Programme to help local authorities learn from what works, and to support improvement in the sector.

We want every child to be in a loving, stable home that is right for them. Whilst in most cases children are best looked after by their birth families, a child may be taken into care as a last resort, in the interests of their safety.

### Social Services: Finance

*Asked by Lord Ouseley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to raising additional resources through taxation to meet the predicted shortfall in social care funding. [HL9304]

**Lord Bates:** Decisions on the funding settlement for social care will be made as part of wider local government arrangements at the spending review.

Councils have access to £9.4 billion more dedicated funding for social care between 17/18 and 19/20 as a result of measures introduced since 2015. The government will also publish a Green Paper by autumn 2018, setting out its proposals to put social care on a more sustainable footing.

*Asked by Lord Ouseley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for the NHS if additional resources for social care are not secured. [HL9305]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Government recognises that National Health Service and social care provision are two sides of the same coin. It is not possible to have a plan for one sector without having a plan for the other. Indeed, we have been clear with the NHS that a key plank of its plan must be greater integration of the two services. We will not allow the pressure from the social care system on the NHS to increase further.

We are committed to creating a sustainable system of social care in England, and that is why the Government has given councils access to up to £9.4 billion more dedicated funding for social care over the three years up to 2019-20. This funding will allow councils to support more people and sustain a diverse care market. It will also help ease pressures on the NHS, including by supporting more people to be discharged from hospital and into care as soon as they are ready.

The Department commissioned a study, finalised in 2008, which explored the relationship between additional spend on care home services and expenditure relating to hospital utilisation. The results indicated that for each additional £1 spent on care homes, hospital expenditure falls by £0.35.

Looking forward, it is right that social care funding is agreed alongside along the rest of the local government settlement at the forthcoming Spending Review. We will ensure that social care places no additional pressure on the NHS.

### Syria: Military Intervention

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK military action near al-Tanf, Syria, on 21 June was approved by Parliament. [HL9371]

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the legal justification for the presence of UK forces in Syrian territory near al-Tanf. [HL9372]

**Earl Howe:** The Parliamentary debate and vote of 2 December 2015 approved the involvement of UK Armed Forces in counter-Daesh operations in Syria. UK aircraft were operating in defence of our Coalition partners who had come under attack in the conduct of such operations. Our actions on 21 June were a proportionate response to the threat posed to partner forces, complied with International Humanitarian Law and there were no civilian, coalition or partner casualties.

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, with reference to the statement of the Combined Joint Task Force of 2 July that acknowledged responsibility for targeting a school on the outskirts of Raqqa, Syria, whether UK forces were involved in the operation. [HL9373]

**Earl Howe:** There were no UK aircraft involved in the strike on a school on the outskirts of Raqqa, Syria on 20 March 2017.

## Universal Credit

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the National Audit Office Rolling out Universal Credit, published 15 June, which states that of those transferred onto Universal Credit (1) 40 per cent are experiencing financial difficulties, (2) 25 per cent are unable to make online claims, and (3) 20 per cent are not paid in full on time; and what steps they intend to take to meet their legal obligations to those receiving in-work benefits. [HL9262]

**Baroness Buscombe:** The National Audit Office (NAO) report recognised that the Department's agile approach allows it to adjust its plans based on what it learns and that some elements are working well. The report also recognised that payment timeliness has improved. We have already implemented policy changes to address many of the concerns raised in the report.

(1) The DWP Claimant Survey (which the NAO Report quoted) says that nearly seven out of ten claimants said they were confident managing their payments. We are investing up to £200 million into budgeting and digital support, to help claimants with the transition to Universal Credit and work coaches work closely with claimants, ensuring they can identify any vulnerabilities or specific needs, such as financial difficulties, at an early stage. We have listened to concerns and invested £1.5 billion in a package of measures to support claimants financially in the first assessment period, and recently announced we would be introducing further protection for people who receive the Severe Disability Premium.

(2) The Claimant Survey research also states that 98 per cent of claims are made online, and that nearly half of claimants had help from others or from their jobcentre adviser to do so. This shows that people get the support they need to make their claim. We knew that people would require digital support with the transition to Universal Credit, that is why, as above, we are investing up to £200 million. All jobcentres across the country have free Wi-Fi, and there are more than 8,000 computers available to support customers who need help with making their claim digitally and applying for jobs online. Work coaches will also assist anyone who needs assistance. If people cannot get online we have also a freephone helpline available.

(3) Around 80 per cent of new claims are paid in full and on time. In many cases, where full payment is not made on time by the end of the first assessment period, this is as a result of unresolved issues: some claimants have not signed their Claimant Commitment or passed identity checks, others have outstanding verification issues, such as for housing and self-employed earnings. Whilst their verification is on-going, many of these claimants receive a part payment. We know that, within five weeks of the payment due date, 95% of the claims are paid in full. As the NAO report acknowledges, we have taken steps to improve the verification processes (Paragraph 2.18). For example we have listened to feedback and built processes into the system to make it easier and quicker for people to verify their housing costs.

## Whisky: Exports

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the importance to industries such as the scotch whisky industry of maintaining access to the Excise Movement and Control System. [HL9264]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what structures they plan to put in place to ensure that scotch whisky can continue to move to and through the EU freely after March 2019 should access to the Excise Movement and Control System not continue during any Brexit implementation period. [HL9265]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they plan to provide to scotch whisky exporters to ease the impact of any increased cost burdens faced by the industry should access to the Excise Movement and Control System not continue after March 2019. [HL9266]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what customs processes they plan to apply to movements of scotch whisky to and through the EU following the end of any Brexit implementation period; and when they expect to be in a position to announce such processes. [HL9267]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the notice period that the scotch whisky industry would require to ensure that any requested changes to exporting processes can be made in time for both (1) the beginning, and (2) the end of any Brexit implementation period. [HL9268]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the notice period that the scotch whisky industry would require to make changes to company software systems and internal procedures

should movements of their products to the EU need to be treated as direct exports following the end of any Brexit implementation period. [HL9269]

**Lord Bates:** During the implementation period, the UK will no longer be a Member State of the European Union, but market access will continue on current terms. To give businesses and citizens certainty, common rules will remain in place until the end of the period meaning businesses will be able to trade on the same terms as now up until the end of 2020.

The UK's future relationship with the EU is subject to negotiations. The Government has published a White Paper that set out in detail the UK's position on the future relationship. The Government hopes to see negotiations accelerate and intensify and remains confident of reaching agreement on the Withdrawal Agreement and future customs framework.

The Government proposes a common approach to the relevant excise processes and procedures that apply to cross border trade in goods. This would, for example, enable businesses that move excise goods, such as alcohol products, tobacco products and oils, within the EU to do so much as they do now.

In the meantime, the Government is engaging with businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises, in every sector and region of the UK economy to assess the effect of EU Exit on them. This includes specific engagement in relation to scotch whisky and we continue to engage closely with the Scotch Whisky Association.

The Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Bill provides flexibility to allow HMRC to continue to use IT systems, including the Excise Movement and Control System for internal movements of excise goods in duty suspension, subject to the outcome of negotiations.

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