

**Session 2017-19**  
**No. 227**



**Monday**  
**18 February 2019**

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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Statements ..... 1**

**Written Answers.....3**

[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/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
<b>Baroness Evans of Bowes Park</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Earl Howe</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<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>Baroness Barran</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Bates</b>	Minister of State, Department for International Development
<b>Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office
<b>Baroness Buscombe</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Minister of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Duncan of Springbank</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office
<b>Baroness Fairhead</b>	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Henley</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>Lord Keen of Elie</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
<b>Baroness Manzoor</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Lord Taylor of Holbeach</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development
<b>Lord Young of Cookham</b>	Cabinet Office Spokesperson and Whip
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2019

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence,  
which is published at [www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/](http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/)

# Written Statements

*Monday, 18 February 2019*

## Hague Convention

[HLWS1306]

**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:

The Government has decided to opt in to the European Commission's proposals for Council Decisions authorising the acceptance by certain Member States of the accession of named countries to the 1980 Hague Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction, in the interests of the EU. The acceptances are as follows:

- Austria, Cyprus, Croatia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom to accept Dominican Republic;
- Austria, Luxembourg and Romania to accept Belarus and Uzbekistan;
- Austria to accept Ecuador and Ukraine;
- Austria and Romania to accept Honduras.

The UK has already accepted Belarus, Uzbekistan, Ecuador, Ukraine and Honduras and therefore these Council Decisions do not instruct the UK to take any action.

All EU Member States are party to the 1980 Hague Convention, the primary civil law international instrument which provides a mechanism to seek the prompt return of wrongfully removed or retained children to their country of habitual residence.

When a country wishes to accede to the Convention, it is necessary for an existing contracting state to accept that country's accession before the Convention can apply between them. It is the European Commission's view that there is exclusive competence on the EU for all matters relating to the 1980 Convention and that therefore Member States must be authorised by the EU to accept accessions by third countries and must do so collectively through Council decisions.

Although not anticipated in the proposals, the Government believes that the UK opt-in under the Protocol to Title V of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union applies and it has therefore asserted its right to choose whether to opt in and has decided that it is in the UK's best interests to do so.

The Government believes that the wider significance of these proposals for external competence mean that it is in the UK's interests to participate fully in these negotiations, including having the ability to vote. These proposals must be agreed by unanimity within the EU Council.

**Probation Services: South-West England and Wales**

## Probation Services: South-West England and Wales

[HLWS1305]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (David Gauke) has made the following Written Statement.

"I wish to inform the House regarding future arrangements for probation services in the South West and Wales.

The House will be aware that Community Rehabilitation Companies were set up just over four and a half years ago (with contracts awarded in December 2014). They were a new idea and part of probation reforms which extended supervision on licence each year to an additional 40,000 offenders released from prison sentences of less than 12 months. These companies do not deal with high-risk offenders – who are managed by the National Probation Service – but with low and medium risk offenders. They have been set up in a range of ways. There are 21 companies, the majority of which are private-sector owned with a range of voluntary sector third party suppliers. Their particular purpose is to work with low and medium risk offenders, supervise them, develop plans for them, and provide them with rehabilitative services, in order to reduce the reoffending rate.

On Thursday 14 February 2019, Working Links (Employment) Limited, and its three CRCs: Wales CRC, Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire CRC, and Dorset, Devon and Cornwall CRC, went into administration. The Ministry of Justice has been in discussions with Working Links and has taken immediate action to ensure that probation services are fully protected in these areas. Our central priority is of course to protect the public, ensuring that we have the right supervision of offenders in place, and that probation staff are supported in their important work. We have undertaken significant work to determine the most sustainable option for future management of probation services in Wales and the South West and have transferred staff and services to Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC, which is owned by Seetec. This change has been made via a variation to Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC's existing contract. Seetec has a good track record in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and we are satisfied that they are well-placed and well-equipped to take over these services and run them effectively. Plans have been implemented to ensure that probation staff and other key probation stakeholders are well-informed with regards to the transition.

We are also working towards more bespoke arrangements for the services in Wales, specifically that offender management services in Wales be transferred to HMPPS before the end of the current contractual period, to better dovetail with the future design for probation delivery in Wales. Our intentions are to transfer these services by the end of 2019, rather than the previously planned date of 2020, and we are currently working at pace with Seetec to accelerate this process.

We also recognise the impact of Working Links' Administration upon its other public-sector contracts in the UK, and have been engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Scottish Government. DWP will be working with Working Links and the Administrators to identify all participants of its programmes who are potentially affected to ensure appropriate advice and support is provided.

The Government continues to work to improve the effectiveness of the wider probation system. We have already taken action to stabilise and improve probation delivery. Last year, we announced we intended to end CRC contracts early and held a consultation on proposals to improve future probation services. We also agreed

contractual changes with current CRCs to improve performance in key areas. We want to create a better system in future which will prevent these kinds of things happening again. We intend to better integrate public, private and third sector providers, putting in place a more stable and resilient probation system, which works effectively to protect the public and tackle reoffending. We will announce detailed plans later this year.

We know probation is vital to ensuring justice is done and the cycle of reoffending is broken. We will work closely with Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC and Seetec in the next weeks and months to ensure the continuation, stability and improvement of services."

## Written Answers

*Monday, 18 February 2019*

### **Billing: Cybercrime**

*Asked by Lord Framlingham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the incidence of cybercrime against those who pay their bills electronically compared to those who pay their bills by cash or cheque. [\[HL13386\]](#)

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK Government does not hold data on losses from cyber crime for those who pay their bills electronically.

The cyber threats we face continue to grow in scale and sophistication. This is why the National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021 is supported by £1.9 billion of transformational investment.

Advice is available to all businesses, big and small, about how to protect their customers by the NCSC.

### **Borders: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which technological solutions are currently under consideration, in the absence of a concluded EU withdrawal agreement, to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland. [\[HL13276\]](#)

**Lord Callanan:** The Political Declaration is clear that the UK and EU should work together and exchange information on facilitative arrangements and technologies. This sits alongside the UK and the EU's existing commitment to developing alternative arrangements to replace the backstop. The Government plans to continue discussion with members from around the House and will finalise proposals to go back to the EU with.

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what scenario planning has been conducted by Government departments responsible for security, immigration control, and food security and safety in relation to the EU-UK border in the island of Ireland. [\[HL13434\]](#)

**Lord Callanan:** The best way to guarantee no hard border remains delivering a deal with the EU, which means people on either side of that border will be able to live their lives as they do now. Both the UK and Ireland have said they will do everything in their power to avoid a hard border in any scenario, but in the event of there being a "no deal" we recognise we would need to take forward discussions with the Irish Government and the Commission on how to achieve this.

### **Countryside Stewardship Scheme**

*Asked by Lord Willoughby de Broke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether payments to participants in the Countryside Stewardship scheme have been delayed; and if so for what reason. [\[HL13549\]](#)

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Over 99% of Countryside Stewardship participants have received their payment for 2017 claims and payments for 2018 claims are underway. The Rural Payments Agency took on administration of Countryside Stewardship in October 2018 and is continuing to simplify the administration of the scheme as far as possible under the current EU system, streamlining processes and boosting the workforce to speed up processing.

### **Defence: Procurement**

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they expect the Ministry of Defence to deliver the target of £13.4 billion efficiency savings over the next 10 years. [\[HL13625\]](#)

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what level of Ministry of Defence over-programming across the next 10 years they consider prudent. [\[HL13626\]](#)

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Ministry of Defence has a plan agreed with industry to maintain the UK-based capability to develop and deliver the equipment required by the armed forces in the future. [\[HL13627\]](#)

**Earl Howe:** We are reviewing the Public Accounts Committee's recommendations on the Equipment Plan 2018-28 and will provide a response to these questions in due course.

### **Department for International Development: Equality**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Department for International Development (DfID) records the religion and other protected characteristics of those it employs; how funding is allocated to organisations after consideration of protected characteristics; and how DfID ensures that those non-governmental organisations, private sector companies, consultancies, and others with whom it contracts are required to report on how they have performed in ensuring equity of access to their work by those with protected characteristics. [\[HL13382\]](#)

**Lord Bates:** Employees can voluntarily declare their diversity data on our HR systems.

DFID contracts are awarded after a process of fair and open competition on the basis of value for money, capability to deliver programme outputs and, as relevant to the specific procurement, equality considerations. DFID's standard contract Term and Conditions require partners not to unlawfully discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics, have due regard for the advancement of equal opportunity and promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Partners are also required to adhere to relevant recommendations by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. DFID's Supply Partner Code of Conduct requires contractors to ensure that robust procedures are adopted and maintained to eliminate the risk of poor human rights practices, including any inequality or discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, sexuality, culture or disability. Both requirements are legally binding and subject to compliance checks by DFID.

### Electronic Government: Proof of Identity

*Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have signed up to use GOV.UK Verify; and how many use each identity provider. [[HL13552](#)]

**Lord Young of Cookham:** The number of GOV.UK Verify accounts (historic and current) is published on the GOV.UK website and is regularly updated. As of 10 February 2019, there were 3,617,585 GOV.UK Verify user accounts. Details of the number of GOV.UK Verify user accounts with each identity provider is commercially sensitive information and cannot be released.

*Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Royal Mail has ceased to be an identity provider for GOV.UK Verify; and why Royal Mail is listed on the GOV.UK Verify website. [[HL13553](#)]

**Lord Young of Cookham:** In the Written Ministerial Statement of 9 October 2018 on the GOV.UK Verify programme, it was confirmed that contracts had been signed with a number of private sector identity providers.

Royal Mail had previously been one of the GOV.UK Verify private sector identity providers. However, Royal Mail did not sign the new contract. Users are therefore unable to create a new GOV.UK Verify account with Royal Mail.

Royal Mail remain listed as a previous identity provider while users who hold an existing account with Royal Mail remain able to sign into GOV.UK Verify with this account. If a user does not have a GOV.UK Verify account, they are not offered Royal Mail as an identity provider to verify their identity.

### Energy Supply

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that businesses are stockpiling electrical power components in preparation for a no-deal Brexit, and (2) the impact a no-deal Brexit could have on UK power networks. [[HL13420](#)]

**Lord Henley:** Leaving the EU with a deal remains the Government's top priority. This has not changed. The Government has accelerated no deal preparations to ensure the country is prepared for every eventuality.

The UK's exit from the EU will not alter the fact that our energy system is resilient and secure and drawn from a number of sources. The Government's Technical Notices set out how cross-border trading and supply of electricity and gas will change, in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a Deal. The Government has worked with Ofgem and National Grid to ensure security of supply.

The Government has recommended that businesses ensure they are prepared, enacting their own 'no deal' plans as they judge necessary.

### English Language: Education

*Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Integrated Communities Strategy green paper, published in March 2018, when they expect to announce the results of the consultation on methods of improving English language skills. [[HL13509](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** On 9 February we published the Government Response to the Integrated Communities Green Paper and an accompanying Action Plan. The new Integrated Communities Action Plan will drive forward work across government to create socially and economically stronger, more confident and integrated communities. In the Action Plan we commit to a new Cross-Government National English Language Strategy for Autumn 2019. We will engage widely with the sector to help shape its content.

### Environmental Stewardship Scheme

*Asked by Lord Willoughby de Broke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there have been delays in payments from the Rural Payments Agency and DEFRA to participants in the Higher Level Stewardship scheme for 2018; and if so, why. [[HL13547](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** While just under 50% of agreement holders have received their 2018 advance payment, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has been working hard to ensure that remaining payments are issued as quickly as possible. The RPA took on administration of Environmental Stewardship in October



2018 and is continuing to simplify the administration of the scheme as far as possible under the current EU system, streamlining processes and boosting the workforce to speed up processing.

*Asked by Lord Willoughby de Broke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all participants in the Higher Level Stewardship scheme have received the payments due to them in 2016 and 2017. [HL13548]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Over 99% of Environmental Stewardship agreement holders have received their 2016 advance and final payments. For 2017 just under 98% have received their advance payment and 80% have received their 2017 final payment. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has been working hard to ensure that remaining payments are issued as quickly as possible. The RPA took on administration of Environmental Stewardship in October 2018 and is continuing to simplify the administration of the scheme as far as possible under the current EU system, streamlining processes and boosting the workforce to speed up processing.

### Further Education: Teachers

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of teaching staff in further education colleges do not have a teaching qualification. [HL13473]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The 'College staff survey 2018', attached, indicated that 7% of teachers in general and specialist further education (FE) colleges did not hold a teaching qualification. Some of these teachers were studying for a teaching qualification at the time of the survey, which is shown in the attached table.

There is no requirement for teachers in FE colleges to hold a teaching qualification. FE providers have the flexibility to recruit and deploy teachers who have a range of skills and industry expertise.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

College\_staff\_survey\_2018\_main\_report  
[College\_Staff\_Survey\_2018\_main\_report.pdf]

HL13473\_teaching\_qualifications\_table  
[HL13473\_table\_of\_teaching\_qualifications\_held\_by\_teachers\_in\_general\_and\_specialist\_further\_education\_(FE)\_colleges.doc]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-05/HL13473>

### Health Professions: Training

*Asked by Lord Dobbs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of UK students who have become NHS (1) doctors, (2) GPs and (3) nurses in

England in each year between 2008 and 2018. [HL13500]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The information is not collected in the format requested.

### Hebron

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Israel's decision not to renew the mandate of the International Monitoring Force in Hebron. [HL13478]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by Israel's decision not to extend the mandate for Hebron's international monitoring mission. The mission has been in Hebron for over 20 years and fulfilled an important role in reducing tensions in the city between Israeli settlers and Palestinian communities. Our Ambassador to Israel raised our concerns over this decision with the Israeli authorities on 29 January. The Minister for the Middle East discussed our concerns with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 30 January and also expressed these concerns in a Tweet on the 2 February.

### Housing

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government working group on mortgages and insurance to report. [HL13369]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) working group have produced an agreed definition of MMC to ensure consistency across the sector and make it easier for all stakeholders to identify particular MMC typologies. These definitions will be launched in the coming weeks.

The group continue working to finalise details of the unified quality assurance platform. This platform will better integrate existing quality assurance and warranty processes to provide a single assurance process for assessing all new technologies used for homes built using MMC and ensure these homes can access insurance and mortgages on the same basis as traditionally built homes. The single assurance platform is expected to be launched in the Spring.

### Immigrants: Detainees

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people currently held in immigration detention are claiming asylum on the grounds of religious persecution. [HL13423]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The basis of a person's asylum claim is recorded on their individual Home Office file, but not in a way that can be easily

aggregated. Therefore, we cannot provide figures on how many people are currently held in immigration detention, claiming asylum on the grounds of religious persecution.

As such, this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost because it would require a manual search through individual records.

Information on people entering detention in 2018 can be found in tab dt\_01\_q of the 'Detention data tables immigration statistics year ending September 2018':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2018-data-tables>

Information on the number of asylum claims, subsequent grants of asylum and humanitarian protection, irrespective of whether the individual was detained, (as at year ending September 2018) can be found in tab as\_02-q at Volume 2 of the quarterly Immigration statistics release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2018-data-tables>

Information on people entering detention in 2018 can be found in tab dt\_01\_q of the 'Detention data tables immigration statistics year ending September 2018':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2018-data-tables>

## Immigration: Detention Centres

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they collect data on the faith identity of people currently held in immigration detention; and if so, what those data are. [HL13421]

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many religious chaplains have been appointed to each immigration removal centre and short-term holding facility in each of the last five years. [HL13422]

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that people held in immigration detention receive appropriate access to chaplaincy and pastoral support. [HL13424]

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what meetings they have had with faith groups to ensure that chaplaincy and pastoral support is available to people in immigration detention. [HL13425]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government respects the rights of detainees to practise their religious faith. The provision of religious services in immigration removal centres (IRC) is through the Detention Centre Rules 2001, the Operating Standards for IRCs, and the relevant sections of the contracts and service level agreements relating to religious affairs.

Under Rule 21 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001, if detainees on admission to an IRC wish to declare that they belong to a particular religion, that information must be recorded. This information is recorded by the IRC service providers on their own internal detainee management systems and is used to inform the religious provision available at the IRC.

IRCs are equipped with mosques and multi faith rooms for detainees to use for prayer, study and reflection. Communal prayers are available in all centres as well as facilities for prayer in the detainees' rooms such as access to prayer mats. Each IRC is required to have a manager of religious affairs whose duties include: establishing a multi-faith team; arranging for ministers of religion to conduct religious services for detainees; and arranging for ministers of religion to visit detainees of their religion soon after their reception into the IRC and as often as they reasonably can thereafter. Each IRC is also required to publish a calendar of religious festivals and observances so that recognition is given to those events and those concerned are able to observe them. Engagement with faith groups is undertaken at a local level by the IRC religious affairs manager.

The religious needs of detainees held at short-term holding facilities must be catered for so far as practicable but, given the limited nature of the facilities at such sites and short durations of stay, there would not be organised services or ministers of religion present.

All IRCs have a number of appointed religious chaplains in place. Management information shows that there were 11 new religious chaplain appointments made at IRCs between 2014 and 2018. Of these 11 appointments, 2 were made in 2014 (Gatwick IRCs and Morton Hall), 4 in 2015 (1 at Gatwick IRCs, 1 at Yarl's Wood IRC and 2 at Morton Hall), 2 in 2016 (Gatwick IRCs and Morton Hall), 2 in 2017 (Gatwick IRCs and Heathrow IRCs) and 1 in 2018 (at Gatwick IRCs). This is provisional management information that is subject to change.

## INF Treaty

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and what diplomatic steps they have taken, following the suspension of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty by the governments of the United States and Russia. [HL13465]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have been discussing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with the US for a number of years as part of our continuous dialogue on security issues. The US also initiated a series of meetings on INF with close Allies in 2017 and 2018, during which we discussed the US approach and exchanged detailed information on the Russian violation and how we might best achieve our shared policy objectives.



NATO Allies first expressed concerns about Russian non-compliance with its INF Treaty obligations in 2014. In the last two years, there has been an intensification of Allied activity to encourage Russia to return to compliance.

We, along with NATO Allies, support the US decision to suspend its participation in the INF Treaty and start the treaty's formal withdrawal process. A situation whereby the US was fully aiding by the INF Treaty and Russia was not, was not sustainable. Following the US announcement, NATO issued a statement declaring full support for US action and urging Russia to use the six month withdrawal period to return to full and verifiable compliance to preserve the INF Treaty.

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Statement on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 February (HL Deb, cols 1495–9), what assessment they have made of whether (1) Germany, (2) Hungary, (3) Poland, (4) Bulgaria, (5) Slovakia, and (6) the Czech Republic have destroyed or dismantled any INF Treaty missiles they hold; and if so, whether they are concerned by those countries' actions in that regard. [[HL13546](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Only the US, Russia and a small number of other Soviet successor states are bound by the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The Treaty initially eliminated all of their intermediate-range (500km–5,500km) ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles. By 1991, all US and Soviet Union missiles covered by the Treaty had been eliminated.

All NATO Allies support the finding of the US that Russia is now in material breach of the Treaty, citing its covert testing, production and fielding of 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile systems. We are working closely with Allies to review the security implications of Russian intermediate-range missiles and will continue to take the necessary steps to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the Alliance's overall deterrence and defence posture.

## Local Government: Borrowing

*Asked by Lord Hollick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria are applied by the Public Works Loan Board when a local authority seeks to borrow to acquire commercial property for investment purposes. [[HL13388](#)]

**Lord Bates:** Responsibility for local authority spending and borrowing decisions lies with locally-elected council Members, who are democratically accountable to their electorates. Local authorities are required to have regard to the Prudential Code and statutory guidance when they borrow from the PWLB or from any other lender, these are published by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and form the

Prudential Framework. The main objective of the Prudential Framework is to ensure that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Before it can advance a loan to a local authority, the Public Works Loan Board requires formal assurance from the authority that the loan is within their borrowing powers and the relevant legislation.

*Asked by Lord Hollick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the extent and nature of the due diligence undertaken by the Public Works Loan Board before extending loans to local authorities to acquire commercial property for investment purposes. [[HL13389](#)]

**Lord Bates:** Responsibility for local authority spending and borrowing decisions lies with locally-elected council Members, who are democratically accountable to their electorates. Local authorities are required to have regard to the Prudential Code and statutory guidance when they borrow from the PWLB or from any other lender, these are published by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and form the Prudential Framework. The main objective of the Prudential Framework is to ensure that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Before it can advance a loan to a local authority, the Public Works Loan Board requires formal assurance from the authority that the loan is within their borrowing powers and the relevant legislation.

*Asked by Lord Hollick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is an limit on loans which can be extended by the Public Works Loan Board to a local authority (1) in any one year, and (2) overall. [[HL13390](#)]

**Lord Bates:** The aggregate amount that may be outstanding in respect of commitments entered into by the Public Works Loan Board is limited, and this limit set out in section 4 (1) of the 1968 National Loans Act. Since December 2017, the limit has stood at £85 billion. There is no separate limit about lending amounts in any one year.

Local authorities are responsible for determining their own limits on the aggregate amount of borrowing that they may have outstanding. The statutory guidance on borrowing and investment was updated in 2018; the updated guidance introduced a new requirement for all English local authorities to set limits for gross debt compared to net service expenditure. Authorities which exceeded their self-assessed limits should, in accordance with the guidance, refrain from making further investments other than short term investments required for efficient treasury management.

*Asked by Lord Hollick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Public Works Loan Board takes on an ongoing basis to monitor the commercial property investments acquired

by local authorities and funded by the Public Works Loan Board. [HL13391]

**Lord Bates:** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has stewardship of the local government sector in England. Together with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), they maintain the statutory guidance on local authority borrowing and investment. In light of changes in local authority borrowing and investment patterns, CIPFA and MHCLG updated the prudential code and statutory guidance in 2018. In addition, local authorities must make appropriate arrangements for the appointment of an external auditor to give an opinion on their financial statements as well as arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Public Works Loans Board has no role in monitoring local authority activities.

*Asked by Lord Hollick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which ten local authorities borrowed the most from the Public Works Loan Board for investment in commercial properties in each of the financial years since and including 2014–15. [HL13393]

**Lord Bates:** The Public Works Loans Board has no role in monitoring local authority activities. Under the prudential regime, decisions on borrowing are devolved to local authorities who are democratically accountable to their electorates. Information about the purpose of PWLB loans is not centrally held.” The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has stewardship of the local government sector in England. Together with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), they maintain the statutory guidance on local authority borrowing and investment. In light of changes in local authority borrowing and investment patterns, CIPFA and MHCLG updated the prudential code and statutory guidance in 2018.

### MMR Vaccine

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to reverse the declining uptake in MMR vaccines, particularly in London, in order to retain the UK's elimination status for measles and rubella. [HL13528]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** In January 2019 Public Health England, Public Health Wales, The Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland and Health Protection Scotland published the UK Measles and Rubella elimination strategy 2019. A copy is attached.

The strategy sets out four core components required to maintain elimination of measles and rubella: achieving and sustaining very high coverage (more than or equal to 95%) with two doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) through the routine childhood immunisation programme; providing opportunities for MMR catch-up to all susceptible population groups over

five years old; strengthening surveillance systems by rigorous case investigation and laboratory confirmation of suspected sporadic cases and outbreaks; and improving the availability and use of high-quality, evidence-based information for health professionals and the public on measles and MMR.

A multi-agency group has been established to take forward the actions in the strategy in England. Local teams including those in London are expected to work with local stakeholders to develop a measles and rubella elimination action plan.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL13528 attached information  
[UK\_measles\_and\_rubella\_elimination\_strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13528>

### Motor Vehicles: Theft

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to prevent thieves from stealing cars by using relay box equipment. [HL13384]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service chaired the first meeting of the Vehicle Theft Taskforce on 15 January. As part of its work, the Taskforce will review whether further measures are required to stop devices that may be used to commit vehicle theft falling into criminals' hands.

### Music: Education

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 1 February (HL12956 and HL12957), what plans they have to maintain support for music education hubs when funding via the National Plan for Music Education comes to an end in 2020. [HL13486]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The department recently announced an additional £1.3 million for music education hubs until March 2020. The total funding for music education hubs between 2016–20 is over £300 million. This is part of almost half a billion pounds the department is investing in a range of music and cultural programmes between 2016–2020 - more than any other subject except PE.

Funding for this commitment beyond March 2020 is a matter for the upcoming Spending Review. In the meantime, the department is reviewing the National Plan for Music Education.

### Neighbourhood Development Plans

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted since 2011;

and of those, how many have applied to unparished areas. [HL13361]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** While we do not formally monitor the production of neighbourhood plans, our records suggest that over 700 neighbourhood plans have been adopted (made) since 2011. Of these around 40 were for unparished areas.

### Nurseries: Recruitment

*Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that children's nurseries are able to recruit and retain sufficient qualified staff practitioners to provide high quality early education to all children. [HL13415]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** We are committed to ensuring that all children have access to high quality early education and can achieve their full potential. The latest Ofsted data confirms that 95% of providers are now rated good and outstanding, up from 68% in 2010.

In March 2017, we published the attached early years workforce strategy which outlined government's plans to support employers to attract, retain and develop early years staff to deliver high quality provision. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy>.

As a result of the strategy, we have worked with sector stakeholders to develop criteria for new, more robust level 2 qualifications, as well as developing new career pathways information to support careers advice, recruitment and staff development. This can be accessed at: <https://www.cache.org.uk/media/1417/dfc-career-pathway-map-v17.pdf>. The information is also attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL13415\_Career\_pathway\_map  
[HL13415\_career\_pathway\_map.pdf]

HL13415\_Early\_years\_workforce\_strategy  
[HL13415\_Early\_years\_workforce\_strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-04/HL13415>

### Obesity

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when, under the NHS Long Term Plan, they will offer support and access to weight management services in primary care for people with a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes or hypertension with a body mass index of 30 and above; what will be the nature of any such services; and who will provide those services. [HL13441]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The NHS Long Term Plan builds on the success of the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme and diabetes treatment services and will provide a targeted support offer to patients with both obesity and type 2 diabetes, or with obesity and hypertension. The services will be provided in local communities and an implementation plan is currently under development.

NHS England plans to increase access to services in secondary care for those with severe obesity. This will include the testing of very low calorie diets.

NHS England, with its partners working in public health and diabetes, will help to ensure nutrition has a greater place in professional education. This will ensure that clinical staff have the skills and confidence to support patients in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

### Obesity: Children

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are preparing a third chapter of the Child Obesity Strategy; and if so, when that chapter will be published. [HL13439]

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will introduce a overarching national campaign against obesity as part of their Child Obesity Strategy. [HL13440]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** We are committed to reviewing the measures set out in both chapters of our childhood obesity plan and will continue to monitor progress and emerging evidence carefully. Where progress is not being delivered, we will consider what further action can be taken.

Both chapters of our plan demonstrate an overarching campaign to tackle obesity. In addition, Public Health England encourages the population to follow a healthy balanced diet through the 5 A Day campaign, Change4Life and OneYou social marketing campaigns.

### Overseas Trade: Republic of Ireland

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to any special arrangements for trade between the Republic of Ireland and the UK in the event of a no-deal Brexit. [HL13432]

**Lord Callanan:** We are committed to upholding the Belfast Agreement and will do everything in our power to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. We have been clear, as have the EU, it is not enough to simply assert this. We recognise that we would need to take forward discussions with the Irish Government and the Commission in the event of a no deal on the best way to achieve this.

## Philippines: Drugs

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of overseas development and aid funding they provide to the Philippines which is spent on the public health effects of drug use and abuse, in particular in prisons and detention centres; and what estimate, if any, they have made of the amount of funding that has been provided by international and multinational funds for such purposes. [[HL13517](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Official Development Assistance spend allocated to our Embassy in Manila in 2017-18 was £230,000. Of this between £40,000-£50,000 is being spent on projects relating to public health effects of drug use and abuse. This does not include the Newton Agham Programme or the Prosperity Fund which are not focused on health.

The projects are not specifically aimed at prisons and detention centres, although our Embassy in Manila does make regular consular representations on prison and detention centres in the Philippines.

In addition to bilateral spend, in 2016, the Philippines received £8.36 million of UK aid through multilateral organisations. This included funding on the health sector.

We do not have an estimate of spend by international and multinational funds for such purposes.

## Prescriptions: Universal Credit

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Manzoor on 22 January (HL12835), what is the reason for the delay in updating the FP10 prescription form; how many low income patients on Universal Credit claiming free prescriptions have received a penalty notice; and how many of those penalty notices have been withdrawn because they were issued in error. [[HL13524](#)]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** A revised version of the FP10 prescription form, featuring a dedicated tick-box for use by Universal Credit (UC) claimants who meet the criteria for free National Health Service prescriptions, recently received Ministerial clearance. Any change to the form involves major system and software updates across the NHS to allow the re-designed form to be used and processed. The revised paper form is currently being prepared for testing, to ensure it is compatible with the scanners used by the NHS Business Services Authority. The revised form will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

At present, both UC and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance claimants who are eligible for free NHS prescriptions, are ticking exemption box K on the FP10 prescription form to ensure they get the free prescriptions to which they are entitled. As a result, the NHS Business Services Authority is not able to confirm how many penalty charges notices have been issued to UC

Claimants, and therefore how many were issued to UC claimants who had a valid prescription charge exemption.

## Private Rented Housing: Licensing

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the joint report from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Chartered Institute of Housing A licence to rent published in January; and whether they will support local authorities expanding selective licensing schemes as a way of tackling poor quality housing. [[HL13493](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government has studied the report carefully and it will be considered as part of our own independent review of selective licensing. The Department maintains a strong working relationship with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and a CIEH representative sits on the project board that oversees the selective licensing review. A final report on the Government review will be published in Spring 2019.

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether ministers will meet representatives from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Chartered Institute of Housing and representatives from local government to discuss selective licensing schemes. [[HL13495](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Department is actively engaging with stakeholders on selective licensing. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health sit on the Project Board for the independent review of selective licensing which is currently underway. The Board also includes representatives from two local authorities, as well as the Greater London Authority and the Local Government Association.

## Rented Housing: Overcrowding

*Asked by Lord Ouseley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent of overcrowded living conditions in private rented accommodation as well as social housing; and what remedial actions might be necessary. [[HL13414](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** In 2015 The Government made an assessment of overcrowded living conditions in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Following extensive consultation, we acted by extending the scope of mandatory HMO licensing so that properties used as HMOs in England which house 5 people or more in two or more separate households would require a licence. These regulations came into force on October 1 2018.

The Government is combatting overcrowding through £9 billion of funding for the affordable homes programme; £2 billion of long-term funding certainty for



housing associations up to 2028/2029; and abolishing the housing account revenue cap. This is in addition to measures already in place such as the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard which requires social landlords to develop and deliver services to address overcrowding in their homes.

### **Royal Albert Hall**

*Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate that the Attorney General will give his definitive ruling on the points of law arising from the case of the Royal Albert Hall and the Charity Commission. [[HL13508](#)]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Last year the Charity Commission wrote to the Attorney General requesting his consent to refer five questions to the First-Tier Tribunal concerning the Corporation of the Hall of Arts and Sciences – i.e. the Royal Albert Hall, which is a registered charity. While the Charity Commission has the power to refer questions to the Tribunal, it may only do so with the consent of the Attorney General, as set out in section 325 of the Charities Act 2011.

This is a complex case involving the application of modern day charity law to an organisation established over 150 years ago. Before making an assessment as to whether consent should be given to the Commission's request, both the Corporation and the Commission were invited to make further representations to the Attorney General's Office. It is important that these are considered carefully, taking into account all relevant factors. While it is not possible to provide an exact estimate as to when a decision will be made, the matter is being given careful thought with a view to reaching a decision as soon as possible.

### **Russia: INF Treaty**

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Statement on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 February (HL Deb, cols 1495–9), what is their response to the government of Russia's non-compliance with that Treaty; and what assessment they have made of reports of INF Treaty non-compliant launchers being moved onto Europe's eastern borders with Russia. [[HL13545](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** NATO first expressed concerns about Russian non-compliance with its Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty obligations in 2014. We now fully support the assessment that Russia's covert testing, production and fielding of the 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile system is a material breach of the INF Treaty.

We, along with NATO Allies, support the US decision to suspend its participation in the INF Treaty and start the treaty's formal withdrawal process. A situation whereby

the US was fully aiding by the INF Treaty and Russia was not, was not sustainable. Following the US announcement, NATO issued a statement declaring full support for US action and urging Russia to use the six month withdrawal period to return to full and verifiable compliance to preserve the INF Treaty.

### **Schools: Health Education**

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 16 January (HL12720), whether the compulsory health education in schools, starting from 2020, will include water lifesaving skills. [[HL13567](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Swimming is a vital life skill, which is why pupils are taught to swim and about water safety at primary school. Swimming and water safety are compulsory elements of the physical education (PE) curriculum at key stages 1 and 2, which sets out the expectation that pupils should be taught to:

swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres;

use a range of strokes effectively; and

perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

We are making relationships education compulsory for all primary aged pupils, relationships and sex education compulsory for all secondary aged pupils and health education compulsory for all pupils. Schools will be encouraged to teach the new subjects from September 2019. The requirement to teach the new subjects will then follow from September 2020. Following a comprehensive consultation process, including both a call for evidence and work with over 90 stakeholder and expert groups, we consulted on the draft guidance and regulations in autumn 2018.

The new subjects are designed to complement the existing curriculum requirements. Schools will be able to integrate health education with other subjects, such as PE and citizenship, where it makes sense to do so. As such, health education should complement what is already taught and develop pupils' core knowledge and broader understanding to enable them to lead healthy, active lives. It will be up to schools to decide whether and how to build on the core swimming requirements in this context.

### **Schools: Vocational Guidance**

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many publicly-funded schools have complied with the obligation introduced with effect from 1 September 2018 to publish (1) details about the careers programme they deliver to pupils from Year 8 until Year 13, and (2) contact details for their careers leader; when they intend to review the information published by those schools;



and how they measure the success of careers programmes in schools. [HL13484]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The department has published statutory guidance that explains what schools must do to comply with the new duty to publish information about the careers programme and to name their careers leader and contact details on their website from September 2018. The guidance, which is attached, is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>.

Information about the number of schools that are compliant with the statutory guidance is not held centrally.

The success of careers programmes in schools is monitored through the progress that schools and colleges are making against the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. The Careers & Enterprise Company publish an annual 'State of the nation' report showing this progress. The attached 2017-18 report, published in November 2018, shows that the average school or college is now fully achieving 2.13 Benchmarks.

We expect the support that we are putting in place, including Careers Hubs and Careers Leader training, to result in significant progress over the next twelve months. Ofsted also takes account of this statutory guidance when developing its approach to assessing careers provision. Ofsted's current school inspection handbook, which is attached, sets out that inspectors take into account careers guidance provided by secondary schools when making their judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL13484\_Careers\_guidance\_provision  
[Careers\_guidance\_and\_access\_for\_education\_and\_training\_providers.pdf]

HL13484\_Ofsted\_school\_inspection\_handbook  
[School\_inspection\_handbook.pdf]

HL13484\_State\_of\_the\_nation\_report\_2018  
[State\_of\_the\_nation\_report\_2018.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-05/HL13484>

## Stocks and Shares

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of calls from European investors for regulators to protect their ability to buy and sell London-traded shares of companies with dual listings in the event of a no-deal Brexit. [HL13418]

**Lord Bates:** Delivering the deal the Government has agreed with the EU remains our top priority and the best mitigation against the issues arising in a no-deal scenario.

Nevertheless, the Government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

The UK authorities are not able through unilateral action to fully address risks to European investors seeking to buy and sell London-traded shares of companies with dual listings in the event of a no-deal Brexit. This would require action by the European Commission and the European Securities and Markets Authority to permit EU investment firms continued access to UK markets for London-traded shares of companies with dual listings.

## Syria: Turkey

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Turkey about that government reportedly removing olives and olive trees from Afrin Province in Syria to Turkey; and whether they will publish any responses received. [HL13451]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, has had a number of recent conversations with his Turkish counterparts over the conflict in Syria, as have his ministerial colleagues and the Prime Minister. We are closely monitoring the situation in North East Syria. Whilst we recognise Turkey's legitimate interest in the security of its borders, it remains in our shared interest to focus on achieving a political settlement that ends the war and suffering, provides stability for all Syrians and the wider region, and secures the enduring defeat of Daesh.

We are aware of the media reports regarding the removal of olives and olive trees, and are currently working to ascertain the validity and veracity of the allegations.

## Tax Avoidance

*Asked by Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that contracts for core business functions are not entered into with companies who seek to minimise the rate of tax paid on their activity in the UK; and what assessment they have made of whether the use of any such contracts will create a conflict of interest within HMRC when it comes to enforcement of anti-avoidance legislation. [HL13410]

**Lord Bates:** The 2015 Public Contract Regulations introduced a new obligation for public bodies to exclude suppliers from a procurement where the supplier has been found guilty of breaching its obligations in relation to payment of taxes, and this has been established by a judicial or administrative decision having final effect within the relevant jurisdiction. This includes where HMRC have successfully challenged a potential supplier under anti-avoidance legislation.

**Telecommunications: Planning Permission**

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what planning requirements apply to the installation of telegraph poles outside homes. [[HL13371](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Proposals for new telecommunications infrastructure require planning permission, either through nationally set permitted development rights or through a planning application to the local planning authority. In England, telecommunications operators are able to install new ground-based infrastructure such as telegraph poles and mobile masts under permitted development rights, subject to various size limits. These rights are subject to a prior approval process (except for infrastructure relating to fixed-line broadband) under which the local planning authority can consider the proposed siting and appearance of the infrastructure. Infrastructure not covered by permitted development rights will require full planning permission, and are assessed against a range of planning criteria as well as policies set out in an adopted development plan, such as a Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

**Terrorism: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Duncan of Springbank on 27 March 2018 (HL Deb, cols 730–761), when they intend to act on the assurances given in those remarks about the provision of pensions for those who were severely physically injured in the Northern Ireland Troubles. [[HL13507](#)]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** Work towards bringing forward a victims' pension is a devolved matter and one of the many reasons why it is so important to have an Executive restored. The Government is aware of how deeply upsetting and frustrating this delay is for those who suffered so much during the Troubles. This is a very complex issue which requires careful consideration, as the Noble Lord will appreciate from his time as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. That is why the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has commissioned advice from the Victims Commissioner in Northern Ireland to ensure progress on this important issue. I am grateful to the Noble Lord for our continuing discussions about this matter.

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

*Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to consult on their plans for a UK Shared Prosperity Fund and if so, when. [[HL13579](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government recognises the importance of reassuring local areas on the future of local growth funding once we have left the European Union and providing clarity on UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). We will consult widely on the Fund, providing all interested parties with an opportunity to convey their views. This will inform decisions on the design and quantum of the UKSPF, which are due to be made at Spending Review.

**Undocumented Migrants: Mediterranean Sea**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they did not agree to take in migrants from Sea-Watch 3 following the collapse of that boat on 19 January. [[HL13466](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK does not participate in relocation efforts. The UK Government's approach is instead to resettle refugees directly from source and transit countries, to avoid creating a pull factor. The UK has a strong record of providing protection to the most vulnerable through our resettlement schemes.

**UNRWA: Schools**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are aware of reports that Israel intends to remove United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East schools in East Jerusalem; and whether they intend to make representations to the government of Israel in this regard. [[HL13397](#)]

**Lord Bates:** UK Officials have contacted UNRWA following media reports surrounding the future of UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem. UNRWA stated that they have not received any official indication that there will be any change to their operation in East Jerusalem.

**USA: Politics and Government**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the number of vacancies in leadership positions in the government of the United States requiring Senate confirmation and the number of leadership positions filled by officials serving in an acting capacity is having any detrimental impact on UK–US bilateral initiatives and joint activities. [[HL13529](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We understand that there are a number of nominees for positions in the US Administration still awaiting Senate confirmation. Many of those are currently filled by other individuals in an acting capacity. We have close working relationships with these individuals. Additionally, we are in regular contact with US and British government counterparts across the breadth of our relationship.

## Vagrancy Act 1824

*Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824; and if not, why not. [HL13565]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** This Government is clear that no-one should be criminalised simply for having nowhere to live and sleeping rough. The cross-Government Rough Sleeping Strategy, which was published in August, committed to reviewing homelessness and rough sleeping legislation, including the Vagrancy Act 1824. The Government believes that review of the 1824 Act, rather than immediate wholesale repeal, is the right course of action to ensure the consequences of repeal are fully understood. My policy officials are currently developing the terms of reference for the review.

## Veterinary Medicine: Training

*Asked by Lord Trees*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to build capacity in the Higher Education system to address the shortage of veterinary surgeons in England. [HL13568]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The government recognises the importance of ensuring there are sufficient skilled graduates to meet industry demand. We are

working with different veterinary sector stakeholders, to look at ways of increasing veterinary school capacity and the number of graduates in all UK vet schools going forward.

The government also subsidises the costs of teaching high-cost subjects such as veterinary medicine, where tuition fee income does not meet the costs of teaching. This is supported through the teaching grant allocated annually to providers via the Office for Students.

In 2018/19, the recurrent teaching grant provided by the government totals £1,290 million, of which £681 million is specifically targeted at supporting high-cost subjects, including veterinary science. This is currently around £10,000 per veterinary science student.

English higher education providers are autonomous institutions. Their institutional autonomy, which includes decisions as to what they teach, is protected by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

However, the lifting of student number controls in 2015/16 means that there is no longer an artificial cap on the numbers of students that higher education providers are able to recruit, including for veterinary science courses.

There has been progress in the sector in increasing places for veterinary students. The first cohort of students to graduate with the University of Surrey's new veterinary degree is scheduled for July 2019, thereby bringing more domestically trained vets in to the profession. Alongside this, the new Harper and Keele Veterinary School will be commencing its new 5 year degree course in 2020.

## Index to Statements and Answers

<b>Written Statements.....</b>	<b>1</b>	Russia: INF Treaty.....	11
Hague Convention.....	1	Schools: Health Education.....	11
Probation Services: South-West England and Wales .....	1	Schools: Vocational Guidance.....	11
<b>Written Answers.....</b>	<b>3</b>	Stocks and Shares .....	12
Billing: Cybercrime .....	3	Syria: Turkey .....	12
Borders: Northern Ireland.....	3	Tax Avoidance.....	12
Countryside Stewardship Scheme .....	3	Telecommunications: Planning Permission.....	13
Defence: Procurement .....	3	Terrorism: Northern Ireland .....	13
Department for International Development: Equality .....	3	UK Shared Prosperity Fund.....	13
Electronic Government: Proof of Identity .....	4	Undocumented Migrants: Mediterranean Sea ...	13
Energy Supply .....	4	UNRWA: Schools .....	13
English Language: Education.....	4	USA: Politics and Government .....	13
Environmental Stewardship Scheme .....	4	Vagrancy Act 1824.....	14
Further Education: Teachers.....	5	Veterinary Medicine: Training .....	14
Health Professions: Training .....	5		
Hebron.....	5		
Housing .....	5		
Immigrants: Detainees.....	5		
Immigration: Detention Centres .....	6		
INF Treaty .....	6		
Local Government: Borrowing.....	7		
MMR Vaccine .....	8		
Motor Vehicles: Theft .....	8		
Music: Education.....	8		
Neighbourhood Development Plans.....	8		
Nurseries: Recruitment.....	9		
Obesity.....	9		
Obesity: Children.....	9		
Overseas Trade: Republic of Ireland .....	9		
Philippines: Drugs .....	10		
Prescriptions: Universal Credit.....	10		
Private Rented Housing: Licensing .....	10		
Rented Housing: Overcrowding .....	10		
Royal Albert Hall .....	11		