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Wednesday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 10 April 2019

Armed Forces' Standards and Values

[HLWS1466]

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

The Ministry of Defence and our Armed Forces expect the highest standards from our personnel. The vast majority not only meet, but exceed these standards on a daily basis in all manner of challenging situations, wherever they are deployed, reinforcing the values on which we pride ourselves. However, it is clear that in a number of cases the standards and values we expect are not being met.

The Ministry of Defence and our Armed Forces are absolutely clear that there is no place for sexual offending or sexual harassment across the Services. Inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and it stands in stark contrast with everything the Armed Forces represent. Anyone found to have committed a sexual offence will be dealt with appropriately and will face the full force of the law. To ensure our Service personnel are adhering to the highest standards, I have commissioned Air Marshal Michael Wigston, Deputy Commander for Capability at HQ Air Command, to conduct an urgent Report into inappropriate behaviour, to include sexual harassment, across the Services.

The objectives of the Report are threefold: to understand the current evidence regarding inappropriate behaviour across the Services; to make recommendations on what can be done to ensure and reassure that the Armed Forces are an inclusive and modern employer; and, to identify areas for further action, including potential improvements to controls, processes or policy. The Air Marshal will provide me with a Report of his findings and recommendations by mid-May. Once the recommendations have been considered and implementation plans have been agreed, the House will be updated.

Public Sector Exit Payment Cap

[HLWS1465]

Lord Bates: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Elizabeth Truss) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Today, I have launched a consultation on the draft regulations to implement the public sector exit payment cap. The government introduced powers to cap exit payments in the public sector at £95,000 in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

Public servants deserve to be properly rewarded for the vital work they do. That is why the government announced the biggest public sector pay rise in ten years

last summer, with most going to the lowest paid nurses, teachers and police officers.

However, the way we reward public servants must be proportionate and fair to taxpayers. The very high exit payments we have seen granted to some highly-paid public sector employees in recent years clearly breach these principles. It is right that the government acts on this to give taxpayers the confidence their money is being spent properly.

This consultation sets out the proposed method for implementing the cap, including which bodies should be in scope.

The consultation can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-exit-payments-in-the-public-sector>

Rail

[HLWS1467]

Baroness Sugg: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling) has made the following Ministerial Statement.

I am updating the House on the East Midlands, South Eastern and West Coast Partnership franchise competitions.

I am pleased to inform the House that, following rigorous competition, I intend to award the next East Midlands Railway franchise to Abellio East Midlands pending successful completion of a standstill period of at least 10 days.

The franchise is due to start on 18 August 2019 and will run for eight years, until 21 August 2027, with an extension of two years callable at my discretion.

Passengers, local authorities, businesses and other stakeholders across the country contributed to a highly demanding and challenging specification for this new franchise. Bidders were invited to demonstrate how they would meet this specification, and I am very pleased that we have agreed a plan with Abellio East Midlands for them to exceed these expectations.

Abellio East Midlands will oversee the introduction of brand-new trains, entirely replacing the existing intercity fleet with more reliable and comfortable trains. Passengers will benefit from an 80% increase in the number of morning peak seats into Nottingham, Lincoln and St Pancras. Passengers will also see faster journey times over long-distances, with a new express service from Corby through Luton into London.

The East Midlands Railway will be at the forefront of the Government's commitment to deliver a cleaner, greener rail network. Abellio East Midlands will trial hydrogen fuel cell trains on the Midland Main Line and will run zero-carbon pilots at six stations along the route.

The new franchise will also deliver a fairer deal for passengers. Over £17 million will be invested in improving station facilities across the route, including to deliver accessibility improvements. Abellio East

Midlands will also deliver an additional 916 extra car park spaces and 1,050 cycle spaces.

Passengers will benefit from the provision of free Wi-Fi throughout the franchise, both on-trains and at stations, and a significant uplift to the current ticketing system, with the introduction of smart, flexible ticketing options, including to provide better value for those who travel regularly but less than five days a week, as well as improved ticket-buying facilities and nine newly staffed stations.

The new East Midlands Railway franchise will also introduce enhanced delay repay compensation, with passengers able to claim compensation if their train is more than 15 minutes late.

We look forward to working closely with Abellio East Midlands to ensure they deliver the high-quality services that passengers expect and deserve from the railway and the East Midlands Railway franchise.

With regards to the South Eastern franchise competition, I am also today updating the House that my Department is negotiating a short-term extension to the

current franchise agreement with Govia while we make a decision on the competition. This will ensure continuity of services for passengers until 10 November 2019, with an option to extend the agreement further to April 2020.

We are due to award the West Coast Partnership in June.

Alongside this, there is a root-and-branch review of the railway underway, independently chaired by Keith Williams. This will make ambitious recommendations before the end of the year to reform the structure of the whole rail industry to prioritise passengers' and taxpayers' interests.

The next East Midlands Railway franchise and the ongoing competitions include significant improvements for passengers and steps to bring track and train closer together. From 2020, we will begin to roll-out further reforms, advised by the Rail Review, across the country. We will be guided by the approaches that deliver benefits to passengers and other rail users soonest. Awarding the new East Midlands Railway franchise is part of that strategy.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 10 April 2019

Alternative Education

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to implement in full Part 4 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 relating to the registration of organisations offering alternative provision in the independent sector; and if not, why not. [HL14889]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Alternative providers (AP) which are full-time and meet the criteria for registration as an independent school are already regulated under the 2008 act. The parallel provisions which would enable regulation of part-time independent settings have not been commenced.

The department is aware that local authorities, schools and AP commission out-of-school AP settings for a variety of reasons, including to equip children with vocational skills working with specialists or to offer work placements

Our statutory guidance is clear that in all cases the local authority or school, acting as the commissioner of AP, should assure itself that the provision is delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks. Ofsted inspectors are expected to consider the progress of pupils who attend off-site provision, when conducting school and college inspections.

In March 2018, the department published guidance, attached, setting out how the government, Ofsted and local authorities can work collaboratively to help ensure unregistered out of school settings are safe and providing a suitable education.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14889_la_Guidance_March_2018
[HL14889_la_Guidance_March_2018.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-27/HL14889>

Animal Welfare: Convictions

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were found guilty of animal cruelty in England and Wales in (1) 2017, and (2) 2018. [HL14915]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Ministry of Justice has published data on the number of people found guilty of animal cruelty in England and Wales up to December 2017. Data up to December 2018 will be published on 16 May 2019.

The number of offenders convicted of animal cruelty offences in 2017 was 809.

Brexit

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 21 March (HL14601), whether they will now answer the questions originally asked, namely what assessment they have made of whether the proposed Brexit deal (1) fulfils, and (2) is consistent with the spirit of, Article 50(1) of the Treaty on European Union. [HL15010]

Lord Callanan: This Government has negotiated a deal, which comprises the terms of our exit from the European Union and the framework for the future UK-EU relationship, in line with Article 50 TEU.

The Prime Minister notified the European Council (under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union) of the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the EU, following the passing by Parliament of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017, as per the UK's constitutional requirements.

Under the terms of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the Withdrawal Agreement may be ratified only if it is approved by a resolution of the House of Commons, along with the framework for the future relationship. An Act must also be passed providing for the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Brunei: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Brunei is to begin imposing death by stoning as a punishment for gay sex and adultery; and whether they intend to make representations to the government of Brunei to dissuade them from such action. [HL14907]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary spoke to Brunei's Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dato Erywan, on 4 April in order to express the UK's deep concern over Brunei's decision to implement the final phases of the Sharia Penal Code.

The Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific raised UK concerns with the Sultan about hudud punishments during his visit to Brunei Darussalam in August 2018 and delivered a statement to the House of Commons on 4 April addressing the implications of Brunei's decision.

Additionally the British High Commission in Bandar Seri Begawan regularly discusses our concerns with the Government of Brunei and has received assurances that the Common Law will continue to operate in parallel with the Sharia Penal Code.

Commonwealth Heads of Government most recently met in the UK in April 2018 where Majesty The Sultan of Brunei Darussalam was present. A communique issued by the leaders included the most progressive language yet on LGBT rights, complimented by an historic speech from the Prime Minister.

We will continue to encourage and work with the Bruneian Government, as with many other countries, to remove corporal and capital punishment from their statutes. We will also urge them to take steps to decriminalise and pass laws to protect LGBT people from all forms of discrimination.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice has been updated to alert British citizens of the introduction of the new local laws in Brunei and we continue to lobby against the use of such punishments.

China: Falun Gong

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Resolution 131 of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic made at the 7th meeting, held on 20 March, on the petition for ending the Chinese regime's persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. [[HL14961](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of this Resolution in the Czech Senate. We remain concerned by all restrictions placed on freedom of religion or belief in China, including on practitioners of Falun Gong. There is credible evidence that Falun Gong practitioners are subjected to serious mistreatment in China.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of petition 11/18 of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic calling "for the end of the Genocide of Falun Gong practitioners Committed by the Chinese Regime". [[HL15004](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of this Petition in the Czech Senate. We remain concerned by all restrictions placed on freedom of religion or belief in China, including on practitioners of Falun Gong. There is credible evidence that Falun Gong practitioners are subjected to serious mistreatment in China.

China: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs in Guangzhou, China, is offering rewards to those who provide it with information on the structure and activities of illegal religious groups in that city. [[HL14990](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the reports from Guangzhou and continue to monitor these and other reports relating to freedom of religion or belief in China. Everyone should be free to practice their religion according to their beliefs, in accordance with the

international frameworks to which both the UK and China are party. We believe that societies which aim to guarantee freedom of religion or belief are more stable, prosperous and more resilient against violent extremism. The prohibition of some religious groups, and the legal restrictions and harassment aimed at others, undermines freedom of religion or belief in China.

Climate Change

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to announce (1) measurable targets, and (2) deadlines, for their clean growth measures announced in the Chancellor's Spring Statement; by how much they intend to increase the proportion of green gas in the National Grid; and when they estimate that target will be reached. [[HL15041](#)]

Lord Henley: The Government are committed to accelerating the decarbonisation of our gas supplies by increasing the proportion of green gas in the grid. In order to meet our climate targets, we need to reduce our dependence on burning natural gas to heat our homes.

The Government will consult later this year on the appropriate mechanism to deliver the commitment to increase the proportion of green gas in the grid. This consultation will inform subsequent decisions about the design of the future mechanism, its implementation, timetable and targets.

The Future Homes Standard, announced in the Spring Statement, will be implemented through an uplift to the Building Regulations, subject to consultation in 2019.

Coal: Mining

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the environmental impact of the new Woodhouse Colliery, in particular on their target set out in the Paris Agreement to limit climate temperature rises to below two degrees centigrade. [[HL15045](#)]

Lord Henley: The UK is committed to delivering the ambition of the Paris Agreement. The Climate Change Act committed the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% compared to 1990 levels and we are phasing out the use of unabated coal for electricity generation by 2025. In response to the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C, we have asked the Climate Change Committee to advise on whether further action is needed.

Cumbria County Council took the decision to grant planning permission for the Woodhouse Colliery, subject to the completion of a section 106 planning obligation. It was the Council's responsibility to consider this application in its role as minerals planning authority, and the Council would have considered all relevant material considerations, including environmental impacts, before reaching their decision.

Construction

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Brexit uncertainty on the UK commercial construction sector. [HL15016]

Lord Henley: I refer my noble Friend to the answer I gave him on 19th February 2019 to Question HL13476.

The latest output figures published monthly by the Office of National Statistics show that construction grew by 0.7% in 2018 and by 2.8% in January 2019, remaining at the record levels reported in the second half of 2018. External forecasts suggest that the industry will continue to grow in 2019 and 2020, led by activity in the infrastructure and private housing sectors.

Deportation: Brunei

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy regarding the deportation of LGBT asylum seekers to Brunei. [HL15030]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We have not formed a general position on asylum seekers from Brunei because we had, as at the end of 2018, received no claims since at least 2001.

However, all asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations.

Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw. Asylum decision makers also have access to an information request service for specific enquiries to deal with particular issues raised in individual claims.

Guidance on how we consider claims based on sexual orientation more generally is available on the Gov.UK website.

Diabetes: Health Education

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people (1) were offered, (2) attended, and (3) completed, structured diabetes education courses over 12 months after being diagnosed with (a) Type 1, and (a) Type 2, diabetes; and what steps they are taking to increase referrals in groups other than those newly diagnosed with diabetes. [HL15031]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of inequality of access to structured diabetes education courses; and what steps they are taking to address those inequalities. [HL15032]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan related to structured education and digital self-management support for people with diabetes, how many more people with (1) Type 1, and (2) Type 2, diabetes they estimate will receive (a) structured education, and (b) digital self-management support, in each of the next five years. [HL15033]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The National Diabetes Audit (NDA) reports on the number of people who are offered and attended structured education programmes within 12 months of diabetes diagnosis. Data on the completion of structured education is not available within the NDA.

The number of people who were offered and attended structured education within 12 months of being diagnosed with diabetes in 2016, by diabetes type in England can be found in the following table.

Diabetes type	Newly diagnosed with diabetes in 2016	Offered structured education within 12 months of diagnosis	Attended structured education within 12 months of diagnosis
Type 1	8,975	3,460	405
Type 2 and other	207,630	155,980	18,045

Notes:

1) Diabetes type is reported as 'Type 1' and 'Type 2 and other' within the NDA.

i) 'Type 1' includes where a person is recorded as having type 1 diabetes in the NDA.

ii) 'Type 2 and other' includes where a person is recorded as having type 2 diabetes, Maturity-onset Diabetes of the Young, other or non-specified diabetes in the NDA.

2) Based on people who appear in the 2017-18 NDA who have a primary care record and a diabetes diagnosis in the calendar year 2016.

NHS England are working to reduce inequalities and widen routes of access to structured education by offering digital self-management support programmes which can offer a more flexible option, particularly for those of working age. These include:

- Access to Healthy Living for People with type 2 Diabetes (HeLP Diabetes) which is an evidenced online self-management tool for those with type 2 diabetes. This will be centrally funded, by NHS England and made available nationally, with implementation starting later this year. The intention is for HeLP Diabetes to be offered to both the newly-diagnosed and prevalent populations, supporting those living with type 2 diabetes at the point of diagnosis and on an ongoing basis;

- NHS England has made £2 million available through the NHS Test Bed Programme to implement and evaluate digital delivery models for self-management education for people living with type 2 diabetes; and

- Clinical commissioning groups who are in receipt of transformation funding have been supported by NHS England to increase uptake of structured education by use of funding to commission digital services where it has been agreed that this would best meet the needs of the local population.

Further to the commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan, the National Implementation Framework, is to be published in the spring, which will provide further information on how the NHS Long Term Plan will be implemented. This will set out further detail on how the National Health Service will further expand provision of structured education and the pace at which local systems will widen provision and routes of access.

Driving: Licensing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to minimise possible delays to the process of obtaining an international driving permit in the event of a no-deal Brexit. [[HL15047](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Post Office began issuing all three formats of International Driving Permits (IDPs) in 2,500 branches on 1 February 2019, with 90 percent of the UK population living within ten miles of an issuing branch.

Centrally, the Post Office currently holds around 1.3million IDPs. The Post Office is working to increase the number of IDP issuing branches to 3,000, focusing on areas which have seen high levels of sales. The Post Office has also been proactively delivering extra stock to affected branches and is ensuring that all issuing branches are ordering more IDPs when stocks are low.

Duchy of Cornwall: Leasehold

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Duchy of Cornwall as a property developer in connection with their Public Pledge for Leaseholders, published on 28 March; whether the Duchy of Cornwall is a signatory to that pledge; and if not, what assessment they have made of the reasons why not. [[HL14931](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government wants to make sure that all leaseholders whose leases contain onerous terms, such as doubling ground rents, get the support they need.

The new government-backed industry pledge announced on 28 March has been signed by more than forty leading property developers and freeholders.

This is a positive start and the Government encourages developers and freeholders to sign the pledge and any organisation not currently signed up can do so by contacting the Ministry. The Duchy of Cornwall has not specifically been approached.

In addition, the Law Commission has recently consulted on proposals to help leaseholders to extend their leases or buy their freehold, seeking to understand the experience for leaseholders on Crown land, including the Duchy of Cornwall. The Law Commission will report later in the year.

Electronic Cigarettes: Licensing

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has made in setting up an expert group to provide advice on streamlining the medicinal licensing process for e-cigarettes; whether that expert group has been convened yet; and if not, what steps they will take to expedite that process. [[HL15014](#)]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: In December 2018, the Commission of Human Medicines (CHM) endorsed the formation of an ad hoc working group of experts to consider the recommendations from the Science and Technology Select Committee on e-cigarettes that impact licensing of e-cigarettes as medicines. In March 2019, the CHM endorsed the terms of reference and membership of the ad hoc working group and the appointment of the chair. The first meeting is expected to be held in late April 2019, subject to availability of the members.

European Gendarmerie Force

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the latest developments relating to the EU Gendarmerie Force; and whether that Force can be deployed on British soil. [[HL14873](#)]

Earl Howe: The European Gendarmerie Force is not an EU body. It was established by treaty between France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain to enable their respective police forces to cooperate on international crisis management operations. The Force may be placed at the disposal of the EU, UN, NATO, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other international organisations. As with other foreign forces, any deployment on British soil would require the consent of the UK Government.

To date, the Force has deployed exclusively outside of the EU. Its latest deployment was to Mali, where it has operated within the EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali to train local security forces since April 2014.

Fracking

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government who would be (1) financially, and (2) legally, responsible for the clean-up and remediation of fracking sites in the event that the operator becomes insolvent. [[HL15067](#)]

Lord Henley: Under the conditions of their Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence, each licensee is responsible for wells drilled under their licence, including their safe plugging and abandonment. Before issuing licences, the Oil and Gas Authority considers the ability of operators to fulfil their responsibilities. In addition, as a matter of policy the Government will assess the financial status of companies wishing to carry out hydraulic fracturing operations, including their ability to fund decommissioning costs, before granting Hydraulic Fracturing Consent (HFC). Hydraulic Fracturing Consent will not be issued unless my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so. The Secretary of State is entitled to refuse HFC and/or, in certain circumstances, can impose conditions to provide additional protections.

The relevant regulators, including the Oil and Gas Authority, Environment Agency, and Health & Safety Executive, will not allow onshore operators to relinquish their licences and permits until they are satisfied that the terms of the relevant permits/licences have been met and that any assets have been safely plugged and abandoned.

Planning permission conditions set by the relevant Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) generally include site restoration to return the land to its former state, as witnessed at Cuadrilla's former Preese Hall site in Lancashire; the first hydraulically fractured well in the UK. In this case the well has been fully decommissioned in accordance with legislation. MPAs may also take financial security to cover decommissioning costs should they consider it necessary.

If, despite the precautionary measures set out above, the operator was to become insolvent, the liability may fall to other appropriate parties, which may include other licensees or landowners.

Gaza: Fisheries

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the banning of all fishing off the coast of Gaza in March; and what assessment they have made of the restrictions faced by fishermen in Gaza. [[HL15022](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise with the Government of Israel the urgent need to ease all access and movement restrictions on Gaza, including fishing limits. This would help to restore the fishing industry. We are aware that on 1 April Israel increased the permitted fishing zone off the coast of Gaza to 15 nautical miles. The UK would like to see a permanent increase in

the size of the fishing zone off the coast of Gaza, in line with the limit of 20 nautical miles stipulated in the Oslo accords.

General Practitioners: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government which NHS General Practices in Northern Ireland have ceased to function as such in each of the last three years; how many patients belonged to those Practices; which NHS General Practices in Northern Ireland have currently given notice that they intend to cease to function; and how many patients will be affected in each of those Practices. [[HL14966](#)]

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information and guidance the Department of Health, Northern Ireland, has issued to individual patients belonging to General Practices in Northern Ireland that have given notice of impending closure. [[HL14967](#)]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Health is the responsibility of the Department of Health in Northern Ireland and figures relating to GP closures and mergers are available on the website of the Health and Social Care Board. Although there have been a small number of closures, the average number of patients per practice has increased and the number of GPs has increased. Some practices have merged in order to provide a broader range of services.

Hernias: Surgery

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford on 25 March (HL14391), how they ensure that all consultant general surgeons are fully trained to maintain their skills in carrying out non-mesh hernia repair treatments. [[HL15007](#)]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: Consultant surgeons go through a standardised training and education process and must pass examinations and have confirmation of their surgical competence by their supervisors before they can join the General Medical Council's (GMC) Specialist Register.

Unless they are on this Specialist Register they cannot practise as consultant surgeons in England. As practising surgeons, they are expected to maintain a Licence to Practise through the GMC's process of revalidation that must be renewed by application every five years and which is associated with annual appraisal. This includes reflection on their performance, continuing professional development, any involvement in serious incidents or complaints, feedback from multi professional colleagues and patients and quality improvement activities.

Typically, the Medical Director of a hospital trust employing surgeons will ensure that numbers and outcomes of surgical procedures carried out by a consultant surgeon are included in their appraisal reflection and discussion. Consultants and their appraisers have a professional responsibility to inform the Medical Director if they have concerns about surgical performance including for non-mesh hernia repair treatments.

Hernias: Surgical Mesh Implants

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford on 25 March (HL14388), whether they will ask NHS England to meet Parliamentarians to discuss the case for the publication of guidance by NICE on hernia mesh operations which cover all the types of hernia treated by surgeons. [HL15006]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: NHS England has advised that Celia Ingham Clark, NHS England's Medical Director for Professional Leadership and Clinical Effectiveness, would be willing to meet with Parliamentarians to discuss hernia mesh operations guidance.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the legal liability of (1) door manufacturers, (2) third party certification bodies, and (3) the providers of test houses, for the failure of glass-reinforced plastic fire doors. [HL14875]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Fire doors should meet the requirements of Building Regulations. Those involved in the design, manufacture, testing and installation of fire doors are responsible for ensuring that those requirements are met.

High Rise Flats: Fires

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many high rise buildings retrofitted with combinations of composite or other forms of cladding which are not formed from solid metal and mineral wool insulation have had fires that resulted in fatalities in the last 10 years in the UK; and what estimate they have made of the number of such buildings internationally that have had fires resulting in fatalities in the last 10 years. [HL14974]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office does not hold this information.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: EU Law

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what derogations under EU law they (1) have made, and (2) contemplate making, in relation to HS2. [HL14857]

Baroness Sugg: We confirm we have not made any derogations under EU law in relation to HS2, and as of this date we are not anticipating making any derogations under EU law for HS2.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018. [HL15051]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government has committed to reviewing the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and how it is working in practice and will report back by March 2020. The review will provide important insight and will shape the Government's future plans to further improve the approach to homelessness prevention.

Housing: Older People

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to issue guidance to local authorities on the provision of specialist housing for older people as required under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017; and what consultation they have undertaken with providers of specialist housing for older people to inform that guidance. [HL14877]

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities have detailed planning guidance in place for the provision of specialist housing for older people. [HL14878]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: In the revised National Planning Policy Framework, published in July 2018, we strengthened policy to create a clear expectation that all local authorities have policies in place for addressing the housing needs of older people. The number of authorities with detailed planning guidance on the provision of specialist housing for older people is not recorded. We will publish further planning guidance, to assist councils to put these policies in place, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Act commitment. We have undertaken extensive engagement in relation to the guidance, including discussions with a range of local authorities, charities and house builder representatives to identify and discuss the key issues. We will publish the guidance in due course.

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they consulted providers of specialist housing for older people when formulating the Housing Delivery Test; and if so, what was the outcome. [HL14879]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: As part of the Housing White Paper 'Fixing the Broken Housing Market', and the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework we consulted a wide range of stakeholders on policy proposals. For the draft Framework we conducted 3 key stakeholder roundtables, and carried out 40 individual meetings with interested parties on specific topics or wording. This included the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and British Property Federation. Stakeholders were generally supportive of the Test's approach to older peoples housing as it rewards authorities for delivering older peoples housing by allowing them to count communal accommodation (such as care homes).

Human Trafficking

Asked by Baroness Stroud

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many National Referral Mechanism referrals submitted to (1) the National Crime Agency, and (2) UK Visas and Immigration, are awaiting a conclusive grounds decision, broken down by year of submission. [HL14920]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Crime Agency regularly publishes National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data, including the "National Referral Mechanism Statistics Annual Report 2018" on 20th March 2019, available at:

<https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/282-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2018>

These published statistics include a summary of current status for cases between 2013 and 2018, including numbers of cases pending a NRM decision (Reasonable Grounds and Conclusive Grounds combined).

The statistics also provide the decision status of 2018 cases, including those pending a Conclusive Grounds decision (as at 12 March 2019), split by grouped nationalities (UK, EU (non-UK), Other, and Not Known), and by claimed exploitation type.

The statistics also detail the number of cases allocated to each Competent Authority in 2018, however the published statistics do not provide breakdown of pending decisions by Competent Authority, i.e. National Crime Agency and UK Visas and Immigration.

Human-animal Hybrid Embryos

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the medical conditions for which interspecies nuclear transfer has provided the first effective treatments; and

how many human-admixed embryos have been produced in each year since the passage of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008. [HL15029]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: There are no medical conditions for which interspecies nuclear transfer has provided effective treatments.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (HFEA) has advised that, in 2008, 155 admixed embryos were produced in a HFEA licensed research project. No admixed embryos have been produced in HFEA licensed research projects in any other year to date.

Industry: Training

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the British Chambers of Commerce's Quarterly Economic Survey suggesting a decline of business investment in staff training in the (1) services, and (2) manufacturing sector. [HL15019]

Lord Henley: The Government recognises the importance of business investment in skills in driving productivity. That is why, through its modern Industrial Strategy, this Government is committed to working with sectors across the economy to ensure the workforce is equipped with the skills they will need now and in the future to create good jobs and increase the earning power of people throughout the UK.

This includes reforming our technical education system to achieve a world-class status and developing a National Retraining Scheme to support adults to upskill and reskill throughout their career as the economy changes.

We are continuing to work with employers and wider stakeholders on how the apprenticeship levy is spent so that the funding system works effectively and flexibly for industry and supports our commitment to delivering 3 million apprenticeship starts in England by 2020.

For the services sector, the Government works closely with Professional & Business Services (PBS) businesses to understand sector issues through the industry-led Professional and Business Services Council (PBSC) which is made up of representatives from the PBS sector, including Professional Bodies.

The PBSC has a Skills & Inclusion working group focussing on apprenticeships, professional qualifications, social mobility, lifelong learning & digital skills and the effects of immigration on access to and retention of talent. This group collaborates with Government to inform and challenge on the key training & development issues facing the sector and provide insight into future directions such as the emergence of new technology and AI which has the potential to impact future ways of working and employment.

For the manufacturing sector, through Made Smarter, our key national industrial digitalisation programme delivered in partnership with industry, developing an upskilling programme is one of our key priorities. We

want to ensure that every worker has the opportunity to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

INEOS

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Ineos about environmental standards; and (1) what steps they have taken, and (2) what correspondence they have had with any public body, as a result of any such discussions. [[HL14858](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government routinely discusses environmental standards as part of its ongoing engagement with key industry bodies and operators, such as Ineos, to ensure high standards of environmental protection are maintained.

The Environment Agency oversees a robust regime for industrial installations to ensure that it takes an integrated approach to pollution control. It routinely engages with a number of operators, including Ineos, to ensure compliance with the UK's environmental regulations.

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the resignation of senior permanent judge Christoph Flüge from the Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at the Hague on the grounds of political interference in the independent judicial functions of the court system by the United States and Turkey. [[HL14963](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We note the resignation of Judge Flüge from the International Residual Mechanism Criminal Tribunal (IRMCT) in January 2019.

The British Government supports the important role of the IRMCT in ending impunity for the most serious international crimes within its remit. We welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's [António Guterres] appointment of Judge Claudia Hoefer of Germany to the IRMCT, who will serve for the remainder of Judge Flüge's term of office.

Iran: Nuclear Power

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last discussed policy towards Iran and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with the government of the United States. [[HL15068](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have been clear with the US about our determination to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action at all levels. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on 5 March regarding Iran, and the British Ambassador in Tehran was in Washington DC meeting a range of

representatives in the US Administration during the week of 11 March.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about reports that Israeli forces killed an unarmed Palestinian man whilst he was assisting the wounded on 20 March. [[HL14986](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As our Consulate General in Jerusalem made clear in a tweet on 28 March we were saddened to learn of the death of a Palestinian medic during an Israeli Defense Forces operation in Bethlehem. It is vital that those delivering medical services are protected. We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and to use appropriate force. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

Israeli Settlements: Companies

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the United Nations about the postponement of the publication of a database of companies operating in illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. [[HL14984](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In March 2016 and March 2017, the UK, along with other EU member states, abstained on the resolution at the UN Human Rights Council which called for the creation of this database. The UK strongly opposed this provision and considered that it went beyond the competence of the Human Rights Council. Human rights obligations are directed at states, and not individuals or businesses, who must determine their trading relationships for themselves; as such, we have no plans to set up an equivalent database. Ultimately it is the decision of an individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The British Government neither encourages nor offers support to such activity.

Israeli Settlements: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the increasing number of attacks on Palestinian farmers by illegal Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; whether they intend to take action in response to any such assessment; if so what; and if not, why not. [[HL14983](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to raise with our Israeli counterparts our concerns about the

destruction of Palestinian agricultural land that has been caused by settlement-related activity. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv most recently raised the issue of settler violence and the importance of accountability with the Israeli authorities on 5 February. The British Government condemns any violence by settlers against Palestinians. Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, has an obligation to take all measures in its power to protect the Palestinian population from all acts of violence.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the attempted attack on two elementary schools in Tuqu village by Israeli settlers escorted by Israeli military forces on 26 March. [[HL14987](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of media reports about the attempted raid on two Palestinian elementary schools in Tuqu village. While we have not raised this specific issue with the Government of Israel, we regularly make clear our concerns about settler attacks to the Israeli authorities.

Jerusalem: Palestinians

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Israeli police cancelled a Mother's Day event at a French culture centre in East Jerusalem. [[HL14985](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware that Israeli authorities temporarily shut down the French Institute in Jerusalem on the grounds that it was to host an event involving an association supported by the Palestinian Authority. While we have not raised this specific issue, our long-standing position is that East Jerusalem is Occupied Palestinian Territory. We regularly raise our concerns about Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, and about the restrictions on freedom of movement within the West Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem, with the Israeli authorities. It remains difficult for Palestinians to enter East Jerusalem for work, education, medical treatment, or religious worship.

Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis

*Asked by **Lord Goodlad***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to improve early diagnosis of Langerhans cell histiocytosis in children. [[HL15001](#)]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: NHS England is committed to improving early diagnosis of all cancers. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, our ambition is to diagnose 75% of patients with cancer at stage 1 and 2 by 2028.

NHS England is currently revising the service specification for children's cancer services. A key focus

of this piece of work is to strengthen existing clinical networks to continue to support the swift referral of children with suspected cancer to the Children's Cancer Principal Treatment Centre for diagnosis and treatment planning.

Marriage

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the recent decision by the government of the Cayman Islands to recognise LGBT relationships in law, what steps they are taking to ensure that LGBT citizens of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, Monserrat, and Northern Ireland have the right to enter into a same sex marriage. [[HL14994](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: After the Cayman Islands court judgement (which has been appealed by the Cayman Island Government) ten Overseas Territories have legal recognition and protection for same sex relationships. The British Overseas Territories are separate, largely self-governing jurisdictions with their own democratically elected representatives. Our relationship with the Overseas Territories is based on partnership and therefore as policy on marriage law is an area of devolved responsibility it should be for the territories to decide and legislate on. As has been demonstrated by recent LGBT cases, the Territories' justice mechanisms and processes should be allowed the space to address these matters. We are working to encourage those Territories that have not put in place arrangements to recognise and protect same sex relationships, to do so, and continue to engage with all the Overseas Territories to ensure that their legislation is compliant with their international human rights obligations. We continue to raise LGBT rights and broader human rights obligations consistently with the leaders of Overseas Territories - both bilaterally, and at the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Councils. This is also a matter that is raised by Governors' Offices.

As marriage is devolved in Northern Ireland, any question of reform to law or policy is rightly one for a devolved Executive and Assembly in Northern Ireland to carefully consider and debate. The Government would hope and encourage a restored Executive to progress legislation on this issue.

Middle East: British Nationals Abroad

*Asked by **Baroness Berridge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British children are living in refugee camps in Syria or in territory that was formerly part of the sovereign states of Syria or Iraq. [[HL14933](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware that some British nationals including children are living in displaced persons camps in Syria but due to the circumstances on the ground, we are not in a position to make an accurate

estimate of the number. The UK has no consular presence within Syria and has advised against all travel to Syria since 2012 because of the dangers associated with the conflict there. We have not been made aware of any British children living in refugee camps in Iraq or elsewhere in the region.

Music: Education

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations in the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education Music Education: State of the Nation, published on 4 February. [HL14887]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendation made in the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education Music Education: State of the Nation, published on 4 February, to add a sixth pillar to the English Baccalaureate covering arts subjects. [HL14888]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: We agree with the All-Party Parliamentary Group's report that all pupils should receive a high quality music education, at least up to age 14. That is why the subject is compulsory in the national curriculum and why this government is providing funding of over £300 million for music education hubs between 2016 and 2020. A report published last year by Birmingham City University (attached) showed that in 2016/17 the hubs taught more than 700,000 children to play a musical instrument with their class.

The national curriculum does not apply in academies, but all state-funded schools have to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. We welcome Ofsted's consultation on a revised education inspection framework which emphasises the importance of a broad and rigorous curriculum

We are also developing a model music curriculum, which will be made freely available to schools and have announced plans to refresh the National Plan for Music Education.

There is no evidence that the introduction of English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is responsible for the reductions in entries to music at GCSE. Since 2009/10, the percentage of the GCSE cohort choosing to take music has fluctuated, but remained broadly stable at between 6 and 7%. The EBacc has been designed to be limited in size in order to allow students to continue to study additional subjects that reflect their individual interests and strengths, including arts subjects. We have no plans to add a sixth pillar.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14887_HL14888_Key_data_on_music_education_hubs
[HL14887_HL14888_Key_data_on_music_education_hubs_2017.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-27/HL14887>

Natural Gas: Housing

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relationship between the clean growth measures announced in the Chancellor's Spring Statement and the recommendations in the report by the Committee on Climate Change UK housing: fit for the future?, published on 21 February, in particular that Committee's proposal to ban gas boilers and cookers from 2025. [HL15042]

Lord Henley: The Future Homes Standard builds on the Industrial Strategy Clean Growth buildings mission to at least halve the energy use of new build property by 2030 and halve the cost of renovating existing buildings to a similar standard as new buildings, while increasing quality and safety. The Future Homes Standard will require all new build homes to have low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency, and will be introduced by 2025.

The Committee on Climate Change are a body that provides independent advice to Government on building a low-carbon economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Their recommendation about new connections to the gas grid is one of several made in the CCC report. The Government is reviewing the CCC's recommendations.

Overseas Students: Tax Yields

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Higher Education Policy Institute and Kaplan International Pathways, The UK's tax revenues from international students post-graduation, published in March, which suggested that the tax and National Insurance payments of a cohort of EU and non-EU students who stay in the UK to work after their studies amounts to £3.2 billion. [HL14885]

Lord Bates: International students make a significant contribution to the UK, beyond any tax payments they make. They enhance our educational institutions; they enrich the experience of domestic students; and they contribute to the £20 billion the education sector generates through education exports and transnational activity each year. The government recently published an International Education Strategy with the aim of increasing the number of international students studying in the UK to 600,000, or by more than 30%, by 2030.

Palestinians: Public Sector

Asked by Lord Polak

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Palestinian Authority's ability to

deliver public services within the Palestinian Territories. [[HL14971](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to the objective of a sovereign and prosperous Palestinian state, living side by side with a safe and secure Israel. That is why we are a key donor to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and why we have put such emphasis on strengthening Palestinian institutions and fostering private sector-led, sustainable economic growth in the West Bank. The UK is concerned about the effects of US and Israeli cuts to the PA's budget on both the PA's ability to deliver essential services to Palestinians and on the prospects for peace and stability in the region. We are also concerned by the PA's decision to not accept reduced clearance revenues from Israel. The PA needs to be financially sustainable to ensure stability, deliver services to Palestinians, and to fulfil its responsibilities under the Oslo Accords. UK aid helps to ensure the PA's financial stability. In 2018/19 UK aid to the PA helped to pay the salaries of 37,600 teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and other health and education public servants. No UK aid is used for payments to Palestinian prisoners or their families.

Post-mortems

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports from the Human Tissue Authority (1) that a memory stick containing images of post-mortems was left on public transport, (2) of multiple organs being lost or misattributed, (3) of organs being kept against the wishes of families, (4) of post mortems being carried out on the wrong bodies, and (5) the findings of the Chester Coroner that human tissue has been removed "without consent"; what action has been taken against those responsible for each such instance; and what steps they have taken to ensure no future such incidents occur. [[HL14928](#)]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The Government assesses data from the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) on reported incidents at quarterly accountability meetings.

When these incidents occur they are upsetting for the families of those involved; although they are rare, when they do happen we are assured that the HTA work with establishments to ensure that a thorough investigation takes place, and that improvements are made to reduce the risk of similar incidents happening again.

Pupils: Reading

Asked by Lord Bird

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the use of school libraries and reading for pleasure in primary and secondary schools. [[HL14935](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It is for individual schools to decide whether to provide and maintain a library service for their pupils. Many head teachers recognise the important role school libraries play in improving literacy and encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and ensure that suitable library facilities are provided. The current national curriculum, introduced from 2014, places greater emphasis on pupils developing the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, as they move through key stage 1 into key stage 2, having first mastered the essentials of phonic decoding. Pupils should read for themselves a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books. From 2016 the end of key stage 2 reading assessment was changed to reflect this more rigorous curriculum.

Refugees: Social Security Benefits

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 20 March (HL Deb, col 1426), which Government departments are responsible for sharing with the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee and non-governmental organisations the results of the evaluation to which she referred; and what is the reason for the delay in the publication of those results given her Written Answer on 25 July 2016 (HL1295) in which she stated that it was intended to publish later that year the evaluation of work with the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure that newly recognised refugees receive their first benefit payment before their Home Office support ended. [[HL14964](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions have worked together to establish and evaluate the success of the "Post Grant Appointment Service", which aims to ensure that newly recognised refugees are able to access mainstream benefits before any support they have been receiving from the Home Office ends 28 days after the grant of their status.

The evaluation has undergone careful data checking and is expected to be shared shortly. DWP Ministers plan to write to the Work and Pensions Select Committee and the Home Office will write to non-governmental organisations.

Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures Highways England have put in place to monitor the performance of highways maintenance contractors; and whether financial penalties are imposed when contractors fail to meet the specified standards. [[HL14913](#)]

Baroness Sugg: Highways England ensures that its supply chain is selected, incentivised and performs in line

with its key performance indicators. Supplier performance is measured on a monthly cycle through the Collaborative Performance Framework process. This scores suppliers on a scale of 0 – 10; the metrics are updated annually.

The contractual arrangements for firms working on the strategic road network provide for both financial reward and penalty depending on performance against the agreed cost of work undertaken. There is also a process of redress for poor quality, including non-compliance with contract, standards or statutory obligation. This ranges from contractors having to bear the cost of correcting defective work through to contract termination.

Sajed Abed al-Hakim Mizher

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Israel following the killing of Sajed Abed al-Hakim Mizher, a uniformed volunteer paramedic, by Israeli forces. [HL15021]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As our Consulate General in Jerusalem made clear in a tweet on 28 March we were saddened to learn of the death of a Palestinian medic during an Israel Defense Force operation in Bethlehem. It is vital that those delivering medical services are protected. We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and to use appropriate force. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

School Meals

Asked by Lord Singh of Wimbledon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all schools provide a non-halal meal option. [HL14917]

Asked by Lord Singh of Wimbledon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of schools that offer only halal meals; and what assessment they have made of the impact of that policy on children in such schools. [HL14918]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government sets out required minimum standards in the attached School Food Standards to ensure that children are served healthy, nutritious meals. The standards do not specify food requirements in terms of cultural and religious needs.

Within these standards, headteachers, governors and their caterers are best placed to make decisions about their school food policies. Information on the types of food provided in schools and the number of schools that offer only halal meals is not held centrally.

Schools should act reasonably in their provision of food, providing choices that take account of cultural, religious and special dietary needs, and we expect them to work with parents in making appropriate arrangements. In particular, schools should consult with parents when making changes to school food provision and ensure parents have access to information on the food provided.

Schools may consider providing both halal and non-halal food each day, or ensuring that dishes are clearly labelled to allow pupils to select the appropriate choice.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL14917_HL14918_School_Food_Regulations_2014
[HL14917_HL14918_School_Food_Standards.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-28/HL14917>

Teachers: Pay

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 5 November 2018 (HL11052), what further discussions they have had with stakeholders regarding centrally employed teachers not covered by the Teachers' Pay Grant. [HL14886]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The teachers' pay grant is to support schools with the cost of the award. Centrally employed teachers make up less than 1% of all classroom teachers, and we anticipate that local authorities will cover the additional increase from existing budgets. While we are distributing the grant on a per pupil formula, we do not have an equivalent basis on which to provide funding to local authorities, given the variability in approach to centrally employing teachers between different authorities. Many centrally employed teachers are employed by music education hubs. We recently announced a £1.33 million increase in funding for music education hubs for 2018/19 and 2019/20 to help with a range of pressures including pay.

Since November, we have discussed this further with a range of stakeholders, including the Local Government Association, other representatives from local authorities and representatives from teacher unions.

Trade Agreements: Nigeria

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in agreeing a new trade agreement with Nigeria. [HL14908]

Baroness Fairhead: When we leave the EU, we will provide the same level of preferential access to Nigeria. The Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Act enables the UK to put in place a UK trade preferences scheme for developing countries, including Nigeria.

A trade agreement between the EU and 16 West African States has been signed by almost all the parties, but it is not currently in force. Therefore, as no agreement is currently being implemented, the UK is not transitioning this agreement.

Trade Agreements: Vanuatu

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in agreeing a new trade agreement with Vanuatu. [HL14909]

Baroness Fairhead: The Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Act enables the UK to put in place a UK trade preferences scheme for developing countries when we leave the EU. This will provide the same level of access as the current EU trade preference scheme, granting duty-free, quota-free access to Least Developed Countries, including Vanuatu.

On 14 March 2019, the UK-Pacific States Economic Partnership Agreement (UK EPA) was signed, providing continuity for businesses, exporters and consumers as the UK prepares to leave the EU. The current parties to the UK EPA are the UK, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

As Vanuatu has not signed the EU-Pacific States EPA it is not party to the transitioned UK EPA, although it is eligible to apply to accede in the future.

Transplant Surgery: Medical Treatments Abroad

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford on 19 March (HL14255), how they have concluded that "very few patients in the UK choose" to travel abroad for organ transplants. [HL14959]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to updating the Human Tissue Act 2004 to ensure that records relating to UK citizens receiving transplant procedures abroad are monitored. [HL14960]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: United Kingdom citizens are advised against travelling to less well-regulated countries to seek an organ transplant.

Data is not collected on people entering the UK who may have had a transplant in another country. Such transplant recipients may or may not become apparent to the National Health Service but the Government does not have any evidence of large-scale travel of British citizens to other regions seeking a transplant. There are no current plans to review the Human Tissue Act 2004.

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss with UK NHS transplant services the

feasibility of establishing a confidential register of those patients who come off the transplant waiting list because they have procured a transplant abroad; and if they do not have any such plans, why they do not. [HL15062]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The Government seeks to promote an ethical approach to organ donation through international conventions and agreements, such as the Council of Europe Convention on Organ Trafficking; the Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism, which encourages all countries to draw up legal and professional frameworks to govern organ donation and transplantation activities; and support to the World Health Organization in its work on organ transplantation.

The Government has no current plans to discuss the feasibility of establishing a confidential register of those patients who come off the transplant waiting list because they have received a transplant outside the United Kingdom. Recipients of transplants outside the UK may or may not come to the attention of NHS services, may have travelled to another country for legitimate reasons and may or may not provide details of the circumstances of any transplant.

Venezuela: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress the European Union International Contact Group on Venezuela has made since its first meeting in Montevideo on 7 February in forging a common international approach to support a peaceful, political and democratic resolution to the situation in Venezuela. [HL14860]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The inaugural meeting of the International Contact Group (ICG) took place in Montevideo on 7 February 2019. The ICG commissioned two Technical Working Groups, one on elections and one on humanitarian aid, that visited Caracas between 20-22 March. The ICG Ministerial meeting in Quito on 28 March agreed to continue work on its twin objectives of securing the right conditions for free and fair Presidential elections and of improving access to humanitarian aid for the Venezuelan population. The ICG also agreed to coordinate more closely with the Lima Group of countries. At the Quito meeting, the EU announced an additional €50 million in emergency assistance to Venezuela, as part of its commitment made in February at the inaugural meeting of the ICG in Montevideo. The ICG will meet again in Costa Rica in May.

The Quito declaration underlined the need to restore Venezuela's full democracy and constitutional order in a peaceful manner, starting with the respect for the constitutional mandate of the democratically elected National Assembly. The solution to the crisis lies in giving the voice back to the people in democratic elections, in line with international standards.

Yemen: Arms Trade

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 28 March (HL14604), whether third parties have provided information about weapons made or sold by British companies that were subsequently used in Yemen; if so, which reports they have received; and what assessment they have made of any such reports. [HL14976]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware that some UK licensed weapons have been used by Saudi Arabia in the conflict in Yemen. We examine every export licence application rigorously on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria including an assessment of whether there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL). We regularly raise the importance of compliance with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the Coalition and draw on a range of sources in making assessments, including NGOs and international organisations and continue to monitor the situation

closely, seeking further information where appropriate. We welcome any further information NGOs and international organisations can provide.

Yemen: Peace Negotiations

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Coventry***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to facilitate an end to the war in Yemen. [HL14938]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has played a leading role in diplomatic efforts, including bringing together key international actors to try to find a peaceful solution. We continue to support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and the UN-led peace process. All parties have reaffirmed their support for the peace process and the Government of Yemen have agreed to the UN redeployment plan but, at this stage, the Houthis have not agreed to the UN plan. It is important that neither side exploits the redeployment process. We urge all parties to co-operate with the Special Envoy and act in good faith to implement the agreements made in Stockholm, including the redeployment of military personnel.

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