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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 17 October 2019

## Aid Sector: Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

[HLWS17]

**Baroness Sugg:** My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development, has today made the following statement:

This week marks one year on since the UK Department for International Development hosted the 2018 Safeguarding Summit, *Putting People First: tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector*.

In early 2018 the aid sector's failure over many years to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) came into sharp relief.

The shocking stories that emerged exposed how aid workers had been allowed to get away with sexual misconduct. Their actions undermined trust in the whole sector and all the positive work that it does.

So from February 2018 DFID set out to work with others to change the way the aid sector tackles SEAH, from root to branch.

The October 2018 summit in London was an important milestone. More than 500 organisations came together to make commitments for change. This included 22 donors - who provide 90% of global ODA. We committed to global standards on prevention and improved processes covering ethical behaviour, robust recruitment and complaints processes.

These were not empty promises. Work is ongoing to put victims and survivors first and drive real culture change across the aid sector. This includes:

- DFID's £10 million project with INTERPOL to help stop perpetrators of SEAH moving around the aid sector by strengthening criminal record checks and information sharing between countries. Regional hubs are being set up and priority countries have been identified.
- The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, which means employers can share data on conduct and disciplinary records related to sexual misconduct with greater confidence. It is still early days, but the over 1,500 requests for information since January have prevented the hiring of at least 10 individuals.
- Awarding the contract this month for DFID's £10 million Resource and Support Hub to provide guidance, support and training to NGOs and others and access to independent investigators for smaller charities.

Today, DFID is publishing three reports showing some of the progress made and the challenges remaining.

The first has updates from each of the eight groups which made commitments at the summit: donors, UK NGOs, private sector suppliers, the United Nations,

International Financial Institutions, CDC, research funders, and Gavi and the Global Fund. Initiatives include new tools and guidance for NGOs; mechanisms to collaborate and learn lessons among private sector suppliers; a new reporting tool for United Nations staff; the development of a Good Guidance Note by International Financial Institutions and CDC; an evidence review of safeguarding challenges by research funders; and the rollout of new training by Gavi and the Global Fund.

The second covers how donors are meeting their commitments. This includes the adoption of a new OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendation on ending SEAH in the aid sector; work to align donor SEAH clauses in funding agreements with multilateral agencies; and collective leverage to drive change across the UN. Donors are continuing to strengthen accountability, build more robust systems and drive culture change across the whole international system. The third gives more details about what DFID has done.

We have been clear that any sexual misconduct is totally unacceptable. But we know that sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector still happens far too often.

The international work led by DFID over the last year has generated good momentum and is starting to deliver results. But we must collectively keep working until every individual feels able to speak up and challenge abuses of power wherever they occur.

We must continue to do all we reasonably can to make zero tolerance a reality, by which we mean responding appropriately to every single report or case.

We must prevent SEAH from happening, listen to those affected, respond appropriately when allegations are made, and learn from every single case.

This is just the beginning of a long-term process.

I will build on the work of my predecessors to maintain momentum, to ensure the failings of the past do not happen again and to deliver better results for the people we serve.

If we do not get things right on safeguarding, and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, then we fail in our ultimate goal to support the world's poorest and jeopardise all the positive work aid does.

The commitments made at the London summit are having a positive impact. But more is required by every organisation and every programme if we are going to stop sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector. Something which we must achieve.

## Boundary Commission for Wales: Deputy Chair

[HLWS20]

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

"I should like to inform the House that I have made the following reappointment under Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986:

- The Honourable Mr Justice Lewis has been re-appointed as Deputy Chair of the Boundary Commission for Wales, effective until 31 December 2019."

### **Double Taxation Agreement: Gibraltar**

[HLWS22]

**The Earl of Courtown:** My honourable friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Clarke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A new Double Taxation Agreement with Gibraltar was mutually accepted in an exchange of letters signed in London on 1 October 2019 and in Gibraltar on 15 October 2019. The texts of the letters will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and made available on the GOV.UK website. The texts will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.

### **Modern Slavery: Annual Report**

[HLWS19]

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

Today, I am publishing the 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery. The Report covers the whole of the UK and has been drafted in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. This report sets out an assessment of the scale of modern slavery in the UK and outlines the actions that have been taken to combat it over the last year.

A copy of the report will be available on Gov.uk and placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### **Radioactive Waste: Geological Disposal**

[HLWS18]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** My hon friend the Minister for Business and Industry (Nadhim Zahawi) has today made the following statement:

Today I am pleased to designate the National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure, which was laid in parliament on 4 July.

This is an important milestone in finding a solution to manage the UK's higher activity radioactive waste and this marks the final step in the parliamentary process for the National Policy Statement.

It is important that we who have benefitted from nuclear technology take appropriate steps now to manage the waste created from using that technology. Nuclear technology has provided clean energy to our homes and

businesses and will continue to play an important role as we transition to a carbon neutral economy. For a long time, we have also used radioactive materials to treat and diagnose serious illnesses, to deliver research and development and to help deliver industrial processes. Radioactive waste is created from a variety of sources including electricity generation, defence and healthcare, and geological disposal is internationally recognised as the safest and most secure means of permanently managing a proportion of this waste not suitable for other management regimes.

The National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure sets out the need for such disposal infrastructure to safely and securely manage the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes. The National Policy Statement provides an appropriate and effective framework for the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to examine and make decisions on development consent applications for geological disposal infrastructure in England.

In order to support the requirements for the designation of the National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure, I am also publishing the Final Habitats Regulations Assessment Report and the Post Adoption Statement for the Appraisal of Sustainability on the department's website.

### **Right to Shared Ownership**

[HLWS21]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement

Two-thirds of social housing tenants would like to buy a home, yet only a quarter believe they will ever be able to do so. That is why I have announced today the government's intention to reinvigorate the home ownership offer for social housing tenants, by introducing a new Right to Shared Ownership.

This will help reduce the gap between ambition and expectation, and make home ownership attainable and affordable for many more social housing tenants. It is part of the government's wider commitment to support people and families from all backgrounds to realise their ambition to own their own home.

The Right to Shared Ownership will give housing association tenants the right to purchase a share of the home they rent and to purchase further shares in future when they can afford to do so. Alongside this, the government will also cut the minimum initial ownership stake from 25% to 10% for all shared ownership homes, making the tenure even more accessible for aspiring homeowners who are struggling to raise a deposit.

This will build on the government's existing proposals to introduce a new national model for shared ownership. This new model will be redesigned to work effectively for

aspiring home owners in today's housing market, for example, by allowing shared owners to buy further shares in smaller increments, cutting the costly fees charged for additional shares and introducing a standardised preferred model to improve mortgage availability. The combined package will make it much easier to buy an initial share and to purchase additional shares in order to build up to full ownership.

The government intends to make the Right to Shared Ownership available to tenants in all new social homes

delivered with grant in the future. Future investment will be considered at a future fiscal event.

We will also work with the housing association sector on a voluntary basis to determine what offer can be made to tenants in existing homes, so that the new Right to Shared Ownership is extended as widely as possible. The Right to Shared Ownership will not apply to tenants living in existing local authority homes, who already have the statutory Right to Buy.

# Written Answers

Thursday, 17 October 2019

## Sovereignty: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote to the people of Northern Ireland the benefits of Northern Ireland forming part of the UK. [HL83]

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether promoting the benefits to Northern Ireland of being part of the UK is one of the core functions of the Northern Ireland Office. [HL85]

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to strengthen Northern Ireland's place within the UK. [HL86]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** This Government has made clear on many occasions that we will never be neutral in expressing our support for the Union. Our steadfast belief is that Northern Ireland's future is best served within a stronger United Kingdom.

The Government and this Department is fully committed to the constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom. Our union is strongest when each of its constituent parts is strong and working together. We remain focussed on ensuring the interests of each nation are fully represented within our union, strengthening the links between our economies and continuing to deliver strong and sustainable devolution.

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic benefits to Northern Ireland of being a part of the UK. [HL84]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** The UK Government believes strongly in upholding the constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom - our four nations are safer, stronger and more prosperous together.

Northern Ireland benefits from being part of the world's sixth largest economy. The UK's integrated internal market means there are no barriers to doing business for companies and people trading across the nations within the UK – creating jobs and prosperity across the country.

Northern Ireland also benefits from the highest public spending per head (£11,190) in the UK - around 20% (£1,883) higher than the UK spend per head (£9,159).

Moreover, over half (53%) of all external sales from Northern Ireland are to the rest of the UK, and half of external visitors to Northern Ireland are from the rest of the UK, with a total of 1.4million visitors in 2018.

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