[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.

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Written Statements

Monday, 4 November 2019

Armed Forces Training: Ukraine

Baroness Goldie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The UK military training mission in Ukraine, Operation Orbital has been extended by a further three years to March 2023. UK Armed Forces personnel deployed on Operation Orbital have trained over 17,500 members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine since 2015. It is much appreciated by the Ukrainians and has helped to save lives. The training is focused on building the resilience and capacity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It includes the identification of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), infantry skills, medical care and logistics. In 2018, the training was expanded to include anti-armour, counter-sniping and mortar planning. In early 2019, Operation Orbital was expanded to include training and support to the Ukrainian Navy. We intend to develop it further over the next three years with more focus on maritime support and at the institutional and operational level.

This extension of Operation Orbital will mean we can train thousands more personnel in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and continue to make a real difference in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group: Annual Report

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am pleased to announce the publication of the first annual report of the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group. The Group was established to meet the current needs for ethical review following the expansion of the National DNA Database Ethics Group remit and provides Ministers with independent advice on matters relating to data ethics and ethical issues in forensic science and biometrics.

I would like to thank the Group for their strategic advice concerning the use of biometric identifiers and for their continued oversight of the work of the Forensic Information Databases Service Strategy Board. Technologies pertaining to forensics and biometrics are rapidly evolving and the recommendations from the Group are more relevant than ever before, particularly with the expansion of the group’s remit this year to include ethical problems posed by analysis of large data sets.

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

Cabinet Office: Work of the Department

Earl Howe: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Oliver Dowden) has made the following statement to the House of Commons:

The Cabinet Office sits at the heart of government, overseeing the delivery of the Prime Minister’s priorities and policies, and ensuring that taxpayers’ money is focused on high-quality public services. The Government needs to do more, and better, for less, and we are achieving this with new ways of working. Procurement has undergone significant reform since the collapse of Carillion, the construction company, in 2018.

Between 2010 and 2015, the Cabinet Office helped drive government efficiencies of £52bn. Its work to cut costs and make savings, while supporting departments to operate more effectively, has continued at pace across digital, procurement, fraud and beyond. At the same time, the Cabinet Office has focused on improving infrastructure delivery, maintaining the integrity of the Union and co-ordinating national security. It has also launched significant new initiatives, including improved cyber-security, the Office for Veterans’ Affairs and the Geospatial Commission.

Value for taxpayers through outsourcing and commercial policy reform

Government departments are working more closely with industry on quality public services and value for money, driving a reform agenda from the ‘Outsourcing Playbook’ of guidelines, rules and principles launched in February 2019. This complements existing compulsory guidance, such as HM Treasury’s Green and Orange Books.

It also builds on our investment since 2010 in a stronger functional model, which has released significant cash and operational benefits through robust central leadership. In all, 14 Government Functions across the Civil Service affect every civil servant and every part of government. Each function sets strategies for efficiency and effectiveness, driving continuous improvement and leading to better quality services for citizens.

We estimate that from 2016/17, at least £2.5 billion in commercial benefits has been achieved by the Central Commercial Team, working with departments. In addition, we estimate that central procurement expertise and frameworks have delivered around £2 billion of benefits.

Our Debt Function, and its innovative Debt Market Integrator policy – which provides additional capacity and capability – has collected at least £400m between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Our Fraud and Error Function established the world’s first Profession for Counter Fraud. It has identified counter fraud and error savings of at least £300m across government since 2017 and helped save at least £200m via National Fraud Initiatives. It promotes the UK as a world leader in public sector counter fraud, well-
positioned to share international best practice and contribute to the global fight against fraud and corruption.

The Grants Management Function has developed the Government Grants Information System – the most comprehensive picture of the grants landscape published by Government online. Across government it has helped managers to make more effective grants and has enabled the identification of inefficiencies and fraud, delivering value for money on taxpayers’ spending.

Cutting property costs from the central government estate

The government is also transforming its use of land and property. In 2017/18 we cut running costs for central government estates by £22m and took out 156,000 square metres – contributing to wider running cost savings of £760m, in real terms, since 2010. Since 2015, sales of surplus property have raised an estimated £2.5 billion. Since 2013, the One Public Estate programme has invested £70m across the public sector, including local government. This has supported the collection of over £140m in capital receipts and saving over £20m of running costs.

Harnessing the power of digital for government and the public

Making government digital has been a major reform area since 2017. We estimate that from 2016/17 the Government Digital Service has enabled total benefits of around £1.9 billion with its advice on more streamlined and value-for-money approaches. The public has responded positively to our focus on digital: the number of users accessing GOV.UK Verify rose by 4.5 million between October 2017 and October 2019.

Supporting our veterans with better long-term outcomes

The UK aims to lead the world in its support for veterans. From its position at the centre of government, the new Office for Veterans’ Affairs ensures that every department plays its part in bringing about better outcomes for veterans, particularly in terms of their mental health, jobs and homes. With £5 million of funding secured for next year, the OVA will ensure that departments work together, and with charities, to support veterans and showcase their contributions to society during and after leaving service.

Unlocking economic value through the new Geospatial Commission

The Cabinet Office aims to unlock up to £11 billion of economic value a year by making better location data accessible. A new digital map of underground pipes and cables will help save lives and reduce disruption caused by their being struck in error: pilot projects have begun in London and the North East. We are on track to deliver our National Geospatial Strategy in spring 2020, and also the digital OpenMastermap commitment.

Strengthening the UK’s cyber security

In its cyber interventions. Through diplomacy we seek to build consensus on the universal benefits of a free, open and secure cyberspace and shape the development of norms that dovetail with our values.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment (Mims Davies MP) has made the following Written Statement.

The UK did not attend the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) in Brussels on 24 October 2019.

The UK Government has decided that from 1 September until exit day, UK Ministers and officials will only attend EU meetings where the UK has a significant national interest in the outcome of the discussions.

Government Business: Pre-election Period

Earl Howe: My Hon. Friend the Minister for the Constitution (Chloe Smith) has made the following Written statement to the House of Commons:

The Prime Minister has today written to ministerial colleagues providing guidance on the conduct of government business during the pre-election period. The Cabinet Secretary has also issued guidance to civil servants on their conduct during this period. The guidance comes into force at 00:01 on Wednesday 6th November.

Copies of the documents have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and published on Gov.uk.

The Statement includes the following attached material:


The material can be viewed online at: http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2019-11-04/HLWS80/

Home Office: Work of the Department

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

Today I am updating Parliament on the work of the Home Office since 2010.

The first duty of government is to protect the public. Since 1782, the Home Office has led work to keep the country safe from those who seek to do the country and its citizens harm. In doing so, we make a vital contribution to the Government’s plan for a stronger, fairer and outward-looking country.

The Home Office has a responsibility to tackle crime, fight terrorism, and secure our borders.
Crime, Policing and Fire

The government has promoted public safety by strengthening policing capabilities, our response to serious violence, domestic abuse and extremism, strengthened our response to fires and civil emergencies and the harm that they cause and strengthened the safeguards on which vulnerable people rely.

We have strengthened the local democratic accountability of police forces through the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 2013, enabled greater collaboration between emergency services by providing powers for PCCs to take on responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services (Policing and Crime Act 2017), providing powers for PCCs, and supporting strong and integrated city regions with Mayors performing the role of a PCC.

We have supported our frontline police officers by providing £7.5 million to fund the National Police Wellbeing Service and a £10 million fund to support the deployment of Tasers. We announced at the Queen’s speech plans for a Police Protection Bill to put the Police Covenant on a statutory footing – giving legal protection to police drivers when pursuing a subject or responding to an emergency, and allowing Special Constables to join the Police Federation.

We responded to increased demands on our police, by providing the best police funding settlement in a decade in 2019/20, with total funding increasing by over £1 billion (including council tax) and by launching a recruitment campaign for 20,000 additional police officers over the next three years. £144 million was awarded, over a five-year period, for an uplift in armed policing capability and capacity in England and Wales to ensure we can respond more quickly and effectively to a terrorist attack (2017/18).

We have tackled the harm caused by drugs and serious violence through a new drug driving offence (Crime and Courts Act 2013), new powers to seize drug cutting agents (Serious Crime Act 2015), tackling ‘legal highs’ (Psychoactive Substances Act 2016), tougher controls on knives and corrosive substances (Offensive Weapons Act 2019), funding £100 million in 2019/20 to support a surge in police operational activity and investing in Violence Reduction Units. By establishing the National County Lines Coordination Centre that has led to over 2,500 arrests, over 3,000 individuals engaged for safeguarding, and significant seizures of weapons and drugs. We have also changed the law to allow specialist clinicians to prescribe medicinal cannabis in 2018. For the first time in the UK, expert doctors have been given the option to legally issue prescriptions for cannabis-based medicines when they agree that their patients could benefit from this treatment. However, we are clear that this does not pave the way towards legalising cannabis for recreational use.

We have also introduced measures to reduce and prevent crime to ensure people feel safe in their homes and communities. We have invested £222 million to support early intervention programmes that prevent and tackle serious violence, and an additional £200 million in 2018 for the Youth Endowment Fund to support important work in the community to prevent vulnerable children and young people from being drawn into crime and violence. We also launched a £25 million Safer Streets Fund this year to help areas put measures in place to prevent burglary, theft and other offences in crime hotspots.

We have protected people from harm and supported victims, by tackling forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) through the creation of FGM Protection Orders and new criminalised breach of Forced Marriage Protection Orders (2015), a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM (2015), extended extra-territorial jurisdiction over FGM offences committed abroad (2015), and brought in a new FGM mandatory reporting duty (2015). We have protected people from domestic abuse by providing access to information through ‘Clare’s Law’, committing £100 million (£80 million announced in 2016; an additional £20 million announced in 2017) to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls. We also announced at the Queen’s speech that we would strengthen the protection and support for victims and their children through the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

We have tackled the harm caused by extremism through empowering 253 locally-led projects to challenge extremist narratives and increase the resilience of communities as part of our Building a Stronger Britain Together programme that has awarded around £9 million of government funding since 2015, and through establishing the Commission for Countering Extremism in 2018 to drive innovative thinking on how best to tackle extremism. We also launched the first Counter-Extremism Strategy in 2015 to protect communities from the wider social harms caused by extremism. We also increased our funding for security measures to protect religious institutions from hate crime. We have awarded approximately £1.5 million to protect over 130 places of worship through our Places of Worship Protective Security Programme.

We have published plans to ensure we can keep the public safe online. Working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), we published the Online Harms White Paper earlier this year that sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. This package comprises of legislative and non-legislative measures and will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to deal with harmful content to keep their users safe.

We have supported Fire and Rescue Services to protect the public from fire in England, with the ‘Fire Kills’ campaign contributing to a sustained fall in the number of fires and casualties, strengthening national capabilities to respond to major incidents including flooding, wildfires, or terrorist attacks, and providing stronger national leadership and accountability through the creation of an inspection regime (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, HMICFRS) in

**Serious and Organised Crime**

The Home Office has also strengthened its response to tackling serious and organised crime.

We created the National Crime Agency (NCA) in 2013 to lead and coordinate UK law enforcement’s response to serious and organised crime by strengthening the UK’s borders, fighting economic crime, fraud, corruption and cybercrime, and protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation and abuse. Since 2013, NCA operations have led to over 12,800 arrests in the UK and overseas, and over 8,200 children safeguarded. We also have disrupted serious and organised crime by establishing a network of Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs).

We published a new Serious and Organised Crime Strategy in 2018 to tackle the evolving threat and the increasing resilience and adaptability of criminal networks. The overarching strategic aim is that there will be no safe space for serious and organised criminals to operate. On the 29 October we announced a review that will enhance the response to serious and organised crime. The review will look to identify ways of bolstering the response to threats such as county lines, people trafficking and drugs.

We have tackled the harm of modern slavery by becoming the first country in the world to introduce dedicated modern slavery legislation (Modern Slavery Act 2015) that included Slavery and Trafficking Prevention and Risk Orders, and ensured perpetrators can receive a maximum life sentence for these appalling crimes and by establishing the UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner. We have also invested £33.5 million into the Modern Slavery Fund, delivered an ambitious package of reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and launched the Single Competent Authority in 2019. We have seen a six-fold increase since December 2016 in the number of police led modern slavery operations (over 1,200 live operations as at the end of 2018/19).

We have made a significant investment in tackling all forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse in recent years and the step change in our response is already drawing this hidden crime out of the shadows as demonstrated by a 227% increase in reporting of child sexual abuse offences to police since 2013. We have announced an additional £30 million to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation and abuse. This additional funding, taken together with an additional 20,000 officers and more money for prosecutors and prison places, will help us redouble our efforts to tackle child sexual abuse. The additional funding will build on our significant investment in recent years, which included £40 million in a package of measures to protect children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation in February 2017 and a further uplift of £21 million to improve how our law enforcement agencies reduce the volume of offending and pursue the most dangerous and prolific offenders announced in September 2018. In 2016 we joined up all UK police forces, and the National Crime Agency, were connected to the Child Abuse Image Database, allowing them to identify and protect victims quicker than before. We are also leading international efforts to tackle what is a cross-border crime through the Five Country Ministerial and the UK-funded WePROTECT Global Alliance Summit.

We have tackled cybercrime through launching cybercrime units in each of the 43 police forces across England and Wales, and teams to tackle illicit use of the Dark Web across Regional and Organised Crime Units. We also established the National Cyber Crime Unit in 2013, a powerful new unit within the National Crime Agency to collaborate with partners to fight cybercrime, protect the public and reduce harm to the UK from online crime.

We have recognised the impact that economic crime has on the public and how this underpins serious and organised crime. The National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) was established to act as the national authority for the UK’s law enforcement response, which froze £65 million worth of assets in the first year and in 2018/19 almost £217 million of the proceeds of crime was collected. The global standard-setter for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, the Financial Action Task Force, assessed in 2018 that the UK has the strongest regime of over 60 countries assessed to date. Since 2014, the Joint Money Laundering Taskforce has provided a mechanism for law enforcement and the financial sector to share information and work more closely to tackle money laundering and economic crime. In January 2019, the Government established a new public-private partnership to tackle economic crime, and in July 2019 we published a new Asset Recovery Action plan and a Public-Private Economic Crime plan. We also introduced new legislation, the Criminal Finances Act 2017, that improved our ability to tackle money laundering and corruption, recover the proceeds of crime and counter terrorist financing. This included the creation of unexplained wealth orders that required those suspected of corruption to explain the sources of their wealth, and helped to facilitate the recovery of illicit wealth, stopping criminals using the UK as a safe haven for the proceeds of international corruption.

**Security and Counter Terrorism**

The Home Office is responsible keeping the United Kingdom safe from the threat of terrorism.

We have equipped our law enforcement and emergency responders with capabilities to protect citizens against the threat from terrorism and provided an additional £160 million for counter-terrorism policing this year (2019-20) taking funding for counter-terrorism policing to over £800 million. Since July 2010 to June 2019 there have been 2,661 persons arrested, with 1,667 charged for terrorism-related activity under the Terrorism Act of 2000 and subsequent legislation. In addition, we continue to provide executive oversight of MI5, under the Security Service Act 1989 (amended in 1996).

We have introduced legislation which balanced new powers to help the UK respond to the threat of terrorism
and protect the public with safeguards for civil liberties. We introduced the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 to close gaps in existing counter-terrorism legislation and ensure compatibility with the digital age, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 increased the legal powers and capabilities of law enforcement and intelligence agencies to disrupt terrorism and prevent individuals from being radicalised, and the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 (TPIMs) introduced a new system to replace the Control Order system.

We strengthened our response to tackling terrorism following the attacks in 2017 that claimed 36 lives and changed the lives of many more. We launched a strengthened Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) in 2018; introduced the Victims of Terrorism Unit to ensure support to all those affected by terror attacks in the UK and overseas; and both MI5 and counter-terrorism policing conducted reviews to learn lessons and improve the operational response.

The Home Office has stopped and prevented dangerous groups from harming UK citizens. We have added 33 groups to the list of proscribed organisations, extended the proscription of Hizballah and implemented 10 name change orders covering 20 aliases. The Home Office has also hardened the country’s defences against hostile state activity. Following the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury in March 2018, we worked with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to expel 23 Russian diplomats who had been identified as undeclared Russian intelligence officers. The Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 included a power for the police to stop individuals at UK ports and the Northern Ireland border area to determine if they are or have been involved in hostile state activity, and we are currently considering whether further primary legislation is required in this area. We have also ensured the removal of people who pose a threat to this country to keep our citizens safe. We enabled the deportation of Abu Qatada and removal of other terror suspects who pose a risk to the safety of this country and whose presence would not be conducive to the public good. We achieved the extradition of Abu Hamza to the US where he has been convicted of serious terrorist charges.

We have ensured that communities are safe by preventing vulnerable individuals from radicalisation and rehabilitating them where necessary. We have provided support to individuals assessed as being vulnerable to radicalisation through the Channel programme. During 2017/2018, a total of 7,318 individuals were referred to the Prevent programme with 1,314 individuals referred onto, and supported by, Channel. We have also worked with Civil Society Organisations to deliver Prevent Local Projects to around 300,000 people from 2014 to build resilience to terrorist and extremist ideology.

We have worked to ensure that we tackle terrorism and protect our citizens by working with tech companies to remove illegal terrorist content from the Internet. We showed global leadership by playing a key role in the establishment of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism to ensure international coordination on this issue, and we announced in 2018 the development of new technology to automatically detect terrorist video content on any online platforms.

We have developed and implemented robust investigatory capabilities with strong privacy protections enabled by the world-leading Investigatory Powers Act 2016, which maintains essential powers and enhances safeguards to underpin intelligence agency and law enforcement operations to protect the public. We have signed the world-first Data Access Agreement with the US, which will strengthen and speed up investigations into organised crime, child abuse and other serious crimes. We have also established a world-leading oversight regime through the office of Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC) to oversee the use of these powers, and the Office for Communications Data Authorisations, under the remit of the IPC, that independently authorises requests for communications data. On encryption, we have led international efforts to stop companies designing out their ability to access communications, even where this access is necessary to save lives.

We have also published the world leading Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Strategy in October 2019 that will allow us to harness and safeguard the economic and social potential drones can bring to the UK and to protect the public from malicious or negligent use.

Border, Immigration and Citizenship System

We have tackled illegal immigration by doubling the maximum penalty for employing an illegal worker to £20,000, simplifying right to work checks and strengthening the ability to collect unpaid penalties (Immigration Act 2014). These measures allowed us to deport foreign criminals under “deport first; appeal later”; shut down bogus colleges; and crack down on illegal working and sham marriages. We also introduced the Immigration Act 2016 provided new powers for councils to crackdown on unscrupulous landlords and evict illegal migrants more quickly, extended the successful ‘deport first; appeal later’ measures, and created a new offence of illegal working which means people who are here illegally can’t benefit from working.

We have tackled Foreign National Offenders, deporting almost 50,000 since 2010 and are legislating to increase the penalties for those seeking to enter in breach of their deportation order. In 2018/19, Immigration Enforcement made 593 disruptions (of these 71 were major) against individuals and organised crime groups (OCGs) involved in the exploitation of people through modern slavery and organised immigration crime. This is an increase of 42% and 41% respectively on the previous year for the number of total disruptions and major disruptions.

The Immigration Act 2016 also introduced the Immigration Health Surcharge to ensure migrants coming to the UK for a time-limited period contribute to the National Health Service, and the Immigration Skills
Charge that placed a levy on businesses to help improve the skills of British workers.

We have transformed our visa operations with the same-day Super Priority Visa service, the only European country to offer a visa decision in 24 hours. We have also reformed the study visa system to tackle abuse, while at the same time the UK remains the second most popular destination in the world for students. University sponsored applications increased by 11% last year to over 202,000 – the highest ever level, and 31% higher than in 2010/11. We have worked with the scientific community to develop a new fast-track visa route for the brightest and best, with a view to launching it later this year. The fast-track immigration route will be designed to attract elite researchers and specialists in science, engineering and technology, ranging from those at the very start of their careers to the winners of internationally recognised prizes and fellowships.

We have tightened up our controls on borders and immigration ahead of and in preparation for our departure from the EU by recruiting up to 1,000 additional Border Force staff. We have committed to end to freedom of movement between the EU and the UK and pave the way for a new points-based system. We have extended ePassport gates to nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United States showing that global Britain is already open for business.

We have strengthened our borders to help tackle the trafficking of drugs and illegal goods. Border Force made 43,930 drug seizures from FY 2010/11 to 2017/18, with an increase in annual drug seizures from 3,954 in 2010/11 to 6,545 in 2017/18.

We successfully developed and launched the EU Settlement Scheme in March 2019, a free scheme enabling EU citizens resident in the UK to obtain the status they will require to live and work in the UK in future. The latest internal figures show there have been over 2.2 million applications and more than 1.8 million people have been granted status. We are processing up to 20,000 applications a day.

We have reduced asylum claims made in Britain from a peak of 84,000 in 2002 to around half that. In order to dissuade people from making the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean, we have resettled 17,000 of the most vulnerable refugees affected by the conflict in Syria since 2015 and are on track to reach our commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees by 2020. We also increased the amount of money we pay to local authorities to look after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children by up to 33% in May 2019. We granted protection to 18,519 people in year ending June 2019 (up 29% from the previous year).

The Government deeply regrets what happened to some members of the Windrush generation and has made it clear that responding to this is a priority. On 24 May 2018 the Home Office announced the Windrush Scheme, which ensures that people affected directly, their children born in the UK and those who arrived in the UK as minors can apply for citizenship, or various other immigration products, free of charge. In total, 8,124 individuals have been granted some form of documentation, either under the initial arrangements put in place prior to the establishment of the Windrush Scheme or under the Windrush Scheme itself.

**Independent Reporting Commission: Second Substantive Report**

[HLWS69]

**Lord Duncan of Springbank: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Julian Smith MP) has today made the following statement:**

I have received the second substantive report from the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC).

The IRC emanated from the Fresh Start Agreement of November 2015. The Agreement set out the Northern Ireland Executive’s commitments around tackling paramilitary activity and associated criminality. This work continues to be taken forward through a Northern Ireland Executive Action Plan which contains 43 recommendations.

This second substantive report builds on the work already undertaken by the Commissioners. While the report provides an update on progress achieved to date, the Commission rightly continues to remind us of the challenging work still to be done. Also, as my predecessor referenced last year, the absence of a functioning Executive continues to have an adverse impact on delivery of this important work. I remain resolute in finding a way forward in relation to that.

I would like to thank the Commissioners for all of their work to date.

**Judicial Conduct Investigations Office: Annual Report**

[HLWS73]

**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:**

"With the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice, I will today publish the thirteenth annual report of the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO).

The JCIO supports the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord Chancellor in our joint statutory responsibility for judicial discipline.

The judiciary comprises approximately 23,000 individuals serving across a range of jurisdictions. Over the past year, the JCIO received 1,672 complaints against judicial office holders. 55 investigations resulted in disciplinary action.

I have placed copies of the report into the libraries of both Houses, the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office. Copies are also available online at: [https://judicialconduct.judiciary.gov.uk/reports-publications/](https://judicialconduct.judiciary.gov.uk/reports-publications/)"
Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000: Statutory Review of Sums

Earl Howe: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Oliver Dowden) has made the following statement to the House of Commons:

As required under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), this statement confirms that the Government will not be making an Order during the course of this Parliament to alter the specified sums and reporting thresholds for (broadly) donations and loans to political parties and candidates.

PPERA allows the Secretary of State or the Minister for the Cabinet Office to amend the majority of the sums and reporting thresholds contained in the Act by Order. This can be done either to reflect an alteration in the value of money (e.g. arising from a change in inflation rates) or to give effect to a recommendation made by the Electoral Commission.

Where the Secretary of State or the Minister for the Cabinet Office decides not to amend the sums contained in Part 4, Part 4A, Schedule 11, section 95(B)(6), Schedule 11A, Schedule 15 and Schedule 19A of the Act, a statement must be made to Parliament explaining why. Broadly, these provisions set the sums and reporting thresholds relating to donations and loans to political parties and permitted participants in referendums.

The Government had no grounds to consider the existing sums in PPERA to be inappropriate. With the date now set for an early General Election on 12th December, we are now unable to prepare and lay secondary legislation by the end of this Parliament in any event.

Shale Gas Exploration

Lord Duncan of Springbank: My Rt hon friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Andrea Leadsom) has today made the following statement:

This statement provides an update on the Government’s policy regarding shale gas exploration.

The Government continues to recognise the importance of natural gas as a source of secure and affordable energy as we aim to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Committee on Climate Change predict that we will still be consuming almost 70% of the gas we consume today in 2050 under our net zero target as significant reductions across building, industry and power are offset by demand for gas to produce hydrogen. It is therefore critical that the UK continues to have good access to natural gas from both domestic and international markets.

Given shale gas has the potential to provide a new source of domestic energy, the Government has supported the development of the UK shale gas industry. Domestic gas production provides jobs and other economic benefits.

The industry is currently in an exploration phase and the Government has always been clear that it will only allow development in a way which is safe and sustainable – both for the environment and local people. We have therefore taken a precautionary, evidence-based approach to exploring this potential, underpinned by world-leading environmental and safety regulations.

Following seismic events in 2011 that were connected to shale gas exploration, the Government introduced regulations to mitigate these risks. A ‘Traffic Light System’ was introduced to monitor real-time seismic activity during operations, with a clear framework for stopping operations in the event of specified levels of seismic activity.

The Government also introduced tighter controls over the shale gas industry through the Infrastructure Act 2015. This included the requirement for operators to obtain Hydraulic Fracturing Consent from the Secretary of State which requires careful consideration and detailed scrutiny of the necessary technical and legislative requirements. This Consent ensures that all the necessary environmental and health and safety permits have been obtained before activities can commence.

While the regulatory and legal framework for shale gas activities has operated effectively to date, it is right that Government and regulators regularly review whether it remains fit for purpose in light of further evidence from shale gas operations.

Cuadrilla, a private company exploring for onshore oil and gas, obtained Hydraulic Fracturing Consent in 2018 to undertake shale gas exploration activity at their site at Preston New Road, Lancashire. Hydraulic fracturing operations took place in 2018 and 2019. Their operations were tightly controlled by the relevant independent regulators, including the Oil and Gas Authority, who are responsible for regulating the licensing of exploration and development of England’s onshore oil and gas reserves, including shale gas.

Following a seismic event of magnitude 2.9 on 26th August 2019, hydraulic fracturing at Preston New Road was suspended by the Oil and Gas Authority, in accordance with its strict regulatory controls. While seismicity was at a level below that at which we would expect significant damage, seismic activity at this level does impact local communities and was clearly unacceptable. An event of this significance was considered highly unlikely in the detailed plan that Cuadrilla provided to the regulator before their activities began.

In parallel to their action following the 26th August 2019 event, the Oil and Gas Authority have been analysing in detail data drawn from Cuadrilla’s earlier operations that took place at Preston New Road last year. This included commissioning a series of expert reports to better understand and learn from the induced seismicity observed in 2018. The Government has recently received these reports and they are being published alongside a summary of their findings by the Oil and Gas Authority today. The Oil and Gas Authority summary report
contains a number of findings and interim conclusions and highlights that the causes of seismicity are highly dependent on local geology. While we cannot draw definitive direct comparisons between this site-specific evidence and other prospective shale gas sites, the limitations of current scientific evidence mean it is difficult to predict the probability and maximum magnitude of any seismic events, either in the Fylde or in other locations.

The Government has always been clear that we will take a precautionary approach and only support shale gas exploration if it can be done in a safe and sustainable way, and that we will be led by the science on whether this is indeed possible. It remains our policy to minimise disturbance to those living and working nearby, and to prevent the risk of any damage.

The Oil and Gas Authority intends to commission further research to incorporate new data from Cuadrilla’s more recent operations. The Oil and Gas Authority has made clear that it cannot evaluate with confidence whether a proposal to resume hydraulic fracturing in the Fylde, or to start operations elsewhere, will not cause unacceptable levels of seismicity. The OGA are therefore unlikely to approve future Hydraulic Fracture Plans unless new evidence is presented.

On the basis of the current scientific evidence, Government is confirming today that it will take a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consents. This position, an effective moratorium, will be maintained until compelling new evidence is provided which addresses the concerns around the prediction and management of induced seismicity. While future applications for Hydraulic Fracturing Consent will be considered on their own merits by the Secretary of State, in accordance with the law, the shale gas industry should take the Government’s position into account when considering new developments.

Finally, alongside the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, I can confirm that the Government will not be taking forward proposed planning reforms in relation to shale gas that were subject to consultation last year. These include the proposals on the principles of a permitted development right for non-hydraulic exploratory shale gas development; making community pre-application consultation compulsory for shale gas development; and proposals to bring shale production development into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime. Full Government responses which summarise the responses to these consultations have been published today.

**Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Guardian’s Allowance**

**The Earl of Courtown:** My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Rishi Sunak) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The government will bring forward regulations that will increase most tax credits rates and thresholds and will increase the Child Benefit and Guardian’s Allowance rates in line with the general rise in prices as measured by the September 2019 Consumer Price Index. The annual up-rating of benefits will take place for Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Guardian’s Allowance in the first full week of the tax year. In 2020, this will be the week beginning 6 April.

The annual up-rating process takes into account a variety of measures:
- The majority of working-age benefits were frozen at their 2015/16 levels for four years under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. From April 2020, the majority of elements and thresholds in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit will be increased by CPI (1.7%). In line with established practice and the Office for Budget Responsibility’s expectations in their welfare forecast, the maximum rate of the childcare element, the family element, the withdrawal rate and the income disregards will remain unchanged.
- Child Benefit will be increased in line with CPI (1.7%) from April 2020.
- As set out in legislation, Guardian’s Allowance will be uprated in line with prices, measured by CPI (1.7%).

The full list of proposed benefit and credit rates will be placed in the Libraries of the House in due course.

**Terrorism**

**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, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) changed the UK national terrorism threat level from ‘SEVERE’ to ‘SUBSTANTIAL’. This means that a terrorist attack is likely.

The decision to change the threat level is taken by JTAC independently of Ministers. JTAC conducts a formal review of the terrorism threat level every six months.

This is a systematic, comprehensive and rigorous process, based on the very latest intelligence and analysis of internal and external factors which drive the threat.

Despite the change in the threat level, terrorism remains one of the most direct and immediate risks to our National Security.

‘SUBSTANTIAL’ continues to indicate a high level of threat; and an attack might well occur without further warning.

As ever, the public should remain vigilant and report any concerns they may have to the police.

Government, police and intelligence agencies will continue to work tirelessly to address the threat posed by
terrorism in all its forms. The threat level is kept under constant review.

**UK Space Agency: Sustainable Development**

**Lord Duncan of Springbank:** My Rt hon friend the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore) has today made the following statement:

The UK Space Agency is offering up to £8 million in grant funding to tackle sustainable development challenges in developing and emerging countries.

These challenges include the growing need for developing countries around the world to build resilience to the effects of climate change. Today’s funding will help to forge new partnerships with countries and better understand their needs.

This round of funding includes a collaboration with Australia’s national science agency CSIRO, who will provide match funding and invite UK organisations and other international partners to work with them on projects to deliver sustainable benefits to Small Island Developing States in the Pacific.

The funding comes from the UK Space Agency’s International Partnership Programme, a £30 million-a-year programme funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund.

Through supporting satellite-led information projects, the International Partnership Programme makes a real and practical difference to the lives of citizens and builds skills and expertise.

This is the third round of funding from the International Partnership Programme, which already supports 33 projects in 44 countries. These projects help developing countries tackle a wide range of challenges including deforestation, food security and disaster resilience.

In addition, this call invites consortia to bid on any topic with any developing country. This will help to forge new partnerships with countries and understand their needs ahead of a follow-on funding call to underpin operational capabilities.

The International Partnership Programme is the world’s largest space for sustainable development programme, involving 120 UK organisations and 147 international organisations since 2016. I’m pleased to note that the programme was recently recognised by Space & Satellite Professionals International in the “Better Satellite World” Awards.

**Unauthorised Encampments: Police Powers**

**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 am I announcing the Government’s plans to consult on criminalising the act of trespassing when setting up an unauthorised encampment in England and Wales. I recognise the distress and misery that some unauthorised encampments cause to many communities and businesses across the country. Currently, this kind of trespass is a civil matter and the powers available to the police are limited.

My predecessor, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, announced to the House of Commons on 6 February that we would carry out a public consultation on amending the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to lower the criteria that must be met for the police to be able to direct people away from unauthorised sites. He also announced that the Home Office would conduct a review into how trespassing while setting up an unauthorised encampment could be made a criminal offence in England and Wales, learning lessons from other countries like the Republic of Ireland, where this is already a criminal offence.

I am announcing today that having considered the legislation in the Republic of Ireland, I would like to test the appetite to go further than the original proposals. I would like to broaden the existing categories of criminal trespass to cover trespassers on land who are there with the purpose of residing in their vehicle for any period, and to give the police the relevant powers to arrest offenders in situ and to seize any vehicles or other property on unauthorised encampments promptly.

Tomorrow, we will launch a public consultation on whether criminalising unauthorised encampments would be preferable to the amendments we originally proposed to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and if so, how it should work. The consultation will be available at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-police-powers-to-tackle-unauthorised-encampments and will be open for four months. A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

I thank Members for their continued engagement on this important issue.

**Welfare and Pensions Update**

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey MP) has made the following Written Statement.

I am announcing the proposed social security benefit and pension rates for 2020/21.

More than 10 million people in receipt of working-age benefits will see their payments increase at the rate of inflation next year.

2.5 million people on Universal Credit and claimants on legacy benefits will receive a 1.7% rise in April. This includes people receiving Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.
The basic and new State Pensions will increase at the highest rate for eight years, by 3.9%, boosting the retirement incomes of 13 million people. Pensioners receiving the full new State Pension will get an extra £344 a year. The basic State Pension will increase by £263 a year.

The Pension Credit standard minimum guarantee for a couple will be £265.20 a week, the basic State Pension will be £134.25 per week, the full rate of the new State Pension will be £175.20 per week, and the Universal Credit standard allowance couple one or both over 25 will be £507.37 a month.

The annual up-rating of benefits will take place for state pensions and most other benefits in the first full week of the tax year. In 2020, this will be the week beginning 6 April.

A corresponding provision will be made in Northern Ireland and the Scottish Government will lay its own statutory instrument in respect of increases to Carer’s Allowance in Scotland.

The annual up-rating process takes into account a variety of measures:

• The basic and new State Pensions will be increased by the Government’s ‘triple lock’ commitment, meaning that they will be up-rated in line with the highest of prices (CPI), earnings or 2.5%. Consequently, they will be up-rated by 3.9% (the May-July Average Weekly Earnings figure).

• The Pension Credit Minimum Guarantee will also be increased by earnings in line with legislation. The Pension Credit Savings Credit maximum amount will be increased in line with CPI (1.7%).

• Benefits linked to the additional costs of disability, and for carers, are increased by the annual rise in prices (1.7%). A number of other elements – including Non-Dependent Deductions – will also be up-rated in line with prices.

• Working age benefits will be increased by CPI (1.7%) from April 2020. Those linked to child tax and working tax credits will be up-rated in line with those benefits.

• Universal Credit Work Allowances will be increased in line with CPI (1.7%) from April 2020.

The full list of proposed benefit and pension rates will be placed in the Libraries of the House in due course.

This will increase expenditure on social security benefit and pension rates by £5 billion. This includes £3.9 billion more to be spent on pensioner benefits. From April 2020 the yearly basic State Pension will be worth over £1900 more in cash terms than in 2010. £1 billion more will also be spent on working-age benefits, ensuring that we continue to support the most vulnerable in society.
5G

**Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of 5G airwaves on (1) satellite communication, and (2) the European Space Agency's Copernicus Project. [HL536]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government is committed to creating a policy and regulatory environment which will ensure the most efficient use of radio spectrum (or airwaves), including setting the right conditions for the development and deployment of 5G networks while protecting important satellite services and applications.

Government departments and agencies have been actively involved in the work of international telecoms groups, ITU (International Telecommunications Union) and CEPT (European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations), to study the necessary technical conditions for 5G, to ensure that they meet internationally agreed protection criteria for satellite communication and scientific satellites, including Copernicus.

These technical conditions must balance the needs of the 5G industry and the science community. Such conditions have already been agreed within Europe. The UK has proposed, via European coordination (i.e. the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations, a pan-European body including 48 countries), that these technical conditions should be adopted at global level at WRC-19 (World Radiocommunication Conference), which meets until 22nd November.

**Africa: Conflict Resolution**

**Asked by Lord Boateng**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of African-led efforts to end conflict in Africa, including the Silence the Guns 2020 initiative; and what steps they intend to take to support such efforts. [HL487]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK welcomes the efforts of the African Union and its sub-regional organizations to prevent, mediate and settle conflicts in Africa. Helping deliver stability and security is a critical component of the UK’s strategic approach to Africa. It is vital that we retain a strong focus on action, translating the noble goal of silencing the guns into concrete initiatives that will make a tangible difference to the lives of ordinary Africans. The UK is working with our partners across Africa to support mediation, women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and countering the proliferation of weapons, especially small arms and light weapons.

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have to enhance cooperation between the UN, the EU, and international, regional, and sub-regional institutions, to advance support for peace in (1) the Sahel, (2) the African Great Lakes, and (3) the Horn of Africa. [HL488]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is enhancing its diplomatic and development efforts across the Sahel to improve international coordination. For example, the UK is expanding its Embassies in Mali and Mauritania, establishing new Embassies in Niger and Chad and setting up a regional hub in Dakar, Senegal. We are seeking to ensure that the Sahel Alliance of donors and the new Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel encourage close partnership between donors and Sahel governments and regional organisations. We are also working to ensure that the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) works effectively with the Malian Government and other security operations in the region. The UK will deploy 250 military personnel to this mission next year.

The UK also supports efforts to bring lasting peace and stability to the Great Lakes region. The UK actively supports the work of the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, who oversees the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF). This aims to address the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes region. The UK is a significant bilateral donor in support of peacebuilding efforts in the region and supporter of MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping mission in eastern DRC.

In the Horn of Africa, the UK is the penholder for all discussions on Somalia in the United Nations Security Council. This includes drafting the mandates for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM); both of which place strong emphasis on the need for coordination between Somalia’s international supporters. In Sudan, the UK has frequent engagement with the AU, EU and UN counterparts to provide coordinated political and technical assistance to support the programme of reform and change that the new government has initiated. In addition, with our UN Security Council partners, we are securing renewed mandates for the UN-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur and the UN mission in Abyei. These will support developing peace processes led by the new government of Sudan. The UK also takes a lead role in South Sudan as a member of the Troika (with Norway and the US) to press for an end to the conflict, and implementation of the Peace Agreement signed on 12 September 2018. We released a statement on 21 October alongside Troika partners urging all sides to demonstrate their commitment to peace by increasing co-operation and working together to resolve outstanding issues (see attached document). We also engage frequently with regional countries, particularly members of IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) who brokered the Agreement.
The UK takes a prominent role with the UN, providing 300 troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. We also play an active role at the UN in New York to ensure attention and support of the international community on ending the conflict that has killed nearly 400,000 since 2013.

The department is currently looking closely at what we need to do to ensure AP provides high quality education and the right support to these children that will enable them to succeed. The department wants to be as ambitious for them as we are for all children and young people.

As part of this the government has launched a £4 million AP Innovation Fund which is delivering nine projects focused on testing ways to improve outcomes for children in AP. In due course, we will set out plans to go further for improving outcomes for children in AP, including how we will support alternative providers to attract and develop high-quality staff.

## Africa: Peacekeeping Operations

** Asked by Lord Boateng**

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of funding for UN support to African Peace Support Operations. [HL489]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK supports the principle of the African Union (AU) accessing UN assessed contributions for future AU-led peace support operations, subject to the conditions previously agreed by the UN Security Council.

## Alternative Education

**Asked by Lord Storey**

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what safeguards are in place to ensure that children in care who are in Alternative Provision are always educated by registered providers. [HL254]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Any independent alternative provision (AP) setting that provides full-time education to one or more children who is looked-after or who has an Education, Health and Care Plan must be registered as a school. It is a criminal offence to operate an unregistered school. We have successfully prosecuted those operating unregistered independent schools and would prosecute any AP setting that was operating as an unregistered independent school. Some children in care may access provision that is not legally required to register as a school if it is on a part-time basis as part of a wider package of education and support.

In all cases, the duty on local authorities under the Children Act (1989) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their areas applies regardless of where a child is educated. For children in care, their social worker should seek a school or other education setting that is best suited to the child’s needs, which may include a part-time, unregistered AP setting. In all cases, the local authority or school that commissions the place in AP should assure themselves that the setting is registered where applicable and the provision is delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks.

## Armoured Fighting Vehicles

**Asked by Lord Moonie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Mastiff (all variants), (2) Ridgeback (all variants), (3) Wolfhound (all variants), (4) Husky (all variants), (5) Coyote (all variants), and (6) Warthog (all variants), vehicles they have purchased in total; and what was the total procurement cost of each vehicle type. [HL516]

**Baroness Goldie:** The number of vehicles procured and the total procurement values are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fleet (all Variants)</th>
<th>Total Number Procured</th>
<th>Total Procurement Value (£ million ex VAT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastiff</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>329.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeback</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>132.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfhound</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>107.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husky</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>190.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warthog</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>129.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that these figures include the procurement of the base vehicle, the integration work required to bring the vehicles up to a UK theatre entry standard and varying levels of initial spares purchases. Some contracts included the purchase of additional items, such as weapons and communication equipment. A number of the vehicle procurements were conducted via the Foreign Military Sales process, with costs calculated at the relevant currency exchange rate paid at the time.

**Asked by Lord Moonie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the status of each fleet of (1) Mastiff (all variants), (2) Ridgeback (all variants), (3) Wolfhound (all variants), (4) Husky (all variants), (5) Coyote (all variants), and (6) Warthog (all variants) vehicles, including the numbers (a) in forward fleet, (b) in reserve, (c) in storage, (d) that are ready for disposal, and (e) that have been sold or gifted. [HL517]

**Baroness Goldie:** The status of each fleet of vehicles can be found in the table below:

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[The material can be viewed online at: http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-29/HL488]
The recent UN Fact Finding Mission report is clear that the situation is dire and what monies are being upheld in Myanmar. Officials continue to work closely with Member States, including partners in Greece, to ensure the safe transfer of children under this Regulation.

Under Section 17 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act, we are committed to seek to negotiate an agreement with the EU allowing for the family re-union of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, where it is in their best interests, once we leave the EU. We are ready to engage with the EU and with Member States on this matter and will endeavour to negotiate such an agreement as soon as possible.

### Aviation: Taxis

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of the regulatory requirements needed for the introduction of so-called “flying taxis”. [HL323]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the independent body responsible for regulating aviation in the UK. The CAA established an Innovation Hub this year, which is engaging with innovative aviation companies, including those seeking to gain permission to operate Electric ‘Air taxis’ in the UK.

In August, the Prime Minister announced a £300 million joint investment, from the Government and industry, through the Future Flight Challenge, which will support the development of innovative aviation systems and the infrastructure and regulations needed to support them.

### Burma: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of reports of attacks against Chin people in Myanmar. [HL532]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is concerned by reports of attacks against the Chin people and missing Chin residents as a result of serious clashes between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military. This conflict has now displaced tens of thousands of people, with civilians caught in the middle. We call on both sides to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue.

### Burma: Rohingya

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of whether the Rohingya people’s civil and human rights are being upheld in Myanmar. [HL530]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is concerned by reports of attacks against the Rohingya people. Officials continue to work closely with Member States, including partners in Myanmar, to ensure the safe transfer of children under the Dublin III Regulation including the provisions determining responsibility for examining the claims of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Officials continue to work closely with Member States, including partners in Greece, to ensure the safe transfer of children under this Regulation.

We remain absolutely committed to transferring the specified number of 480 unaccompanied children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (Dubs Amendment) as soon as possible. We have been making further progress with participating States, including Greece, to transfer more eligible children to move closer to the commitment to transfer 480 children.

Until the UK leaves the EU, we remain fully committed to the timely and efficient operation of the Dublin III...
for the 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State. The British Government is clear that Rohingya in Myanmar continue to be at serious risk of human rights violations, including mass killings, sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking. We are particularly concerned at restrictions on freedom of movement, religious belief and access to education. This situation has been exacerbated by the conflict between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military.

We continue to push the Government of Myanmar to fully implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, in order to improve conditions for all those who living in Rakhine State. Baroness Sugg raised this with senior government figures in Rakhine on her recent visit.

Côte d’Ivoire: Politics and Government

*Asked by Lord Sheikh*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to hold discussions with the government of the Ivory Coast about honouring presidential term limits. [HL561]

*Asked by Lord Sheikh*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political situation in the Ivory Coast. [HL562]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government has a strong partnership with Cote d'Ivoire. Stability and inclusive economic growth are shared priorities, with a view to consolidating peace after a decade of crisis and uncertainty. We take every opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to peaceful, free and credible elections in 2020, in line with international law, and encourage all parties to work towards this goal. We have done so directly with government and opposition political parties in Cote d’Ivoire and at the 42nd Human Rights Council on 19 September in Geneva. The 2016 constitution of Cote d’Ivoire stipulates a two-term limit on Presidential mandates, which the incumbent will have reached by the 2020 elections. The elections are the responsibility of the Government of Cote d’Ivoire, all political parties and the Ivorian people. We urge all parties to participate responsibly, engage fully in the process and avoid the use of inflammatory language. We continue to follow developments closely and hope to see extensive domestic and international observation encouraging transparency and due process before and during the elections in 2020.

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** Evidence shows that targeted supervised toothbrushing schemes are effective at preventing tooth decay and produce the biggest impact in reducing inequalities in oral health.

The Government’s Green Paper *Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s*, published in July, commits to consulting next year on options for rolling out a national school toothbrushing scheme in more pre-school settings and primary schools in England. These proposals will aim to reach the most deprived 3-5 year olds in all areas of the country, and will look to reach 30% by 2022.

**Dental Services**

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a new NHS dental contract focused on prevention, as recommended by the Royal College of Surgeon's Faculty of Dental Surgery's report *The state of children's oral health in England*, published in August. [HL299]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The Government is committed to reforming the current National Health Service dental contract to focus on preventing, as well as treating, dental disease.

We are currently testing this new approach in 101 dental practices, known as dental prototype practices, across the country. No decisions have yet been made on wider national roll out.

**Department for Education: Third Sector**

*Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of third sector organisations currently receiving funding from the Department for Education have had (1) firm, and (2) indicative, funding allocations for 2020–21. [HL451]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Departmental budget allocations for 2020-21 were announced in September 2019. The Department for Education is currently undertaking a business planning and financial planning exercise to allocate resources across the department. Organisations receiving funding from the department will be notified of intended funding arrangements once this exercise has concluded.

**Economic Situation: Forecasts**

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish their next economic forecasts in accordance with the Industry Act 1975. [HL469]

**The Earl of Courtown:** The schedule pertaining to economic forecasting in the Industry Act 1975 has been repealed in consequence of the provisions in the Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011.
The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 established the creation of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility. This legislation outlines that it is the duty of the Office to produce, on at least two occasions for each financial year, a fiscal and economic forecast. As a result, the government’s medium-term economic and fiscal forecasting is undertaken by the Office for Budget Responsibility in line with its statutory duty.

The Office for Budget Responsibility will produce a new economic and fiscal forecast to accompany the next fiscal event.

Elections: Visual Impairment

*Asked by Lord Crisp*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accessibility of elections for blind and partially sighted people; and what steps they intend to take to ensure that the new photographic ID requirement does not decrease that accessibility. [HL223]

The Earl of Courtown: In 2018 the Government issued a Call for Evidence on Access to Elections. It received over 250 responses and in a subsequent response paper set out some of the things it was going to look at, including elements that address accessibility issues for people with sight loss.

With regard to piloting voter identification in polling stations, the Government has worked with the Access to Elections Working Group, which includes people from RNIB, Mencap and other organisations representing disabled people, to consider how accessibility can be maintained. The Government has also worked with a wide range of other stakeholders. We will continue consultation with all of these organisations, keeping Public Sector Equality Duty compliance at the core of our planning for the roll out of voter ID in Great Britain.

We are also starting to bring forward measures which respond to issues raised in the Government’s response to the 2018 Call for Evidence on Access to Elections, with the proposals announced as part of the package around the Queen’s Speech. These will include increasing the range of support available to voters with disabilities in polling stations and allowing a wider range of people (such as carers) to assist disabled voters in polling stations if needed.

Electric Vehicles

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to promote the (1) production, and (2) use, of electric cars in the UK. [HL435]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is supporting the automotive industry in the switch to ultra-low emission vehicles. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles has awarded over £300m in grants, via Innovate UK, into ultra-low emission technologies to support vehicle manufacturers, technology companies and academia in delivering a major programme of R&D into cleaner vehicle technologies. The Government and industry have also committed around £1bn over 10 years to 2023 through the Advanced Propulsion Centre, to research, develop and commercialise the next generation of low carbon technologies, and to keep the UK at the cutting edge of low carbon automotive innovations.

The £274m Faraday Battery Challenge will ensure the UK builds on its strengths and leads the world in the design, development and manufacture of electric batteries. The £80m Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge provides support for innovation in electric motor technology.

The Government has recently also announced up to £1bn of additional funding to develop UK supply chains for the large-scale production of electric vehicles, and for further EV research and development.

Alongside these supply-side measures, we are investing nearly £1.5bn between April 2015 and March 2021, via grants available for plug in cars, vans, lorries, buses, taxis and motorcycles, and schemes to support chargepoint infrastructure at homes, workplaces and on residential streets. These subsidies are designed to support the early market and achieve a competitive, self-sustaining market.

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill: Wales

*Asked by Lord Morris of Aberavon*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government whether agreement has been reached with the Welsh Government on which parts of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill require the Welsh Assembly’s consent in accordance with the Sewel Convention. [HL521]

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist: The UK Government has strengthened and enhanced devolution in Wales. We are fully committed to abiding by the Sewel Convention and associated practices. We have sought legislative consent from the National Assembly for Wales for certain provisions of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill in line with this. We will continue to discuss with the Welsh Government the clauses for which Assembly consent is sought.

*Asked by Lord Morris of Aberavon*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment has been made of the proposed “Henry VIII” clauses in clause 21 of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill; and whether the views of the Welsh Government have been sought on the powers within that Bill to amend the Government of Wales Act 2000 by regulation as opposed to primary legislation. [HL522]

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist: Clause 21 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill would allow the
UK Government to meet fully the obligations set out in the Northern Ireland Protocol. The “Henry VIII” power in the clause could be used where necessary to amend primary legislation to ensure arrangements required in the Northern Ireland Protocol are operational and to implement the requirements set out in the Protocol.

In response to concerns raised by the Devolved Administrations, clause 18 of the Bill (Main power in connection with other separation issues) has been restricted so that powers under this clause cannot be used to amend the devolution acts, including the Government of Wales Act 2006.

The Government is working to establish whether restricting the powers in clause 21 in a similar way would mean the obligations in the Protocol could still be met. Subject to the outcome of this work, the Government would be open to imposing the restriction by amending the Bill during its passage.

Financial Services: Regulation

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will (1) establish an independent review into the Financial Conduct Authority's supervision of Woodford Investment Management and Link Financial Solutions, and (2) review the protections in place for investors in open-ended funds in circumstances similar to those managed by Woodford. [HL410]

The Earl of Courtown: The government takes the suspension and winding up of the Woodford Equity Income Fund (WEIF) very seriously and is monitoring the response. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is continuing its investigation into the activities that led to the suspension of the WEIF. At this stage, the government has not seen evidence that would justify establishing an independent review into the FCA’s supervision of the fund.

As part of its investigation, the FCA is considering what FCA rule changes may be necessary to protect investors and to prevent similar issues in future. The FCA is also working with the Bank of England’s Financial Policy Committee to assess how funds’ redemption terms might be better aligned with the liquidity of their assets. Once the FCA publishes its findings, we will be able to assess whether there is any further role for the government.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the impact of regulation on the competitiveness of financial services in the UK. [HL468]

The Earl of Courtown: The Government keeps the regulatory framework for financial services under review, and is committed to ensuring the competitiveness of the sector. It has also given the independent financial services regulators a statutory mandate to have regard to aspects of the Government’s economic policy (including competitiveness), which is communicated through letters of recommendations.

Free Syrian Police and White Helmets: Finance

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the Netherlands about the reasons why that government cancelled its funding for the White Helmets and the Free Syria Police in 2018; and whether they will publish the outcomes of any such discussions. [HL306]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We coordinate closely with likeminded partners, particularly on co-funded programmes. Decisions regarding the Netherlands’
programme funding are a matter for the Government of the Netherlands.

**Hong Kong: Elections**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the disqualification of Joshua Wong from being able to stand for election in the District Council elections in Hong Kong; whether they are monitoring those elections for irregularities; whether they intend to challenge any unjust disqualifications and irregularities; and if so, how. [HL547]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by the rejection of Joshua Wong's nomination for next month's local elections. Standing for election is a fundamental right enshrined in Hong Kong's Basic Law and Bill of Rights. Now, more than ever, it is vital that Hong Kong's political processes and institutions help to build trust amongst the public. Hong Kong's success is built on its rights and freedoms, including open and inclusive debate. We will continue to make these points to the Hong Kong SAR government.

Hong Kong district council elections will be an important opportunity for the citizens of Hong Kong to exercise their rights to make their voices heard. We will of course follow the conduct of the elections closely, and raise any concerns with the relevant authorities.

**Hong Kong: Politics and Government**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations the Prime Minister has made to the President of China about the situation in Hong Kong; and when any such representations were made. [HL547]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Prime Minister wrote to President Xi Jinping on 30 September. In his letter, he underlined the importance of upholding the Joint Declaration, under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. The leadership in China and Hong Kong is in no doubt about the strength of UK concern over the current situation, and our commitment to seeing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration upheld.

**Hong Kong: Task Forces**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) membership, (2) purpose, and (3) timescale for the work, of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Hong Kong Task Force. [HL272]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The China Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office deals with our relations with China, including Hong Kong. In light of the ongoing situation in Hong Kong, and our commitment to uphold the rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Joint Declaration, we have increased the number of FCO staff in this Department and keep this under regular review.

**House of Lords: Social Media**

* Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask the Senior Deputys Speaker what plans there are, if any, to add either 'International Relations' or 'Foreign Affairs' to the searchable list of topics on the Lords Digital Chamber, which currently includes: 'Business and Economy', 'Communities, Education and Families', 'Defence', 'Environment', 'Europe', 'Health', 'Home Affairs', 'Science and Technology' and 'Transport'. [HL432]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** The Lords Digital Chamber (lordsdigitalchamber.co.uk) brings together the social media activity of members of the House of Lords, political parties and groups in the Lords from Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and blogs. The topics pages currently use an algorithm to aggregate together commonly searched-for terms and phrases associated with particular subject areas.

The House of Lords Communications team keeps the topics section under continual review and will investigate the potential for including these subjects in the Lords Digital Chamber.

**Immigrants: Detainees**

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of those who have been held in immigration detention centres for more than 28 days in each of the last four years were granted (1) refugee status, and (2) the right to remain, in the UK. [HL413]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Information on the length of detention, and reason for release from detention, is available in tables dt_06_q and dt_14_q of the detention tables in the latest release of ‘Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2019’. The published statistics show the number of people who were granted leave to remain (LTR) in the UK on leaving detention. However, this is not broken down by type of leave, nor will it include those who are released from detention for other reasons and subsequently granted LTR.

The Answer includes the following attached material:


The material can be viewed online at:
http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-24/HL413

**Jerusalem: Water Supply**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they intend to have with the government of Israel about
its reasons for the reported denial of access to the Ein Hanya natural spring near Al-Walaja, within the municipal boundary of Jerusalem. [HL302]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly make clear our concerns to the Israeli authorities about the difficulties of access to Jerusalem for Palestinians from the West Bank. We are concerned by unilateral Israeli measures in East Jerusalem, including around the Palestinian village of Al-Walaja which threaten to restrict Palestinian access to their lands. We are also concerned by ongoing demolitions in the village. We continue to make clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the overall increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties across the West Bank.

### Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

**Asked by Lord Moonie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK's F-35 aircraft they have ordered, broken down by (1) lot number, and (2) financial year, since the start of the programme. [HL520]

**Baroness Goldie:** The UK has taken delivery of 18 F-35B aircraft from Lots 3-11, with a further 17 on order in Lots 12-14.

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**Asked by Lord Moonie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the figures for the delivery of F-35 aircraft to the Ministry of Defence in the National Audit Office's report Delivering Carrier Strike, published on 16 March 2017, remain the planned delivery rates; and if not, why those rates have changed. [HL552]

**Baroness Goldie:** The planned F-35 delivery rates remain the same as those published in the NAO's report.

### Kazakhstan: Foreign Relations

**Asked by Viscount Waverley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the outcomes of the UK–Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission meeting, held in London on 24 October. [HL420]

The Earl of Courtown: My Rt Hon Friend, the Minister of State for International Trade, attended the UK-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC). The Kazakh delegation was led by the Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe, Mr Roman Vassilenko.

The IGC promoted opportunities for British companies and business collaboration in the following sectors: technical and vocational education and training, healthcare, mining, oil and gas, and financial and professional services.

The CityUK used the IGC to take forward a British government-funded project to help develop the Astana International Financial Centre’s corporate governance code.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) and the Kazakh authorities signed a Memorandum of Understanding, affirming UKEF appetite to support projects in Kazakhstan, with a view to increasing procurement from the UK.

This was a successful event with a key strategic partner in Central Asia, which supported British exporters’ efforts in the Kazakh market, which was worth £2.3 billion to UK firms in 2018-19.

### Liberia: Politics and Government

**Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of the political and social situation in Liberia. [HL405]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government is concerned by the deteriorating political and social environment in Liberia, resulting in an increase in protests and a fractious relationship between the media and government. The UK supports freedom of expression as a fundamental human right alongside freedom of the media. We regularly raise our concerns around civic and political issues directly with the Liberian government. Liberia has been named as one of the Lonely Planet’s Top 10 countries to visit in 2020. The potential to overcome significant poverty, economic and governance challenges is therefore clear. We stand ready in friendship to support Liberia in its efforts to become a more peaceful, stable and democratic country enjoyed by all Liberians and visitors.

### Life Expectancy

**Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the reasons for the disparities in life expectancy between women and men. [HL353]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** Life expectancy in England is the highest it has ever been for both males and females. Women continue to live longer than men, as they do around the world, but the gap is reducing.

The difference in life expectancy at birth in England between males and females has decreased in every time period between 2001-03 and 2015-17. Over the past
decade, the gap between male and female life expectancy at birth has narrowed from 4.1 years in 2006-08 to 3.6 years in 2016-18. Men experience higher mortality rates for some leading causes of death, including circulatory disease and cancer, which contribute to this difference in life expectancy.

Liothyronine

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure that the updated prescribing guidance for liothyronine issued by the South Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee in July is followed by all Clinical Commissioning Groups. [HL455]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** It is not the responsibility of the Department to direct clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) on which medicines they can or cannot prescribe. These decisions need to be taken by each individual CCG. However, we would expect CCGs to have regard to the South Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee prescribing guidance.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they propose to take in relation to thyroid patients who, having previously had successful treatment on dosages of 20mcg and above of liothyronine, are now facing a restriction on the dosage. [HL456]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** Whilst NHS England and NHS Improvement will regularly review its guidance, at present, there are no plans to revisit the specific recommendations for liothyronine unless new clinical evidence comes to light. Decisions on appropriate treatment for thyroid patients and doses are taken in accordance with a clinical management plan and implemented by the clinician.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what price to the NHS liothyronine would need to fall below in order for the restriction on its prescription to be lifted. [HL503]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The Department would not intervene in determining what price to the National Health Service liothyronine would need to fall below in order for the restriction on its prescription to be lifted.

Liothyronine is only appropriate for a certain group of patients and the South Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee advice sought to provide further clinical guidance on this matter. Whilst NHS England and NHS Improvement will regularly review its guidance, at present, there are no plans to revisit the specific recommendations for liothyronine unless new clinical evidence comes to light.

Liothyronine: Merseyside

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further proof of eligibility for treatment with liothyronine is required for those patients, in Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) who are members of the Pan Mersey Area Prescribing Committee, for whom an endocrinologist has confirmed levothyroxine treatment has not been suitable and has recommended they are prescribed liothyronine, and where the CCG is requiring an Individual Funding Request process be undergone before treatment can be permitted. [HL457]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** In the absence of positive National Institute for Health and Care Excellence technology appraisal guidance, any funding decisions should be made by National Health Service commissioners (including NHS England and NHS Improvement in respect of specialised services), based on an assessment of the available evidence and on the basis of an individual patient’s clinical circumstances. The NHS Constitution states that patients have the right to expect local decisions on the funding of drugs and treatments “to be made rationally following a proper consideration of the evidence”. If an NHS commissioner decides not to fund a drug, then it should explain that decision.

Liothyronine: West Midlands

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action can be taken by thyroid patents who in raising concerns about the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group’s (CCG) refusal to allow the prescription of liothyronine, were told by that CCG to raise the issue before treatment can be permitted. [HL457]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** Clinical commissioning groups (CCG) are the responsible commissioner for this prescription of liothyronine. NHS England and NHS Improvement has set out its position and it is for CCGs to have regard to that guidance. If a CCG has a commissioning policy that differs from the guidance, then it is for the CCG to explain to patients why this is the case and the basis on which their decision was made. Therefore, patients should raise their concerns with the CCG. NHS England and NHS Improvement’s guidance does not remove the discretion of individual prescribers who remain responsible for clinical decisions relating to their patient’s care.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of whether the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group is following the updated prescribing guidance for liothyronine issued by the South Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee.
in July; and what action they are taking to ensure the guidance is being followed. [HL502]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The Department has not made an assessment and does not have the responsibility to direct clinical commissioning groups on which medicines they can or cannot prescribe.

**London Underground: Carbon Emissions**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Transport for London about steps it may take to make the London Underground network carbon neutral. [HL258]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government is committed to our Net Zero target. As part of our forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan we will be working with industry and local communities around the country to develop plans to achieve this. Those conversations will of course include the Mayor of London and Transport for London.

**Lung Diseases: Medical Equipment**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to cease the prescription of dry powder inhalers in England apart from in exceptional circumstances; and if so, when. [HL568]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** It is the intention of the National Health Service, as set out in its Long Term Plan commitment, to reduce the use of traditional inhalers with higher levels of fluorinated gases. There are devices available which use significantly less fluorinated gases and dry powder devices, which do not use fluorinated gases, unlike traditional metered doses devices.

This year, the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence has published a Patient Decision Aid to help people with asthma, alongside health professionals, to identify which inhalers could meet their needs and control their symptoms. Where several inhalers could be viable options, the decision aid helps clinicians and patients choose the more environmentally friendly option, with a lower carbon footprint. The British Thoracic Society have included device carbon impacts in their recently published asthma guidelines.

**Maritime Patrol Aircraft**

*Asked by Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what rules the Boeing P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft for the Ministry of Defence has been certified as airworthy; and where certified by a third party, what plans they have to re-certify for airworthiness via the Military Airworthiness Authority. [HL519]

**Baroness Goldie:** The P-8A Poseidon MRA Mk1 has been certified as airworthy in accordance with the Military Airworthiness Authority's (MAA) Military Air System Certification Process, as laid out in Regulatory Article (RA) 5810.

The MAA issued a United Kingdom Restricted Military Type Certificate for the Poseidon MRA Mk1 on 19 September 2019.

**Ministerial Powers**

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many occasions since 24 July Permanent Secretaries or Senior Civil Servants required ministerial direction to act, broken down by Government Department. [HL523]

**The Earl of Courtown:** Ministerial directions are published on gov.uk.

There have been no ministerial directions since 24th July 2019.

**Ministers: Harassment**

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to protect ministers from abuse and intimidation when leaving the Parliamentary Estate. [HL343]

**Earl Howe:** The Government deplores the inexcusable intimidation and abuse of ministers and MPs in public life; nobody should have to suffer abuse and intimidation simply for doing their job.

It is a wide-ranging and complex issue to tackle - it cannot be achieved through one action alone and the Government is working with the police, political parties, Parliament’s security teams, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), the electoral community, civil society groups and other organisations.

**Ministry of Defence: Advertising**

*Asked by Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much the Ministry of Defence spent on advertising in the last year; and what the principal categories were, broken down by (1) medium, and (2) purpose. [HL515]

**Baroness Goldie:** The amount spent by the Department on advertising for financial year 2018-19 was £40.7 million. The majority of expenditure is accounted for by advertising by the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force to aid recruitment into our Armed Forces. The breakdown of medium is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.
NHS: Negligence

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the financial implications for the NHS of the level of damages payments issued to resolve clinical negligence claims before legal proceedings. [HL417]

**Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford:** The rising costs of clinical negligence are a concern and something we are committed to tackling, given that National Health Service funds spent on clinical negligence are resources not available for frontline care. In 2018/19 total clinical negligence provision was £83 billion (Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts provision was £77.6 billion).

NHS Resolution has a responsibility to settle justified claims fairly and promptly and defend unjustified claims to secure NHS resources. Each case must be considered on its own merits and it is important that a proper investigation is undertaken. NHS Resolution aims to get to the right answer as quickly as possible in every case and to help resolve claims sooner, and without the need for court proceedings. To support this NHS Resolution launched a new mediation service in December 2016.

Nobel Prize

*Asked by Lord Crisp*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to support the nomination by the Republic of South Korea of the nurses Marianne Stoger and Margaritha Pissarek for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020. [HL440]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The remarks made by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea on 22 October that (1) North Korea “is violating its human rights obligations due to its failing economic and agricultural policies”, and (2) discrimination leads to many people being deprived of rations in that country; and what estimate they have made of the amount of money that North Korea spends on agriculture and food production compared with its military programmes and nuclear capability. [HL430]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The remarks made by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea are deeply troubling. Limited availability of official data from the North Korean government makes comprehensive analysis of their expenditure on agriculture and its weapons programmes difficult. However, outside observers estimate that the DPRK spends a disproportionately large amount of its GDP on its military and illegal weapons programmes. It is abundantly clear that years of failed economic policies by the DPRK government are to blame for the current humanitarian situation. We have made clear on many occasions our concern at the DPRK government’s appalling human rights record and its failure to allocate its resources to the needs of its people. We urge the North Korean government to put its people’s needs before the development of illegal weapons programmes.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have grave concerns about the human rights situation in North Korea. As the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea in response to damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Lingling. This allocation was made in order to provide urgent food security and nutrition interventions, and support increased access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in the most affected provinces.

We urge the DPRK to put the needs of its people over its illegal WMD programmes, and provide aid agencies with adequate data and access in order to support the most vulnerable.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are monitoring the food security situation and response to Tropical Cyclone Lingling. This allocation was made in order to provide urgent food security and nutrition interventions, and support increased access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in the most affected provinces.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We urge the DPRK to put the needs of its people over its illegal WMD programmes, and provide aid agencies with adequate data and access in order to support the most vulnerable.

North Korea: Human Rights

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of remarks made to the human rights committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 24 October that 11 million people, including 140,000 children in North Korea remain undernourished and that 30,000 of those people "face an increased risk of death". [HL429]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in North Korea and reports that 11 million people remain undernourished. We are monitoring the food security situation accordingly. The UK contributes to the UN Central Emergency Fund (CERF), along with other bilateral donors. In October, CERF allocated $6 million to North Korea on 24 October that (1) North Korea is placing severe and widespread restrictions on basic freedoms, including surveillance and close monitoring of civilians, and (2) many citizens permanently disappear to a kwanliso political prison camp with families never informed of the decisions or of the whereabouts of their relatives; whether the UK Ambassador to North Korea has raised those allegations with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea; and if so, what response they received. [HL431]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have grave concerns about the human rights situation in North Korea. As the
North Korea made clear on 22 October, citizens in North Korea are subject to arrest and imprisonment in horrifying conditions for attempts to exercise even basic, universally accepted, human rights, such as freedom of expression and belief. Our Ambassador in Pyongyang regularly raises human rights concerns with the DPRK authorities, including reports of severe restrictions on freedoms and conditions in prison camps. North Korea routinely challenges the evidence base for such allegations.

We also raise our human rights concerns in international fora. At the UN General Assembly in October, we called on the North Korean Government to show the world that freedoms supposedly enshrined in its constitution are not a mirage, and at North Korea's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May, we called on the authorities to end all surveillance and censorship of individuals and organisations. We have also urged North Korea to permit access for the Special Rapporteur and other UN human rights bodies. North Korea continues to reject allegations of human rights violations, and took note of our UPR recommendations but with no commitment to action.

**North Korea: Refugees**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of remarks made to the human rights committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 22 October that in the past six months he has received information from family members living in South Korea (1) that an increasing number of North Korean escapees are being detained in China, and (2) that those that are returned to North Korea are likely to be tortured or subjected to other human rights violations; when they last raised this with the government of China; what response they received; and what actions they have taken at United Nations fora to highlight these issues. ([HL485](https://www.parliament.uk/helplibrary/lordsofware/1921/5.html#p485))

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are extremely concerned about the repatriation of North Koreans by Chinese authorities and the conditions they may face on return to North Korea. When we hear of individuals facing repatriation, we seek to raise their cases directly with China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with our international partners. We did so most recently in May 2019. We will continue to monitor closely and will work with the Special Rapporteur and other UN human rights bodies. North Korea continues to reject allegations of human rights violations, and took note of our UPR recommendations but with no commitment to action.

**Nurseries**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the freedom of information request which details how nursery rates are calculated will be published by the Department of Education. ([HL473](https://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary-question/2019/11/4/43/))

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** We want every child to have the best start in life, which is why we are spending around £3.5 billion on early education entitlements this year and plan to spend over £3.6 billion on these offers next year. We are aware of the Information Commissioner Office’s decision and are considering our response.

**Occupational Pensions**

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the Pensions Regulator makes pension schemes regularly reconcile and report on the accuracy of auto-enrolment pensions data. ([HL483](https://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary-question/2019/11/4/43/))

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Automatic Enrolment into workplace pensions is working. It has transformed pension saving for millions of today’s workers. It has reversed the decline in workplace pension saving seen in the decade prior to its introduction. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012, workplace participation has increased among eligible employees from a low of 55 per cent in 2012 to 87 per cent in 2018. The Government has put in place a robust, proportionate compliance framework. This is administered by The Pensions Regulator, and includes detailed regulatory guidance about how to comply with the law. An employer is required to select a qualifying pension scheme; enrol qualifying staff into that scheme, and deduct any contributions payable under Automatic Enrolment.

The Pensions Regulator’s priorities are contained in their corporate plan 2019-22 and include; providing clarity, enforcing the high standards of trusteeship, governance and administration they expect. Qualifying pension schemes for Automatic Enrolment are subject to the regulatory framework overseen by The Pensions Regulator in respect of payment and accuracy of contributions. The Regulator has published codes of practice on its website setting out how trustees of defined contribution pension schemes and managers of personal pension schemes should monitor the payment of contributions; provide information to help members check their contributions; and report material payment failures to the Regulator.

The regulatory regime is designed so that errors can be identified and material failures can be reported, the Regulator can then require restitution; and, where

**Lord Taylor of Warwick:** We want every child to have the best start in life, which is why we are spending around £3.5 billion on early education entitlements this year and plan to spend over £3.6 billion on these offers next year. We are aware of the Information Commissioner Office’s decision and are considering our response.
necessary, make use of its enforcement powers. The Government keeps all aspects of automatic enrolment under regular review but has no plans to make changes to the compliance framework at this time.

### Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) employers, and (2) pension scheme members, have received too much tax relief due to incorrect pension contributions being made as a result of confusion between (a) Relief at Source, and (b) Net Pay, arrangements. [HL428]

The Earl of Courtown: Employers have not been given too much or too little tax relief as employers do not receive tax relief under net pay or relief at source (RAS) arrangements.

The information about members is not readily available in the form requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Errors made by employers and pension providers have resulted in pension scheme members receiving either no tax relief on their pension contributions, or receiving tax relief twice.

In the Pension schemes newsletter 105 (November 2018), HMRC invited pension schemes who think that any of their members have been given the wrong amount of tax relief to email HMRC. HMRC would then work with the scheme to help correct their tax position.

HMRC is continuing to work with the pension schemes that have informed if an error has been made, but is unable to give more detail of these cases as this could prejudice future HMRC compliance activity.

### Overseas Trade: Côte d'Ivoire

*Asked by Lord Sheikh*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the forecasts by multilateral financial institutions including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, what plans they have to strengthen economic ties with the Ivory Coast. [HL560]

The Earl of Courtown: The Department for International Trade (DIT) works closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID) to advance our trade relationship with the Ivory Coast.

DIT has recently increased promotion of the UK commercial offer and facilitated new business by supporting trade missions. DIT continues to develop a strong pipeline of projects in the market, eligible for UKEF financing, that UK companies are well positioned to invest in and is working to increase the visibility of the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) that supports the building of businesses throughout Africa.

### Pakistan: Minority Groups

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide training for Pakistani minority groups and non-governmental organisations on how to (1) organise, campaign and lobby for their rights, and (2) respond to the shrinking of civil society space in Pakistan; and how the persecution of Ahmadi and Christian minorities was raised during the visit to Pakistan by HRH the Duke of Cambridge. [HL233]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government provides training, workshops and seminars on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Pakistan, including to representatives of minority groups. These aim to increase awareness of rights and constitutional safeguards, and to strengthen connections between minority communities and local media. The British Government continues to support civil society and non-governmental organisations lobbying the Government of Pakistan to honour its international commitments. Department for International Development will work with local civil society organisations to promote respect, tolerance and inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups through its AAWAZ II programme.

While in Pakistan, Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge discussed interfait harmony with faith leaders from across Pakistan’s various religious communities, including Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Shia and Sunni. Discussions focused on the challenges and opportunities present in promoting interfait relations in Pakistan, as well as how faith representatives can work together to build acceptance and tolerance in Pakistani society. They also spent time with members of the Kalash community in the Bumburet Valley of Chitral.

### Public Sector: Business Interests

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether decision-making civil servants and local authority officials are currently required to disclose all interests to prevent any conflict of interest; and if so, whether those records are made public. [HL380]

The Earl of Courtown: Civil Servants serve the government of the day and can only exercise power for and on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The Civil Service Management Code sets out regulations and instructions related to civil servants’ terms and conditions of service, including the declaration and management of private interests. HR in each Department will provide advice about the appropriate procedures to follow.

Local authorities are responsible for the management of their own officials. Local government officers must act in conformity with the Nolan Principles.
Public Sector: Contracts

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding by the Reform think tank that £14.3 billion of public money has been wasted by public sector outsourcing contracts. [HL376]

The Earl of Courtown: The Government recognises that outsourcing is an important component in a “mixed economy” of government service provision which includes in-house and the voluntary sector. Government needs the dynamism and innovation that only a healthy, diverse marketplace of suppliers can provide and economies of scale mean services can be provided more efficiently and maximise value for the public.

The Government is committed to improving how we work with the private sector to deliver quality public services and value for money. In February 2019, the Government launched the Outsourcing Playbook which sets out eleven new policies to ensure contracts are set up for success and services are protected in the event of a corporate failure.

Public Works Loan Board: Interest Rates

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the one per cent interest rate rise on the Public Works Loan Board 50-year new maturity loan. [HL403]

The Earl of Courtown: In raising interest rates for new loans from the Public Works Loan Board, the Treasury assessed the potential impact on local government capital plans. Local authorities continue to benefit from very favourable interest rates on Public Works Loan Board loans. This increase returned Public Works Loan Board rates to levels that were available in 2018.

The Government will continue to work with individual authorities on a case-by-case basis if they raise concerns over their financial position.

Qatar: Football

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made as to whether the humans rights of workers building the stadium for the FIFA World Cup in Qatar have been violated. [HL474]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Qatar has made significant progress to improve the situation for its workers, including migrant workers since it won the right to host the World Cup. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) opened an office in Doha in 2018 to work with Qatar on improving workers’ rights. We welcome the steps Qatar has taken to date to improve the treatment of workers in Qatar including its most recent announcements on labour reform to abolish the Kafala system by early 2020. We continue to encourage Qatar on making further reforms recommended by the ILO and stand ready to support.

Railways: Tree Felling

*Asked by Lord Krebs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 28 October (HL39), what assessment they have made of the impact of clearance of trackside vegetation by Network Rail on the UK’s carbon budget. [HL465]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government expects Network Rail to achieve no net loss in biodiversity by 2024, and net gain by 2040 as the primary environmental objective of its lineside vegetation management. Network Rail does not currently calculate the carbon impact of vegetation clearance. As a responsible landowner Network Rail must effectively manage the national environment on its estate, whilst ensuring the safety and performance of the railway.

The Government believes that the railway should make a significant contribution to achieving our objective of net zero greenhouse gas emissions across the economy by 2050.

*Asked by Lord Krebs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 28 October (HL39), whether Network Rail carries out any habitat and carbon offsetting to compensate for the removal of trackside vegetation. [HL466]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government expects that, where it is not safe or practical to mitigate habitat loss on its lineside estate, Network Rail makes use of opportunities to improve biodiversity elsewhere on its estate or more widely.

Network Rail does not currently carry out carbon offsetting against the removal of trackside vegetation. The Government believes that, system-wide, the railway should make a significant contribution to achieving our objective of net zero greenhouse gas emissions across the economy by 2050.

Following the publication of the Varley Review on 28 November 2018, the Government published a policy statement: *Enhancing Biodiversity and Wildlife on the Lineside*. This sets an ambitious target for Network Rail to achieve no net loss in biodiversity on its existing lineside estate by 2024, and to achieve biodiversity net gain on each route by 2040. The policy statement sets out the Department’s expectation that Network Rail develop a Biodiversity Action Plan.

Russia: Diplomatic Relations

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what conditions they would anticipate a rapprochement of
diplomatic relations with the government of Russia. [HL421]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to hope that we will one day once again enjoy a strong partnership with the Russian government and we remain open to a different relationship in future – one where Russia desists from attacks that undermine international treaties and international security, and its actions that undermine the territorial integrity of its neighbours - and instead acts together with us to fulfil the common responsibilities we share as permanent members of the UN Security Council. As long as Russia persists in its efforts to undermine our interests and values, we will continue to deter and counter them.

**Sahel: Counter-terrorism**

*Asked by Lord Sheikh*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contributions they are making to the proposed Multi-National Joint Task Force and the G5 Sahel Joint Force in the Sahel. [HL564]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Since 2016, the UK has contributed £5 million to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNTJF), on top of our assessed contributions through the EU’s Africa Peace Facility. We also support through the deployment of UK personnel, who provide technical and strategic support, to the MNJTF headquarters in N’Djamena. The UK has supported the G5 Sahel Joint Force (G5SFJ) bilaterally and through the EU. We contributed £2 million of bilateral support in 2018/19 and are continuing to support this year. We are also providing technical support to cooperation between the G5SFJ and the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA.

**Sahel: Politics and Government**

*Asked by Lord Sheikh*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent reports they have received about unrest in the Sahel. [HL563]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is deeply concerned at the scale of terrorist and inter-community violence in the Sahel. In recent weeks, we have seen a number of horrific attacks with tragic consequences for people in the region. The UK condemns these attacks, including, most recently, those conducted against the Malian and French armed forces on 1-2 November, and offers its deepest condolences to those affected.

As part of the UK’s new strategic approach to Africa we are increasing our support to the Sahel, bringing together our development, diplomacy and defence expertise to help address instability and poverty in the region. Our increased engagement includes the deployment of 250 personnel to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali next year and the expansion of our work to address the long-term drivers of conflict.

**School Libraries**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make it mandatory for schools to have a library. [HL324]

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of the educational impact on children of not having access to a school library. [HL325]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** It is for individual schools to decide whether to provide and maintain a library service for their pupils. The vast majority of 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 national curriculum requires teachers in maintained schools to encourage pupils to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. It also emphasises the importance of listening to, discussing and – as their fluency increases – reading for themselves a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books. Ofsted’s school inspection framework has a significant focus on reading as part of the quality of education judgement, with reading being prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer.

The last Progress in International Reading Literacy Study indicated in 2011 that 92% of pupils in Year 5 in England were attending a school where there was a library. This was above the international average of 86%.

We do not collect data on school library provision or the impact it has on children’s educational attainment.

**Schools: Standards**

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government how the Joint Understanding between the Department for Education and the Independent Schools Council is supporting the raising of educational standards in state schools. [HL321]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The government’s joint understanding with the Independent Schools Council (ISC) encourages more independent schools to work in partnership with state-funded schools across the 4 key areas of: governance, teaching, curriculum and targeted school improvement. These 4 areas have been identified as key to raising standards across the education system. The department is supporting the growth of partnerships across these 4 areas through a dedicated unit.

The 2019 ISC census shows that there are 1,142 ISC schools in the UK involved in partnerships with state schools - equating to 84% of ISC schools. Those schools reported 11,466 separate partnerships, compared with 10,553 before the joint understanding was agreed in 2018.
The department welcomes a reported shift in the census towards higher impact activities, such as staff secondments, mixed lessons, and other academically-significant endeavours, as well as an increase in members of independent school staff serving as governors of state schools. These trends are to be welcomed for their ability to raise educational standards across the system.

Consistent with the joint understanding, the department is now calling for bids for its cross-sector partnerships grant. The grant aims to raise the ambition for what schools can achieve together, and to remove a key financial barrier to new high-impact, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships forming. It is designed to attract bids from both new partnerships that may benefit from seed funding, as well as existing partnerships looking to deepen and expand their collaborations.

**Scientists: Migrant Workers**

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Queen's Speech on 14 October, how they intend to expand the pool of UK research institutes and universities able to endorse scientists and researchers to carry out work in this country. [HL239]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** On 8 August the Prime Minister announced that we would be reforming our Tier 1 Exceptional Talent route – an immigration route for very high skilled individuals who are endorsed by a recognised UK body – to provide for a fast track immigration scheme to attract top scientists and those with specialist skills in Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics subjects to the UK.

The Government is clear that the scientific community should be at the heart of the proposals. We are working with the existing endorsing bodies as well as the wider scientific community on changes to this route. Further details will follow in due course.

**Shares: Sales**

*Asked by Lord Vinson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of tracker and similar funds lending the shares of beneficial owners for shorting; what regulations are in place to ensure that such funds make share owners sufficiently aware that shares may be lent in this way; whether such funds must seek the permission of beneficial owners before lending their shares for such purposes; and if not, why not. [HL332]

*Asked by Lord Vinson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of beneficial owners with shares invested in tracker and similar funds that are not fully cognisant that their shares are being lent for shorting; and what steps they intend to take in response to any such estimate. [HL333]

**The Earl of Courtown:** The FCA seeks to ensure that regulated firms provide adequate levels of disclosure to investors that invest in financial products, as well as the orderly functioning of these types of investment products.

As part of this, the FCA sets requirements for managers of authorised funds carrying out stock lending, including obligations that they make clear in the fund’s prospectus (the document provided to those considering investing in a fund) if the stocks in the fund they invest in may be lent on to others. However, the FCA does not require fund managers to then seek the permission of fund investors before lending their stock in each individual case. Under FCA rules, managers of authorised funds can only lend the stocks in these funds for the account of and for the benefit of the fund and in the interests of unitholders. The manager must be satisfied that any stock lending is appropriate for generating additional income for the fund at an acceptable degree of risk.

More broadly, the FCA is responsible for enforcing the Short Selling Regulation (SSR), which regulates short selling practices while safeguarding companies and the financial system. It imposes a disclosure regime on those who have reportable net short positions to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and to the public and provides the FCA with powers to suspend short selling or limit transactions when there are significant reductions in the price of certain instruments from the previous day’s closing price. Additionally, the Treasury and FCA both have powers under the Regulation to address adverse events that pose a serious threat to market confidence or financial stability.

**Slavery: Victims**

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring the law in respect of the treatment and care of modern slavery victims in England and Wales in line with the standards in force in Scotland and Northern Ireland. [HL230]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery; ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives and that those responsible are prosecuted. In July 2018, the Government commissioned an independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, led by Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss to ensure our legislative framework remains truly world-leading. The Government welcomed the findings of the Independent Review and has accepted or partially accepted the majority of the Review’s recommendations.

The Government also recognises the importance of publishing statutory guidance to ensure that victims are provided with the support they need and deserve. We have made significant progress in developing statutory guidance for England and Wales under Section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, setting out the indicators someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support...
to which victims are entitled, and the process for determining whether someone is a victim. This will be published in the coming months.

Social Security Benefits: Northern Ireland
*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Duncan of Springbank on 8 October (HL17821) and the report of the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland Review of Welfare Mitigation Schemes, published in March, which stated that "in the absence of a functioning Assembly it is considered that the only viable option for providing the legal authority for the Department to cooperate to make a mitigation payment beyond 2020 would be for the Westminster Parliament to bring forward appropriate legislation", what steps they are taking to bring forward such legislation. [HL110]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The bespoke mitigation arrangements for Northern Ireland were agreed by the Executive following the “A Fresh Start, the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan”.

I understand that the present uncertainty over the future of these schemes has been a cause of considerable concern, especially for those in receipt of the top up payments.

Neither the Northern Ireland Office nor its Ministers can instruct the Northern Ireland Civil Service in the devolved welfare space or direct spending from the NI block grant.

We have however, following the Executive Formation Act, provided departments with additional guidance on the exercise their functions in the public interest in the absence of a restored NI Executive. And of course, we continue to work tirelessly to facilitate the restoration of locally accountable political leadership. I am grateful to the Noble Baroness for raising this matter.

Social Security: Self-employed
*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that HM Revenue and Customs provides rebates for freelance workers in the EU27 who may incur double deductions of social security as a result of the invalidity of A1 certificates in the event of a no-deal Brexit. [HL340]

The Earl of Courtown: If the UK leaves the EU with an agreement then there will be no changes to social security coordination rules in full until the end of December 2020. Where arrangements are put in place, individuals, employers and freelancers will continue to pay social security contributions in one country at a time.

Social Services: Apprentices
*Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the maximum funding for a Level 3 Adult Care Worker apprenticeship is set at £3,000 when the maximum funding for Level 3 apprenticeships for veterinary nurses and project control technicians is set at £15,000 and £21,000 respectively. [HL448]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Each apprenticeship standard is allocated a funding band based on recommendations by the independent Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute). The Institute uses a wide range of evidence to inform these funding band allocations, including information from trailblazer groups, training providers and assessment organisations, and consideration of comparable qualifications such as relevant standards.

A longer duration often drives a higher funding band, due to the larger volume of material delivered in the standard. In this instance, the level 3 Adult Care Worker has a 12-month duration, compared to a 30- and 36-month duration for Veterinary Nurse and Project Controls Technician respectively.

The Institute is improving the transparency and operation of the funding band recommendation process in 2019-20 and will test improvements with employers.

Soft Drinks: Taxation
*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. [HL504]

The Earl of Courtown: The Government has no plans to end the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. However, HM Treasury keeps all taxes under review.

Sugar: Taxation
*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to extending the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to other products which fail to meet Public Health England’s voluntary sugar reformulation targets. [HL505]

The Earl of Courtown: As set out in Phase 2 of the Childhood Obesity Strategy, HM Treasury is due to review the Soft Drinks Industry Levy exemption for milk-based drinks in 2020.

The Government has no other plans to extend the scope of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy.
Syria: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which the agreed ceasefire in north-east Syria is being respected by all armed groups; and what proposals they have for making it (1) effective, and (2) permanent. [HL509]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome the fact that the ceasefire in north-east Syria appears to be broadly holding and that Turkey has confirmed it has no plans for a further offensive. Implementation of the ceasefire is for the parties directly involved but we have made clear our expectation that all parties abide by the agreed ceasefire and by their obligations under international humanitarian law. We have consistently clear with Turkey on our opposition to its military action in north-east Syria – the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Minister for the Middle East and North Africa have each made this clear to their Turkish counterparts, most recently on 26 October.

Syria: British Nationals Abroad

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 29 October (HL109), how many repatriations of British citizens or residents now in Syria, in particular in the north-east, have so far been achieved through their case-by-case approach; and whether they are seeking the help of both non-governmental organisations and international organisations to ensure the process supports those people affected effectively. [HL510]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We do not routinely comment on individual cases. We can confirm that in the last 12 months there have been a small number of British children who have left Syria and returned to the UK via third countries. As a matter of general policy, we provide consular assistance to British Nationals not UK residents. The UK has no consular presence within Syria from which to provide assistance. Each case is considered on an individual basis. As the Foreign Secretary has said, the Government will work with a range of partners in Syria and at home to facilitate the return of unaccompanied or orphan children where feasible and subject to national security concerns. This includes both non-governmental organisations and international organisations.’

Syria: Military Intervention

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what evidence they have received about reports of torture, murder, kidnapping, ransoming of civilians, and sexual enslavement of women, by the Turkish forces and allied militias in the Afrin Canton of Syria; and what is their response to any such evidence. [HL304]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Prime Minister spoke to President Erdogan on 12 and 20 October to express our opposition to the Turkish military operation and urge an end to the action. Dr Murrison met the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister, Sedat Önal, on 26 October and urged restraint on the part of Turkish forces and their proxies. We therefore welcome the fact that the ceasefire is holding and that Turkey has confirmed there are no plans for a further offensive, involving its military forces and Turkish-backed groups. The Foreign Secretary has also conveyed UK concern to his Turkish counterpart.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government is deeply concerned by all civilian casualties in north east Syria. The allegations that white phosphorous has been used against civilians are extremely worrying and it is important that the full facts are established before any other action is considered. The UN Commission of Inquiry has responsibility for investigating alleged violations of international law in Syria. White phosphorus is not classed as a chemical weapon or covered by the Chemical Weapons Convention. But we have repeatedly called on all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law which prohibits attacks against civilians irrespective of the weapon used.

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government whether they intend to call on the government of Turkey to compensate the (1) next of kin of civilians killed or seriously wounded, and (2) local authorities for damage to civil infrastructure, in particular water facilities and grain storage, as a result of the recent incursion by Turkey into Syria. [HL303]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to raise concerns with Turkey about the impact of its intervention in north-east Syria on civilians and civil infrastructure. Decisions on whether to award compensation for damages are a matter for the courts in the relevant jurisdiction.

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Turkey about ensuring that its auxiliary militias comply fully with current, and any future, ceasefires in Syria. [HL304]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Prime Minister spoke to President Erdogan on 12 and 20 October to express our opposition to the Turkish military operation and urge an end to the action. Dr Murrison met the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister, Sedat Önal, on 26 October and urged restraint on the part of Turkish forces and their proxies. We therefore welcome the fact that the ceasefire is holding and that Turkey has confirmed there are no plans for a further offensive, involving its military forces and Turkish-backed groups. The Foreign Secretary has also conveyed UK concern to his Turkish counterpart.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have received reports from the UN Commission of Inquiry and credible
international NGOs on possible violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In its September report, the UN Commission of Inquiry for Syria found that there were reasonable grounds to believe that members of armed groups in Afrin continued to commit the war crimes of hostage-taking, cruel treatment, torture and pillage. We continue to raise concerns with Turkey, and to call for credible investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law in areas under the control of armed groups supported by Turkey.

**Asked by Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of white phosphorus against the Kurds by the government of Turkey. [HL381]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of very worrying allegations that white phosphorous has been used against civilians in Syria. It is important that the full facts are established. The UN Commission of Inquiry has responsibility for investigating alleged violations of international law in Syria. We have repeatedly called on all parties to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law which prohibits attacks against civilians irrespective of the weapon used.

**Asked by Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to consulting other NATO members about expelling Turkey for reportedly committing war crimes. [HL382]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Turkey is and will remain an important NATO member and ally. We are in close consultation with international partners and multinational bodies, including NATO, on the situation in north-east Syria. Turkey briefed NATO allies on its operation on 16 October and the Defence Secretary discussed the situation in north-east Syria with other NATO Defence Ministers last week. We have made clear to Turkey our serious concerns about alleged violations of international humanitarian law committed during the Turkish military operation in north-east Syria.

**Asked by Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the withdrawal of United States forces from north-east Syria, whether the Coalition for the Defeat of ISIS' mission now includes retaining control over the al-Omar oilfield and the prevention of access to that oilfield by Syrian Armed Forces. [HL436]

**Asked by Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the al-Omar oilfield in Syria will be controlled by military personnel associated with the Coalition for the Defeat of ISIS or the United States Armed Forces. [HL437]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The purpose of this work, the Global Coalition has been engaged in a comprehensive campaign to disrupt and prevent Daesh from raising funds. US military decisions and troop movements are a matter for the US government.

**Asked by Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the British Armed Forces have, or are intended to have, any involvement in controlling the al-Omar oilfield in Syria. [HL438]

**Baroness Goldie:** The UK remains fully committed to the Global Coalition against Daesh and we must not lose sight of the threat that they still pose.

We are in close contact with the US and other allies regarding the next stage of the campaign against Daesh in Syria but we are clear that our key aim is to defeat this evil terrorist group.

**Temporary Accommodation: Children**

**Asked by The Earl of Listowel**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many ISIS fighters in Syria have been (1) killed, and (2) captured, in (a) 2018, and (b) 2019, by the Coalition for the Defeat of ISIS. [HL439]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government does not hold this information.

**Written Answers**

4 November 2019
31 March 2017: 120,520  
31 March 2018: 123,520  
31 March 2019: 126,020

**Temporary Accommodation: Families**  
*Asked by The Earl of Listowel*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many families have been living in temporary accommodation in each of the last five years. [HL406]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Time spent in temporary accommodation means people are getting help and it ensures no family is without a roof over their head.

The government has undertaken a significant programme of work backed by over £1.2 billion, to tackle homelessness. This includes supporting Local Authorities in the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, increasing access to the private rented sector for families in temporary accommodation (TA) and supporting London boroughs to procure TA more efficiently.

Last summer we published the cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy. This sets out an ambitious £100 million package to help people who sleep rough now, but also puts in place the structures that will end rough sleeping once and for all.

We are clear that local authorities should, as far as possible, avoid placing households out of their borough. However, in some areas where there is a limited supply of suitable accommodation, we are aware that, on occasion, it is necessary to place households in accommodation outside of the local area. This is set out in legislation and guidance which local authorities must have regard to.

Homeless households have legal rights to request a review of a decision to place them in unsuitable accommodation.

**Thomas Cook: Insolvency**  
*Asked by Baroness Doocy*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review their repatriation measures for non-ATOL protected passengers, following the collapse of Thomas Cook. [HL501]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** On 14 October 2019, the Queen’s Speech set out the Government’s intention to legislate to enhance the Civil Aviation Authority’s oversight of airlines, and to create a new airline insolvency framework to provide a means to keep the fleet flying and to get passengers home quickly and efficiently in the event of any future insolvencies.
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