

**Session 2019-21
No. 60**



**Tuesday
2 June 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
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Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
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Written Statements

Tuesday, 2 June 2020

Grenfell Tower: Phase 1 Report Next Steps

[HLWS253]

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

On 30 October 2019 Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which focused on how the fire started and spread and the emergency response, concluded with the publication of the Phase 1 report. In January 2020 the Government reaffirmed the acceptance, first given on the day of publication, to accept in principle, all the recommendations that Sir Martin Moore-Bick made for central government in that report.

Six months on from the publication of the Government's response to the Phase 1 report, I would like to update Parliament on the Government's progress at turning our commitments into real and lasting change to building and fire safety.

The Grenfell fire was an unimaginable tragedy that must never be allowed to happen again. Even in these unprecedented times, the Government's commitment to implementing the Inquiry's recommendations, as a priority, remains unchanged. As does the Government's commitment to ensuring those most affected, the bereaved and survivors – who have displayed such remarkable courage, resilience and dignity – continue to be engaged in discussions about policy development.

Ban on the use of combustible materials

The Inquiry's report was clear that the use of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) rainscreen cladding and combustible insulation on the exterior of the Tower was the defining factor in the rapid spread of the fire. The Government introduced regulations in December 2018 that banned the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of specific types of new high-rise buildings. A public consultation was held between January and May 2020, to further explore and refine the scope of that ban – including a proposal to ban the use of ACM with unmodified polyethylene core and similar materials on all buildings in England. We are analysing feedback and will be publishing a response in due course.

Remediation

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Home Office (HO) have identified over 450 buildings with unsafe ACM cladding, and we have worked with local authorities and fire and rescue authorities to ensure that appropriate interim safety measures are in place, while these buildings undergo remediation.

In March this year the Government announced that it will provide £1 billion to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems. This

is in addition to the £600 million which Government has made available for remediation of the highest risk ACM cladding. The prospectus for this fund was launched last month and sets out the buildings and non-ACM cladding systems that are eligible for funding and registration is now open for potential applicants, in advance of the full application process opening by the end of July 2020. More information on the Fund Prospectus can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund>.

This fund will meet the cost of remediating unsafe non-ACM cladding systems where building owners (or other entities legally responsible for making buildings safe) are unable to do so. Government are also providing additional, specialist project management capability to building owners or managing agents to speed up the development and implementation of building plans.

The Fire Protection Board

The Government has also established a Fire Protection Board, chaired by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), to provide greater assurance to central government of Fire and Rescue Service protection activity. The Board is leading a Building Risk Review Programme, supported by government funding to ensure that all high-rise residential buildings of 18m or above are inspected or reviewed by the end of 2021. We are also using a proportion of the additional £20m secured for fire and rescue services in the recent Budget to further support an uplift in protection capability.

Stay Put

At the end of last year, a joint HO and MHCLG steering group was set up to support a technical review of stay put. There are three strands to this work: an evidence review, assessing academic evidence on methods of evacuation; operational research to test evacuation strategies; and building design research. The first stage of this work has been commissioned and is underway whilst preliminary work is being carried out on the other strands.

Building safety

At the heart of the Government's radical reforms to building safety is the new Building Safety Regulator, which we are establishing within the Health and Safety Executive. The Government set out plans in our response to the 'Building a Safer Future' consultation for the biggest change in building safety for a generation.

The new regulator will be responsible for implementing and enforcing a more stringent regulatory regime for higher risk buildings, as well as providing wider and stronger oversight of safety and performance across all buildings and increasing the competence of those working on building safety. This work complements the establishment of a new construction products regulatory role to strengthen national oversight and effectively enforce the new regulatory regime.

The Government will soon be publishing the draft Building Safety Bill for scrutiny before it is introduced in Parliament. This Bill will put in place this new and

enhanced regulatory regimes for building safety and construction products, and ensure residents have a stronger voice.

In April, the Government published a workplan detailing the next steps for the wider review of Approved Document B, following the technical review that was started in December 2018. Research will be carried out in areas such as means of escape, compartmentation and toxicity. This work will build on the changes we have published in an update to Approved Document B last month, so that sprinklers and wayfinding signage will be provided in all new blocks of flats above 11 metres. The Government is also working with the NFCC on further tests of evacuation with a view to including guidance on provision of these systems in a later update to Approved Document B.

Fire Safety Bill

The Inquiry's Phase 1 report also called for new duties on building owners and managers to share technical information with fire and rescue services and undertake regular inspections of flat entrance doors. It is our intention to take forward these recommendations for existing buildings under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 underpinned by the changes being introduced through the Fire Safety Bill.

The Fire Safety Bill, which was introduced in March and received cross-party support, clarifies that the scope of the Fire Safety Order covers external walls (including cladding and balconies) and flat entrance doors in multi-occupied residential buildings. It provides a firm foundation upon which to bring forward secondary legislation to implement the recommendations that require further changes to the law. The Bill is a significant further step to ensure better identification and management of fire safety risks in such buildings.

It is important that the Government's response to the Inquiry's recommendations has the support of those with experience in these matters, and those most affected by them. To ensure their views inform our response, a public consultation will be issued soon setting out the Government's proposed approach to the remaining recommendations that call for legislative change.

Fire and Rescue Services

Many of the recommendations within the Inquiry's Phase 1 report were directed at non-Government organisations that are equally committed to the reforms. The report was clear that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) must learn and change to restore public confidence. Our request for regular progress reports from the LFB setting out how they are translating the recommendations into action are a key part of retaining focus and momentum on the need for change.

There remains much to do, but the HO is already seeing a commitment to revised policy and procedures backed up by the use of better equipment and technology to support high-rise fire fighting and fire fighting in London more broadly. The pandemic has created many challenges, but

it has not affected the LFB's commitment to implementing the Inquiry's Phase 1 recommendations.

It is important that the lessons from Grenfell are learned beyond London. This is why the NFCC is working to ensure that the Phase 1 recommendations are implemented across all fire and rescue services. The HO is working closely with the NFCC on an improvement plan to help it drive real change across the sector.

In the three years since the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government has remained steadfast in its commitment to driving forward both cultural and legislative change so that no such tragedy can ever be allowed to happen again. Through implementation of the reforms highlighted in this statement, and wider work of Government and our stakeholders, we will move from the conditions that allowed a tragedy like the fire at Grenfell Tower to occur almost three years ago, to a system which ensures developers and building owners demonstrate greater responsibility for the safety of residents and which allows local authorities and fire and rescue authorities to enforce this. The Government is firmly committed to ensuring all residents are safe in their homes, now and in the future.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendments) (No. 3) Regulations

[HLWS249]

Lord Bethell: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

On 26 March 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force, imposing restrictions on people's movements and gatherings, and requiring the closure of certain retail and public premises, in the interest of public health in light of the coronavirus pandemic. A review of these Regulations must take place at least every 21 days to ensure the restrictions remain necessary. I completed the third review as required on 28 May 2020.

Taking into account scientific advice and taking into consideration the Government's assessment against the five conditions required for change, we can proceed with some limited and cautious amendments to the Regulations to ease the restrictions as announced by the Prime Minister on 28 May 2020.

The changes coming into effect include allowing for increased social contact outdoors (both public and private places) in groups of up to 6 people from different households and opening some outdoor retail (e.g. vehicle showrooms and outdoor markets). Those from different households should continue strictly to observe social distancing guidance.

In order to provide greater clarity and certainty to the public, businesses and police, we are confirming in law what people cannot do rather than the reasons for which someone can leave the home.

The changes generally follow the principle that outdoor environments, whilst not zero-risk, have a lower risk of transmission than indoor.

Additionally, to ensure that we are making future decisions about the lockdown at the right time, the maximum review period will change from 21 days to 28 days. This will allow decisions to align more closely with the period of time necessary to assess the impact of previous changes on key data feeds, including the R rate. The Government will also keep all the measures under continual review and will account to Parliament on an ongoing basis.

Publicly available Government guidance on Gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the amended Regulations. These remain strict measures, but they are measures that we must take in order to protect our NHS and to save lives.

Higher Education Stabilisation Package Draft Regulations

[HLWS248]

Baroness Berridge: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

On 4 May 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced a package of measures to protect students and higher education providers, in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This package was designed to stabilise university finances, including tuition fee income resulting from admissions, and to support our world-class higher education system to continue to deliver for all students and the wider economy.

One of the measures announced was temporary student number controls (SNCs) designed to prevent recruitment by providers taking a form which would be against the interests of students and the sector, yet still allow students who want to go to university, and meet their entry requirements, to access higher education.

I announced on 4 May that SNCs would be linked to the student finance system. I can confirm that I will be laying draft Regulations before Parliament which provide that, where an SNC is exceeded in academic year 2020/21, providers in England which are subject to a tuition fee limit will have that limit reduced in the subsequent academic year. In the case of institutions in the devolved administrations which attract student loans for students from England, the maximum loan amount will be reduced in academic year 2021/22 where they exceed their SNC in academic year 2020/21.

These number controls are a response to the financial threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic. They aim to prevent large swings in the number of students between providers, with much higher levels of recruitment at some providers potentially leaving others in financial difficulty. They also aim to prevent recruitment practices which are against students' best interests because they may

encourage them to accept an offer from a provider that is not best suited to their needs.

On 1 June we published a policy statement setting out the detail of the SNCs. These will allow higher education providers to recruit, without the financial consequences referred to above, full-time, undergraduate, UK/EU domiciled students (with certain exemptions) up to a set level, based on 2019/20 numbers and provider growth forecasts, and which allow additional growth of up to 5% in the next academic year.

In addition, providers can also apply for additional places, following the process set out in the policy statement. The Government will allocate an additional 10,000 places for strategically important subjects, with 5,000 of these ring-fenced for nursing, midwifery or allied health courses to support the country's vital public services.

In the event that a provider does not abide by its student number controls, the Government will address the consequences for the stability and the sustainability of the higher education sector by reducing the sums available to the provider through the student finance system in the subsequent academic year. This will be through the introduction of lower fee limits in the academic year from 1 August 2021 for providers that recruit more students than their individual SNCs. Maximum tuition fee loan amounts available to English-domiciled students starting full-time courses at institutions in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are also reduced in the same circumstances.

The Government therefore intends to lay draft Regulations (the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Student Support) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020) before Parliament for its approval. These Regulations will amend the legislation which prescribes tuition fee limits and tuition fee loan amounts.

These SNCs are in the best interests of the financial health of the higher education sector overall, and will help to ensure we can continue to look after the best interests of students, allowing them make well-informed choices that give them the best prospects for success in their lives and careers.

Historic Royal Palaces: Contingent Liabilities

[HLWS252]

Baroness Barran: My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, Nigel Huddleston MP, has made the following Statement:

It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Minister concerned:

To present a departmental Minute to parliament, giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and

To refrain from incurring the liability until fourteen parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in the cases of special urgency.

The Departmental Minute I lay today is in respect of two matters:

Firstly, to provide the House with notice that Historic Royal Palaces' previously approved £4 million overdraft facility, whereby Government act as a guarantor, has now been called upon and thus the guarantee has been activated as a result of COVID-19.

Secondly, to provide the House with retrospective notice of a new contingent liability of up to £20.8 million created by my Department. This is in relation to a new borrowing facility of up to £26 million for Historic Royal Palaces whereby Government provides the lender with a guarantee of 80% against the outstanding balance of the finance.

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is a charity established by Royal Charter. By virtue of a contract entered into on 1 April 1998, it carries out the functions of the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under Section 21 of the Crown Lands Act 1851 of managing the unoccupied Royal Palaces.

The £4 million guarantee was originally placed in 2002 and was intended to safeguard HRP's business from a sudden and serious decline in economic conditions affecting HRP's admissions income. Since that date, the guarantee has been extended on a rolling basis. Following the laying of a Departmental Minute and Written Ministerial Statement by the then Heritage Minister on 15 September 2016, the £4 million guarantee was last renewed for a period of 5 years.

As a result of COVID-19, HRP closed all of the palaces in its care on 20 March 2020. As HRP receive no grant-in-aid from Government and are entirely dependent on admissions, visitor related spend and events, they have therefore lost their main sources of income. Whilst HRP currently have reserves of c.£33 million, the use of these reserves before they mature would not be cost effective and lead to financial penalties being incurred. The £4 million overdraft facility with Barclays Bank has therefore been put in place to meet their immediate cash flow requirements in April and thus the £4m guarantee has been activated.

HRP expects that the current crisis will exhaust all of their reserves within the current financial year. The new guaranteed borrowing facility of up to an additional £26 million will enable HRP to allow their reserves to mature and invest in the business. The guarantee will be available for a period of two years and HRP will only enter into borrowing facilities at such times and within such monetary limits as the Department shall agree.

HRP's cash flow estimates showed that by the end of May they would have exhausted the existing £4m overdraft facility and be in urgent need of c.£1.4m to make payments due. Therefore, due to the urgency involved, the Department has authorised HRP to immediately draw down £4million from the additional

£26 million facility to meet HRP's immediate cashflow needs.

I am placing today a copy of the Departmental Minute in the Library of the House.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

[Departmental Minute \(Departmental minute.pdf\)](#)

NHS Test and Trace

[HLWS251]

Lord Bethell: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

On 28 May the NHS Test and Trace service was introduced across England. This forms a central part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy to help as many people as possible return to life as close to normal as possible, in a way that is safe and protects our NHS and social care.

The objective of the NHS Test and Trace service is to push down and keep low the rate of reproduction (R) of COVID-19 and reduce the total number of infected people by catching cases before they spread the virus. It brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service.

The roll-out of the NHS Test and Trace service has been made possible by the rapid expansion of testing. The largest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history has been created and now has the capacity to carry out 200,000 tests a day. This includes 50 drive-through sites, more than 100 mobile testing units and 3 mega laboratories. Everyone in England is now eligible for a test if they have COVID-19 symptoms. These symptoms are: a new, continuous cough; or a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of smell or taste.

The NHS Test and Trace service uses a combination of 25,000 dedicated contact tracing staff, local public health experts and an online service to trace the contacts of anyone who tests positive for COVID-19. The NHS COVID-19 App, which will further extend the speed and reach of contact tracing, will be rolled out nationally in the coming weeks as part of the NHS Test and Trace service.

On 22 May we announced £300m of new funding for local authorities in England to work with NHS Test and Trace to develop local outbreak control plans. These plans will focus on identifying and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, housing complexes, care homes and schools, ensuring testing capacity is deployed effectively and helping vulnerable people who are self-isolating access essential services in their area.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus is contacted by NHS Test and Trace and asked to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members and people with whom they have been in direct contact or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. People identified as having been in close contact

with someone who has had a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.

Those who need to self-isolate will be informed about local support networks if they need practical, social or emotional support. They will also have access to the same financial support available to those who have to self-isolate because they or another member of their household has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19. This includes access to Statutory Sick Pay, subject to normal eligibility conditions.

The public will have a key role to play in making this service a success. They will need to report COVID-19 symptoms, book tests, help to identify recent close contacts, and self-isolate for at least 7 days if they have COVID-19, and for 14 days after they were in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if they are identified as a close contact by NHS Test and Trace.

We have put in place a comprehensive media campaign to increase public awareness of the NHS Test and Trace service, what it is, why it is important and what the public need to do. This includes TV, radio, Video on Demand, posters, digital display and social media.

We are working closely with the devolved administrations and public health agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure an aligned approach to testing and tracing across the United Kingdom where possible.

Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019: Documents Required

[HLWS250]

Baroness Scott of Needham Market: I wish to inform the House regarding certain documents that have been agreed by virtue of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 ('the Act').

On 8 April the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body was established as a corporate body by section 2 of the Act with overall responsibility for the Parliamentary building works. As required by section 3 of the Act the Sponsor Body established the R&R Delivery Authority to carry out the works.

Section 4 of the Act requires the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority to enter into a programme delivery agreement (PDA) regarding the arrangements for the definition, development and delivery of the works. The PDA was approved by the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority Boards on 18 May and it will be reviewed after six months.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Sponsor Body to prepare a strategy for consulting Members of both Houses in relation to the works, which must be published by 3 June. The Sponsor Body Board approved the strategy on 23 April and the Commissions of both Houses took note of the strategy in May. The Act requires the strategy to be kept under review with subsequent versions published accordingly.

Section 6 of the Act requires the Corporate Officers of both Houses to enter into a parliamentary relationship agreement (PRA) with the Sponsor Body. The PRA sets out the arrangements for how both Houses and the Sponsor Body will work together during the works, including their respective roles and responsibilities, and what they should expect of each other across a wide range of areas. The Commissions of both Houses and the Sponsor Body Board approved the PRA in April and it will be reviewed after six months.

I have attached these documents, which are also available on the Programme website at: <https://restorationandrenewal.uk/about-us/governance>

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Member Consultation Strategy
[Member_Consultation_Strategy.pdf]

Parliamentary Relationship Agreement
[Parliamentary_Relationship_Agreement.pdf]

Programme Delivery Agreement
[Programme_Delivery_Agreement.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-06-02/HLWS250/>

Prison and Probation Service: Roadmap to Recovery (Covid-19)

[HLWS255]

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

I am today announcing the Government's plans for how Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will start to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

I want to first pay tribute to the hard-working staff across the country who have continued to deliver essential services in spite of the virus. They have been striving tirelessly to make sure those in their care are safe and the public is protected.

The Government has introduced strong measures to save lives and protect the NHS, including reducing face-to-face interactions in both prison and probation, minimising transfers between establishments, shielding the vulnerable, quarantining new entrants to prison and making greater use of technology to enable family contact and supervise offenders in the community.

As a result of the success of these measures, we are formulating plans for how these restrictions can be cautiously rolled back over the coming weeks and months. This will happen within overarching frameworks for prisons and probation which have been published today. These decisions will be guided by public health advice and the best available data.

In prisons there will not be a simple easing of restrictions across the estate but national guidance will ensure there is consistency in decision-making by

governors. That means establishments will progress at their own speed, taking full account of their specific circumstances.

We know it will not be a straightforward return to normality. As the Prime Minister has set out, the whole country now needs to prepare for an extended period of living with and managing the threat from the virus.

But over the coming weeks and months, we will restart aspects of daily prison life, such as social visits, education and work, and face-to-face probation supervision, including unpaid work and accredited programmes, with adaptations where necessary to ensure safety.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation, and only proceed once it is safe to do so. Should restrictions need to be re-imposed to ensure the safety of staff and those in our care we will not hesitate to do this.

During this time, we will continue with measures such as providing additional temporary accommodation, and making careful use of our End of Custody Temporary Release powers, to ensure we are able to manage the possibility of any future outbreaks.

Reopening Schools

[HLWS254]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

This week, we have been able to take the first, cautious, step towards getting children and young people back in education. In line with many other countries this is being done with a phased approach. As the Prime Minister confirmed on 28 May, the government's five tests are being met and all nations in the UK are beginning to ease the lockdown restrictions.

Based on all the evidence, in England this means that nurseries and other early years providers, including

childminders, are now able to welcome back children of all ages. Primary schools are able to welcome back pupils in Reception, year 1 and year 6, in smaller class sizes, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children of all ages who will continue to be able to attend.

We recognise that schools and nurseries need time to plan and to implement the strict protective measures we have asked them to put in place. We are continuing to work with the sector to ensure any schools experiencing difficulties are supported to welcome more children and young people back as soon as possible.

From 15 June, secondary schools and further education providers are being asked to provide face-to-face support for years 10 and 12, and 16-19 learners in the first year of a two-year study programme, who are due to take key exams next year. This support will supplement their remote education, which will continue to be their main method of education during this term. As the scientific evidence indicates numbers need to continue to be limited, we are asking that only a quarter of this cohort should attend at any one time to limit the risk of transmission. Children of critical workers and vulnerable children in all year groups will continue to be able to attend full-time.

The Department for Education has published detailed guidance for settings on how to prepare.

We continue to follow the best scientific advice and believe that this cautious, phased return is the most sensible course of action to take. As the Prime Minister has set out, the Government will continue to monitor the rate of transmission carefully and will not hesitate to reintroduce restrictions on a local or regional basis if required.

I continue to be immensely grateful for the response of all those in working in education, childcare and children's social care during this challenging time.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 2 June 2020

Abortion

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of a medical professional to establish the gestation period of a child accurately via a telephone consultation before prescribing the at-home administration of mifepristone and misoprostol for an abortion. [HL3441]

Lord Bethell: The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has issued clinical guidelines for healthcare professionals on Coronavirus infection and abortion care. The guidance sets out the circumstances where women should be asked to attend a clinic for an ultra-sound scan. However, it states that “most women can determine the gestational age of their pregnancy with reasonable accuracy by last menstrual period (LMP) alone”. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends in their guidance *Abortion Care* that services should consider providing abortion assessments by phone or video call, as evidence shows that community services and telemedicine appointments improve access to abortion services. A copy of this guidance is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Abortion Care [abortion-care-pdf-66141773098693.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3441>

Academies

Asked by **Lord Grocott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of secondary schools are now academies. [HL4256]

Asked by **Lord Grocott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many secondary academy trusts comprise: (1) single academies, (2) two academies, (3) three academies, (4) four academies, and (5) five academies. [HL4257]

Baroness Berridge: In May 2020, there are 2,675 secondary academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges (UTCs), out of a total of 3,453 state-funded secondary schools. This is 77% of all secondary schools. Please note that the number of secondary schools includes middle deemed secondary schools, 16+ schools, all through schools and secondary schools.

Academy trusts may comprise of either one phase of education, or multiple phases of education. The table below provides the number of academies within academy

trusts that have at least one secondary academy. The number of academies within these trusts also includes primary, special and alternative provision (AP) academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs.

Table 1: Number of academy trusts, by size of academy trust, and number of academies within those trusts

<i>Number of academies in a trust</i>	<i>Number of academy trusts with one or more secondary academy</i>	<i>Number of primary, secondary, special and AP academies within these trusts</i>
1	786	786
2	138	276
3	106	318
4	77	308
5	72	360
More than 5	277	3574
Total	1456	5622

Source: Get information about schools, taken from 1 May 2020.

Accident and Emergency Departments: Admissions

Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people who are not reporting to accident and emergency departments with serious non-COVID-19 related conditions including (1) heart attacks, and (2) strokes; and what plans they have to encourage those with such conditions to continue to use accident and emergency services. [HL4699]

Lord Bethell: The information is not held in the format requested.

Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Hain**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 15 May (HL4054), what provision they have made for additional aid to combat COVID-19 in Africa. [HL4570]

Baroness Sugg: We are tackling COVID-19's direct and wide-ranging secondary impacts, and to date have committed up to £764 million of UK aid to support the global response to COVID-19. This includes UK support for the implementation of the African Union's COVID-19 Continental Strategy. UK aid funding of £20 million will help strengthen healthcare systems and save lives in the African Union's 55 member states by providing training for healthcare workers, supporting the deployment of African experts, and helping to tackle misinformation around COVID-19.

The UK has provided public health experts to support Africa Centres for Disease Control through the Department of Health and Social Care International Health Regulations Strengthening Project and the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team. DFID is rapidly adapting its bilateral programmes across Africa to help counter the health, humanitarian, and economic impacts of COVID-19, in support of the poorest people.

We are seeking to ensure that the significant amounts of finance made available by International Financial Institutions targets the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, flexes to meet the short-term needs of governments, and is coordinated with the UN and other parts of the international response.

Agency Nurses: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether agency nurses working in hospitals, nursing homes and care homes are being tested for COVID-19. [HL4274]

Lord Bethell: All National Health Service and social care staff, including nurses, can apply for a test if they are experiencing symptoms using digital portal. The employer referral portal allows employers to refer essential workers who are self-isolating either because they or member(s) of their household have COVID-19 symptoms, for testing.

Asymptomatic care home staff are now eligible for testing through the 'whole home' testing portal.

Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 7 May (HL3400), what plans they have (1) to encourage more flexible and part time seasonal employment on farms, and (2) to encourage more British workers to apply for vacancies through the Pick for Britain scheme. [HL4405]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are already a number of recruitment efforts under way by industry and we encourage as many people as possible to take up seasonal work on farms. We took the decision to allow thousands of furloughed staff to take additional jobs and top up their income.

We know people are signing up for extra work and we are working with industry to highlight these jobs and encourage recruitment. We are working with industry to encourage farmers, growers and Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) licensed businesses with vacancies to add their websites to the Pick for Britain (PFB) website through the 'Are you an employer' page. We are also working with industry recruiters to encourage them to post vacancies on the GOV.UK Find A Job digital platform so farmers can access a broader number of jobseekers.

Jobs will continue to be added by these recruiters as more workers are needed and we will be working with industry to promote the PFB website throughout the summer. Further communications on PFB will be released based on the needs of the sector- this may include regional variations and targeting towards specific audiences such as students.

We are in regular contact with the industry and current sentiment is that labour demands are being met for May. But we will monitor this across the picking season and work with growers and industry to join up potential sources of labour, including highlighting the benefits of a diverse and flexible workforce.

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many current seasonal farm workers are (1) Eastern European, and (2) UK recruits through the Pick for Britain scheme. [HL4406]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra does not hold details of the number of seasonal farm workers from eastern Europe versus those recruited through the Pick for Britain (PFB) scheme, but we understand that this year's workforce is likely to be more diverse than in previous years as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Industry tells us that demand for seasonal workers in May is currently being met, but we know that demand will rise from June onwards. A number of workers from within and outside of the UK have already been recruited and trained and will continue to work on our farms throughout the season.

There are already brilliant recruitment efforts underway by industry and there has been a strong response with thousands of British people expressing their interest in agricultural work in the upcoming months.

The PFB website acts as a central hub to signpost people to recruiters of seasonal agricultural workers and jobs will continue to be added to the website by these recruiters as more workers are needed. We will be working with industry to promote the PFB website throughout the summer.

We will continue to work closely with industry to ensure our food supply chain remains resilient and to help our world-leading farmers and growers access the labour they will need over the busy harvest months.

Air Pollution: Health Hazards

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of human exposure to high levels of ultrafine particulate matter from air pollution on the expression of Angiotensin I converting enzyme 2. [HL4695]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) is aware of evidence linking exposure to particulates in the air to altered expression of Angiotensin I converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), and of emerging evidence that this is a potential

mechanism by which air pollution exposure could theoretically increase the spread or severity of COVID-19.

PHE is continuously reviewing and considering the evidence on the health impacts of air pollution exposure, as well as potential associations between air pollution and the health impacts of COVID-19.

Airports and Ports: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish a detailed plan about the quarantine of international travellers arriving in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether that scheme will cover ports as well as airports. [HL4475]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government will soon require all international arrivals not on a short list of exemptions to self-isolate in their accommodation for fourteen days on arrival into the UK. The General Aircraft Declaration (GAD) process will now be required for all flights coming to the UK, requiring crew to identify symptomatic passengers before arrival, with a similar process being implemented for maritime and international rail. This will contribute to keeping the overall number of Covid-19 transmissions in the UK as low as possible.

Further details, and guidance, will be set out shortly, and the measures and list of exemptions kept under regular review.

Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase provision of services to address alcohol-related issues related to any increase in the consumption of alcohol during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4483]

Lord Bethell: Local authorities are responsible for assessing local needs and commissioning alcohol services to meet these needs, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Health England supports local authorities in this work by providing advice, guidance and data.

In support of COVID-19, NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a specialty guide for alcohol dependence to support clinicians in acute and mental health trusts treating patients with alcohol dependence. Additionally, a national alcohol clinical expert network has been established to provide advice and support.

Armed Forces: Deployment

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of the UK Armed Forces are currently deployed on NATO operations, broken down by service. [HL4592]

Baroness Goldie: In total there are 2,005 members of the UK Armed Forces deployed on NATO operations. The Navy has 14 deployed, the Army has 1,727 deployed and the RAF has 264 deployed.

This table provides greater detail should it be required.

Country	Army	RAF	Navy	Total
LITHUANIA	2	164	1	167
ESTONIA	838	1	1	840
POLAND	136	1	0	137
KOSOVO	20	0	0	20
IRAQ	4	1	1	6
AFGHANISTAN	727	97	11	835
Total	1727	264	14	2005

Armed Forces: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many former service personnel discharged from the services on disciplinary grounds have (1) applied to rejoin the armed forces and (2) been accepted and rejoined. [HL4463]

Baroness Goldie: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Armenia: Azerbaijan

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Azerbaijan has been conducting large-scale military exercises along the borders with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh; and what representations, if any, they intend to make to that government about such exercises. [HL4626]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Azerbaijani troops used large-calibre weapons to fire at Berkaber village in Armenia's Tavush Province on 13 May. [HL4627]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is aware of reports of military exercises being conducted in Azerbaijan by the country's military. As with the exercises of other countries in the region, we will continue to monitor this closely.

We are also aware of ongoing reports of ceasefire violations along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At this time of global crisis, the United Kingdom fully supports the UN Secretary General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in armed conflicts around the world. The United Kingdom would like to see a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and fully supports the efforts of the Co-

Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in achieving that. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly raises the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and will continue to do so.

Asylum: Finance

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 6 May (HL Deb, col 441), when the current review of asylum support commenced; when that review is due to be completed; and whether that review will take additional costs into account, such as those associated with hygiene needs, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4183]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The current review of the level of the cash allowances began with the publication of the latest Family Spending data by the Office for National Statistics on 19 March, as that data is one of the main sources of information used to assess the appropriate level of the allowances. The review also takes account of research into the actual costs of purchasing essential items and whether Covid 19 has impacted on these costs.

The outcome of the review will be published in due course.

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the level of asylum support in line with the COVID-19 related uplift for Universal Credit. [HL4235]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers. The level of the cash allowances is not linked to Universal Credit.

Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those in the asylum system who are affected by the covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and are making adjustments to our processes and procedures where necessary and appropriate.

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make Wi-Fi available for people living in all forms of asylum accommodation so that they can contact essential mental health support services, currently only offered online, during the COVID-19 pandemic without having to spend any portion of their £37.50 weekly allowance on such data. [HL4558]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum seekers receiving support under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 are generally provided with accommodation and a cash allowance to cover other essential living needs. The level of the cash allowance

provided take into account communication needs, including the cost of buying and using a mobile phone. As a result of the Covid-19 crisis a higher proportion of asylum seekers than usual are being accommodated in full-board hostels and hotels. We are looking at practical ways of providing internet access to this group and other ways to enable them to communicate effectively.

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 11 May (HL3390), what plans they have to include consideration of extending the current weekly validity of the Aspen card for asylum seekers alongside the quantum in the current review. [HL4583]

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 11 May (HL3390), on what date the current review into the level of cash allowances for asylum seekers will be published. [HL4584]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The asylum support cash payments are currently made on a weekly basis. There has been some suggestion that these payments should be made fortnightly, and we are currently seeking views on this issue.

We are currently reviewing the level of the cash payments, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers and will announce the outcome as soon as we can.

Asylum: Housing

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum-seekers in housing provided by the Government or local authorities, including through private contractors, are still in shared rooms of two or more people. [HL3896]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not hold the information requested. However, although room sharing is in place, no one is forced to share rooms with anyone displaying COVID 19 symptoms.

PHE Guidance recommends that separate rooms should be provided for symptomatic people, or they should be moved to hotels. Those with underlying health conditions and people over 70 years of age should also be moved to the appropriate hotel accommodation following PHE guidance, unless individuals do not wish to be moved. We are reviewing each case on an individual basis and continue to work with our providers to ensure the guidance is followed.

Asylum: Wakefield

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conditions, and treatment of

asylum-seekers, in Urban House in Wakefield, following reports that individuals displaying COVID-19 symptoms have been forced to share rooms with others there. [[HL3895](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We've conducted a thorough assessment of Urban House with local health partners and have put in place steps in accordance with all of their recommendations. These steps include staggering meal times, increasing staff numbers, providing information and guidance in a variety of languages, stopping all new arrivals into Urban House.

Although room sharing is in place, no one is forced to share rooms with anyone displaying COVID 19 symptoms. Those with underlying health conditions and people over 70 years of age should also be moved to the appropriate hotel accommodation following PHE guidance.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with British Airways and other airlines about the (1) requirement to provide passenger refunds for cancelled flights within the legal timescale, and (2) the need to ensure consumer rights are respected. [[HL4580](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport is in regular conversation with UK airlines and wider membership bodies. We are working closely with the sector, the regulator and consumer groups to help ensure airlines deliver on their commitments.

The Government recognises the challenges businesses are experiencing regarding refunds for cancelled holidays and flights. Airlines are working hard to answer the high call volumes and to process large volumes of refunds.

The Government appreciates the frustration consumers may be experiencing. We have been clear that where a consumer has asked for a refund, that refund must be paid.

Bahrain: Press Freedom

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the publication of the Reporters Without Borders 2020 World Press Freedom Index which saw Bahrain drop to 169 out of 180 countries, a fall of two places since last year and five places since 2017, what assessment they have made of the state of press freedom in Bahrain; and whether any such assessment will impact their provision of technical assistance to that country. [[HL4192](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We take note of a number of sources of information when assessing a country's performance. We continue to encourage the

Government of Bahrain to protect freedom of expression for all of its citizens. We have not provided technical assistance to Bahrain in this area.

Bahrain: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief on 11 September 2019 that "reform is taking place" in Bahrain, what assessment they have made of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's Annual Report 2020: Bahrain Chapter, published in April, which states that Bahrain "continued its ongoing and systematic discrimination against some Shi'a Muslims on the basis of their religious identity" in 2019, noting in particular the mistreatment of Shi'a prisoners, the harassment of Shi'a Imams and jailed Shi'a activists who advocate for greater freedom of religion in Bahrain. [[HL4191](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a human rights priority for the UK Government. Bahrain was the first country visited by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB in September 2019. The Special Envoy discussed FoRB with religious leaders from the range of different faiths represented in Bahrain. Our most recent assessment of Bahrain was published as part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Human Rights and Democracy Report in June 2019. We take note of a number of sources of information when making assessments.

Barristers: Public Appointments

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review the QC appointments competition to assess whether from 2021 it should no longer be externalised. [[HL4270](#)]

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review whether fees should be paid for QC applications; and if so, how much they should be. [[HL4271](#)]

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review whether fees should be paid for QC appointments; and if so, how much they should be. [[HL4272](#)]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government has no current plans to review the QC appointments competition and make this a Government function. The fees for both QC applications and QC appointments are set by Queens' Counsel Appointments Ltd, and are therefore a matter for QCA.

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to call for the Biological Weapons Convention to be updated to include provision for inspection and compliance enforcement at the Ninth Review Conference due to occur in 2021. [[HL4666](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK strongly supports the effective global implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Verification remains a highly contested question and there is currently no prospect of consensus among the Convention's States Parties to agree any declaration, inspection or investigation provisions. However, at the Ninth Review Conference the UK will work to build consensus on strengthening the operation of the Convention, including improved decision making and more structured scientific and technological review processes.

The UK continues to take a leading role in efforts to build up and sustain operational capabilities for the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for the investigation of allegations of the use of chemical and biological weapons. This is complementary to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Asked by Baroness Redfern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how quickly banks will be able to make a decision on applications to the Bounce Back Loan scheme [[HL4365](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) was launched on 4 May to help small and medium-sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000.

More than 69,000 Bounce Back Loans worth over £2 billion were approved during the first 24 hours of the scheme. As of 24 May, this has increased to 608,069 loans issued to businesses, worth £18.49 billion.

In order to apply for the scheme, businesses complete a short, simple, online application form, meaning that applications can be submitted and processed rapidly, and loans can be accessed within a matter of days. The Government is providing lenders with a 100% guarantee on each loan to give them the confidence they need to support the smallest businesses in the country.

Asked by Baroness Redfern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the difficulties faced by businesses that apply and receive the Bounce Back Loan Scheme if those businesses do not stay with their existing lenders. [[HL4430](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) has been introduced to help small and medium-

sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. Businesses are not required to bank with a lender in order to apply for a Bounce Back Loan with them.

There are now 18 accredited lenders of the scheme and the British Business Bank is working at pace to accredit more lenders to further extend the Scheme's reach and provide more choice for businesses. A full list of accredited lenders can be found on the British Business Bank website.

Brexit: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to extend the transition period as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4581](#)]

Lord True: I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave to PQ [HL3150](#) on 28 April 2020.

British Council: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving to the British Council to respond to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4672](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCO remains committed to the British Council, who are a key driver of our soft power overseas and a precious part of the FCO family. In order to help stabilise their immediate financial position following the impact of Covid-19 on their ability to operate, we agreed to provide the British Council with £26m of additional funding for the 2019-20 financial year. We have also provided some of their 2020-21 Grant-in-Aid funding upfront this month to further alleviate pressures.

The FCO have also supported the British Council in accessing wider government relief available through the COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme and similar schemes in other countries. This will help them support many of their workforce, and those employed through its partners, funded through the commercial side of their business. We will continue to work closely with the British Council in the coming days and weeks to seek to address the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to operate.

British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by the Foreign Secretary on 11 May (HC Deb, col 13), what is the "outstanding issue" referred to which is preventing the repatriation of UK citizens who are crew members stranded around the world on cruise ships. [[HL4467](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The "outstanding issue" mentioned was not intended to refer to any particular

obstacle preventing the repatriation of British crew members, but was a reference to the fact that although no British national passengers remain on any cruise ships, we continue to work on the outstanding issue of supporting the return of British crew members. We are in direct contact with all of the main cruise ship operators, as well as with many crew members and their families. We will continue to support operators to ensure the welfare and safety of British crew. Our overseas missions are liaising closely with local authorities in an effort to facilitate disembarkation and ensure British crew can access flights home.

Broadband: Standards

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they provide to broadband consumers in urban areas who are not able to access superfast broadband from Openreach. [HL4651]

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they provide to broadband consumers who are unable to access (1) fibre-to-the-premises, or (2) fibre-to-the-cabinet, broadband from Openreach in urban areas where Openreach has no plans to make such services available. [HL4652]

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all consumers with exchange-only broadband connections are able to access superfast broadband. [HL4654]

Baroness Barran: According to Ofcom's latest Connected Nations report, more than 98% of premises in urban areas can access superfast broadband. The Government's Superfast programme has been instrumental in reaching this level of coverage, with £1.8 billion invested to date. The programme is still ongoing, and future delivery will further increase superfast coverage.

For consumers unable to access download speeds of at least 10 megabits per second, including those on exchange only lines, the Government has legislated to introduce the broadband Universal Service Obligation, which provides households with a legal right to request this minimum speed up to a reasonable cost threshold of £3,400 per premise.

In addition, the Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit-capable broadband as soon as possible and has already invested in stimulating demand for gigabit broadband, including in urban areas. The £200 million Local Full Fibre Networks programme has funded projects in urban areas such as Belfast and London, for example.

The Government has also announced that it will invest a further £5 billion to provide gigabit-capable networks in the hardest to parts of the UK. This funding will focus on connecting more rural and remote areas but, alongside this, the Government is also taking action to reduce the barriers to deployment, and make it cheaper and easier for BT Openreach and other operators to roll out broadband commercially, including in urban and suburban areas. For example, we are taking the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill through Parliament, which will make it easier for network builders to access blocks of flats where there is an absent or unresponsive landlord.

Finally, mobile network operators already provide 4G mobile broadband services which provide a viable alternative to superfast coverage in urban areas. In addition, according to Ofcom's December 2019 Connected Nations report, more than 40 towns and cities already have access to even faster 5G mobile services, and the rollout has developed further since then.

As part of this, the Government has allocated £200 million from 2017 to March 2022 to support the further development of 5G through its 5G Testbeds & Trials Programme, including up to £20 million in the West Midlands 5G (WM5G) Programme (over three years, to March 2022).

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in ensuring that every home and business in the UK will have access to (1) full fibre, and (2) gigabit-capable, broadband by 2025. [HL4655]

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect (1) full fibre, and (2) gigabit-capable, broadband will be available to every home and business in London. [HL4656]

Baroness Barran: Ofcom's latest Connected Nations update found that, as of January 2020, over 3.5 million premises or 12% of the UK had access to full fibre broadband. This represents a considerable increase from 7% coverage in January 2019. In addition, the independent ThinkBroadband website estimates that around 19% of UK premises currently have access to gigabit capable broadband, including full fibre, but also upgraded cable broadband.

Full fibre figures for London boroughs are generally higher than the UK average. According to Connected Nations, 19 London Boroughs had full fibre coverage above the national average. However, there are notable differences between boroughs, ranging from full fibre coverage of 50.9% in Barking and Dagenham, compared to 1.1% in Bromley.

We are taking action to reduce barriers to commercial deployment and are confident that telecoms providers will step up and deliver gigabit capable coverage across London by 2025.

Broadband: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Freyberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mandate the rollout by Openreach of fibre-to-the-premises broadband to urban areas; and what is their timeframe for this rollout. [HL4653]

Baroness Barran: The Government's ambition is for nationwide coverage of gigabit capable broadband as soon as possible. Gigabit capable broadband can be delivered by fibre to the premise broadband, as well as other technologies, such as upgraded cable networks.

We believe the best way to deliver nationwide coverage is to promote network competition and commercial investment by BT Openreach and other operators wherever possible, and to intervene with public subsidy where necessary. To deliver this, we are taking action to reduce barriers to commercial deployment including, for example, through the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold) Property Bill, which will make it easier to connect tenanted properties with an unresponsive landlord. At Budget, we also committed to invest £5 billion to deliver gigabit capable deployment to the hardest to reach areas of the country.

The Government does not have formal powers to mandate the rollout of gigabit capable broadband by a private sector company like BT. However, BT recently announced their ambition to deliver gigabit connectivity to 20 million premises during the 2020s.

Building Societies: Fraud

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all regulations relating to the actions that banks are legally required to take when there has been unauthorised or fraudulent activity on a customer's account also apply to building societies. [HL4297]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Banks and building societies are both regarded as credit institutions under the EU Capital Requirements Regulation. As such, where there are obligations for unauthorised or fraudulent activity in relation to a credit institution, these apply equally to banks and building societies, unless stated otherwise.

Every industry has a role to play in protecting themselves and their customers from fraud - from keeping their customers' personal and card payment details safe, to ensuring they have adequate mechanisms in place to spot and stop fraudulent transactions. The scale of fraud requires a unified response with the private sector, particularly the banking industry, retailers, telecommunications industry and social media companies.

Burkina Faso: Terrorism

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of

Burkina Faso about protecting civilians displaced by terrorist activity, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4332]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to protect the towns and villages in Burkina Faso that are now outside of state control because of terrorist activity. [HL4356]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Burkina Faso about the reported continuation of terrorist violence in the Centre-Nord region and surrounding areas, including (1) holding perpetrators to account, and (2) providing humanitarian aid for victims. [HL4357]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is deeply concerned by the ongoing reports of terrorist violence in Burkina Faso and the tragic consequences for the population. The number of displaced people due to instability continues to rise. As of March 2020, just under 800 000 people were recorded as displaced in Burkina Faso. The UK condemns the violence and is committed to working with all partners, including the G5 Sahel countries, to support those most in need and tackle the long-term drivers of instability in the region. In March, the Minister for Africa attended the first meeting of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly and G5 Leaders' Summit, where he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to improved security and increased development in the Sahel. We are also deeply concerned by reports of abuses and violations of human rights in Burkina Faso, including by armed groups and the Burkinabe security forces. We welcome the Government of Burkina Faso's commitment to investigate recent abuses and hold those responsible to account, including following the attack on Malian refugees on 2 May and the deaths of 12 detainees in mid-May.

The UK is supporting Burkina Faso by providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis. Over £23 million of UK humanitarian aid will go to Burkina Faso between 2019 and 2021, including to help tackle food insecurity and treat acute malnutrition.

We are also funding a number of programmes that help provide access to education in emergencies and support women's sexual and reproductive health. The UK is supporting the security response through non-combat assistance to the French-led counter-terrorism mission Operation BARKHANE, in the form of three CH47 chinook helicopters. The UK is also committed to helping the G5 Sahel Joint Force reach full operational capability - bilateral funding has gone towards the provision of non-lethal military equipment and support for the human rights compliance framework. In response to COVID-19, the UK has committed up to £744 million of UK aid to combat the virus and to reinforce the global effort to find a vaccine. In the Sahel, the UK is seeking to make sure existing programmes adapt to new needs and is working

with partners like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank to ensure that countries in the region, including Burkina Faso, get the support they need to respond to COVID-19 and manage its impact.

Burundi: Politics and Government

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the current political situation in Burundi, following the presidential elections on 20 May, and (2) how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting Burundi. [[HL4849](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK welcomes the broadly peaceful conduct of the elections in Burundi on 20 May, and takes note of the provisional presidential and parliamentary results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission on 25 May. We are, however, concerned by reports of violence against political party members during the electoral period. In advance of elections, the UK called on all parties to resolve electoral disputes through legal mechanisms and to ensure a peaceful post-electoral environment, through a joint statement with Germany, Belgium, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the EU and the United Nations Country Team. We are continuing to follow developments closely.

The Burundi elections took place against the challenging context of the COVID19 pandemic. We have called on the Government to ensure necessary measures are implemented to limit the transmission of COVID-19. A Department for International Development humanitarian affairs officer is working with United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support preparedness and contingency planning for COVID-19 in Burundi.

Business: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Drake***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will provide greater clarity on their plans for the phasing out of current emergency financial measures and the phasing in of any further support measures, so that businesses and organisations have time to assess the implications and plan accordingly. [[HL4594](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As the economy re-opens, we are looking at how to adjust our support in a way that ensures people can get back to work, protecting both the UK economy and the livelihoods of the British people.

On the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Chancellor has been clear that getting people back to work will be introduced in a measured way, avoiding a cliff edge. The scheme will run in full until July. We will then introduce more flexibility so that we move out of the scheme in a measured way that protects people's incomes and helps support furloughed employees as they return to

work. This will run for three months from August through to the end of October.

The Government will continue to monitor developments to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on individuals and businesses.

Cancer: Radiotherapy

*Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of patients awaiting radiotherapy therapy for cancer have experienced delays in their treatment since January. [[HL3781](#)]

Lord Bethell: The data requested is not held centrally.

Carbon Monoxide: Poisoning

*Asked by **Baroness Finlay of Llandaff***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in view of carbon monoxide poisoning risks in the home, what steps they have taken to (1) raise awareness of the availability of free call-out gas services, (2) ensure that every pregnant woman has a carbon monoxide alarm following the suspension of antenatal screening for carbon monoxide, (3) amend the symptoms algorithm on the NHS 111 line to take account of the fact that symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can masquerade as those of COVID-19. [[HL4500](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department does not have a remit for the oversight of gas services or domestic carbon monoxide alarms.

NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance to maternity services to pause carbon monoxide testing of pregnant women during COVID-19 pandemic.

NHS 111, through the NHS Pathways system, uses information and symptoms given by the patient to assess what care they need. NHS Pathways does not diagnose but will recommend further action, including referrals, based upon their assessment. If anyone (including pregnant women) presents with symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, they would be assessed using the appropriate algorithm based on their symptoms.

Care Homes and Hospitals: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the remarks by the National Statistician that the R rate of COVID-19 infections "is driven by the epidemic in care homes; and (2) reports by Care England that the levels of COVID-19 infections among hospital and care home staff may be five times higher than those in the wider population; and what steps they are taking in response. [[HL4326](#)]

Lord Bethell: Individual modelling groups use a range of data to estimate R including epidemiological data such as hospital admissions, intensive care unit admissions and

deaths. R is an average value that can vary in different parts of the country, communities, and subsections of the population. It cannot be measured directly so there is always some uncertainty around its exact value.

We know that care providers across the country have been doing their utmost to keep those they look after safe and well in the most challenging circumstances. On 13 May we announced an additional £600 million to support providers through a new Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund.

The Government has also made £3.2 billion available to help local authorities deal with the immediate impacts of COVID-19, and £1.3 billion of additional funding to enhance the National Health Service discharge process, getting patients who no longer need urgent treatment home from hospitals safely and quickly.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many tests for COVID-19 have been carried out in care and nursing homes in the UK; and over what period that testing took place.[T] [HL3094]

Lord Bethell: Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 125,000 workers in care settings and over 118,000 care home residents have been tested through Departmental and Public Health England's testing routes.

On 11 May we launched the 'whole care home' portal. We have the capacity to deliver up to 30,000 tests a day to residents and staff in care homes, making sure that all residents and asymptomatic staff can all be tested.

This information is for England only and supplements the local systems already in place for testing residents. We are working with the devolved administrations to support their needs around adult social care testing.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients who were discharged from hospitals to care homes in each week since 1 February were not tested for the COVID-19 virus before that transfer. [HL3701]

Lord Bethell: The Government does not hold data on the number of patients who were discharged from hospitals to care homes in each week since 1 February and were not tested for COVID-19 before transfer. We are working closely with local authorities, the care sector and NHS England to understand the impact of COVID-19 on care homes and ensure everyone has access to the right care, in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to work closely with the sector to keep our policies and data under review as the pandemic goes on.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the basic reproduction rate of COVID-19 (1) inside, and (2) outside, of care homes, as of 30

April; what comparative analysis they have conducted of those figures; and what conclusions they have drawn from any such analysis. [HL3816]

Lord Bethell: We do not currently have reproduction (R) rates for care homes. The Government Office for Science published the latest R number range for the United Kingdom on 15 May. The range of 0.7-1.0 is an estimate based on latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates.

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' advice. These papers are being published in batches. The latest batches were released on 20 March 2020 and 5 May 2020 and the next batch will be published in the coming weeks. The full list of papers released to date is available on the GOV.UK site at *Scientific Advisory Group for Emergency's (SAGE): Coronavirus (COVID-19) response* in an online only format. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

Asked by Baroness Wheeler

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefit of redeploying NHS nurses and doctors to care homes, and what representations they have received from the National Care Forum and other care organisations about any such redeployment. [HL3975]

Lord Bethell: We are very grateful for the many health professionals who are supporting the local health and care system during the pandemic, including National Health Service support to enable nurse returners to be deployed to care homes through the Bringing Back Staff programme.

In April, we published *COVID-19: Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care* setting out the measures that the Government and other parts of the system are taking to support adult social care, to ensure people in care homes and other settings continue to receive the care they need. We are increasing funding and support to care homes to reduce the spread of infection and support workforce resilience, working with local authorities and health. We continue to work closely with our senior leaders' group which includes the National Care Forum, who advise the Government on the measures we are taking to maximise workforce supply and capacity. A copy of *COVID-19: Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care* is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID 19 Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care [covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3975>

Asked by Baroness Wheeler

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to issue new guidance on friends and

relatives visiting care home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what steps they are taking to enable such visits to take place safely. [HL3976]

Lord Bethell: The Department's *COVID-19: Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care* outlines the importance of restricting visitors to care homes at this time to reduce the risk of infection for care home residents and staff. A copy of *COVID-19: Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care* is attached.

It is recognised that this restriction in visitors may cause anxiety for both residents and their relatives. Existing guidance encourages that alternatives to in-person visiting are explored such as telephones or video calling. It is important that relatives can visit their loved one if they are dying, or if the relatives' bereavement is likely to be worse, with a higher risk of psychological and physical morbidity. The Adult Social Care Action Plan acknowledges this exception.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID 19 Our Action Plan for Social Care [covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3976>

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that care homes have had to accept patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 from hospitals, and (2) the impact any such patients have had on deaths from COVID-19 in care homes. [T] [HL4282]

Lord Bethell: The safety of residents and staff is always a priority and patients should not be discharged unless it is clinically safe to do so.

We are determined to make sure discharges into nursing or social care do not put residents currently in those settings at risk. We have introduced a policy of testing all residents prior to discharge to a care home.

If appropriate isolation or cohorted care for an individual is not available with a local care provider on discharge, the individual's local authority has been asked to secure alternative appropriate accommodation and care for the remainder of the required isolation period.

We are continuing to monitor care home deaths and are working closely with local authorities, the care sector and NHS England to understand the impact of COVID-19 on care homes and ensure everyone has access to the right care, in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to work closely with the sector to keep our policies and data under review as the pandemic goes on.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) residents, and (2) workers, in care homes have been

offered COVID-19 tests; how many have been carried out; and what estimate they have made of the time it will take for all residents and employees in care homes to be offered tests. [HL4374]

Lord Bethell: Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 125,000 workers in care settings and over 118,000 care home residents have been tested through Departmental and Public Health England testing routes. On Monday 11 May we launched the 'whole home' testing portal. As of 19 May, around 170,000 tests have been delivered to 1,243 care homes using the whole care home portal as part of this programme. We will make testing available for every resident and member of staff in care homes for older people in England between now and early June.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Adelina Comas-Herrera and Jose-Luis Fernandez at the London School of Economics England: *Estimates of mortality of care home residents linked to the COVID-19 pandemic*, published on 12 May, which found that "data on deaths in care homes directly attributed to COVID-19 underestimate the impact of the pandemic on care home residents" and that such data accounted for "an estimate 41.6 per cent of all excess deaths in care homes"; what assessment they have made of the accuracy of the data provided by the Office for National Statistics that 8,314 people had died from COVID-19 in care homes from 13 March to 8 May; what were the causes of the additional 10,000 recorded deaths in care homes during that period between 13 March and 1 May as set out in the report; and whether the total number of deaths over that period represents 18,000 more than the average estimate in previous years. [HL4465]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Alton,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the report by Adelina Comas-Herrera and Jose-Luis Fernandez at the London School of Economics England: *Estimates of mortality of care home residents linked to the COVID-19 pandemic*, published on 12 May, which found that data on deaths in care homes directly attributed to COVID-19 underestimate the impact of the pandemic on care home residents, and that such data accounted for an estimated 41.6 per cent of all excess deaths in care homes; what assessment they have made of the accuracy of the data provided by the Office for National Statistics that 8,314 people had died from COVID-19 in care homes from 13 March to 8 May; what were the causes of the additional 10,000 recorded deaths in care homes during that period between 13 March and 1 May as set out in the report; and whether the total number of deaths over that period represents 18,000 more than the average estimate in previous years (HL4465).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing mortality statistics for deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent year for which mortality statistics are available is 2018[1]. However, we do publish provisional statistics for weekly deaths registrations, which are currently published for deaths registered up to 8 May 2020[2]. National Records Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10). Deaths involving COVID-19 are identified by the ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2.

We are working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Public Health England (PHE) to better understand deaths that are occurring in care homes. From 28 April 2020, we have published counts of deaths reported by care home operators to the CQC involving COVID-19, in our provisional statistics for weekly death registrations release. We have also provided information about the different data sources in our comparison article[3] that was last updated on 19 May 2020.

The weekly mortality statistics published for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are all designated as National Statistics, meaning they meet the Code of Practice for official statistics requirements of trust, quality and value. The most up-to-date figures for the number of registered deaths in care homes in England and Wales involving COVID-19 are contained in the ONS weekly deaths bulletin[4] and accompanying dataset[5] published on 19 May 2020. The year-to-date analysis in this report showed there were 9,980 deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes up to the week ending 8 May 2020 (these figures represent provisional numbers for deaths where COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate). The analysis also showed there were 21,753 excess deaths that occurred in care homes up to the week ending 8 May 2020 as compared to the previous five-year average over the same period.

On 15 May 2020, we published further analysis of deaths involving COVID-19 in the care sector in England and Wales[6]. This report provides breakdowns of deaths involving COVID-19 in the care sector, by: characteristics of the deceased; place of death; geographical location; leading cause of death; and, pre-existing conditions. Included are figures on the number of deaths of recipients of domiciliary care, derived from data provided by the Care Quality Commission.

The analysis in this report found that since the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (between the period 2 March and 1 May 2020, registered up to the 9 May 2020):

- there were 45,899 deaths of care home residents (wherever the death occurred); of these 12,526 involved

COVID-19, which is 27.3% of all deaths of care home residents.

- COVID-19 was the leading cause of death in male care home residents, accounting for 30.3% deaths, and the second leading cause of death in female care home residents, after Dementia and Alzheimer disease, accounting for 23.5% of deaths.

- Dementia and Alzheimer disease was the most common main pre-existing condition found among deaths involving COVID-19 and was involved in 42.5% of all deaths of care home residents involving COVID-19.

No specific assessment has yet been made of the estimates presented in the preprint article by Adelina Comas-Herrera and Jose-Luis Fernandez released on 12 May 2020. The ONS is publishing a report on the increase in non-COVID-19 deaths observed in weekly deaths statistics, with a provisional publication date of 29 May. This is mentioned in the ONS's statement of upcoming analysis on deaths and coronavirus (COVID-19)[7]. The report will analyse how the number of non-COVID-19 deaths occurring in different places of death (including care homes), for different age groups and for different causes of death differ from previous years' data and will suggest how these findings correspond with possible reasons for the increase.

Yours sincerely

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenglandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending8may2020>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/articles/comparisonof weeklydeathoccurrencesinenglandandwales/latest>

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending8may2020>

[5]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/weeklyprovisio nalfiguresondeathsregisteredinenglandandwales>

[6]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/deathsinvolvingc ovid19inthecaresectorenglandandwales/deathsoccurringup to1may2020andregisteredupto9may2020provisional>

[7]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/statementofupcominganalysisondeathsandcoronaviruscovid19>

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government why patients have been discharged to care homes from hospitals without prior testing for COVID-19. [HL4485]

Lord Bethell: The safety of residents and staff is always a priority. We are determined to make sure discharges into nursing or social care do not put residents currently in those settings at risk. We have introduced a policy of testing all residents prior to discharge to a care home. This was announced in our *Adult Social Care Action Plan* on 15 April.

A small number of people may be discharged from the National Health Service within the 14-day period from the onset of COVID-19 symptoms needing ongoing social care. Some care providers will be able to accommodate these individuals through effective isolation strategies or cohorting policies. If appropriate isolation/cohorted care is not available with a local care provider, the individual's local authority will be asked to secure alternative appropriate accommodation and care for the remainder of the required isolation period.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to review our guidance in line with scientific advice.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the comments by the National Care Association that care homes have felt "completely abandoned" during the COVID-19 pandemic and that prioritising the NHS without adequately protecting elderly people in care may have been "wrong". [HL4625]

Lord Bethell: The safety of residents and staff is always a priority. We have provided extensive support and guidance to care homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are working closely with local authorities, the care sector and NHS England to ensure everyone has access to the right care, in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

We are determined to give both the care sector and the National Health Service everything they need to respond to this pandemic. On 15 May 2020 we published a care home support package which outlines the next phase of our response for care homes, using the latest scientific evidence and drawing on the insights of care providers. To support this, on 13 May we announced an additional £600 million to support care home providers through a new Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to review our guidance and national support in line with the latest scientific advice and engage with stakeholders to ensure we address the majority of their concerns.

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 of the financial sustainability of (1) the for-profit care home sector, and (2) care homes operated by charities. [HL4645]

Lord Bethell: The Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitors the financial health of the largest and most difficult-to-replace adult social care providers through its Market Oversight Scheme. The scheme covers both commercial providers and charities. Under the scheme, the CQC has a duty to notify local authorities if they consider that a provider's services are likely to be disrupted because of business failure. This allows local authorities time to step in and ensure that people continue to receive the services they need. As a minimum, all providers in the scheme are required to provide the CQC with financial information on a quarterly basis. However, where the CQC perceives a greater risk to continuity of care, more regular engagement is undertaken.

We recognise the pressures that all parts of the sector are facing, and we provided local authorities with £1.6 billion funding in March to help them deal with the immediate impacts of COVID-19. On top of this, on 18 April the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP) announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support local authorities delivering essential frontline services.

On 13 May we announced an additional £600 million for an Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience.

Care Homes: Fees and Charges

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the average weekly fees paid by local authorities to care homes run by (1) local authorities, and (2) private operators, for elderly (a) residential care, and (b) elderly nursing care. [HL3650]

Lord Bethell: Care and support is arranged on an open market where prices and fee rates are negotiated locally by commissioners for state funded clients, whilst individuals and their families do so for those who self-fund. The Government has no say in these individual negotiations, as the level of fees charged to people who fund their own care is a private contractual arrangement.

The Government has taken and continues to take steps to support adult social care providers and local authorities, including providing regular advice and guidance, and working with the sector on contingency and preparedness.

We recognise the pressures that all parts of the sector are facing, and we have announced £1.6 billion to help local authorities deal with the immediate impacts of

COVID-19. On top of this, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support local authorities delivering essential frontline services.

Children: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the best interests of children who have a parent in custody, during, and after, the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4337](#)]

Baroness Berridge: Ensuring that vulnerable children remain safe and protected is our top priority. For children who have a parent in custody, their circumstances vary considerably and therefore local agencies are best placed to determine what support is needed. This may include early help, statutory social care services, or support for other needs, such as mental health. A child's need for support should be assessed individually. We do not believe a prescriptive approach – such as regarding all children of prisoners as children in need – is the right one. However, it is vital that all services consider the safeguarding and welfare issues that may be faced by children of prisoners.

The statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018), is unequivocally clear that anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's social care. The local authority and its social workers then have specific roles and responsibilities to lead statutory assessments or enquiries to determine whether the child is in need (section 17, Children Act 1989), or suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (section 47, Children Act 1989).

We know that attending education settings is an important protective factor for vulnerable children. That is why we have ensured vulnerable groups, including children with a social worker and children assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities, can continue to attend educational settings. We are also providing laptops and tablets for children with a social worker and care leavers, and those in year 10 preparing for exams who do not already have such devices, to help children's social care services keep in touch and keep children safe, and to support remote education.

For schools and colleges, the statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, sets out that staff should consider the additional needs of children with parents in prison. The guidance highlights the risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. It signposts staff to the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders website which provides specialist advice and resources to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

We recognise the importance of supporting and maintaining links between offenders and their families,

when this is in the best interests of the child. This is why HM Prison and Probation Service have been active in responding to this need and providing support for the families and children of those men, women and young people in their care. This includes the issuing of 900 mobile phones to establishments, piloting a video calling service, video messaging, using social media to update families, issuing letters from senior prison staff to prisoners' families with information and updates on conditions, weekly bulletins and updates from establishments, reassurance updates from healthcare and psychology teams, and running art competitions for children of prisoners.

Children: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their definition of disadvantaged in relation to school children. [[HL4343](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The department defines disadvantaged pupils as those who are recorded as claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, those pupils in the care of an English local authority, and those pupils who have left care in England or Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

The department recognises that other pupils face challenges in realising their potential at school. It encourages school leaders to exercise their autonomy when deciding how to provide extra support, particularly through the pupil premium, so that the needs of other pupil groups, such as those in touch with a social worker and young carers, may be addressed.

Children's Commissioner for England: Public Appointments

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that the provisions of the Family Test are used as a guide in the appointment of a new Children's Commissioner for England. [[HL4608](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The primary function of the Children's Commissioner for England is promoting and protecting the rights of children in England and by extension of that, the Commissioner has a part to play in issues that affect families. This is a key role for protecting children's rights, particularly the most vulnerable, and the recruitment of a new Commissioner is a priority for the government.

Whilst the Family Test is primarily a tool to prompt policymakers to consider potential impacts on family functioning and relationships in a more holistic way, various considerations will be taken into account as part of the appointment process of identifying the most appropriate person to take on the role of the new

Children's Commissioner, which is a Significant Public Appointment.

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the appointment process for the Children's Commissioner for England; and when they expect to begin this process for the next Commissioner. [HL4647]

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the term of office for the current Children's Commissioner for England is due to end; and whether they anticipate an extension to that term. [HL4648]

Baroness Berridge: The Children Act 2004 states that the Children's Commissioner is to be appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. The Children's Commissioner post is a Significant Public Appointment and therefore follows the process and requirements set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Officials in the Department for Education have already started planning for the recruitment of the next Children's Commissioner. We will be monitoring closely the current situation with the COVID-19 outbreak to see when would be most appropriate to launch the campaign.

The current Children's Commissioner's term in office will conclude at the end of February 2021. The Children's Commissioner maximum term in office is six years as set out in primary legislation – the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Families Act. An extension to the term of the Children's Commissioner is not permitted under the current legislation.

China: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that the World Health Organisation (WHO) cooperated with the government of China to suppress information about the emergence of COVID-19, and (2) the extent of the influence of that government within the WHO. [T] [HL4668]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The World Health Organisation (WHO) has an important role to play in coordinating the global health response - underpinned by the latest public health and scientific evidence. The UK has always been clear that, at the right time, there will need to be a full and independent review into the pandemic. The World Health Assembly resolution on COVID-19, which the UK co-sponsored, calls on the WHO to initiate an independent and comprehensive evaluation. This is an important step in learning the lessons of this pandemic.

China is currently one of 34 member states represented on the World Health Assembly's Executive Board, as is the United Kingdom. The World Health Assembly, which is the WHO's supreme decision making body, includes representatives of all 194 member states. In line with their

responsibilities in the international community, China has a vital role in the global response to the pandemic and any long-term health challenge. The immediate focus continues to be stopping the spread of the virus through global action but, at the right time, we will work with the international community, including China, to learn lessons.

Chorley and South Ribble Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments

Asked by Lord Hoyle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans there are to reopen the accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital; and if there are any such plans, when that department will be reopened. [HL4261]

Lord Bethell: The accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital has been temporarily modified to provide an urgent care level service. This is to safely manage the local response to COVID-19. This temporary change will be kept under review during the pandemic and services will be reinstated as soon as reasonably possible, based on local service needs.

Civil Partnerships

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow virtual civil partnership registrations during the COVID-19 lockdown. [HL4560]

Baroness Berridge: At present, only civil partnerships or marriages conducted under the special procedure, for those who are seriously ill and not expected to recover, are being conducted, and only where the Registrar General thinks it is safe to do so according to Public Health England guidelines. The Government has no plans to introduce virtual registration of civil partnerships.

We understand the frustration couples planning a civil partnership or a wedding must be feeling, and as with all coronavirus restrictions we will look to ease them as soon as it is safe to do so. As set out in our roadmap, those decisions will be based on scientific evidence.

Climate Change

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their investment in economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic will support the UK's climate objectives. [HL4276]

Lord Callanan: The UK has shown that growing our economy and cutting emissions can be achieved at the same time. We have grown our economy by 75% while cutting emissions by 43% over the past three decades. The

UK has over 460,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains and many of the actions we need to take to reach our target of net zero emissions by 2050 will support the future growth of our economy.

As we recover from COVID-19, the Government intends to deliver a UK economy which is stronger, cleaner, more sustainable and more resilient.

Climate Change Convention

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on revising their plans for COP26. [HL4275]

Lord Callanan: The Government will be setting out dates for a rescheduled conference in 2021, hosted in Glasgow by the UK in partnership with Italy, in due course.

Coastal Areas: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what targeted, additional support they are making available to businesses in seaside towns during and beyond the lockdown. [HL4251]

Lord Greenhalgh: The government has already invested £228m since 2012 in coastal towns, supporting 359 projects through the Coastal Communities Fund and a further £7.5 million through the Coastal Revival Fund.

In recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19, the government has announced a package of support for businesses to help with their ongoing business costs.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has been working across Government to provide £13 billion of grant funding to help small and rural businesses and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors manage their cashflow through this period. This support is in the form of two grant funding schemes, the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF). As of 10 May, these grants have been received by over 742,000 businesses and the performance of local authorities in disbursing funding is published on a weekly basis, including all local authorities covering coastal areas of England, this document can be found here at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>

In addition, on 1 May, the Business Secretary announced that up to £617 million is being made available to Local Authorities in England to allow them to provide discretionary grants. This is an additional 5% uplift to the £12.33 billion funding previously announced. The additional Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs but not liable for business rates or rates reliefs. Guidance, intended to support Local Authorities in

administering the Discretionary Grants Fund, was published on 13 May. This does not replace existing guidance for the SBGF or the RHLGF.

Furthermore, High Streets Minister Simon Clarke announced on 24 May 2020 a new £50 million fund for councils to support their local high streets get safely back to business. To prepare for the reopening of non-essential retail when the scientific advice allows, the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund will help councils in England, including those with seaside towns, introduce a range of safety measures in a move to kick-start local economies, get people back to work and customers back to the shops. The announcement, including allocations, can be found (attached) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/50-million-boost-to-support-the-recovery-of-our-high-streets> and the accompanying guidance at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-high-streets-safely-fund-guidance>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

High Street safely fund guidance [200527
Reopening_High_Streets_Safely_Fund_-_Guidance - HL4251.pdf]

High street fund allocation [200527 reopening-high-streets-safely-fund-allocations-per-local-authority - HL4251.pdf]

Local authority grant payment [200527 la-grant-payments-HL4251.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4251>

Construction: Mental Health

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Chartered Institute of Building Understanding Mental Health in the Built Environment, published on 11 May; and what steps they are taking in response. [HL4482]

Lord Callanan: The health and wellbeing of our construction workforce is of the utmost importance. The Government welcomes the Chartered Institute of Building's report on mental health in the sector, and will consider its recommendations.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

CIOB Understanding Mental Health report May 2020
[Understanding-Mental-Health-in-the-Built-Environment-May-2020-1.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-14/HL4482>

Consumers: Protection

Asked by Lord Tyler

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they have responded to the Competition and Market Authority's

(CMA) 2019 proposal that the CMA's powers to enforce consumer protection law should be improved. [HL4663]

Lord Callanan: As outlined in our manifesto, the Government is committed to giving the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) enhanced powers to tackle consumer rip-offs and bad business practices.

The Department and the CMA have been working closely together to develop the proposals made by the CMA in 2019. For example, following a commitment made in June 2019 by the previous Secretary of State, we are looking into the possibility of putting the CMA's powers on an administrative basis. This would allow the CMA to decide itself if a breach of consumer law has happened, rather than going to court.

Furthermore, we have announced that we will introduce a new power to impose fines of up to a maximum of 10% global turnover on businesses who have breached consumer law.

Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific guidance they plan to issue, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, to people living with serious health conditions. [HL2699]

Lord Bethell: On 30 March the Government updated their online guidance on GOV.UK for the clinically extremely vulnerable. This group is advised to shield until at least the end of June 2020. Expert doctors in England identified specific medical conditions that, based on what we knew about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

There are around 2.2 million clinically extremely vulnerable patients that have been identified. Each patient identified nationally receives a letter, a text message if their mobile phone details are known and is entitled to use the Cabinet Office shielded patient service. The letter provides specific advice about their circumstances.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that some cases of COVID-19 are leading to cytokine storm syndrome. [HL3031]

Lord Bethell: COVID-19 is a new virus and we are learning more about the properties of the virus every day. The United Kingdom is carrying out research to better understand the virus and inform the actions that will lessen its effect on the UK population.

UK clinical experts recognise that most patients recover from COVID-19 without complications, but a small proportion develop a severe delayed hyper-inflammatory illness that includes a set of symptoms or complications sometimes referred to as 'cytokine storm'. The UK is assessing in clinical trials, several drugs that may make a difference at this stage in the illness.

The Government will continue to review the evidence as it emerges and will always be ready to upgrade the guidance with new scientific evidence and on the expert advice of New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG).

Asked by Lord Lipsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in reporting COVID-19 deaths by location, whether the person's home address, the hospital where they are treated, or some other factor determines the location recorded. [HL3265]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) reports data on all deaths in people who have had a positive COVID-19 test result confirmed by a public health or National Health Service laboratory. These data include COVID-19 related deaths from all settings, in hospital or elsewhere, and geographical details of residence are assigned using the home postcode of the person who died.

The Office for National Statistics is responsible for publishing mortality statistics for deaths registered in England and Wales. The data is taken from information recorded on the death certificate. The geographical location of a death is assigned according to the address recorded as the usual residence of the deceased. The location of death (hospital, care home, etc) is assigned according to the information provided on the death certificate about the place of death.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in the UK they estimate will contract COVID-19 in 2020. [HL4007]

Lord Bethell: The number of people who contract COVID-19 in 2020 will depend on behavioural factors and future policy. The Government's five tests will seek to ensure that COVID-19 cases are kept low, whilst enabling the economy to re-open. It is important that people keep alert to control the virus, and in doing so, we will save lives.

Asked by Baroness Corston

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the increased risks to maternal and infant health caused by COVID-19 (1) in the UK, and (2) around the globe. [HL4566]

Lord Bethell: The National Health Service is making arrangements to ensure the care, support and safety of women through pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period to mitigate increased pressures on healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a clinical guide for the temporary reorganisation of intrapartum maternity care to ensure the safety of mothers, babies and staff. To reduce the risk of infection, there are now restrictions on visitors in most hospitals and maternity units. Further, the Department is funding several studies researching the

impact of COVID-19 on maternity and neonatal care to ensure rapid learning.

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government with what frequency they plan to publish a national figure for R, the reproduction index for the COVID-19 virus; whether they plan to publish regularly a value for the R figure by geographic area; and whether they plan to publish regularly a value for the R figure for different demographic groups. [T] [[HL4586](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of the United Kingdom-wide range for R on a weekly basis. The current range is estimated to be 0.7-1.0 and is based on latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates. R is an average value that can vary in different parts of the country, communities, and subsections of the population. It cannot be measured directly so there is always some uncertainty around its exact value.

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies advice. These papers are being published in batches. The latest batches were released on 20 March 2020 and 5 May 2020 and the next batch will be published in the coming weeks. The full list of papers released to date is available in an online only format on GOV.UK. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

Coronavirus and Tuberculosis: Medical Equipment

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they intend to provide to the Global Drug Facility to avoid shortages of key medical supplies and personal protective equipment for (1) tuberculosis, and (2) COVID-19, caused by current global supply and transport network disruptions. [[HL4641](#)]

Baroness Sugg: Along with other donors the UK is supporting UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs to respond to coronavirus in other countries. This includes helping the world's poorest countries to access critical medical supplies including PPE. UK aid is also helping to increase global production of medical supplies, including PPE. This includes significant support to the World Health Organisation (WHO) to help it work with global manufacturers.

The UK Government does not directly fund the Global Drug Facility, but it does provide significant funding to global bodies to tackle TB. This includes our funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, which we have committed £1.4 billion to for the next three years. We are also supporting developing countries through our multilateral partnerships with organisations like the WHO, and our regional and national programmes,

to make their domestic health systems, including their TB programmes, stronger and more resilient.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance is available to those who received firm job offers including start dates before lockdown was announced on 23 March but whose start dates have subsequently been postponed because of the lockdown. [[HL4315](#)]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance is available to those who received firm job offers including start dates before lockdown was announced on 23 March but whose start dates have subsequently been postponed because of the lockdown. [[HL4316](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is designed to help employers whose operations have been severely affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) to retain their employees and protect the UK economy. If an individual was on their former employer's payroll as of 28 February 2020, their employer can re-employ them and put them on furlough. This applies even if an employee is not re-employed until after 19 March.

However, the scheme is not an employment right and it is up to the employer to decide who to furlough, and whether to re-employ a member of staff they have made redundant or who has resigned from their employment.

There is a package of support available for those who are not eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, including an increase in the amount of Universal Credit, three-month mortgage holidays and support for renters.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support is available to businesses that have not been ordered to close but are reliant on those that have, such as ticket agents, 73 per cent of whose staff have been furloughed according to the Entertainment Agents' Association; and whether they expect that these businesses and their staff will need continued support to prevent large job losses. [[HL4319](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government is aware that businesses are facing many challenges during this unprecedented time and we are doing everything at our disposal to support businesses through this crisis and beyond.

The Government has been clear that it is essential that businesses that experience increased costs and disrupted cash flow as a result of coronavirus are supported, and my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency. These measures include the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS),

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), and Bounce Back Loan Scheme, which are designed to help businesses across the UK impacted by the coronavirus crisis to access funding they need and the Self-Employed income support scheme. Guidance on all these schemes can be found on the Government website.

In addition, to help firms to continue to keep people in employment, the Government has introduced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The scheme has protected over 7 million workers and almost 1 million businesses so far through this crisis. This scheme has been extended in full until end July 2020 and after July we will introduce more flexibility to the furlough scheme so that we move out of it in a measured way that protects people's incomes and helps support furloughed employees as they return to work. This will run for three months from August through to the end of October.

The Government recognises that some firms will be affected longer than others by Coronavirus. Through this period, the Government will continue to monitor developments in the public health and wider economic situation, and engage with affected sectors, to ensure that the support provided is right for these sectors and for the economy as a whole.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, an employer and employee must enter into a written agreement reducing the employee's salary before the first reduced payment is made. [HL4402]

Lord Callanan: Employers should discuss the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme with their staff and make any changes to the employment contract in writing as part of the furlough agreement. This includes agreement to any reduction in pay.

In order to be eligible for the scheme, employers must confirm in writing to their employee that they have been furloughed. If this is done in a way that is consistent with employment law, that consent is valid for the purposes of claiming through the scheme. Collective agreement reached between an employer and a trade union is also acceptable for the purpose of such a claim. There needs to be a written record, but the employee does not have to provide a written response. A record of this communication must be kept for five years.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, HMRC will tax the employee on their full salary and not the reduced one if an employer and employee have not entered into a written agreement reducing the employee's salary before the first reduced payment is made. [HL4403]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The CJRS is available to support employees paid via PAYE across the UK. When an employee has been furloughed, HMRC will tax the furlough salary in accordance with PAYE.

However, in order to be eligible for the grant employers must confirm in writing to their employee that they have been furloughed. If this is done in a way that is consistent with employment law, that consent is valid for the purposes of claiming the CJRS. Collective agreement reached between an employer and a trade union is also acceptable for the purpose of such a claim. There needs to be a written record, but the employee does not have to provide a written response. A record of this communication must be kept for five years.

If the employee has not received written notice confirming they are furloughed, the employee is not considered to be furloughed.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme does not require an employee to sign up to a salary reduction in order for the employer to make a claim for the grant, whether HMRC expect employers and employees to have entered into written agreements either for those who have been furloughed on 80 per cent of their pay or those who are still working but have voluntarily taken a temporary reduction in pay; and, if not, what evidence HMRC will require. [HL4404]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: In order to be eligible for the grant, employers must confirm in writing to their employee that they have been furloughed. If this is done in a way that is consistent with employment law, that consent is valid for the purposes of claiming the CJRS. Collective agreement reached between an employer and a trade union is also acceptable for the purpose of such a claim. There needs to be a written record, but the employee does not have to provide a written response.

Those who have voluntarily taken a reduction in pay and are still working do not meet the eligibility requirements of the CJRS and therefore are not furloughed according to the terms of the scheme.

As the scheme is administered through existing PAYE, the employee does not need to take further action.

Detailed step by step guidance for employers is available on GOV.UK.

Coronavirus: Brexit

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement by 31 December. [HL4438]

Lord True: Work on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement continues despite the challenges posed by the UK and EU's responses to COVID-19. This Government is overseeing a broad programme of activity which will ensure the UK is prepared for the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met for the first time on 30 March and will meet again on 12 June. The Specialised Committees are also progressing.

The Cabinet Office has published a Command Paper on the Implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. This is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and in the library of the House.

Coronavirus: Children

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures being developed to support street children during the COVID-19 pandemic (1) the Department for International Development, and (2) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, are aware of; what measures the Government are implementing in the UK; and what steps they are taking to involve specialist expert organisations in the development of such measures. [HL4037]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to protecting the most vulnerable children in the world. We are working with international partners to ensure that child protection is integrated into a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to Covid-19 which supports the most marginalised and vulnerable groups around the world, often with limited or no state protection, including children who live and work on the streets. We provide significant support to protect children from violence in conflict and humanitarian crises and to reduce their risks of exploitation and neglect. We welcome the statement made by the Chairpersons of the 10 UN Treaty Bodies on 24 March calling for a human rights approach in fighting COVID-19 and in the subsequent guidance provided by other Treaty Bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Providing financial support to UNICEF enables the UK to protect vulnerable children across the world who would be significantly affected by the spread of COVID-19, and through emergency grants to "Education Cannot Wait" we are supporting children in 16 Covid-19 hit countries. We are also working to ensure that existing UK programming is responsive to the challenge of supporting those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work on supporting street children in the UK does not come under the remit of the Department for International Development or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Asked by Lord Lingfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether COVID-19 contact tracing, if widely applied, will also extend to school-aged children. [HL4265]

Lord Bethell: The Government is developing a new test and trace programme. This will bring together an app, expanded web and phone-based contact tracing, and swab testing for those with potential COVID-19 symptoms. This programme will play an important role in helping to minimise the spread of COVID-19 in the future, including for school-aged children.

The programme will include more traditional methods of contact tracing if a child, parent or guardian test positive. This could include, for example, direct discussion with parents and schools on recent contacts. The Government has recruited 21,000 contact tracers to support contact tracing and will recruit more if needed. They will play an important part in tracing the contacts of those with COVID-19, including school-aged children.

Coronavirus: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 10 March (HL1839), what assessment they have made of the report by the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies China and Viruses: The Case of Dr. Xiangguo Qiu, published on 29 January. [HL2604]

Lord Bethell: The Government is aware of this report by the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies.

Research into COVID-19's origins is ongoing, and the United Kingdom is working with the international scientific community to determine the source of the outbreak.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total number of deaths from COVID-19 in the UK in each week during 2020. [HL4424]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Marlesford,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what estimate has been made of the total number of deaths from COVID-19 in the UK in each week during 2020 (HL4424).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing weekly numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent annual figures published are for deaths registered in 2018[1]. However, we do publish provisional weekly deaths registrations, which are currently published for deaths registered up to 1 May 2020[2]. National Records Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10). Deaths involving COVID-19 either as a contributory or underlying cause of death are identified by the ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2.

Data can refer to deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate (and may not always be the underlying cause of death), and deaths where COVID-19 was recorded as the underlying cause of death. The accompanying dataset[3] to our provisional weekly deaths bulletin includes UK data on deaths involving COVID-19, which refer to deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate.

Table 1 shows the provisional number of deaths involving COVID-19 registered each week in the UK up to 1 May 2020, broken down by country.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Number of deaths involving COVID-19 registered each week in the UK, 28 December 2019 to 1 May 2020[4][5][6][7][8][9][10]

Week No.	Number of deaths involving COVID-19				
	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0
11	5	5	0	0	0
12	113	100	2	10	1
13	607	515	21	62	9
14	3,801	3,330	134	282	55
15	6,889	5,899	304	610	76
16	9,495	8,335	409	650	101
17	9,005	7,806	413	658	128
18	6,676	5,748	281	523	124

Source: Office for National Statistics

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenlandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenlandandwalesprovisional/weekending1may2020>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/>

[birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/weeklyprovisionalfiguresondeathsregisteredinenlandandwales](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/weeklyprovisionalfiguresondeathsregisteredinenlandandwales)

[4] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes U07.1, U07.2

[5] Figures are based on deaths registered up to 1 May 2020

[6] All figures for 2020 are provisional

[7] Weekly deaths for Scotland are produced by NRS: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

[8] Weekly deaths for Northern Ireland are produced by NISRA: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

[9] England, Wales and Northern Ireland weekly deaths run from Saturday to Friday, Scotland deaths run from Monday to Sunday

[10] Northern Ireland week allocation differs from other countries. For example, week 1 is week ending 10-Jan. This has been adjusted for the purpose of aggregating the data

Coronavirus: Deaths

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is or are (1) the procedure, (2) the timetable, and (3) the rules, for adding COVID-19 related deaths (a) in care homes, and (b) in the wider community, to the total number of deaths announced each day. [HL4126]

Lord Bethell: Daily published statistics for COVID-19 related deaths in the United Kingdom consist of deaths with lab-confirmed COVID-19 in all settings. The UK figures are compiled from validated data provided by each of the four nations of the UK to the Department which brings the data together into a summary figure for the whole country.

Data for deaths in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are provided by Public Health Scotland, Public Health Wales and the Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) respectively. Figures for England are provided by Public Health England (PHE) and draw together multiple data sources, including data from NHS England and NHS Improvement, National Health Service and PHE laboratory systems and PHE local health protection teams.

In all settings, deaths are reported only if they are linked to a lab-confirmed COVID-19 test and reported as at 5pm the previous day. The time between occurrence of death and reporting may vary and, in some cases, could be a few days.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by **Lord Vinson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Public Health England's (1) preliminary planning before, and (2) advice during, the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3355]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England's (PHE) preliminary planning before, and advice during, the COVID-19 pandemic has been guided by the scientific evidence. This is a new virus and PHE continues to keep its planning and advice under review to ensure it is informed by the latest evidence.

Asked by Lord Morris of Aberavon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update their guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020; and in particular the guidance on (1) leaving a house and the frequency of such visits, and (2) the restrictions on the number of outside visits for exercise. [T] [[HL3904](#)]

Lord Bethell: Guidance is kept under constant review and regularly updated as legislation changes. On 11 May 2020, the Government updated its guidance, reflecting the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 as follows:

- Leaving the house and the frequency of such visits – now, people unaffected by COVID 19, can leave home for work, where they cannot work from home; go to shops permitted to be open to get food and medicine or collect goods ordered online or on the phone; for any medical need, to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm or to provide care to help a vulnerable person; and

- the restrictions on the number of outside visits for exercise – now, people can exercise or spend time outdoors as often, or for as long as they wish.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 contain a full list of reasons people can leave their homes.

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are in the "very high risk due to a serious underlying health condition" category referred to in the leaflet enclosed with the letter from the Prime Minister updating recipients on the steps being taken to combat COVID-19. [[HL4079](#)]

Lord Bethell: Those identified as extremely clinically vulnerable are put on the Shielded Patient List, which is drawn from multiple sources. An initial list of patients with high risk conditions has been supplemented by general practitioners (GPs) and hospital consultants adding individual patients to the list based on their clinical assessments of each individual's needs. The list is dynamic. People are added to the list as we learn more about the virus and expand the list of high-risk conditions, or as additional patients are added at their clinician's discretion. Letters have therefore been issued at various stages during this process. We cannot give a precise date of when letters are issued or when they should have been received, but everyone who has been identified should now have been sent a letter either centrally by the National Health Service or by their local clinician.

That number of people on the Shielded Patient List currently stands at 2.2 million people in England. If someone has not received a letter, then we would advise they contact their local GP or their hospital consultant in order to discuss this.

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the leaflet enclosed with the letter from the Prime Minister updating recipients on the steps being taken to combat COVID-19 that "If you are at a very high risk due to a serious underlying health condition, you should have already received a letter from the NHS containing specific guidance about what to do", between which dates was that letter to those at a very high risk despatched; what were the maximum number of days allowed, under any contractual arrangements, between date of despatch and date of delivery; to how many people that letter has been despatched; and from what source, or sources, was the list of people to whom that letter has been sent, obtained. [[HL4080](#)]

Lord Bethell: Those identified as extremely clinically vulnerable are put on the Shielded Patient List, which is drawn from multiple sources. An initial list of patients with high risk conditions has been supplemented by general practitioners (GPs) and hospital consultants adding individual patients to the list based on their clinical assessments of each individual's needs. The list is dynamic. People are added to the list as we learn more about the virus and expand the list of high-risk conditions, or as additional patients are added at their clinician's discretion. Letters have therefore been issued at various stages during this process. We cannot give a precise date of when letters are issued or when they should have been received, but everyone who has been identified should now have been sent a letter either centrally by the National Health Service or by their local clinician.

That number of people on the Shielded Patient List currently stands at 2.2 million people in England. If someone has not received a letter, then we would advise they contact their local GP or their hospital consultant in order to discuss this.

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they are developing for extensive testing, contact-tracing and quarantine in society as a whole prior to schools starting up again during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4269](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May. It will help identify, contain and control COVID-19, reducing its spread and saving lives.

As part of this service, the Government has extended eligibility for tests to all those who display symptoms of COVID-19 including children of all ages. This means that, once schools open to a wider cohort, a child or young person will be able to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or guardians to return to work, if the test proves to be negative.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 contact tracing workers (1) have been recruited, (2) have been trained, and (3) are currently working on such tracing. [HL4441]

Lord Bethell: We have recruited over 25,000 contact tracers in England to support contact tracing as part of the new NHS Test and Trace service. These contact tracers are a mix of call handlers and health professionals and will support existing public health experts who have been undertaking outbreak tracing and management throughout the pandemic.

All contact tracers receive appropriate training. In such a large service there will be some turnover of staff and therefore ongoing recruitment and training. Recruitment and training figures will therefore change daily.

The NHS Test and Trace Programme launched on 28 May so newly recruited contact tracers will have started shifts from that point forwards.

Asked by Lord Strasburger

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Data Processing Impact Assessment will be published for the computer systems that will store the data collected by COVID-19 human contact tracers. [HL4446]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England, supported by the NHS Business Services Authority, is preparing a data protection impact assessment for the NHS Track and Trace information system, and expects to publish this at the time the system is publicly launched.

Asked by Baroness Andrews

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to integrate the results of COVID-19 antibody testing with the results of the NHS contacting tracing app; and what consideration they have given to the implications of integrating these results for privacy protections. [HL4551]

Lord Bethell: There are currently no such plans. If we make any changes to how the app works over time, we will explain in plain English why those changes were made and what they mean for app users and will publish an updated Data Protection Impact Assessment and Privacy Notice.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) support, and (2) protect, BAME (a) key workers, and (b) NHS staff, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4717]

Lord Bethell: The Department has commissioned Public Health England to complete a rapid review to understand disparities in COVID-19 infection across the population. This will include looking at the impact on different ethnic groups and occupations - as well as by deprivation, age, and sex. The report will suggest recommendations for further steps that should be taken to

reduce disparities in risk and outcomes from COVID-19 on the population.

In advance of Public Health England's review, and on a precautionary basis, NHS England and NHS Improvement have recommended that all National Health Service organisations undertake appropriate risk assessments for their black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and make appropriate arrangements to support and protect them. The Department is working to support the care sector to ensure the safety of all staff in social care.

All NHS and social care staff can access emotional, psychological and practical support.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the COVID-19 R-number is calculated separately for transmission in (1) the community, (2) hospitals, (3) care homes, and (4) different UK regions; and if so, what plans they have to publish those separate R-numbers. [HL4775]

Lord Bethell: The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of the United Kingdom-wide range for R on a weekly basis. Because outbreaks in care homes, hospitals and the community are interlinked, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its subgroups do not calculate them separately. The current range is estimated to be 0.7-1.0 and is based on latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates.

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the SAGE's advice. These papers are being published in batches. The latest batches were released on 20 May and 22 May and the next batch will be published in due course. The full list of papers reviewed to date is available in an online only format on GOV.UK. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to foreign governments for the inclusion of (1) refugees, (2) migrants, (3) unregistered persons, and (4) persons without legal documentation, in national public health responses. [HL4798]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise that refugees and Internally Displaced People may be at higher risk of infection by COVID-19 and other diseases due to high geographical mobility, overcrowded conditions, lack of safe sanitation and already poor health outcomes, and have focused our advocacy and aid commitments accordingly, working with international partners. The UK has committed up to £764 million aid funding so far to support global efforts to combat COVID-19, which includes £276 million for supporting resilience in vulnerable countries. £145 million of this is focused on UN appeals, and support to particular vulnerable groups: £75 million for the WHO; £20 million for UNICEF and

£5 million to Education Cannot Wait to help refugee, migrant and displaced children providing basic supplies and lessons; £20 million for the UN Refugee Agency providing access to handwashing stations and drinking water for displaced people; £15 million for the World Food Programme; and £10 million to UNFPA to provide lifesaving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and gender based violence prevention. We have also adapted our bilateral programmes in a number of countries to respond to the particular challenges that COVID-19 presents to vulnerable communities. For example, in Bangladesh, UK aid is helping maintain essential humanitarian services in Rohingya refugee camps.

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will implement their strategy for individual contact tracing in respect of COVID-19. [[HL4861](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government's new NHS Test and Trace service was launched across England on 28 May. It brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service. The primary objective of NHS Test and Trace is to control the rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

*Asked by **Baroness Thornton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the R number, the reproduction index for the COVID-19 virus, for each region of the UK. [T] [[HL4872](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of the United Kingdom-wide range for R on a weekly basis. The current range is estimated to be 0.7-1.0 and is based on the latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates.

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) advice. These papers are being published in batches. The latest batches were released on 20 May and 22 May and the next batch will be published in due course. The full list of papers reviewed to date is available in an online only format on the GOV.UK page, 'The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE): Coronavirus (COVID-19) response'. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

Coronavirus: Drugs

*Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the preservation of sufficient stocks of drugs that may be promising for use (1) to treat COVID-19 patients, or (2) in COVID-19 clinical trials, in addition to the illnesses they were originally developed for. [[HL4597](#)]

Lord Bethell: As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines, including those used in clinical trials. The Department is working closely with the pharmaceutical industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients can access the medicines they need, and precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages.

We are implementing a joined-up and streamlined process across research, manufacturing and distribution that will rapidly test potential treatments for COVID-19 and prepare to increase supplies if trials show positive indications. In order to support clinical trials, there are centrally procured and managed supplies of a number of medicines.

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by **Baroness Uddin***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the reported numbers of COVID-19 related deaths of frontline staff from BAME communities, what steps they are taking to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 for BAME frontline staff. [[HL3098](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are looking very specifically at the impact COVID-19 is having on the black, Asian and minority ethnic population. We have commissioned Public Health England to look at this issue in detail and they are due to report before the end of May. The review will also analyse available data on health outcomes for National Health Service staff, to develop a better understanding of how the virus affects frontline workforce.

In advance of Public Health England's review, and on a precautionary basis, NHS England and NHS Improvement have recommended that NHS employers should risk-assess staff at potentially greater risk and make appropriate arrangements accordingly.

We are working around the clock to ensure personal protective equipment is delivered as quickly as possible to all those on the frontline during this global pandemic for as long as it is required.

*Asked by **Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with governments of other countries about the differential impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities; and what lessons they have learned from any such discussions. [[HL4029](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department is regularly in discussions with other countries on a wide range of issues of issues relating to COVID-19. COVID-19 presents a global challenge which requires a collaborative response. The Department will continue to work with other countries throughout the crisis and beyond.

Public Health England is undertaking a programme of stakeholder engagement as part of its review into the

impact of COVID-19 on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities; this has included the devolved nations. PHE continues to be committed to working with experts in the devolved nations to share learning and identify opportunities for collaboration. PHE is also working with the National Institute for Health Research to undertake an evidence review looking at the factors impacting health outcomes from COVID-19 on BAME communities. The scope of this work will include international evidence.

*Asked by **Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following reports of the differential impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities, all relevant public authorities in the UK should be gathering data on the ethnic profile of those dying with the condition; and if not, what plans they have to instruct such authorities to do so. [HL4512]

Lord True: The potential for impact on ethnicity, gender, age, and other vulnerable groups is a cause for significant concern to us. This is why we have asked Public Health England to review COVID-19 outcomes among different groups, including ethnic minority communities, and to explore reasons for the disparities.

The findings of this review will inform what further action we can take to better protect these communities. In the meantime, we have implemented specific measures to reduce the spread of the virus in all communities.

The statistical information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Baroness Lawrence,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking whether, following reports of the differential impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities, all relevant public authorities in the UK should be gathering data on the ethnic profile of those dying with the condition; and if not, what plans they have to instruct such authorities to do so (HL4512).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing weekly numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent annual figures published are for deaths registered in 2018[1]. However, we do publish provisional weekly deaths registrations, which are currently published for deaths registered up to 8 May 2020[2]. National Records Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10). Deaths involving COVID-19, which refers to deaths where COVID-19 is mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, are identified by the ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2.

The ONS have recently published an article[3] and accompanying datasets[4] on provisional analysis of deaths involving COVID-19 by ethnicity for England and Wales. These analyses are based on a new dataset developed by the ONS that links 2011 Census records to deaths that occurred between 2 March and 10 April 2020 registered by death registrations up to 17 April 2020, with deaths being added on a weekly basis. These analyses will be updated and extended in June 2020.

Collecting information on the ethnic profile of individuals dying with COVID-19 presents practical and methodological challenges. This is because ethnicity is a self-identification measure reflecting how individuals define themselves, and guidance on the collection of ethnic group data in the UK states that responses on ethnicity should be answered by the individual directly, particularly if they are an adult[5].

Ethnicity is not recorded on the death certificate. To enable us to undertake our specific analysis at the ONS, deaths involving COVID-19 were linked to the 2011 Census, which allowed us to ascertain the self-reported ethnicity of the deceased and other demographic factors.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenglandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending8may2020>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020/relateddata>

[5]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/measuringequality/ethnicgroupnationalidentityandregion>

Coronavirus: Gender

*Asked by **Lord Lucas***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the tweet by the Department of Health and Social Care on 4 May that "There is emerging evidence to suggest that coronavirus may be having a disproportionate impact on some ethnic groups, as well as certain genders", on what evidence they base their statement that gender affects the impact of COVID-19; what is their

definition of gender when making that statement; how many affected genders they believe there to be; which are those affected genders; what consideration they gave to using the phrase “male” in place of “certain genders”; and what plans they have to use such a formulation in future. [[HL4095](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government is concerned by the apparent disparities in how COVID-19 is affecting people. We have asked Public Health England to complete a rapid review to understand how COVID-19 may be having an impact on different groups of concern.

Short descriptions of the terms ‘sex’, ‘gender’, ‘transgender’ and ‘gender identity’ have been published by the Government Equalities Office.

Coronavirus: Industrial Health and Safety

Asked by Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter sent by Sir Simon Stephens to all NHS Trusts on 29 April which stated "on a precautionary basis we recommend employers should risk-assess staff at potentially greater risk and make appropriate arrangements accordingly"; and what action NHS Trusts should take in response. [[HL4510](#)]

Lord Bethell: Proper risk assessment is key to ensuring the protection and wellbeing of our staff. NHS Employers, working in partnership with key stakeholders, published guidance for employers on 30 April on how to carry out risk assessments particularly for vulnerable groups, to understand the specific risks staff members face from exposure to COVID-19 and actions which employers can take to keep staff safe. NHS Employers will be keeping its guidance to employers under review to reflect any feedback or additional evidence coming to light and signpost to key national guidance where available.

Coronavirus: Inquiries

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to supporting the government of Australia in calling for an international independent inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3920](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation, with significant global implications. It is vital that we all learn the lessons of this pandemic and, as the Foreign Secretary has said, there will need to be a review in time. We will work with all our international partners, including Australia, on this. Right now we are focused on the immediate response and working alongside other countries to stop the spread of the virus.

Coronavirus: International Cooperation

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what their policy was at the recent G20 meetings of health ministers on the proposal for a COVID-19 global mechanism for all countries to access affordable testing, treatment and vaccines. [[HL4604](#)]

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they supported proposals made at recent meetings of G20 representatives for a global mechanism to provide affordable testing, treatment and vaccination for COVID-19. [[HL4676](#)]

Lord Bethell: The G20 Health Ministers' Meeting was held on 19 April. During its intervention, the United Kingdom emphasised the importance of a coordinated global response to COVID-19, including on the development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

A globally accessible vaccine, alongside effective tests and treatments is needed to end the pandemic and start global economic recovery. This will need unprecedented global collaboration and resourcing to drive the speed and scale needed.

Coronavirus: Israel

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research into COVID-19 by the MIGAL Research Institute in Israel and the potential effectiveness of their orally-administered vaccine Migvax. [[HL4725](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Vaccines Taskforce is working with experts, as appointed by Kate Bingham as Chair, to assess the range of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidates being developed around the world. As part of this assessment, Government will evaluate the MIGAL Research Institute's orally-administered, viral vector-based vaccine.

Companies and research institutes are welcome to submit proposals to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) research calls. Government support is available to prioritise, coordinate and deliver studies which qualify as urgent public health research.

Coronavirus: Medical Equipment

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what protocols are in place to ration medical equipment if necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL2951](#)]

Lord Bethell: As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the coronavirus outbreak, the Department is working closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients can access the medicines and medical devices and equipment they need. Precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages, including management of demand.

The Department shares regular information about impending supply issues and management plans with the NHS via networks in primary and secondary care and will liaise with relevant patient groups about issues affecting specific medicines, medical devices and equipment.

Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to streamline (1) legislative, or (2) regulatory, hurdles in the approvals process for treatments for COVID-19; and what safeguards will be built into any proposed changes to this process. [HL4599]

Lord Bethell: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is providing expedited scientific advice, and rapid reviews of clinical trials applications to support manufacturers and researchers on potential treatments for COVID-19.

The MHRA is also working closely with the Department and other healthcare partners and stakeholders to rapidly identify where flexibilities in the regulation of medicines and medical devices may be possible. This is with a view to supporting the healthcare products supply chain and wider response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the United Kingdom. These flexibilities are being offered to provide flexibility in exceptional circumstances. The flexibilities are temporary and will be kept under review, except where regulatory extensions have been stated.

Coronavirus: Nitrogen Oxides

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any correlation between nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide levels in the air and COVID-19 (1) infection, and (2) death rates. [HL4694]

Lord Bethell: Currently, there is no clear evidence to suggest that nitrogen dioxide and/or nitric oxide have a direct link to the infection rate or death rate of COVID-19.

Public Health England and other Government departments are reviewing and considering factors such as air pollution which may influence the health impact of COVID-19. This includes assessing whether there is any evidence of an association between exposure to gaseous pollutants or particulates and COVID-19 mortality in the United Kingdom.

Coronavirus: Pharmacy

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the support required by pharmacies during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps, if any, they are taking to ensure that any shortfall in such support is addressed. [HL2879]

Lord Bethell: Ministers and Government officials are working closely with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, the representative body of pharmacy contractors, and NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure that community pharmacies get the support they need to supply medicines and to help their communities stay well.

Coronavirus: Probiotics

Asked by Lord Lipsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value of the use of probiotics in treating COVID-19. [HL4559]

Lord Bethell: The use of probiotics and prebiotics to treat COVID-19 are not currently our priority in trials. The Government is investing across the board in both basic genetic research and clinical studies to find a sustainable treatment or vaccine against COVID-19. More information can be found in *Our plan to rebuild: the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy* which is attached.

The Government has been at the forefront of the international response to the virus, co-hosting the Coronavirus Global Response Summit on 4 May, pledging £388 million in aid funding for research into vaccines, tests and treatment including £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Our plan to rebuild COVID 19 recovery strategy
[Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-18/HL4559>

Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what scientific advice and other factors they are using to determine whether to recommend the use of face coverings in public. [HL3991]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies considered the very limited evidence available on the use of face coverings and advised that there was some positive benefit for reducing the transmission of COVID-19. However, the main ways to

reduce the spread of COVID-19 are social distancing and washing hands regularly.

The Government is now advising wearing a face covering in situations where it is difficult to manage social distancing and there may be close contact with people the wearer would not usually meet. Further guidance on the use of facemasks is available in the *Staying safe outside your home* guidance published on 11 May in an online only format on GOV.UK.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the best types of materials to be used when making a face mask at home to help combat the spread of COVID-19. [HL4413]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies considered the very limited evidence available on the use of face coverings and advised that there was some positive benefit for reducing the transmission of COVID-19. However, the main ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are social distancing and washing hands regularly.

The Government is now advising wearing a face covering in situations where it is difficult to manage social distancing and there may be close contact with people the wearer would not usually meet. Guidance on how to wear and make a cloth face covering was published on 11 May in an online only format on GOV.UK.

This guidance refers to the use of cotton fabric, which is consistent with the limited available scientific literature on the use of face coverings.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they used to select Deloitte to manage the procurement of personal protection equipment. [HL4436]

Lord Bethell: Deloitte is providing operational support for the procurement process of personal protective equipment (PPE) from existing and new manufacturers who can assist in scaling-up regulatory-approved PPE resources within the United Kingdom. As an existing professional services provider to the public sector, Deloitte's expertise is being used to supplement in-house resource to deliver significant programmes of work, which currently includes the national response to COVID-19.

Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March in *Procurement Policy Note – Responding to COVID-19*. Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. We have also made it clear that authorities must continue to achieve value for money for taxpayers, use good commercial judgement and publish the details of any awards made, in line with Government

transparency guidelines. A copy of the procurement policy note is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PPN_01-20_-_Responding_to_COVID19 [PPN_01-20_-_Responding_to_COVID19.v5__1_.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4436>

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the results of the tests carried out on personal protection equipment held in the national pandemic stock that had expired on or before 30 January to ensure that such equipment remained fit for purpose. [HL4439]

Lord Bethell: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in England, we held around 50,000 pallets of medicines and consumables, including personal protective equipment (PPE), to enable us to respond to a United Kingdom pandemic, with the devolved administrations holding their own stockpiles. About 25,000 of those pallets held PPE and hygiene products.

Stocks of facemasks and FFP3 respirators along with other items of PPE are stored in controlled and monitored conditions and this means that stocks are more likely to be fit for use beyond normal expiry dates.

In line with Health and Safety Executive advice, facemasks and FFP3 respirators are independently tested to ascertain whether their shelf life can be extended.

Asked by Lord Skidelsky

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the health benefits of wearing protective masks in public; what different types of protective masks they have considered; and for each of those types of masks, what assessment they have made of the change to their health benefits when social contact is at (1) two metres, (2) one metre, and (3) zero metres. [HL4444]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies considered the very limited evidence available on the use of face coverings and advised that there was some positive benefit for reducing the transmission of COVID-19. However, the main ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are social distancing and washing hands regularly.

The Government is now advising wearing a face covering in situations where it is difficult to manage social distancing and there may be close contact with people the wearer would not usually meet, such as on public transport. Guidance on how to wear and make a cloth face covering was published on 11 May in an online only format on GOV.UK. This guidance provides instruction on two methods of making a face covering.

A face covering is not the same as a face mask, such as the surgical masks or respirators used as part of personal

protective equipment by healthcare and other workers. In the context of use for COVID-19, a face covering simply means something which safely covers the nose and mouth area and may be as simple as a scarf or a bandana that is easily washed.

No assessment has been made of the change to a face covering's health benefit when social contact is at two, one and zero metres.

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to use GPS technology to ensure people who have interacted with a 'super-spreader' quarantine appropriately. [HL4370]

Lord Bethell: There are currently no such plans. If we make any changes to how the app works over time, we will explain in plain English why those changes were made and what they mean for app users and will publish an updated Data Protection Impact Assessment and Privacy Notice.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what use is being made of reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction tests to address the Covid-19 pandemic. [HL3782]

Lord Bethell: Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), is used in many laboratories to test patient samples for the COVID-19 virus.

RT-PCR is used for detecting certain viruses to help diagnose infection. It is being used throughout the United Kingdom to detect the COVID-19 virus. RT-PCR makes millions of copies of a virus' genetic material and these can be detected on laboratory equipment. If this equipment detects a signal, it means the test is positive (virus detected). If the equipment does not detect a signal, it means the test is negative (no virus detected).

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce electronic temperature testing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4048]

Lord Bethell: There are not currently any plans to introduce temperature testing.

Asked by Baroness Pinnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements have been made to ensure prompt and universal COVID-19 testing for those (1) providing home care, and (2) receiving care at home. [HL4527]

Lord Bethell: Symptomatic social care workers (and symptomatic members of their household) who are self-isolating can access testing through the online self-referral

portal. Individuals can also be referred for a test by their employer through the employer referral portal.

Anyone in England over the age of five with any of the symptoms of COVID-19 can ask for a test through the National Health Service website.

Coronavirus: Social Distancing

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further plans they have to modify social distancing measures. [HL4437]

Lord True: As set out in Our Plan to Rebuild, the Government will introduce a range of adjustments to current social distancing controls for England, timing these carefully according to both the current transmission rate of the virus and the Government's ability to ensure safety. The steps for modifying social distancing measures are set out in the plan, with strict conditions to safely move from each step to the next.

Step One was implemented from 13 March. The Government's current aim is that the move to Step Two will be made no earlier than 1 June, subject to these conditions outlined in the document being satisfied. Proposed changes set out include a phased return for early years settings and schools; opening non-essential retail when and where it is safe to do so; permitting cultural and sporting events to take place behind closed-doors for broadcast; and re-opening more local public transport in urban areas.

Step Three will also take place when the assessment of risk warrants further adjustments to the remaining measures. The Government's current planning assumption is that this step will be no earlier than 4 July, subject to the five tests, and further detailed scientific advice provided closer to the time, on how far we can go.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what scientific evidence they used to underpin their guidance that a person may meet one other person outside their own household in a park at a distance of two metres but that such a meeting may not occur in people's gardens. [HL4442]

Lord Bethell: In line with scientific advice, the Government introduced measures to minimise the spread of COVID-19 including social distancing. Over the coming months the Government will carefully consider introducing a range of adjustments so that society can return to normal. However, before doing so, it must be confident that any adjustments do not risk a second peak and that the conditions set out in the recovery strategy are met.

The Government has prioritised enabling contact in public open spaces, which are accessible to everyone and do not require people to enter the homes of other people. The risk of transmission is significantly lower outdoors.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the effect of each adjustment, as set out in *Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID 19 Recovery Strategy*. A copy of the Strategy is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Our Plan to Rebuild
[Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4442>

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what preparations they have made for the easing of social distancing measures. [HL4794]

Lord True: Coronavirus is the biggest challenge the UK has faced in decades. That is why the Government put in place strict social distancing to slow the spread of the virus so that the NHS would not be overwhelmed, and lives could be saved. With thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of the British people, the UK slowed the spread of Coronavirus.

As set out in Our Plan to Rebuild, the Government will introduce a range of adjustments to current social distancing controls, timing these carefully according to both the current transmission rate of the virus and the Government's ability to ensure safety. The steps for modifying social distancing measures are set out in the plan, with strict conditions to safely move from each step to the next.

The Government continues to keep social distancing measures under constant review, with a statutory obligation to review progress every three weeks.

Coronavirus: Travellers

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 21 April (HL3176), when health guidance for members of Gypsy, Traveller and Boater communities will be disseminated; and in what format. [HL4385]

Lord Bethell: We have been in close contact with Gypsy and Traveller Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations and are working hard to support these communities through the pandemic. VCS organisations have used existing Public Health England (PHE) guidance as a basis for producing targeted guidance and videos to inform and advise communities.

In collaboration with the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Public Health and NHS England and NHS Improvement, PHE has collated a suite of resources 'COVID-19: Place-based approach to reducing health inequalities' to complement existing work being led at a local level.

On 11 April the Minister of State for Home Affairs and Housing, Communities and Local Government, the noble Lord Greenhalgh, wrote to all local authority chief executives to highlight that some Gypsies and Travellers may need specific support to enable them to access to essential basic amenities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal facilities. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL4385 letter [COVID-19_-_mitigating_impacts_on_gypsy___traveller_communities.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4385>

*Asked by **Baroness Whitaker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the impact of COVID-19 on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; and whether these communities have been included in their assessments of the effects of the virus on BAME individuals. [HL4738]

Lord Bethell: There is emerging evidence of an association between ethnicity and COVID-19 incidence and adverse health outcomes. We are working hard to understand more about COVID-19 and establish robust data on the factors impacting the number of COVID-19 cases and health outcomes for different groups within the population.

As part of this, we have commissioned Public Health England to consider the impact of various factors such as ethnicity, obesity, age, gender and geographical location, where data is available.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs and Housing, Communities and Local Government (the noble Lord Greenhalgh) has written to councils outlining their responsibility to support all communities, including Gypsy and Traveller communities, and to ensure they have access to water, sanitation and waste collections. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping and Housing (Luke Hall MP) has written to owners and managers of caravan sites making clear they should keep sites open to allow people to remain if they would otherwise have nowhere to live.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by **Lord Bassam of Brighton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to the risk that a COVID-19 vaccine may not be found in the coming months. [HL4471]

Lord Bethell: There is extraordinary effort taking place in the United Kingdom and internationally to accelerate the research and development of a vaccine as soon as possible, with the Government making over £130 million available to fund the front-runners University of Oxford and Imperial College London teams, on top of the £250 million we have pledged to the international effort to find

a vaccine – the largest international contribution of any country.

Given that a COVID-19 vaccine may not be found, we are also working on identifying safe and effective treatments for COVID-19. There are multiple clinical trials underway, including the ACCORD phase II trial platform that identifies and tests newer therapeutics, and phase III trials including PRINCIPLE, RECOVERY and REMAP-CAP, that are trialling repurposed drugs in primary, acute and intensive care settings respectively.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the laboratories involved in the development of COVID-19 vaccines are evaluating the (1) use, and (2) potential effects, of those vaccines in trials with (a) older people, and (b) people with disabilities. [HL4623]

Lord Bethell: Vaccine development involves evaluating the quality, safety and efficacy in a series of carefully planned clinical trials. The Government is backing two promising United Kingdom COVID-19 vaccine candidates at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London. Vaccine development is in the early stages but progressing rapidly. During clinical trials, both Oxford and Imperial plan to evaluate the safety and efficacy of their vaccines in older people. While there are no plans to specifically recruit those with disabilities, in both cases those with disabilities are eligible and welcome to take part in clinical trials subject to specific exclusion criteria which apply to all volunteers to ensure the safety of participants.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in the development of a vaccine for COVID-19. [HL4862]

Lord Bethell: Developing a vaccine is a complex process that can take many months and has no guarantees of success. We have pledged £250 million to the international effort to find a vaccine – the largest international contribution of any country – and are backing two of the global front-runners in the United Kingdom, at the University of Oxford and Imperial College, London. The Government recently announced £84 million of new funding to support Oxford and Imperial, bringing the total Government investment in these institutions to over £130 million.

The University of Oxford and AstraZeneca have recently announced a partnership to support the further development, large-scale manufacture and potential distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine currently being trialled by the University.

Coronavirus: Vitamin D

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what analysis they have undertaken into whether there is any correlation

between COVID-19 infection and low levels of vitamin D. [HL4632]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) is monitoring the evidence on nutrition and COVID-19 and seeking the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) as appropriate. PHE is carrying out a rapid review of recent evidence relating to vitamin D and the prevention of acute respiratory tract infections for SACN to consider at its meeting in June 2020.

Culture: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use the commissioning of public artworks as a mechanism to support the cultural sector during and after the COVID-19 pandemic; and if they have any such plans, how they intend to do so. [HL4480]

Baroness Barran: DCMS is working with partners to ensure all major programmes and policies support the national renewal. Festival 2022 will begin its commissioning phase this year through funded R&D with the sectors, and the Government Art Collection, which directly supports emerging and established British artists and galleries in the visual arts sector through their annual acquisitions budget, is looking to ensure this year's acquisitions respond to the current situation.

The Government has already announced an unprecedented package of measures in place to provide immediate and vital support to the cultural sector during this pandemic. These include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self Employment Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, business rates relief and cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses.

DCMS has also worked with various Arms Length Bodies to create tailored funding packages to support the cultural sector at this time. Arts Council England has announced a £160m emergency response package to complement the financial measures already announced by the Government and support the resilience of this vital sector. This funding package will support organisations and individuals who need the most support to see them through this crisis.

Customs: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether goods moving between Northern Ireland and Great Britain will be subject to customs inspections once the UK has fully withdrawn from the EU. [HL4496]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Under the UK's Withdrawal Agreement, Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's customs territory. As set out in the *New Decade, New Approach* deal, the Government has committed to legislate to guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK internal

market and to ensure that this legislation is in force for 1 January 2021. The arrangements that the Government introduces will reflect this approach and the Government will set out more detail in due course.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether customs officers will have powers to prevent goods moving between Northern Ireland and Great Britain following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [HL4498]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Under the UK's Withdrawal Agreement, Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's customs territory. The Withdrawal Agreement allows the UK to ensure unfettered market access for goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain. The arrangements that the Government introduces will reflect this approach and the Government will set out more detail in due course.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to establish customs posts at ports and airports in Northern Ireland; and if so, (1) where those posts will be located, and (2) what will be the function and purpose of those posts. [HL4553]

Lord True: On 20 May 2020 the UK Government set out our approach in the Command Paper 'The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol' confirming there will be no new physical customs infrastructure in Northern Ireland (or in Great Britain ports facing Northern Ireland). The limited additional processes required by the Protocol should be implemented in a way that takes account of all available flexibilities, and respects Northern Ireland's place in the UK's customs territory.

As ministers set out, we will expand some existing entry points for agri-food goods to provide for proportionate additional controls, in locations where these already take place such as Larne and Belfast. We will continue to work closely with the NI Executive to take that work forward.

Customs: Republic of Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to augment customs arrangements between Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland after 1 January 2021. [HL4495]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The UK will be leaving the Customs Union at the end of this year. The Government will implement customs arrangements that facilitate trade and investment between the UK and EU, but that ensure customs authorities are able to protect their regulatory, security and financial interests.

Cybercrime: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on cybercrime rates; and what plans they have to address any rise in cybercrime linked to COVID-19. [HL4521]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office and its operational partners continue to monitor and respond to the cyber crime threat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Current assessments have not indicated an increase in reporting linked to COVID-19. However, cyber criminals are exploiting COVID-19 as an unparalleled opportunity to conduct criminal activity using social engineering, capitalising on people's anxieties about the pandemic.

On 21 April, the Government launched a revised Cyber Aware campaign to coincide with the launch of the NCSC's new Suspicious Email Reporting service. The NCA have also launched an advertorial on the popular Games Radar website to deliver PREVENT messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic as the public spend more time online. The advert is designed to deter young people away from becoming involved in cyber-criminality.

We have also recently launched a gov.uk page on coronavirus-related fraud and cybercrime. The page includes easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves and signposts other relevant advice and tips. It can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make additional resources available to the National Cyber Security Centre to address any rise in cybercrime linked to COVID-19; and, if so, what those resources will be. [HL4523]

Lord True: The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is deploying its full range of capabilities in tackling the cyber threat during the Covid-19 crisis.

The NCSC, National Crime Agency and partners in the UK and overseas are working together to tackle cyber threats, publishing guidance and identifying and removing malicious sites. This includes working closely with the NHS to keep their systems and the healthcare sector safe as we see a greater demand on their services during this period. We are able to draw upon these resources, because of the implementation of the 2016 National Cyber Security Strategy.

The Covid-19 crisis means that the UK is now more reliant on home working and online services than ever before. In April, the NCSC, alongside Cabinet Office, DCMS and Home Office relaunched the Cyber Aware campaign, which advises the public of the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online.

We recognise the importance of not losing momentum on our response to cyber security and of continuing to build on the capabilities we have developed; this will be considered as part of the Government's next Spending Review.

*Asked by **Baroness Andrews***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of recent cyberattacks on (1) UK computing infrastructure, and (2) any delays to COVID-19 research that such attacks may have caused. [T] [[HL4547](#)]

Baroness Barran: The UK remains resilient against cyber attacks and the government has invested heavily in developing the UK's cyber security capabilities, as set out in the National Cyber Security Strategy. The Government judges the overall level of cyber crime has remained stable, however there has been an increase in malicious 'phishing' emails attempting to capitalise on concern around Covid-19. The National Cyber Security Centre is supporting the NHS, health researchers and others in the health supply chain to ensure all the nation's resources can be focused on the public health response without disruption.

*Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the prevalence of online crime during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4701](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: While it is yet too early to identify any trend in online crime since the outbreak of Covid-19 the Government and law enforcement colleagues are working tirelessly to identify and disrupt those seeking to use online platforms to commit these crimes.

Criminals are looking to take advantage; Covid-19-related fraud and cybercrimes now represent 2.7% of all reported fraud to Action Fraud. Operational partners, the National Crime Agency, the National Cyber Security Centre and City of London Police, have thwarted over 2,000 scams in April alone.

The Government is committed to preventing criminals from profiting from covid-19 and ensuring that the public and business can protect themselves.

- On 21 April the National Cyber Security Centre launched the Suspicious Email Reporting Service. This allows members of the public to report any suspicious emails. This has received over 160,000 reports, leading to over 300 previously unknown phishing campaigns being taken down.
- On 23 April the Home Office launched a gov.uk page on coronavirus-related fraud and cybercrime, including easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves as well as signposting all relevant advice and tips. This page can be at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

- The Home Office are working closely with partner organisations such Trading Standards, the Financial Conduct Authority and all major banks to ensure key online safety guidance and messages are communicated.

Cycling and Running

*Asked by **Lord Greaves***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of the package of initiatives to encourage cycling and running to work, what plans they have to assist in providing showers, washrooms and changing facilities at places of work. [[HL4362](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government has published guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible, and this includes looking at any existing or new communal facilities such as showers and changing facilities. Employers are responsible for taking all reasonably practical steps to address health and safety risks; however, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency.

People should only be going into work if they cannot work from home, and we encourage employers to agree alternative or flexible working hours with their employees. Whilst we have always said that those who cannot work from home can travel to work, we are giving those who have not been working the confidence to return to work and those businesses who suspended operations the guidelines they need to reopen safely.

Walking, running and cycling help to reduce pressure on the public transport system and the road network, which is why they are recommended as more people return to the workplace. We are also encouraging people to avoid rush hour if they can, to help maintain social distancing. This will also reduce peak demand on the transport system.

Dairy Farming: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment will be made of the adequacy of their financial package of support for the dairy industry during the COVID-19 lockdown. [[HL4408](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has continued to engage closely with representatives from all parts of the dairy supply chain throughout this difficult period to assess the challenges facing the industry and to ensure that appropriate financial support is provided. The vast majority of Britain's dairy farmers continue to supply their contracts at or around the usual price. Approximately 5% of total milk production, however, goes to the service trade. A small proportion of farmers supplying milk to processors that sell into the food service sector have seen a reduction in demand with the closure

of food service. A small proportion of suppliers have therefore seen a reduction in demand. We have provided a range of support to help these affected farmers.

At the outset of the pandemic, the Government announced a number of emergency measures to support farmers, processors and retailers. These include designating the food sector as critical to the response, with people working in the production, processing, sale, distribution or delivery of food categorised as key workers and granting derogations on drivers' hours limitations.

In addition, to support milk producers, the Government announced on 17 April a temporary easing of some elements of competition law to make it easier for the dairy industry to come together to maximise production, processing and storage efficiency and to ensure that as much product as possible can be processed into high quality dairy products. This Statutory Instrument was laid on 1 May and applies retrospectively from 1 April.

On 6 May we announced a new scheme specifically to provide support to eligible dairy farmers in England who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May because of coronavirus disruptions. This will provide farmers with funding of up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during the qualifying period, enabling them to continue to operate and to sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare.

Defra and the devolved administrations are also jointly contributing towards financing the new £1 million campaign by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and Dairy UK to drive an increase in the consumption of milk. Running over 12 weeks, the campaign is highlighting the role that milk plays in supporting moments of personal connection during times of crisis.

Our Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme is available to farmers, milk buyers and processors. Responding to industry feedback on this scheme, Defra held urgent discussions with the major banks to ensure they understand that farmers, milk buyers and milk processors are eligible. In addition, the new Bounce Back Loan scheme, which applies to businesses operating in agriculture, ensures that the smallest businesses can access loans up to £50,000. To give lenders the confidence they need, we have provided them with a 100% guarantee on each loan and will cover the first 12 months of interest payments and fees.

Public intervention for skimmed milk powder (SMP) and butter continues to be available in the UK. Alongside this we have also ensured the availability to UK dairy processors of private storage aid for cheese, butter and SMP. These measures will help to underpin prices, providing a floor in the market by reducing the volume of product coming on to the market.

We will continue to engage with the dairy industry throughout this period of disruption to monitor the impact of the range of financial and other measures we have

implemented, ensuring that the sector continues to have the support that it needs.

Defence: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to continue meeting their NATO commitment to spending two per cent of GDP on defence in real terms. [[HL4593](#)]

Baroness Goldie: Her Majesty's Government is committed to spending at least 2% of GDP on Defence each year of this Parliament, as per the Defence Investment Pledge. The UK is one of only a handful of nations that meets, and in our case exceeds the 2% target, and remains the largest European Defence spender in NATO.

Delivery Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Butler of Brockwell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the greater use of delivery vehicles during the COVID-19 pandemic [[HL4351](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Supermarkets are responding to the extremely high demand for delivery slots and there has been considerable growth in online delivery across all supermarkets. In some cases, retailers have worked to double their number of online delivery slots available. Recent Kantar Worldpanel Data suggests that online sales now account for 10.2% of overall grocery, versus 7.4% last month, with the greatest increase among older shoppers (last 4 weeks ending 19 April 2020). These increases have ensured that everybody will have access to the food that they need. The Department welcomes the actions that industry is taking, including hiring more staff and prioritising delivery slots for those that need them most.

Additionally, Ministers have asked local authorities to show flexibility to allow extended delivery hours to supermarkets to ensure shelves can be replenished more quickly. The Government recognises that whilst the increased frequency of deliveries could have a temporary impact on local residents, this needs to be balanced by the significant public interest in ensuring local residents have continued access to food and other essential goods in their local shops.

Deportation: Pakistan

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to deport Abdul Aziz, Adil Khan and Qari Abdul Rauf. [[HL4429](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am aware of the cases referred to, but I am unable to comment on individual cases.

The crimes committed by child sexual exploitation gangs, such as those in Rochdale, who prey on the young and vulnerable are appalling. I have every sympathy with their victims.

We are clear that foreign criminals should be deported from the UK wherever it is legal and practical to do so.

Foreign national offenders should be in no doubt of our determination to remove them, and since 2010 we have removed more than 52,000.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of global markets to fund the borrowing by developed countries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic [[HL4333](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury continuously monitors the global economy. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, developed countries have responded with considerable fiscal support. The IMF has affirmed the vital role of such support, and notes that markets expect sovereign bond yields to remain low in advanced economies over the medium term.

Disability: Public Lavatories

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many RADAR toilet facilities in England remain open for use during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what this is as a percentage of total RADAR toilet facilities. [[HL4347](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government does not keep a record of which toilets are open and which are locked with a Radar key either pre or during the Covid-19 situation.

The Radar National Key Scheme offers disabled people independent access to over 9,000 locked public toilets around the country with one key. Toilets fitted with National Key Scheme locks can now be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafes, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in the country, and are operated by a wide range of organisations.

Disease Control

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 13 May (HL3564), whether any single authority or body was responsible for monitoring and assessing individual departmental plans to ascertain the level of national readiness for a pandemic; and if not, why not. [[HL4540](#)]

Lord True: Planning for a pandemic inevitably engages the work of many different departments. Each department is responsible for ensuring its own

preparedness, and that of its relevant sectors, to manage the impacts of a pandemic. The Cabinet Office's role includes coordinating the regular assessment of the UK's overall risk landscape for both internal and public purposes, the Resilience Capabilities Programme, managing central government response including by convening COBR, providing crisis management training through the Emergency Planning College, and working with Departments to test emergency response plans.

Disease Control: Protective Clothing

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the UK's stockpile of personal protective equipment has decreased over the last ten years and, if so, what financial saving was made as a result. [[HL3957](#)]

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which stockpiles of personal protective equipment were replaced by 'just in time' supply arrangements over the past ten years. [[HL3970](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department's advisory Committee for New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) makes recommendations to the Government on what medicines and clinical consumables should be stockpiled for pandemic influenza preparedness including relevant scientific information that is used for estimating target stock levels. No assessment has been made of variance in the spend on personal protective equipment (PPE) over the past 10 years, therefore we are unable to estimate the financial savings made as a result.

A small portion of the required FFP3 respirators and gloves have 'just in time' arrangements in place. The majority of the stockholding for these products and all other PPE is held in the stockpile on a 'just in case' basis.

Dismissal: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that (1) disabled people, and (2) those who live with a vulnerable person, are being threatened with dismissal if they do not physically return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4719](#)]

Lord Callanan: Government is actively monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market, including the impact on those with disabilities and on other groups. Employers must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate.

The Public Health advice is clear and we expect employers to act accordingly.

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home. They have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.

If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away from others. If they have to spend time within 2m of others, the employer should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

Those living with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals do not need to start shielding themselves, but they should do what they can to carefully follow guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing).

Domestic Abuse: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by **Baroness Uddin***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that women from BAME communities who have (1) experienced, and (2) reported, domestic abuse receive adequate advice, support and counselling and, where necessary, emergency housing and financial assistance. [HL4193]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are in frequent contact with the domestic abuse sector, including specialist BAME organisations, as well as the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to understand the impact of covid-19 on BAME communities.

Following increases in calls to domestic abuse helplines and online services, the Home Secretary announced an additional £2m to bolster organisations' capacity on April 11. This is currently being allocated.

This is in addition to £28m of Government funding for domestic abuse charities to help survivors of domestic abuse and their children by providing more safe spaces, accommodation and access to support services during the coronavirus outbreak.

Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 May (HL3266), whether local authorities have specifically been told they should offer support to survivors of domestic abuse with a condition of no recourse to public funds; if so, whether it has been advertised so women in communities experiencing such abuse are aware of that. [HL4518]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Local authorities may already provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution. Local Authorities have been asked to work closely with the domestic abuse services in their area,

providing support where they deem it necessary in order to protect victims of domestic abuse, for example by providing crisis funding to safe accommodation services.

The Government has announced £28m of funding to support domestic abuse charities of which £10m has been allocated to support additional refuge bed spaces and specialist support. The Home Office has announced an additional £2 million in funding to help bolster specialist helplines and online services so that victims can continue to seek support.

The Government domestic abuse awareness raising campaign under the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone, signposts victims to sources of advice and support. Details of these services can be found at www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse.

Economic Situation: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their (1) economic, and (2) financial, strategy for the post COVID-19 pandemic period. [HL4434]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Treasury's priority is to support the economy through the immediate crisis. We have taken unprecedented steps to keep as many people as possible in their existing jobs, support viable businesses to stay afloat and protect the incomes of the most vulnerable. These measures aim to protect the productive capacity of our economy and to enable a strong and sustainable recovery from this crisis.

It is clear that the impact on the economy and the government's necessary response will lead to an increase in borrowing in the short-term. However, the Office for Budget Responsibility note that the measures taken should help limit the long-term damage to the economy and public finances – and the costs of inaction would have been higher.

The government has set out a conditional roadmap for reopening certain economic activities, whilst continuing to suppress the Covid-19 outbreak. Our economic strategy will therefore be closely coordinated with the public health strategy to ensure a safe return of economic activity. What we are thinking about first and foremost is protecting people's health, protecting people's jobs and supporting businesses. As we exit the current crisis, we will take stock of the economy and public finances and make the right decisions at that point.

*Asked by **Baroness Drake***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further initiatives they will put in place to build and maintain a consensus with Parliament, devolved administrations and local governments on how the national interests can best be met as the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted and they seek to rebuild the economy. [HL4569]

Lord True: Protecting the health and safety of the public is, and must always be, our top priority. The UK Government is working with the Devolved

Administrations and local government to keep the whole of the UK safe. For example, back to work guidance documents have been developed in consultation with approximately 250 businesses, unions, industry leaders as well as the Devolved Administrations.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is working with local resilience forums to coordinate the response of local public services, and provide support to the most vulnerable in our communities. The department has published guidance here for local councils during the coronavirus outbreak:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>

It is vital that Parliament can continue to scrutinise the Government and legislate to support the coronavirus response.

Education: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role will testing and contact-tracing play in education; whether the systematic testing of staff and pupils at schools play a role in keeping effective reproduction number of coronavirus below 1; and what PPE is appropriate for use across the variety of school settings in view of the expected levels of prevalence of the virus. [HL4292]

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they will provide on parameters for (1) appropriate physical distancing, (2) levels of social mixing, and (3) appropriate use of PPE, in schools. [HL4293]

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there will be comprehensive access to regular testing for children and staff to ensure that schools and colleges do not become hotspots for COVID-19. [HL4294]

Baroness Berridge: On 12 May, the department published comprehensive guidance to schools which included advice on protective measures and appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

On 18 May 2020, the Government announced that with immediate effect, all UK citizens over the age of 5 who experience symptoms are eligible to be tested.

To support schools in the return of a wider group of children and young people from 1 June, they will have access to testing if they display symptoms, as will any symptomatic members of their household.

The government has launched a new national test and trace programme. This will include more traditional

methods of contact tracing if a child, young person or parent tests positive. This could include, for example, direct discussion with parents and schools or colleges on recent contacts.

The majority of staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others.

Eleanor Sharpston

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for (1) the rule of law, and (2) the principle of judicial independence, of the EU's decision to terminate the appointment of advocate general Eleanor Sharpston QC's term at the European Court of Justice, which was not due to expire until October 2021. [HL4821]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This is matter for the European Union to be decided in accordance with EU law. Since the UK has left the EU, we shall not comment on this matter.

Electric Scooters

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their proposed trial of e-scooters on public roads will include (1) rental schemes only, (2) privately owned e-scooters only, or (3) both rental schemes and privately owned e-scooters. [HL4530]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: E-scooter trials will include only rental scooters. This allows trials to take place in a controlled manner while we assess their safety and other impacts. There are a wide range of e-scooters available, built to differing standards. Limiting trials to rental scooters ensures that only approved scooters are used, and that they can meet legal requirements. It will also improve the quality of the evidence we gather, that will inform whether e-scooters should be fully legalised. We are working with local authorities to enable trials to begin soon.

Email: Fraud

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 14 May (HL3707), what is the current status of their Suspicious Emails Reporting Service. [HL4519]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In April 2020, the NCSC launched the Suspicious Email Reporting Service. This initiative by the NCSC makes a significant contribution to the Government's aim to make the UK the safest place to live and work online.

As of 14 May, the Suspicious Email Reporting Service has had more than 300,000 emails submitted, leading to over 2,500 unique URLs, which resulted in 600 bogus sites being taken down. Examples of threats the NCSC has removed with the help of the reporting service include:

- Scam web pages that have been flagged include mock-ups of official GOV.uk and TV licencing websites (visitors are lured into giving their billing information to scammers posing as these legitimate organisations).
- Scam web pages purporting to sell coronavirus linked bogus products such as testing kits, face masks and even vaccines. (The NCSC noted a rise in cyber crime exploiting the coronavirus pandemic last month.)

This automated email reporting service makes it easier than ever for people to help protect others from falling victim to scams. To use the reporting service, people are asked to simply forward suspect emails to report@phishing.gov.uk. If they are found to link to malicious content, it will be taken down or blocked, helping prevent future victims of crime.

Employment: Pregnancy

*Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 5 May (HL3252), which paragraph of the Government guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme clarifies that pregnant employees can be furloughed under the Scheme if they and their employer agree, and provided they meet the normal eligibility requirements. [HL4363]

Lord Callanan: The Job Retention Scheme has been designed to help employers retain staff during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance explains that anyone who meets the eligibility requirements can be considered for the Scheme - where the employee and employer agree. That includes pregnant women. The limited number of exclusions are explicitly set out in the guidance.

Enforcement: Disease Control

*Asked by **Lord Blencathra***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the means by which police forces are enforcing the lockdown, particularly in regard to police on horseback questioning people in parks; what representations they have received about the behaviour of the police when carrying out such enforcement; and what guidance they have provided to police to ensure adherence with Government guidelines. [HL4308]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our police forces face unprecedented challenges as they play the critical role of maintaining public order during this public health emergency. The police response has and will follow the four-step escalation principles – engaging, explaining, encouraging, and then enforcing as a last resort.

I welcome the conclusions of the Home Affairs Select Committee report on police preparedness, which was published on 17 April. The report concluded that the overall police response to the current crisis has been proportionate and effective.

We have and will continue to work closely with our policing partners to ensure there is clear guidance to officers on any changes to the Health Protection Regulations and the powers available to them.

Entertainments and Sports

*Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to return any entertainment and sports centres that are currently being used for medical purposes to their normal use. [HL4060]

Baroness Barran: Both sport and healthcare are devolved, and each of the Devolved Authorities will have its own approach to these facilities. Changes in use of such facilities will be made on a location by location basis as a result of discussions between the local parties, depending on local need at the time.

In England, six NHS Nightingale hospitals have been opened of the seven being built across the country, as part of actions taken to ensure the NHS has sufficient hospital capacity to care for COVID-19 patients. This includes the Nightingale hospitals in London (London ExCel) and Birmingham (Birmingham National Exhibition Centre).

Surge capacity is holding up well in NHS hospitals across the country. As such, both the London ExCel and Birmingham National Exhibition Centre have now been placed on standby and will not be accepting patients. It is possible the NHS Nightingale hospitals will be needed in the months ahead, and the Government will maintain that extra capacity until there is more certainty.

Erasmus+ Programme and Horizon 2020

*Asked by **Lord Bruce of Bennachie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the details of (1) the criteria they will apply to, and (2) the timetable for making, a decision on participating in (a) Horizon 2020, and (b) Erasmus Plus, after the transition period of the UK's departure from the EU. [HL4387]

Lord Callanan: On the issue of Horizon Europe, I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave to the noble Lord Bassam of Brighton on 20th May 2020 to Question HL3887.

On the issue of Erasmus Plus, the Government remains open to considering participation the next Erasmus+ programme, provided it is in the UK's interest to do so.

The UK will consider options for participation in elements of Erasmus+ on a time limited basis, provided they are in line with UK interests and we can agree a fair and proportionate financial contribution. Erasmus+ is a

complex programme with very many elements, of which some provide value to the British taxpayer. This will be subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU.

We will, in parallel with these negotiations, continue to develop a domestic alternative to Erasmus+, to ensure we are prepared for every eventuality as the Government remains committed to international exchanges in education, both with the EU and beyond.

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government what considerations they have made of BAME households in developing plans to re-open schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4291]

Baroness Berridge: We have developed plans to open schools to more children and young people in line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means we have had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, including race, and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

We are aware that there is emerging evidence that BAME individuals can be more severely affected than their peers by the virus, though this is not yet fully understood. On 4 May, Public Health England launched a review into the factors affecting health outcomes from COVID-19, to include ethnicity, gender and obesity. This will be published by the end of May and will help to inform our approach. In the meantime, schools should be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of BAME members of staff, BAME parents and BAME pupils, and consider if any additional measures or reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place to mitigate concerns.

Exercise: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they selected Wednesday 13 May as the appropriate day on which unlimited outdoor exercise could resume. [HL4367]

Lord True: Throughout the period since the Government imposed restrictions due to Coronavirus, people have been encouraged to exercise outdoors, alone or with members of their households. The Government's advice was to limit this to once a day during the early phases.

The Government has developed specific guidance to mitigate transmission risks and communicated that

guidance on 11 May, giving people time to understand and prepare for the changes to the regulations and guidance before the measures were implemented on 13 May. We will keep all of these measures under review, as required by the law.

Exercise Cygnus

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they took following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus. [HL4396]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took, following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus, to ensure that the UK's preparedness and response, in terms of its plans, policies and capability, was sufficient to cope with the extreme demands of a pandemic. [HL4397]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took, following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus, to develop a plan to ensure that, in the event of a surge in patients, the health and social care sectors could make a quick decision on whether someone stays in hospital or is discharged to residential care, community care or home for treatment or care. [HL4398]

Lord Bethell: The lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus continue to be considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners.

Working across Government and with stakeholders the lessons from Exercise Cygnus, along with expert advice, have informed our preparedness. Developments include strengthening health and care sector plans to surge and flex systems and resources beyond normal operations and stockpiling personal protective equipment specifically for an influenza pandemic.

Plans for the discharge of patients who no longer need acute care follow the 'Discharge to Assess' model; wherever possible, people who are clinically ready will be supported to return to their place of residence, where assessment of longer-term needs will take place. The safety of residents and staff is always a priority and patients should not be discharged unless it is clinically safe to do so.

COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements was published on 19 March 2020. These requirements follow the 'Discharge to Assess' model. A copy is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19_hospital_discharge_service_requirements.p [COVID-19_hospital_discharge_service_requirements.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4396>

Exports: Open General Export Licences

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many open general export licences have been granted in the last five years to Commonwealth countries; and to which countries. [[HL4352](#)]

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many open general export licences have been granted in the last five years to African countries not in the Commonwealth; and to which countries. [[HL4353](#)]

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many open general export licences have been granted in the last five years to South American countries; and to which countries. [[HL4354](#)]

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many open general export licences have been granted in the last five years to the United States. [[HL4355](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Open General Export Licences (OGELs) are not granted for specific exports to specific destinations, rather they are pre-published licences that permit the export of specified items to a range of specified countries, following an online registration. They remove the need for exporters to apply for individual licences, providing the exporters can meet the terms and conditions set out in the licence.

There are also EU General Export Authorisations (EUGEAs) under the dual-use regulations. These permit the export of certain specified dual-use items to specified destinations, subject to the terms and conditions of the licences. They are equivalent to OGELs and are available for use by any exporter within the EU, as well as the United Kingdom for now.

At the end of the transition period, the EUGEAs will be retained as part of the retained Dual-Use Regulation. They will be renamed as "Retained General Export Authorisations" and will be available for use by exporters based in the United Kingdom, to export from the United Kingdom.

In total, there are 65 OGELs and six EUGEAs currently available. To provide actual registrations over the last five years can only be provided at disproportionate cost, as my Department would have to review each live and archived OGEL/EUEA, which will include reviewing country additions/removal dates and analysing specific registrations over each period.

Extradition: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government with which EU member states they have concluded extradition

agreements to come into force after the end of the transition period. [[HL4589](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and security of our citizens is the government's top priority, which is why we have said the agreement with the EU on law enforcement and judicial cooperation on criminal matters should provide for fast-track extradition arrangements based on the EU's arrangements with Norway and Iceland, but with appropriate further safeguards for individuals beyond those in the European Arrest Warrant.

Both the UK and the EU are committed in the Political Declaration to reaching agreement by the end of 2020.

Extradition: USA

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to renegotiate current extradition arrangements between the UK and the USA. [[HL4588](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There is no current intention to renegotiate the UK-US Extradition Treaty.

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been extradited (1) to the USA from the UK, and (2) to the UK from the USA, since the Extradition Act 2003 came into force. [[HL4590](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Extradition Act 2003 entered into force on 1 January 2004. To date, since entry into force, there have been 177 extraditions from the UK to the US, and 67 from the US to the UK.

Farnborough Airport

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 13 May (HL3586), why no data is kept on non-commercial flight movement to, and from, Farnborough Airport; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the absence of such data on their ability to enforce their plans to apply 14-day quarantine rules to those arriving on flights from overseas from the end of this month. [[HL4469](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Official data on commercial flights is collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and received from UK airports in adherence to statistical regulation (EC) 437/2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air. As Farnborough mainly receives non-commercial flight traffic, it is exempt from reporting under this regulation.

The Department can consult monitoring of flight traffic conducted by Eurocontrol to identify the volume of flights at Farnborough. This monitoring shows that Farnborough

received an average of 10 flights (arrivals and departures) per day throughout April 2020.

We are asking people travelling to the UK to supply their contact details and details of their accommodation, and to self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days.

Farnborough Airport is manned by Border Force officers who are based onsite during the opening hours for the airport. It will be their role to ensure adherence to the proposed requirement for international arrivals to complete the proposed online locator app, outside of a small number of exemptions to this requirement.

Fisheries

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish the UK's negotiating position on a future fisheries agreement with the European Union. [HL4407]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The UK published its approach to fisheries negotiations on 27 February and has since published its draft Fisheries Framework Agreement legal text, as set out in a Written Ministerial Statement laid before the House on 19 May.

Fixed Penalties: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Trefgarne***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many fixed penalty notices have been issued under powers granted by orders made under the Coronavirus Act 2020. [HL4281]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued under the new emergency COVID-19 health regulations, are published by the NPCC on a fortnightly basis and can be found on the National Police Chiefs' Council website.

The NPCC release provides information about FPNs issued by police forces in England and Wales, the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police.

Policing is a devolved matter and FPNs issued by Police Scotland and Police Service Northern Ireland are reported separately by the respective forces.

Food: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of the food in parcels being distributed to those shielding from COVID-19 in England is ultra-processed food. [HL4481]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There is no universally agreed description for ultra-processed foods and therefore the Government cannot comment on the percentage of such in the food parcels. The contents of the emergency food parcels have, however, been reviewed by

nutritionists as overall based on, and broadly in line with, the national food model, the Eatwell Guide.

Football: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Football Association about (1) restarting the English Premier League behind closed doors and (2) the timing of matches in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4045]

Baroness Barran: Ministers held a productive meeting with the Football Association, alongside the Premier League and English Football League, on 14th May to discuss the latest on their plans for the safe resumption of professional football in June.

The Premier League will only return when it is safe to do so - the health and welfare of players, coaches and staff comes first.

Forced Marriage

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to legislate to tackle predatory marriage. [HL4350]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government has no current legislative plans to change the existing safeguards.

A registration official has a duty to stop proceedings if they are of opinion that either of the parties to a marriage does not have the capacity to marry.

The Law Commission is currently reviewing how and where weddings take place, including the formalities and safeguarding checks required before a marriage is conducted. We will carefully consider any recommendations made in the final report.

Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of children who are eligible for the national voucher scheme; and what is the current rate of take up in England. [HL4201]

Baroness Berridge: As both my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

Our latest guidance on for schools is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

During this period, we are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals, by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. However, we recognise that providing meals and food

parcels is not a practicable option for all schools. That is why on 31 March we launched a national voucher scheme as an alternative option, with costs covered by the Department for Education.

Schools are best placed to make decisions about the most appropriate arrangements for eligible pupils and this can include food parcel arrangements, alternative voucher arrangements or provision through the national voucher scheme.

Edenred has reported that over £101.5 million worth of voucher codes have been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families through the scheme as of Friday 22 May. Edenred has also reported that 17,000 schools had placed orders for the scheme as of Tuesday 12 May. We do not collect data on the scheme at pupil level.

The number and proportion of students who qualify for free school meals is published in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' publication and its underlying data files. As of the 2019 school census, there are around 1.3 million children eligible for and claiming free school meals. Statistics for the 2020 school census are not yet available. The 2019 publication is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>.

These are rapidly developing circumstances; we continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PDF file for second link [HL 4201 DfE
Schools_Pupils_and_their_Characteristics_2019_Main_Text.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4201>

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current take up rate of the national voucher scheme; and how many vouchers provided through that scheme have been spent in supermarkets. [HL4202]

Baroness Berridge: As my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have both made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by Covid-19.

Our latest guidance for schools is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

During this period, we are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children and we encourage this approach where it is possible.

Where this is not possible, we have introduced a national voucher scheme to provide headteachers with additional flexibility to decide what is best for families at their schools. More information about the national voucher scheme is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

As of Friday 22 May, Edenred reported that over £101.5 million has been redeemed into supermarket vouchers by families and schools. As of Tuesday 12 May, Edenred reported that 17,000 schools had placed an order. Schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations as normal.

These are rapidly developing circumstances. We will continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the length of time it has taken for the national voucher scheme to issue and deliver vouchers to schools and families; and what plans they have to (1) speed up the process for families, and (2) reduce the administration required from schools. [HL4203]

Baroness Berridge: As my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have both made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by Covid-19.

During this period, we are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children and we encourage this approach where it is possible.

Where this is not possible, we have introduced a national voucher scheme to provide headteachers with additional flexibility to decide what is best for families at their schools. More information about the national voucher scheme is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

We are working very closely with our supplier, Edenred, to improve the performance of the national voucher scheme. We are very grateful to families and schools for their understanding and patience whilst we upgrade this service to meet increased demand. Edenred have written to schools using the system to encourage them to order vouchers in bulk as this is more efficient for both the system and the school, enabling orders to be processed more quickly.

Edenred has reported that over £101.5 million worth of voucher codes have been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families through the scheme as of 22 May and that 17,000 schools had placed orders for

the scheme as of 12 May. Schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations as normal. However, if schools are unable to use the national voucher scheme and choose an alternative approach, they can be reimbursed through the exceptional costs fund, where the costs cannot be met from their existing resources. Further details are available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>.

These are rapidly developing circumstances. We will continue to keep the situation under review and to keep Parliament updated accordingly.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assurances they have sought from Edenred that the food voucher scheme will work for all those who require them; (2) what plans they have to provide emergency aid to those who are unable to benefit from the scheme; and (3) what plans they have to seek financial compensation from Edenred. [HL4323]

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they can take to encourage all food shops to accept food vouchers. [HL4324]

Baroness Berridge: As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

During this period, we are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals, by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children, and we encourage this approach where it is possible. However, we recognise that providing meals and food parcels is not a practicable option for all schools. That is why on 31 March we launched a national voucher scheme as an alternative option, with costs covered by the Department for Education.

Through the national voucher scheme, schools and families could initially access e-gift cards for Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose and Marks & Spencer. On Monday 27 April, we added Aldi to this list and on Wednesday 29 April, we added McColl's. We recognise that it may not be convenient or possible for some families to visit one of these supermarkets and we have been working with a range of retailers to see if they can be added to this list. This would involve them having the right infrastructure to deliver e-gift cards across all their stores.

If schools wish to provide vouchers through a supermarket that is not part of our national scheme, they can make their own voucher arrangements locally. Our guidance for schools sets out that they can be reimbursed for costs incurred where the national voucher scheme is not suitable for their families, and this can include

alternative voucher arrangements with supermarkets that are not part of the national voucher scheme.

In terms of the financial arrangements with our supplier, Edenred, we can confirm that we are only paying for the face value of goods delivered – in this case, vouchers.

Voucher codes are being processed through the national scheme and many thousands of families are redeeming them. As of Friday 22 May, Edenred reported that more than £101.5 million worth of voucher codes have been redeemed into supermarket e-gift cards by schools and families. As of Tuesday 12 May, Edenred reported that 17,000 schools had placed an order. We have been working closely with Edenred to improve the scheme, and we thank schools using the system for their patience while it has been upgraded to meet increased demand.

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to measure the success of the national voucher scheme; and whether they have access to supermarket data on (1) the amount of vouchers spent, and (2) what foods such vouchers were spent on, in order to assess whether the scheme was successful in supporting healthy eating. [HL4204]

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued to support families to feed children nutritious food that meets school food standards whilst schools are closed. [HL4205]

*Asked by **Baroness Boycott***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the national voucher scheme to cover the half-term holiday in May and the six-week summer holiday. [HL4206]

Baroness Berridge: As both my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID 19.

Our latest guidance for schools is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

During this period, we are asking schools to support pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. However, we recognise that providing meals and food parcels is not a practicable option for all schools. That is why on 31 March we launched a national voucher scheme as an alternative option, with costs covered by the Department for Education.

Voucher codes are being processed and many thousands of families are redeeming them. Edenred has reported that over £101.5 million worth of voucher codes have been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and

families through the scheme as of Friday 22 May. Edenred has reported that 17,000 schools had placed orders for the scheme as of Tuesday 12 May.

Families are free to select the most appropriate food and drink for their child. When selecting products, we encourage families to consider health and nutrition. The School Food Standards may act as a useful guide for families and is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england>.

The vouchers should not be redeemed for any age-restricted items, such as alcohol, cigarettes or lottery tickets.

There are a number of online resources available to support families in preparing healthy and nutritious food, including on the NHS Eat Well website: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/?tabname=recipes-and-tips>.

Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only. However, during the Easter holidays the department met the costs of offering free school meals to eligible pupils not attending school during term time weeks. This was in recognition of the unprecedented levels of disruption and uncertainty for schools during this time.

These are rapidly developing circumstances; we continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

Free Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lingfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of free schools in the pre-opening stage. [HL4614]

Asked by Lord Lingfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government how COVID-19 is affecting the delivery of new special free schools; and what steps they are taking to mitigate this impact. [HL4615]

Baroness Berridge: We are monitoring closely the risk that construction delays caused by COVID-19 might impact on our capacity to deliver free schools, including special free schools, planning to open in September 2020.

Where delays are putting at risk completion of sites by September, we are agreeing appropriate mitigations, including alternative temporary accommodation.

We remain committed to opening all free schools due to open this September, as planned.

Further Education: Finance and Governing Bodies

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring forward legislation relating to the finance

and governance arrangements of further education colleges in England. [HL4381]

Baroness Berridge: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education recently set out (to the Education Select Committee) that we are working on a White Paper aimed at delivering ambitious reform in our vital further education (FE) sector.

The FE sector is playing a pivotal role in making sure more people can access the high-quality education and training they need to progress and will support our economic recovery following the COVID-19 outbreak. Our reforms will build on and strengthen the excellent work already happening across the country and will ensure the FE sector is at the heart of every community.

We have been working very closely with the sector on the development of the reform programme from the start and will continue to do so. We will outline further details in due course.

Galileo System

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what part, if any, the UK is playing in the EU's Galileo satellite system. [HL4736]

Lord Callanan: During the implementation period, UK companies and other UK entities can continue to take part in the EU's space programmes, except in the security-related sensitive aspects of Galileo where UK participation has been excluded by the European Commission since January 2018. UK companies continue to deliver contracts for the EU's space programmes, such as the construction of Galileo payloads by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL). The UK now does not have a level of access to Galileo that would enable us to assure the system and use it for purposes such as defence and security. As such, the UK will not seek to continue participation in the Galileo programme at the end of the implementation period.

Gambling: Mental Health

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Royal Society for Public Health Problem gambling and suicidality in England: secondary analysis of a representative cross-sectional survey, published on 12 May; and what regulatory measures they have changed as a result of evidence linking gambling-related harm and suicide. [HL4536]

Lord Bethell: Officials have assessed the research article published by the Royal Society for Public Health as a valuable addition to the evidence base about the risk factors of suicidal behaviour but have noted that caution is needed when interpreting the study's results as the sample size for the problem gambler group is very small and comes from data collected in 2007.

We know that there may be wider lifestyle factors associated with gambling addiction that may link to poor mental health and that gambling addiction can create a cycle of debt which can also have a significant impact on mental health and may, in extreme cases, lead to thoughts of suicide. We committed to addressing suicide risk and gambling in the most recent progress report on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Workplan, published in January 2019.

Gaza: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza. [[HL4228](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of personal protection equipment and ventilators in the West Bank and Gaza. [[HL4229](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UN assesses that although the current number of detected cases remains relatively low in Gaza and the West Bank, the capacity of the Palestinian health system to cope with an increase in COVID-19 cases is poor, including the low availability of PPE and ventilators. The situation is particularly severe in Gaza, where the health system has shortages in specialised staff, drugs and equipment. As of 14 May, 20 cases have been detected in Gaza (of which 6 remain active). So far, cases have been contained and any community outbreak has been prevented.

The UK has pledged £744 million to support the global humanitarian response to COVID-19. We have delivered additional vital support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by providing funding to the World Health Organization and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity.

We continue to monitor the situation and are working closely with the UN and the international community to ensure a co-ordinated response.

Gender: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they have provided to those researching the gender impact of the COVID-19 lockdown. [[HL4531](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The Office for National Statistics and Public Health England are government-funded bodies that are conducting research and analysis to understand gender impacts of COVID-19. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is also funding work in this area, such

as adapting existing longitudinal studies to cover covid impacts, and running an open call for research proposals on covid-19. In addition, the Government Equalities Office has commissioned a survey under its existing Gender and Behavioural Insights research programme to measure the impact of the changes in the uptake of flexible working on gender equality within households and the workplace.

Global Navigation Satellite Systems

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the speech by the Prime Minister on 24 July 2019, what steps they have taken to establish a UK satellite navigation system. [[HL4733](#)]

Lord Callanan: The UK's Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Programme is currently in its Engineering, Design and Development Phase to research and understand what would best suit the UK's positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) requirements. The Programme is taking the appropriate time to investigate the requirements, design specifications and costs as fully as possible. This includes assessing value for money, scope for innovation, new markets and how much a system could meet the UK's assured PNT requirements.

We recently proceeded with a number of technical contracts from April to September to deliver key engineering work whilst protecting skills and technical GNSS sector jobs. We are now considering workstreams past September in addition to looking at wider PNT requirements, bringing together expertise from across Whitehall, industry and the PNT community to consider the requirements across military, civil and Critical National Infrastructure sectors.

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the feasibility study carried out by the UK Space Agency concluded that it was feasible for the UK to establish its own satellite navigation system. [[HL4734](#)]

Lord Callanan: The UK's Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) is still undergoing the Engineering Design and Development Phase which will determine the requirements for delivering the capability, looking at cost, design specifications, scope for innovation and potential for new markets.

Government Departments: Compensation

*Asked by **Lord Blencathra***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many compensation claims have been brought against Government departments, except the Department of Health and Social Care, since 28 February; how many claimants there are; and what was the amount of damages sought in each case. [[HL4487](#)]

Lord Keen of Elie: Since 28 February 2020, 601 claims for damages have been brought against government departments, excluding the Department for Health and Social Care, in litigation conducted by the Government Legal Department (GLD).

GLD conducts most, but not all, litigation on behalf of government departments. For example, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs normally conducts its own litigation.

GLD is unable to give the amount of damages sought in each case because that information is not always available at the early stage of the case and whether such information is available could not be ascertained without examining every case file and thus incurring disproportionate costs.

Gulf States: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 29 January (HC 9712), what assessment was made before their decision to extend the Integrated Activity Fund beyond the initial four-year period; and what plans they have to publish that assessment. [HL4190]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Ahead of the Spending Round presented to Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 2019, the Governance Board of the Integrated Activity Fund considered the effectiveness of the Fund in August 2019. This was also informed by regular monitoring and evaluation of projects against their objectives and value for money considerations. We do not plan to publish these internal reports.

Health Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability to treat other conditions, including (1) HIV and (2) tuberculosis. [HL4027]

Lord Bethell: Sexual and reproductive health services are open. They have reduced their face-to-face appointments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but they will be able to see urgent, priority or vulnerable clients in person. Services are also maintaining access during this time through scaling up on online services. This can be achieved through a variety of routes, such as increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours' service for residents of another local authority. Public Health England is also seeking to establish a national framework for online sexual and reproductive health services that local areas can choose to commission for their residents.

NHS England has published a number of specialty guides to help hospital departments continue essential care for patients within their speciality, whilst supporting

the wider hospital and community in providing care for patients with COVID-19. On 26 March 2020, NHS England published a letter about the importance of maintaining the provision of tuberculosis services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) change services to patient care and experience; and (2) invest in the field of multidisciplinary and integrated perioperative care, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4168]

Lord Bethell: COVID-19 has affected every part of local health and care systems. To respond to the challenge, National Health Service organisations, local councils and others are working across traditional organisational and team boundaries.

The NHS is investigating ways to 'lock in' beneficial changes to patient care and experience which have been introduced during the COVID-19 outbreak. These include backing local initiative and flexibility; enhanced local system working; strong clinical leadership; flexible and remote working where appropriate; and rapid scaling of new technology-enabled service delivery options such as a digital-consultations.

Similarly, a full programme of NHS-led work, through Integrated Care Systems and sustainability and transformation partnerships, will aim to join up services and foster multidisciplinary team working, to make perioperative care more responsive and convenient for patients across the full pathway; before, during and after surgery.

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment (1) they, and (2) NHS England, have made of the availability of non-COVID-19 related urgent care services; what steps they are taking to ensure that such services are resumed; and when can patients expect face-to-face appointments to resume. [T] [HL4214]

Lord Bethell: We have continued to deliver the most urgent treatments, such as emergency and urgent cancer care, throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

With evidence suggesting that we are passing the peak of this wave of COVID-19, and with the National Health Service well-placed to provide world-leading care for those who do still have the virus, we are bringing back non-urgent services that had been temporarily suspended. We will work on the principle that the most urgent treatments, including mental health support, should be brought back first and this will be driven by local demands on the system. The approach will be flexed at local level according to capacity and demand in different parts of the country, and will be gradual, over weeks.

In the absence of face-to-face appointments, primary and secondary care clinicians have been asked to stratify and proactively contact their high-risk patients to educate on specific symptoms and circumstances needing urgent

hospital care and ensure appropriate ongoing care plans are delivered.

Doctors will always have the safety of patients at the centre of any decisions they make.

Health Services: Older People

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in response to the concerns raised by the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on 27 March about the protection of older people who are at the highest risk of COVID-19; and what consideration they have given to her recommendation to develop triage protocols to "ensure that decisions on whether to allocate medical resource are made on the basis of medical needs, the best scientific evidence available and not on non-medical criteria such as age or disability", and to "ensure that essential support services at home in the communities can continue without putting older persons and their care providers at risk". [[HL3676](#)]

Lord Bethell: On 7 April 2020, NHS England published a letter outlining the importance of maintaining standards and quality of care in pressurised circumstances. This letter emphasised the NHS Constitution which is based on the principle of equity of access for those who could benefit from treatment escalation.

The evidence is clear that people who are over the age of 70 are at increased clinical risk of having severe cases of COVID-19. The Government recognises that social distancing and self-isolation are likely to increase the risk of loneliness and mental health issues for everyone, but particularly for vulnerable groups including those with pre-existing conditions and those shielding. The Government has provided guidance to support people both medically and socially, who on the basis of their condition and not their age, are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. This is available in an online only format on GOV.UK. Furthermore, on 22 April the Government launched a new major plan to tackle loneliness which include a £5 million boost for national loneliness organisations.

It is important that people continue to receive support services in the community. The Government has made £3.2 billion available to help local authorities deal with the immediate impacts of COVID-19, and £1.3 billion of additional funding to enhance the National Health Service discharge process, getting patients who no longer need urgent treatment home from hospitals safely and quickly.

Hebron: Religious Buildings

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to propose a joint UK-EU initiative to protect the

Ibrahimi Mosque, following reports that the government of Israel is planning renovations and improvements to the building, without prior consultation or agreement and which could involve some expropriation of Palestinian land. [[HL4685](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The holy sites of East Jerusalem and the West Bank hold particular significance for many groups around the globe, especially the three Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In our meetings with the Israeli authorities we regularly raise the need to respect the status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority about the preservation of the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. [[HL4721](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In our meetings with the Israeli authorities we regularly raise the need to respect the status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Hedges and Ditches

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on (1) the environment, and (2) road safety, of the cutting of roadside verges and hedges in English local authority areas since 2015; and whether they have plans for a review of these practices. [[HL4526](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Our roadside verges and hedges can provide a rich refuge for plants and for the pollinators and other wildlife they support. The responsibility for managing England's strategic road network falls to Highways England and the local road network to local authorities.

All public bodies, including Highways England and local authorities, have a legal duty under the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to have regard to conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. Management of road verges, hedgerows and other green spaces to support wildflowers, pollinators and other wildlife is one way in which public bodies can discharge this duty, although those public bodies also have to ensure public safety.

The UK Roads Liaison Group's Code of Practice on Well Managed Highway Infrastructure recommends that authorities manage highway verges, trees and landscaped areas with regard to their nature conservation value and biodiversity principles as well as whole-life costing, highway safety and serviceability.

Many public bodies are already taking action to enhance biodiversity along public roads. Highways England's Biodiversity Action Plan sets out its approach to promoting biodiversity while balancing this with safety on the strategic road network. A number of local authorities are also working with conservation groups such as the local Wildlife Trust to plan and implement biodiversity enhancements alongside roads.

Defra, alongside our external partners and other Government departments, regularly reviews the evidence on the value to wildlife of roadside verges and hedges, and strongly encourages positive management that balances wildlife and safety.

Help to Buy Scheme: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lansley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the cut-off date for the completion of Help to Buy properties by six months in view of the delay to construction activity. [HL4509]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government recognises the disruption Covid-19 has caused to housebuilding, which is why we have taken decisive steps to re-open the housing market and ensure housebuilding can now safely recommence, with immediate effect. The Government published a "Plan to Rebuild" on Monday 11 May, setting out the UK Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy. This makes clear that construction work can be undertaken across England providing sites are able to operate safely in line with Covid-19 guidelines. A number of developers have already announced plans to restart work on sites.

To support customers, Help to Buy Equity Loan Agents are already offering more time for purchasers to complete their transactions. Homes England released this guidance on 1 May.

Hereditary Peers: Allowances

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park on 12 May (HL3709) what was the total cost in the parliamentary session 2017/2019 of allowances paid to peers elected by the process of conducting by-elections for hereditary members. [HL4431]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The total cost in the parliamentary session 2017/2019 of allowances paid to peers elected by the process of conducting by-elections for hereditary members was £1,674,929.

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask the Leader of the House whether, and if so how, she is assessing the arrangements for conducting

ballots to fill vacancies for hereditary peers after their suspension until 8 September; and how such arrangements will be put before the House. [HL4432]

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask the Leader of the House whether any process for resuming the conduct of by-elections for hereditary peers will be put to a vote of the whole House of Lords before any more such by-elections take place. [HL4433]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: The House resolved on 23 March that Standing Order 10(6) be suspended until 8 September. No further decisions of the House are required before the provisions of Standing Order 10(6) resume.

The Clerk of the Parliaments is responsible for making the arrangements for individual by-elections. In all recent by-elections those eligible to vote have been able to do so by post.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Compensation

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of properties required for the development of HS2 Phase 1 have received full compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code. [HL4484]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: To date, HS2 Ltd, acting as agents for the Secretary of State, has taken possession of nearly 60sq km of land and paid £1.74 billion for acquisitions in Phase One.

Where land is being acquired under statutory blight provisions, 216 of blight cases (86%) have a 'full and final' settlement.

Where land has been acquired through compulsory purchase, compensation claims have been submitted in 460 cases. Many claimants have not requested full and final payment. As of 4 May 2020, HS2 Ltd has received Advance Payment Requests on 313 cases and further compensation claims (in addition to Advance Payment Requests) on 147 cases. Of these 147 cases, 15 (10%) have been settled as a 'full and final' settlement. In the other 132 cases, claimants have either reserved the right to make further compensation claims or negotiation continues.

For payments where HS2 Ltd has possessed land temporarily, 246 claims have been submitted. Of those, 136 (55%) have either been paid, or are ready to be paid but rest with the claimants' solicitors; 31 (13%) cases are going through HS2 Ltd governance in order to make the payment, and 79 (32%) payments are being negotiated between the claimants and HS2 Ltd.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Forests

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to delay any removal of ancient woodlands

until a further assessment has been made of the viability of HS2. [HL4649]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There are no plans to delay or pause any HS2 works, including woodland removal, provided they can proceed in line with guidance from Public Health England.

The Oakervee Review recently conducted an assessment of the project and concluded that it should continue. At a time when the construction sector faces uncertainty during the coronavirus outbreak, the Government's subsequent decision to authorise 'Notice to Proceed' for Phase One has provided certainty for construction companies, communities along the route, and the wider UK supply chain supporting this transformational project, which is crucial to the Government's long-term plan to level up the country.

Higher Education: Finance

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on funding for (1) medical faculties, and (2) the teaching of STEM subjects, at higher education institutions of any fall in the amount of funding received by cross-subsidisation from students of arts and humanities subjects due to a decrease in the numbers of any such students. [T] [HL4748]

Baroness Berridge: In light of COVID-19, we have carefully assessed the challenges the sector is facing and brought forward a comprehensive support package for higher education providers and students in order to stabilise the admissions system and ease pressures on universities' finances. This included confirming universities' eligibility to apply for the government financial support schemes and bringing forward £100 million of research funding and an estimated £2.6 billion worth of tuition fee payments for providers. The government continues to prioritise science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and medicine.

Additionally, the government continues to contribute teaching grant funding to support the delivery of priority activity, including for high-cost subjects. High-cost subject funding is due to total £690 million for 2020-21 and it is targeted at many STEM courses, as well as medicine. Very high-cost STEM subject funding is due to be £24 million for 2020-21.

Home Education

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children without access to (1) laptops, (2) reliable internet connections and (3) other equipment necessary for them to participate in remote learning. [HL4050]

Baroness Berridge: We are constantly reviewing the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children to ensure they get the support they need at this time.

The Government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education. We are providing laptops and tablets to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examination in Year 10, receiving support from a social worker or are a care leaver. We are also providing 4G wireless routers to care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged Year 10 pupils who do not have sufficient internet connections.

To support householders who face challenges accessing an internet connection, the government has brokered an agreement with all the major telecoms companies aimed at protecting the most vulnerable, as well as those who may become vulnerable due to COVID-19. We are also working to remove data charges for educational resources for families who rely on 4G.

For those in rural areas or without a connection, schools will be able to draw on support from the BBC which is broadcasting lessons on television. Some of the BBC educational content is offline, via the red button, which disadvantaged pupils without digital devices or connectivity will still be able to access

Schools may also choose to draw on the many resources offers which have been made by publishers across the country. The department has published an initial list of high quality online educational resources, which have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts to help pupils to learn at home. The list is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the National Education Union has instructed teachers not to provide online lessons from home. [HL4309]

Baroness Berridge: On its website, the National Education Union has highlighted the importance of any school which carries out online lessons having protocols in place to protect staff and safeguard pupils. They also advise teachers against live streaming lessons from home and say that any contact between pupils and teachers should only be through a platform provided by the school and not through personalised accounts open to public viewing.

We know that school leaders, teachers and pupils are all having to adjust to remote education strategies. While this is happening, it is more important than ever that schools continue to follow safeguarding procedures. The department has published guidance on safeguarding and remote education during COVID-19 at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

This recognises that teaching from home is different from teaching in the classroom and confirms that 'there is no expectation that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their pupils and staff.'

All schools and colleges should be considering the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct) should be followed. This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Further guidance for schools and colleges to support them keeping children safe, including online, during the COVID-19 outbreak is also available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>.

Home Office: Staff

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Home Office officials who have been charged with criminal offences in connection with their public duties are awaiting trial. [HL4034]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: At present there is one former employee who is currently awaiting trial.

Hong Kong: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 May (HL3427), what urgent representations they will make to the government of Hong Kong about any breach of Article 22 of the Basic Law arising from the arrest of pro-democracy leaders and lawmakers; and what plans they have, as part of their role as a co-signatory to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, to request that the trials of those arrested do not proceed. [HL4266]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in my Written Answer on 5 May (HL3427), we are concerned by the arrests of a number of pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong and are following these cases closely. Senior Officials have raised our concern about the arrests with the authorities in Hong Kong, Beijing and with the Chinese Embassy in London; and we will continue to make our views clear both publicly and privately.

Article 22 of the basic law states that "No department of the Central People's Government [,,,] may interfere in the affairs which the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region administers on its own in accordance with this law". As co-signatory of the Joint Declaration, we expect

the mainland Chinese authorities to respect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the rights and freedoms provided for in that legally binding treaty.

Horizon Europe

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in the negotiations regarding future participation by the UK in the Horizon Europe research programme; and what preparations are being made to address any shortfall in UK research capacity should the UK cease to participate in Horizon Europe. [HL4741]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to ensuring the UK becomes a global science superpower and continues to collaborate with Europe on scientific research. The UK is ready to consider a relationship in line with non-EU Member State participation in Horizon Europe, provided that this represents value for money and is in the UK's interest. Any agreements relating to Union programmes should contain fair terms for UK participation. This should include fair treatment of participants, a fair and appropriate financial contribution, provisions allowing for sound financial management by both parties, and appropriate governance and consultation.

The shape and content of EU Programmes post-2020, including Horizon Europe, are currently being negotiated in the EU Institutions and have not yet been finalised. These EU Programmes must be adopted by the EU before arrangements for potential UK participation could be finalised.

I refer the Noble Lord to a Written Ministerial Statement made by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 19 May (HCWS245), which set out that discussions covered all workstreams including: general terms for UK participation in programmes, including provisions for financial contribution.

We are also considering a range of alternative schemes to support international research and innovation collaboration in tandem with Horizon Europe negotiations. These include options to address immediate needs and work through to any future funding scenario.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that hospitals and other healthcare providers in England follow NHS England guidelines to (1) risk assess, and (2) redeploy where possible, BAME staff who are working on the COVID-19 frontline; and what assessment they have made of the implantation of those guidelines. [HL3832]

Lord Bethell: Guidance for all black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) colleagues working in the National Health Service has been published online by

NHS England. This is in addition to information from NHS Employers on COVID-19 and the prioritisation and management of risk, including ethnicity.

NHS England will be sharing a framework of resources to support systems, trusts, commissioners and primary care teams to implement the actions listed in their online blog post, 'A note for all BAME colleagues working in the NHS'. We would expect all NHS trusts to follow and take account of any guidance that is issued and to disseminate it as appropriate to the relevant departments or clinical areas to action and take forward as necessary.

Public Health England's review will analyse available data on health outcomes for NHS staff, to develop a better understanding of how the virus affects frontline workforce.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Reuters Special Report In shielding its hospitals from COVID-19, Britain left many of the weakest exposed, published on 5 May. [T] [HL4069]

Lord Bethell: Social care has been at the frontline of our response to COVID-19, with social care providers looking after many of the most vulnerable in society. The Government's number one priority for adult social care is to ensure that everyone who relies on care gets the care and support they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 13 May we announced an additional £600 million for an Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience. Furthermore, on 15 May, the Government published a Care Home Support Plan in an online only format on GOV.UK. This is the next phase of our response for care homes, using the latest domestic and international evidence brought together by Public Health England, and drawing on the insights of care providers.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue new guidance on the admittance of patients at an earlier stage of showing symptoms of COVID-19 to improve survival rates. [HL4122]

Lord Bethell: The Government continues to be led by the evidence in our response to COVID-19. Public Health England has published guidance on the investigation and initial clinical management of possible COVID-19 cases, including on admission to hospital, which is kept under review. A copy of the latest guidance *COVID-19: investigation and initial clinical management of possible cases* is attached.

In addition, a suite of guidance has been published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to ensure the best treatment for people with COVID-19.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19_ investigation [HL4122 - COVID-19_ investigation and initial clinical management of possible cases - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-06/HL4122>

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the study "Associations with COVID-19 hospitalisation amongst 406,793 adults: the UK Biobank prospective cohort study." [HL4419]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is responsible for ensuring that timely and coordinated scientific advice is made available to decision-makers, to support United Kingdom cross-Government decisions. In fulfilling this role, SAGE considers a wide range scientific evidence. This paper has not been considered by SAGE, but SAGE members may consider a range of evidence in their work.

House of Lords: Training

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are for the (1) long-term evaluation, and (2) follow-up, of the Valuing Everyone training sessions. [HL4295]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: Valuing Everyone is a training module designed specifically for Parliament that aims to raise awareness of, and confidence to tackle, bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, as well as to highlight the sources of support available to those who have experienced this behaviour. Variations of this training are offered to staff of both Houses, members of both Houses and members' staff.

The training is part of a suite of initiatives that together ensure that Parliament is a safe and respectful workplace, with zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. The two Houses will continue to conduct regular surveys, among other measures, to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Participants are routinely asked to complete feedback forms, and the results of these (including those from MPs and Peers) demonstrate that participants have an overwhelmingly positive experience of the training, and in particular report that they are better able to recognise and call out unacceptable behaviour. These, together with ad hoc feedback from participants, allow an ongoing dialogue enabling the course to remain relevant and suitable for all parts of the parliamentary community. In addition, the training provider submits regular anonymised reports to the two Houses on themes that have emerged during the training, so that appropriate steps can be taken to address risks or to communicate more effectively about Parliament's response to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the Court of Appeal judgement in *C Spencer Ltd vs MW High Tech Projects Ltd*, what plans they have to consult on bringing forward legislation to include all construction operations in connection with process industry operations within the ambit of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. [[HL4582](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government has no plans to consult on bringing forward legislation to include all construction operations in connection with process industry operations within the remit of Part 2 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Housing: Energy

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of certified Retrofit Coordinators required under PAS2035:2019 that (1) will be required to support the delivery of the Retrofit Standards Framework at its commencement in June 2021, (2) are currently certified, and (3) are awaiting certification; and what assessment they have made of whether the number of certified Coordinators is sufficient to enable the planned Whole House Retrofit policy in England to be delivered to its original timescale. [[HL4211](#)]

Lord Callanan: We estimate that 250 – 1,000 retrofit coordinators will be required to meet the PAS2035:2019 requirements for the Energy Company Obligation, which is currently the only policy in which the Retrofit Standards Framework will have to be implemented from 1 July 2021. The number of retrofit coordinators required will depend on the number of projects and the number of measures per project.

Currently, around 80 people have graduated from the training with around an additional 230 going through the process.

The training can be provided fully on-line and we are in regular contact with the training provider to monitor uptake as well as considering options to increase it should we deem it necessary.

Human Rights

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the report by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee *Global Britain: Human Rights and the Rule of Law* (HC 874), published on 11 September 2018, in particular its recommendation that “repercussions, including the suspension of support” should be introduced for those

states that do not make sufficient progress, or regress, in areas of rule of law and democracy; and (2) the report by the Freedom House *Freedom in the World 2019: Bahrain* which stated that Bahrain has “become one of the Middle East’s most repressive’ states”; and what steps, if any, they have taken in response to those reports’ findings and recommendations. [[HL4187](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We take note of a number of sources of information when assessing performance and progress. We continue to believe that Bahrain is taking steps in the right direction to improve its human rights record, in line with the Government's Plan which built on the reform recommendations set out in the 2012 BICI Report. Whilst we and the Government of Bahrain acknowledge this is a work in progress, our support for this Bahrain-led reform is helping to build effective and accountable institutions, strengthen the rule of law and deliver justice reform. All our support is in line with international standards, and aims to share the UK's expertise and experience. Any training provided by, or behalf of, the British Government fully complies with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

Hydroxychloroquine: Procurement

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are purchasing hydroxychloroquine and if so, for what purpose; and what is the total cost of the purchase of hydroxychloroquine to date. [[HL4781](#)]

Lord Bethell: Clinical trials are currently under way to assess whether existing medicines are safe and effective for treating COVID-19, with more than 10 drugs being tested in the United Kingdom in this way, including hydroxychloroquine. In order to support a number of those trials, there are centrally procured and managed supplies of hydroxychloroquine.

The Department is also securing additional supplies of a number of medicines as part of our COVID-19 response, which could be deployed for population use if required and considered safe and effective to do so. We continue to review supply requirements as further evidence becomes available. To date, we have placed orders for hydroxychloroquine worth around £5 million, of which medicine to the value of £1.9 million has already been delivered (exclusive of VAT).

Immigrants: Detainees

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the use of administrative immigration detention in the UK's short-term holding facilities in northern France will be discontinued for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. [[HL3893](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Short term holding rooms in Northern France are still in operation. High-risk individuals displaying symptoms of COVID-19 are

referred to the French authorities in the first instance. All Border Force staff continue to adhere to Public Health England guidance to ensure we follow the latest scientific advice and seek specific guidance for our frontline operations.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were detained in each immigration removal centre on (1) 2 March, (2) 21 April, and (3) 7 May. [HL4186]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on people in detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of people detained under immigration powers at the end of each quarter, by location are published in table Det_D02 of the immigration detention detailed datasets.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to those in detention as at 31 December 2019, which show that there were 1,256 people detained in immigration removal centres, 24 in short term holding facilities in the detention estate, with a further 359 detained under immigration powers in prison. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Figures covering the first quarter of 2020, including those detained as at 31 March 2020 will be released on 21st May 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar.'

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial and other support they provided to those released from immigration removal centres as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4208]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they hold the current address of each person released from an immigration removal centre as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4209]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they provided long-term accommodation to those released from immigration removal centres as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4210]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum seekers who would otherwise be unable to support themselves are provided with accommodation and financial assistance to meet their essential living needs.

We remain committed to providing support and accommodation to those who need it. In light of the pandemic, we have introduced temporary measures to continue supporting those who would normally have had their accommodation and financial assistance stopped

until at least the end of June when we will review the situation.

We are ensuring local authorities are supported, with £3.2 million in targeted funding to help support individuals who are sleeping rough off the streets, and an additional £3.2 billion provided to local authorities as part of the wider government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding has been provided to help local authorities to reduce risks to public health and to support individuals on the basis of need.

The legal position on those with no recourse to public funds has not been amended. People granted refugee status in the United Kingdom are able to access the mainstream benefits in the same way as a British Citizen.

Individuals released from immigration detention will usually be subject to certain conditions which may require a person to report to a Home Office reporting centre at regular intervals or to remain living at the same address.

Immigrants: Finance

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they consider that people designated as "no recourse to public funds" under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 will have access to food during the lockdown. [HL4690]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is working closely with other government departments, including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to support people, including migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), through this crisis. Departments are sharing what they are learning from other bodies and charities with each other to ensure we continue to take a compassionate and pragmatic approach to an unprecedented situation.

Many of the wide-ranging Covid-19 measures the Government has put in place, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-employment Income Support Scheme and rental and mortgage protections are not public funds and therefore are available to migrants with NRPF.

Local authorities can provide basic safety net support if it is established there is a care need which does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question. The Government has provided more than £3.2 billion of funding to local authorities in England, and additional funding under the Barnett formula to the devolved administrations to enable them to respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable. In addition, on the 8th April the Chancellor announced an additional £750m package of support for charities across the UK to ensure they can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

More information on the support available for migrants affected by Covid-19 can be found on Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>.

We will keep the situation under review and consider further measures if needed.

Immigration

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people who have come into the UK by (1) boat, and (2) Eurostar, since 1 April. [HL4368]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is due to publish the next quarterly Immigration Statistics on 21 May. In addition, an ad hoc statistical release 'Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020' will be published on the 28 May - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/statistics-relating-to-covid-19-and-the-immigration-system-may-2020>.

Immigration Controls: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to ensure that people quarantine for two weeks following arrival into the UK. [HL4715]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Given the high levels of compliance we have seen to date, we expect that the majority of people will do the right thing and abide by these measures. But we will take enforcement action against the minority of people who endanger the safety of others.

The police will continue to use their powers proportionately and will engage, explain and encourage, and only as a last resort, enforce.

British citizens and foreign nationals who fail to comply with the mandatory conditions could face enforcement action. A breach of self-isolation would be punishable with a £1,000 fixed penalty notice in England or potential prosecution and unlimited fine.

Immigration action will also be considered as a last resort for foreign nationals.

Enforcement measures will be set individually by the Devolved Administrations.

Immigration: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow those with irregular migration status leave to remain in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3916]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Immigration Rules already provide for undocumented migrants to regularise their status.

If appropriate in light of the situation in their country of origin, irregular migrants may claim asylum. The UK has a long and proud history of providing protection to those who need it and we will continue to uphold our obligations under the Refugee Convention during this time. Therefore, whilst ensuring that the Home Office is adhering to Public Health England's advice in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak, decisions are continuing to be served on asylum claims on a case by case basis where there is sufficient evidence for us to make an accurate and well-informed decision in-line with published policy.

Even if an application is refused, measures we have implemented already guarantee that an individual can remain safely accommodated and be able to follow public health guidance, whilst maintaining access to financial support and healthcare until the end of June, and this will be kept under review.

There are no plans to provide temporary leave to remain to all asylum applicants or those with insecure status.

India: Coal and Renewable Energy

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of India to (1) discourage financial assistance to the coal industry, and (2) encourage renewable energy development, following reports of a drop in non-renewable energy usage and carbon emissions for the first time in four decades. [HL4301]

Lord Callanan: The UK and Indian governments are closely engaged in regular dialogue on issues of clean energy transition, including rapid development of renewables. UK partnership with India in support of these objectives includes technical collaboration, joint research, and support for investment and commercial partnerships in renewables. Bilateral engagement is backed by a Ministerial Energy Dialogue, which includes discussion of alternatives to coal, and accompanied by support for clean energy transition through multilateral channels. The UK also supports India-led initiatives like the International Solar Alliance. The UK is committed to close engagement with India as a long term partner on this issue, including through engagement with the COP26 Energy Transitions campaign.

Through the Powering Past Coal Alliance initiative we have also actively engaged with a number of Indian states: Chhattisgarh and Gujarat have committed to no new coal for the next few years. India currently still requires coal as a baseload and to manage intermittent renewables; plans for new coal production are in line with this need and no further. Representations to the Government of India are mindful of this fact.

Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what extra resources they plan to provide to (1) the Health and Safety Executive, and (2) local councils, to ensure that any responsibilities to make workplaces safe from COVID-19 are met. [T] [[HL4477](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government have announced additional funding of up to £14 million has been made available to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to support their advice and regulatory activity as businesses implement the new guidance on working safely. HSE's plans will develop as more businesses return to work and this will include checks that appropriate measures are in place to protect workers from COVID-19.

The Government has also announced a total of £3.2 billion of funding for councils to support their response to the pandemic. This is a significant package of support which responds to the range of pressures councils have told us they are facing and will support them to protect vital services.

Asked by Lord Hendy

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Callanan on 14 May (HL Deb, cols 781–2), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, what plans they have to review their guidance Working Safely during COVID-19, published on 11 May, to ensure that it is compatible with the statutory duty to provide personal protection equipment to any employee who may be at risk. [T] [[HL4773](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Government continues to work with stakeholders on developing sensible guidance for businesses that will give UK workers the utmost confidence on their return to work. We will now focus on sectors that are not currently open to help them plan for when they can open. The Government is keen to stay in close contact with other business sectors so we have the right information ahead of any further guidance publications.

We will keep the guidance under review and will consider updating it as circumstances change. We are being led by the science and we will make changes to the guidance when they are needed as determined by the science and as we learn best practices from businesses. We welcome views on the guidance. If there are specific points you would want to make about safer working, contact details can be found on the [gov.uk/workingsafely](https://www.gov.uk/workingsafely) webpages.

The guidance outlines where an employer's risk assessment identifies that certain steps need to be taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19, such as ensuring social distancing is maintained or providing additional handwashing facilities, it is the employer's responsibility

to ensure that these steps are taken. This is already an existing obligation for employers, which this guidance does not change. If an employer's risk assessment does show that PPE is required, employers must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it, and any PPE must fit properly.

Insurance Companies

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to review the effect of deteriorating credit quality on the (1) profits, and (2) capital generated to meet claims, of life insurance companies under the matching adjustment permitted by the Prudential Regulation Authority. [[HL4639](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Since the onset of the crisis caused by covid-19, the Government has been monitoring any impact of any deteriorating credit quality on the profits and capital generated to meet the claims of life insurance companies closely. We monitor developments in the profitability, liquidity and solvency of insurance companies, including the impact of credit quality on the matching adjustment and any resulting impact on these metrics. The Prudential Regulation Authority continually keeps the operation of the matching adjustment under review.

Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to inform civil society about how to participate in the upcoming Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy as soon as work on it recommences. [[HL4556](#)]

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether work streams have already been identified for the upcoming Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and, if so, what are they. [[HL4557](#)]

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they think that work will recommence on the upcoming Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and, if undecided, whether they will announce when this recommences. [[HL4571](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following the Chancellor's announcement that the Comprehensive Spending Review is being delayed, the Integrated Review has been paused given the pressing need to focus on COVID-19. We will return to the Integrated Review when appropriate to do so, aligned with the CSR, ensuring that we engage with all relevant stakeholders.

Interest Rates

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likelihood of a rise in interest rates due to an increase in borrowing. [[HL4334](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is responsible for setting interest rates to meet the inflation target, and has operational independence from the Government to determine the appropriate level of interest rates.

The Government is ultimately a price-taker, with the price of Government debt dictated by the market. UK debt benefits from "safe haven" status. The trust in the UK's institutions makes gilts a popular form of sovereign debt compared to many other comparable issuers, keeping its borrowing costs low.

UK borrowing costs tend therefore to chiefly be driven by global risk sentiment and currently stand close to historical lows. The gilt market is deep and liquid with a good track record in responding smoothly to increases in gilt supply.

International Assistance: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Stop TB Partnership's recent report on the impact of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic on tuberculosis services; and what support they intend to provide to the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism to help countries respond to COVID-19 and mitigate the impacts on HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria programmes. [[HL4640](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is concerned about the indirect impacts of COVID-19 on other health priorities, including increased rates of HIV, TB and malaria. The Stop TB Partnership's rapid assessment of COVID-19 and the TB response gives helpful insights into short-term impacts. The modelling report co-commissioned by the Stop TB Partnership outlines longer-term impacts, suggesting that disruptions caused by COVID-19 could lead to an additional 6.3 million TB cases and 1.4 million TB deaths between 2020 and 2025. The findings of both reports are concerning.

The UK Government is taking action, including through support to the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism, which we are funding through our £1.2 billion contribution to the Fifth Replenishment of the Global Fund. Through our multilateral partnerships with organisations like the WHO, and our regional and national programmes, the UK Government also supports developing countries to make their domestic health systems, including their TB programmes, stronger and more resilient.

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to clarify their relationship with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea; and when they expect to conclude the agreements that are necessary before 31 December. [[HL4520](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK has agreed in principle a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). This will ensure the advice we require is in place so that the UK can continue to meet its international and domestic commitments and obligations on sustainability. The MoU will be signed by December 2020, entering into force on 1 January 2021.

The UK has been a member of ICES since its inception in 1902 and we intend to continue playing a strong role in it in the future. UK scientists make a significant contribution to the science that generates ICES's advice, including annual recommendations for total allowable catches, and they will continue to provide their scientific expertise. The UK will continue to provide strong support for ICES's scientific activities in 2020 and beyond.

International Monetary System

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had with Cabinet colleagues on their policy at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring meetings on the issuing of additional special drawing rights to (1) African countries, and (2) other IMF members, which need the liquidity. [[HL4606](#)]

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support proposals made at the IMF and World Bank spring meetings to issue additional Special Drawing Rights to (1) African, and (2) other IMF members, in need of liquidity. [[HL4679](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has been vocal in supporting the IMF in its response to liquidity challenges posed by Covid-19.

In response to the crisis, the IMF has doubled its concessional emergency financing support available through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and provided debt relief through the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT). Several African countries have benefited from support from the PRGT and CCRT.

The UK has strongly supported these efforts. In the face of increased demand for PRGT and CCRT resources, the UK has recently agreed a new £2.2bn loan to the PRGT and provided a contribution of up to £150m to the CCRT.

The Government welcomes the IMF's recent agreement on a new instrument, the Short-term Liquidity Line, to provide liquidity support for IMF members with strong macro-economic fundamentals. The Government has also encouraged the IMF to keep the possibility of a Special Drawing Rights allocation under review, and will continue to do so.

HM Treasury is the department responsible for the UK's relationship with the IMF. The relevant Cabinet committees have agreed on the importance of supporting vulnerable countries in responding to the crisis, including through the IMF.

International Planned Parenthood Federation: Finance

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) core, and (2) non-core, funding they provided to the International Planned Parenthood Federation in (a) 2011, (b) 2012, (c) 2013, (d) 2014, (e) 2015, (f) 2016, (g) 2017, (h) 2018, and (i) 2019. [HL4462]

Baroness Sugg: (1) Since 2011, DFID contributed a total of £52 million core funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Core Funding (in £)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
International Planned Parenthood Federation Funding	9.5M	8M	10.7M	8.6M	8.6M	6.4M	0	0	not yet published	52M

(2) Since 2011, DFID contributed £8.5 million non-core funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Non-Core Funding (In £)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
International Planned Parenthood Federation funding	0	0	1.5M	1M	0.4M	0	0	5.5M	Not yet published	8.5M
Comparable figures beyond December 2018 are not yet available.										

Comparable figures beyond December 2018 are not yet available.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL4462 - yearly figures [HL4462 Baroness Tonge.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4462>

Iran: Arms Trade

Asked by **Baroness Eaton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure British dual-use exports to Iran will not be deployed for non-civilian purposes following the expiration of the UN conventional arms embargo in October. [HL4494]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Although the UN conventional arms embargo is due to expire in October

2020, the EU arms embargo will remain in place until October 2023 and is binding on the United Kingdom until the end of the transition period, at which point our sanctions on exports to Iran will come into force.

Dual-use exports not prohibited under the Iran sanctions are subject to the normal export licensing process and currently assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Iran: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the US government on facilitating the supply of humanitarian relief to the government of Iran for the treatment of Iranian citizens with COVID-19. [HL4591]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK, along with France and Germany (the E3), have expressed their full

solidarity with all impacted by COVID-19 in Iran. We are working with the international community to ensure that Iran receives the humanitarian support it needs: the E3 have provided a EUR 5 million package of financial and material assistance to Iran via the World Health Organisation and UN bodies to help with the response. We also continue to engage the US on a range of policy matters relating to Iran, including how the international community can best support the Iranian Government's response to the COVID-19 crisis in Iran. We welcome the new US Treasury factsheet issued on 16th April summarising the humanitarian exemptions to sanctions against Iran and offering additional guidance for individuals and governments.

Iran: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the expiration of the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran in October on human rights advocates in the country. [HL4493]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a reciprocal deal that lifts sanctions in exchange for tough nuclear limits. Iran has broken the nuclear limits in the JCPOA and we are working to bring Iran back into compliance through the deal's Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

UNSCR 2231, which underpins the JCPOA, includes a number of clauses designed to allow sanctions to expire on fixed dates: the UN conventional arms embargo is due to expire in October 2020. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions will remain in place until 2023. We are consulting partners on the broader implications of arms embargo expiry for Iran as well as the region, and encourage all states to implement national export control best practice.

Separate to sanctions in place under the JCPOA, there is an EU Iran human rights sanctions regime. It consists of asset freezes and travel bans on certain individuals and entities involved in human rights violations; and trade restrictions on specified goods and technology which may be used to repress the civilian population of Iran, and on specified goods and technology which may be used for interception and monitoring services in Iran. These EU trade restrictions do not have an expiry date.

Asked by Lord Grade of Yarmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risks associated with the Iranian trade in arms following the expiration of the UN Security Council arms embargo on Iran in October. [HL4502]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a reciprocal deal that lifts sanctions in exchange for tough nuclear limits. Iran has broken the nuclear limits

in the JCPOA and we are working to bring Iran back into compliance through the deal's Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

UNSCR 2231, which underpins the JCPOA, includes a number of clauses designed to allow sanctions to expire on fixed dates: the UN conventional arms embargo is due to expire in October 2020. We have repeatedly set out concerns about Iranian destabilising behaviour, including proliferation to non-state actors. We are consulting partners on the broader implications of the UN arms embargo expiry and encourage all states to implement national export control best practice.

As part of those consultations, we are taking into account sanctions regimes that will remain in place after the arms embargo expires, such as UNSCRs 1540, 1701 and 2216, which prohibit the proliferation of weapons to Lebanese Hizballah and the Houthis. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions on Iran will also remain in place until 2023. Separate to sanctions in place under the JCPOA, there is an EU Iran human rights sanctions regime. It places trade restrictions on specified goods and technology which may be used to repress the civilian population of Iran and on specified goods and technology which may be used for interception and monitoring services in Iran. These EU trade restrictions do not have an expiry date.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they use to decide whether to investigate incidents of Israeli settler violence or incidents involving Israeli forces causing injury, death or other harm to Palestinians in the West Bank. [HL4226]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government from which sources they obtain reports of Israeli settler violence or incidents involving Israeli forces causing injury, death or other harm to Palestinians in the West Bank. [HL4227]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes within their national jurisdictions, including territory a state has occupied. The UK does not have jurisdiction to do so directly. We monitor events using a wide variety of sources of information, including from local and international NGOs, UN agencies, the Palestinian Authority and official Israeli data. We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We have also stressed to them the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that settlers are building a road on Palestinian land near Dura in the West Bank. [[HL4230](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on these reports, we continue to oppose settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our policy is clear: settlements are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that a Palestinian man was shot dead by hospital guards in front of Sheba hospital on 13 May. [[HL4618](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We understand from reporting that this was a criminal matter which would be a matter for the Israeli Government.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that an unarmed 15 year old Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli forces during a raid on Fawwar refugee camp. [[HL4619](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May, we remain deeply concerned by the ongoing cycle of violence. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel following the recent judgment handed down by the Israeli Central Court to deduct 450 million Israeli shekels from Palestinian tax revenues [[HL4686](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of this case and are following developments as the legal process is still ongoing. It is important that economic and fiscal agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to continue to be fully implemented.

Israeli Settlements

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the viability of a one-state

solution if the government of Israel annexes parts of the West Bank, (2) the potential for equal rights of Israelis and Palestinians within any annexed areas, and (3) the impact of any such annexation. [[HL4231](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April, we are deeply concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. The Government judges that a one-state solution is incompatible with the national aspirations of both peoples and remains committed to a two-state solution.

Large Goods Vehicles

*Asked by **Lord Bradshaw***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 5 May (HL3178), what steps they are taking to prevent the use of unsuitable roads by HGVs where highway maintenance standards have also declined. [[HL4330](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Local authorities are best placed to manage traffic on local roads and consider the needs of local residents. The powers given to local traffic authorities under Sections 1 & 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allow for the restriction or prohibition of the use of HGVs on any road, for a wide range of safety and environmental reasons. These measures can be implemented by making Traffic Regulation Orders without reference to the Department for Transport.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 provide various signs for authorities to consider if they choose to do this, including signs informing motorists that certain roads are unsuitable for HGVs or if a weight limit is in place. The restrictions are then enforceable by the police.

Learning Disability

*Asked by **Baroness Jolly***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are putting in place to ensure that policies applied to people with learning disabilities recognise their individual needs. [[HL4242](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are supporting people of all ages with a learning disability or autism to live well in the community, rather than in inappropriate hospital care. *Building the Right Support* is our national plan to develop community services and reduce reliance on mental health inpatient services for people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to an extra £4.5 billion a year for primary care and community health services by 2023/24. Health and social care staff must have the skills and knowledge to make a positive difference to the lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people. This is a priority for the Government and we are developing plans to introduce the Oliver McGowan mandatory training in learning disability and autism.

Life Sciences: Finance

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on science and research funding life sciences to deliver testing capabilities now and in the future. [[HL4277](#)]

Lord Callanan: The UK continues to be a prime destination for life sciences. Sustained Government and industry investment in life sciences research across the UK has provided a strong foundation for this work to flourish.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, the Government is engaging with the life sciences sector to understand how it can best respond to issues, such as developing and producing testing supplies.

The Government's long-term objectives for research and development are clear: to invest in the science and research that will deliver economic growth across the UK, for decades to come. As part of the Government's £1.25 billion Covid-19 support package, Innovate UK is investing £750 million to support innovation in the country's most research-intensive businesses during and after the pandemic.

Listed Buildings: Risk Assessment

*Asked by **Lord Patten***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the practical outcomes of the maintenance of the at risk register of listed buildings in England. [[HL4787](#)]

Baroness Barran: Historic England's Heritage at Risk programme identifies designated heritage assets – including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Protected Wreck Sites – that are deemed to be at risk of damage or destruction (whether by human interventions or natural processes). It also helps to focus efforts to find creative solutions, and provides opportunities to celebrate successful outcomes.

The last five years have seen a steady net decline in the number of entries in the Heritage at Risk Register, from 5,478 in 2015 to 5,073 in 2019. Notable successes from the last 12 months include the Grade II* listed former School of Art (Moseley Road, Birmingham), now a community hub and studio space; and the Grade II* listed Holy Trinity Church (Bristol), now a thriving arts centre.

Livestock: Hormone Treatments

*Asked by **Lord Jopling***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 15 May (HL3775), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, why they have adopted the EU's legislation on the use of growth hormones in food production; and what caused the change in policy held by previous governments on that legislation within the Council of European Agricultural Ministers. [[HL4577](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: As a Member State, the UK fulfilled its obligations of EU membership and implemented EU Council Directive 96/22/EC (as amended) into domestic law. UK policy was always to implement EU law as required.

Although the UK expressed some concerns with the robustness of the scientific evidence underpinning the EU ban at the time, it has always been fully implemented in the UK and this will continue, now we have left the EU.

Local Government: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Pinnock***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 5 May (HL3280), whether councils will be failing in their democratic duties if they do not hold a formal meeting within a six-month period; and what plans they have to advise local councils that the six-month rule should not apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4529](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has no plans to advise local councils that the six-month attendance rule should not apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 enable all local authority meetings before 7 May 2021 to be held remotely. Councils can thus continue to hold meetings whilst following Public Health guidelines, upholding democratic principles and maintaining a thriving local democracy.

Mali: Armed Forces

*Asked by **Lord Moonie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Armed Forces personnel were planned to be deployed to Mali in 2020; and what was the anticipated (1) length, and (2) objective, of any such deployment. [[HL4244](#)]

Baroness Goldie: As announced in July 2019, the UK is due to deploy 250 peacekeepers to the UN's mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The first unit is planned to deploy in 2020 and will be led by the Light Dragoons. The deployment will last an initial period of three years. The deployment's objectives are aligned with the UN mission's mandate of: supporting the Malian peace process; security sector reform; assisting the

reestablishment of State authority; protecting civilians; and promoting human rights.

The UK also currently has three CH-47 helicopters committed to France's counter-terror mission in the Sahel, Operation BARKHANE, in a non-combat, heavy-lift capacity role. This was initially agreed as part of the January 2018 UK-France Summit. This commitment is currently due to end in June 2020 and discussions are ongoing regarding a possible extension. Operation BARKHANE is a French-led operation and the objectives focus on preventing the re-establishment of any safe havens for terrorist forces in the region.

The UK also has military and civilian staff in the EU's Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali. UK contributions to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations will be maintained during the Transition Period. The objectives for these UK personnel are focused on the delivery of international humanitarian law training, in support of EUTM's current mandate which aims to train, educate and advise Malian Armed Forces.

Marriage Guidance

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evaluation has taken place of projects funded by the Department for Work and Pensions Reducing Parental Conflict Programme; and when a final evaluation of the programme will be published. [HL4628]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The evaluation of the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme is ongoing and a final research report will be published in 2022.

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the Department for Work and Pensions Reducing Parental Conflict Programme beyond 2021. [HL4629]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Reducing Parental Conflict Programme is providing crucial support to families, particularly those who may be under increased pressure due to COVID-19. We are working with our local delivery partners to ensure that programme delivery continues during the period of social distancing restrictions, being flexible and innovative in ways that we can reach families that require support. Partners are continuing to make progress in embedding a focus on parental conflict in local services across all local authority areas in England. Decisions on taking forward the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme will be taken by the Department in due course.

Mayors

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce more elected mayors for local authorities in England; and if not, why not. [HL4321]

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of local authorities in England that (1) have elected mayors, and (2) do not have elected mayors. [HL4364]

Lord Greenhalgh: As the Prime Minister has made clear, the Government wants to see more mayors with more powers, and has successfully concluded negotiations with West Yorkshire for a devolution deal involving electing a new mayor in May 2021. The Government intends to set out its future plans for devolution, including future governance arrangements, in a White Paper later this year and intends to work with areas at pace to deliver these plans.

It is for local areas to decide what governance arrangements would be of most benefit and value to their local communities. As set out in answer to a question (HL17399, answered on 23 July 2019) from the Noble Lord, Lord Grocott, as the effectiveness of local government is dependent on many factors, not simply the governance arrangements, the only assessment undertaken by Government of governance models has been to focus on what different models can deliver; it has concluded that only the mayoral model provides that single point of accountability necessary if significant powers and budgets are to be devolved to an area.

Mental Capacity

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to announce the timetable for introducing the Liberty Protection Safeguards, which were established in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019. [HL4499]

Lord Bethell: The Government is acutely aware of the pressures that COVID-19 is exerting on the health and social care sector and will provide an update on the Liberty Protection Safeguards implementation timetable shortly. In the meantime, we are not asking the health and care sector to prioritise implementation work in light of the pandemic.

Ministerial Statements and Private Notice Questions: Virtual Proceedings

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what assessment has been made of the time available to members of the House to participate in (1) Private Notice Questions, and (2) urgent questions from the House of Commons repeated as statements, which are being considered in Virtual Proceedings; and what plans there are to change the time available. [HL4221]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The Procedure Committee agreed on 11 May that the time allowed for a Private Notice Question should be increased from ten minutes to fifteen minutes. This change was approved by the House

on 14 May. The allocation of time for the answers to Urgent Questions in the House of Commons repeated in the form of Oral Statements remains as if it were taking place in the Chamber, and there are currently no plans to extend the time allowed for these. The Procedure Committee will continue to keep these arrangements under review.

Ministers: Conduct

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask the Leader of the House who is responsible for ensuring that ministers adhere to paragraph 6.14 of the Companion to the Standing Orders and Guide to the Proceedings in the House of Lords which specifies that they should give accurate and truthful information to Parliament, and be as open as possible in answering questions. [HL4609]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Individual Ministers are responsible to the House for the answers they provide. As Leader of the House I regularly remind Ministers of the importance of their obligations to the House and will continue to do so.

Minority Groups: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support refugees and marginalised religious and belief communities which have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. [HL4377]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government works to ensure that all aid reaches the most vulnerable, including refugees and those from marginalised religious and belief communities. Vulnerable populations will experience COVID-19 outbreaks differently. COVID-19 is likely to reinforce their marginalised position in society, their experience of discrimination, violence and stigma, and further limit their access to essential support and services. For this reason, guidance has been circulated across DFID highlighting that inclusion must be central to our response and that the specific needs of refugees and all marginalised religious communities should be taken into account when developing practical programmes to tackle COVID-19.

Modern Slavery Act 2015 Independent Review

Asked by Lord Bates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the operation and effectiveness of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. [HL3852]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In July 2018, the Government commissioned an Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 led by Baroness Butler-Sloss,

the Rt. Hon. Frank Field and the Rt. Hon. Maria Miller MP. The Review considered where the Act is working well and where implementation can be strengthened. The Government welcomed the findings of the Review and we responded formally in July 2019. The Government accepted or partially accepted the majority of the Review's 80 recommendations and we are taking action to implement these recommendations.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Government Response to Modern Slavery Act
[Government_Response_to_Independent_Review_of_MS_Act.pdf
]

Ind Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015
[Independent_review_of_the_Modern_Slavery_Act_-
_final_report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3852>

Motor Vehicles: Testing

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation they undertook with the (1) Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, (2) Independent Garage Association, and (3) Institute of the Motor Industry, prior to introducing the MOT exemption; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the lockdown ease in England on the number of unsafe cars on the roads. [HL4579]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In accordance with section 195(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, the Department consulted with a selection of representative organisations including the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders and the Independent Garage Association. The analysis of the effect of these regulations is ongoing.

National Cyber Security Centre: Finance

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the budget of the National Cyber Security Centre in (1) 2016/17, (2) 2017/18, (3) 2018/19, and (4) 2019/20; and what is it for 2020/21. [HL4522]

Lord True: The National Cyber Security Strategy supported by a £1.9 billion investment through the National Cyber Security Programme, is delivering transformational change, building new capabilities and intervening to protect the UK from cyber attacks.

We established the National Cyber Security Centre in October 2016 as part of the National Cyber Security Strategy to bring together our best intelligence and expertise into a single national technical authority, driving improvements in detection, defence and incident management.

Our manifesto committed to investing more in cyber security, embracing new technologies and legislating to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

National Income: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lamont of Lerwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the impact of (1) current social distancing measures on GDP, and (2) the impending recession referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Economic Affairs Committee on 19 May, on GDP. [T] [\[HL4840\]](#)

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Treasury does not produce forecasts of the economy or public finances.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is responsible for producing forecasts of the economy and public finances. On 14 April the OBR published a reference scenario assessing the potential impact of coronavirus. In this scenario GDP is assumed to fall by 35 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 before recovering in subsequent quarters. The OBR note that the Government's policy response should help limit the long-term damage to the economy and public finances.

NHS: Computer Software

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements have been made to incorporate information from the King's College London and ZOE COVID-19 symptom tracking application into the submission of information and advice to ministers. [\[HL4223\]](#)

Lord Bethell: Project OASIS is a combined effort between NHSX and the jHub to create a much clearer picture of the public's experience with COVID-19 by incorporating data from third party symptom tracker apps commonly used by the public with the National Health Service's own internal data. The data will be used by the NHS to understand the spread of COVID-19 at a national and local level.

At the point that the OASIS platform began ingesting data there were seven app providers that had committed to provide data. Following discussions with the King's College London team, NHSX has been working with Health Data Research UK (HDR) to onboard the data from the C-19 Covid Symptom Tracker (Zoe app) into project OASIS. These discussions are at the final stages as at 20 May 2020. When this is agreed HDR will be added as a contributor to project OASIS on the NHSX website.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to measure the success of the NHSX contact tracing application being trialled on the Isle of Wight. [\[HL4784\]](#)

Lord Bethell: The Isle of Wight phase was intended to improve our understanding of how the different components of our COVID-19 response fit together and how parts of the healthcare system interact with each other. It was also an opportunity to test that the underlying technologies and systems work. Our evaluation of the Isle of Wight phase was designed to provide us with answers on the health behaviours of people who use the app and those who do not, the attitude of individuals to the contact tracing app and their experience of using it, how successfully the app fits in to the wider health service processes, and the app's influence on wider health-seeking behaviours. The Government Digital Service and Natcen have been procured to survey opinions and attitudes across the Isle of Wight to the app whilst Zuhlke Engineering has been overseeing the technical activities and deliveries.

NHS: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Sharkey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking to ensure that (1) doctors, (2) nurses, and (3) other healthcare workers, who have registered respectively with the General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council and Health and Care Professions Council to return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic are able to remain in service in the NHS once the immediate state of emergency subsides. [\[HL4443\]](#)

Lord Bethell: Temporary emergency registration powers are available to the registrars of the General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council and Health and Care Professions Council for the duration of an emergency, as declared by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The Department is working with the healthcare professional regulators, the devolved administrations, NHS England and NHS Improvement and employing organisations to ensure that the closure of the temporary emergency registers takes place in a planned and co-ordinated way.

The temporary registers will be closed at the end of the COVID-19 emergency period (as declared by the Secretary of State) and all those who have joined the temporary registers will have their registration revoked. However, we are keen that anyone who has returned to practice and who wishes to remain working beyond the emergency period is encouraged and supported to join the full register. To do so they will need to demonstrate that they meet the required standards and pay the relevant registration fees.

NHS: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the protocols in relation to whistle-blowing in the NHS; and what plans they have to issue new guidance to

prevent the victimisation of employees in the health and care sectors, including those employed by private companies, who highlight any unsafe, inadequate, inefficient or potentially corrupt practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4829]

Lord Bethell: Speaking up is vital for ensuring patient safety and quality services and should be routine business in the National Health Service. As set out in the NHS Freedom to Speak Up policy, anyone in the NHS who wishes to raise a concern can do so through their line management, or lead clinician. If they do not feel comfortable doing so, they can raise concerns through their Freedom to Speak Up Guardian or outside their organisation, for example through the Care Quality Commission. Those seeking guidance on how to raise a concern can call the Speak Up Direct helpline.

More broadly, whistle-blowers play an important role in bringing to light wrongdoing in the workplace. The Employment Rights Act 1996, amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, gives legal protection to workers who speak up. The legislation is intended to build openness and trust by ensuring that workers who hold their employers to account are treated fairly.

NHS: Migrant Workers

Asked by Baroness Quin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to waive the cost requirement for the renewal of visas for those working in NHS hospitals in any capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. [T] [HL4616]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has announced we will extend the visas for a range of healthcare professionals working for the NHS and independent health and care providers, where their current visa expires between 31 March and 1 October. This offer also applies to their families. The 12-month extension is automatic and free of charge and those benefitting will not have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge.

This is part of a wider Government approach to supporting the health and care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to keep all of our policies under review.

NHS: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all suppliers and potential providers of personal protective equipment within the UK have been used by the NHS. [HL3346]

Lord Bethell: As of 15 May, over 13,000 businesses have contacted the Government with offers of help on supplying personal protective equipment (PPE). Many are related to the manufacture of PPE for the National Health Service and care sectors, a vast majority of which we are taking forward, predominantly from United Kingdom based companies but also including multinational

companies. Some offers were not progressed due to financial and capability considerations.

The Department engages directly with potential manufacturers to qualify and prioritise the opportunity, based on availability of and access to raw supplies, lead-times to manufacture, and other commercial considerations. Product prototypes are submitted to a Technical Product Review process, to ensure they meet essential health, safety and quality standards for PPE. Financial due diligence and fraud prevention measures are also undertaken, after which the Department can contract with the manufacturer.

Lord Deighton is leading the Government's efforts to secure sufficient PPE and ensure this gets to where it is needed. He is also driving forward coordination of the end-to-end process design and manufacture of new domestic PPE supplies. As at 15 May, the Department has entered into contract and placed orders with eight manufacturers to provide millions of items of PPE products to the National Health Service and carers. The volumes will increase in the coming weeks.

NHS: Re-employment

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that recently retired NHS workers who have returned to work for the NHS continue to be employed throughout the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4287]

Lord Bethell: The Department is working with the healthcare professional regulators, the devolved administrations, NHS England and NHS Improvement and employing organisations to ensure that the closure of the temporary emergency registers takes place in a planned and co-ordinated way.

The temporary registers will be closed at the end of the COVID-19 emergency period (as declared by the Secretary of State) and all those who have joined the temporary registers will have their registration revoked. However, we are keen that anyone who has returned to practice and who wishes to remain working beyond the emergency period is encouraged and supported to join the full register. To do so they will need to demonstrate that they meet the required standards and pay the relevant registration fees.

NHS: Staff

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish the full NHS People Plan. [HL4328]

Lord Bethell: The publication of the full NHS People Plan has been deferred to later in the year, so that the National Health Service can devote maximum operational effort to COVID-19 readiness and response.

While timing of publication continues to be kept under review, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together

with Health Education England, are continuing to grow and transform the workforce and build lasting culture change, in line with the objectives of the People Plan.

Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reduction of National Non Domestic Rates receipts in 2020–21 consequent upon COVID19; and what discussions they have had with the Local Government Association and councils about the impact of that virus on the operation of the Business Rates Retention Scheme and local authority budgets in succeeding years. [[HL4225](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is in on-going discussions with local authorities and their representative bodies, including the Local Government Association, to understand the impact that Covid-19 is having on councils' funding, including non-domestic rating income. As a result of those discussions, we have announced the suspension of the planned reforms to the local government finance system, including the Review of Relative Needs and Resources (the 'Fair Funding Review') and the increase to 75% business rates retention. These were due to be introduced in 2020-21 and would have complicated councils' financial planning at a time when the impact of Covid-19 on present and future business rates income is still uncertain. We have also introduced measures worth over £5 billion to ease the immediate cashflow pressures caused by reductions in local authority revenues. We will continue to work with councils and their representative bodies to understand the on-going impact of the pandemic on councils' finances and capacity.

North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Private Sector

Asked by Lord Hoyle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many private ambulances are used by the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust. [[HL4262](#)]

Lord Bethell: Data on usage of private ambulances is not held centrally. The use of private ambulances is decided at a local level by trusts and their commissioners based on capacity needs on a day to day basis.

Obesity

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what new steps they are planning to take to reduce obesity. [T] [[HL4587](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government has outlined steps to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 through cutting sugar from half the drinks on sale, funding more

opportunities for children to exercise in schools, and working with councils to tackle child obesity locally through ground-breaking programmes.

However, it is also critical to understand how different factors, including obesity, could be disproportionately impacting how people are affected by COVID-19.

Public Health England launched a review into the factors affecting health outcomes from COVID-19, to include ethnicity, gender and obesity. This will be published by the end of May.

As outlined in the United Kingdom Government's Recovery Strategy, the Government is committed to investing in preventative and personalised solutions to ill-health, empowering individuals to live healthier and more active lives, which will help to mitigate pressures faced by NHS services.

Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 31 March (HL2729), how many people, recorded in HMRC's Real Time Information records as earning below the personal tax threshold, were contributing at work to a pension scheme using the Relief at Source method of income tax relief in the tax years after 2016; and, of these, how many were (1) women, and (2) men. [[HL4642](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMRC estimate that 1.3m individuals earning below the personal allowance in 2017-18 made workplace pension contributions via Real Time Information (RTI) using relief at source arrangements. About 65% of these individuals are estimated to be female and 35% are estimated to be male.

The personal allowance in 2017-18 was £11,500.

HMRC's Survey of Personal Income (SPI) and administrative data was used to produce the estimates. The 2017-18 SPI data (published in March 2020) is the latest year available. The SPI is updated annually.

Offences Against Children

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 January (HL158), whether they published their national strategy to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse; and if so, where it can be found. [[HL4322](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The government is committed to publishing a first of its kind national strategy on tackling all forms of child sexual abuse, outlining our long-term ambition to drive a whole system response to tackle this horrific crime. However, we must respond to the threats raised by Covid-19 and our priority is to tackle offending, protect children and support victims and survivors during this challenging time.

We have responded swiftly to the risks posed by COVID-19. We are working with Law Enforcement, the UK Intelligence Community, safeguarding partners and the third sector to assess the threat and ensure they have the resources they need to tackle offending and provide the greatest protection for vulnerable children.

The Government has made £1.6 million available immediately for the NSPCC to expand and promote its national helpline for adults. We have also launched a £1.2 million funding competition for organisations providing support for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse at a national level, including through support lines, online resources and remote counselling. We have further driven forward work to respond to the increased risk of children coming to harm online, by working across government, with the NCA and industry to ensure that teachers, parents and carers have access to the support they need to help keep children safe online.

The Home Office will further distribute £7.8 million in emergency support for charities helping vulnerable children who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. The Home Office is working closely with other government departments to ensure that this funding is prioritised and that charities who need this support receive it as soon as possible.

On Thursday 21st May, the Prime Minister hosted a virtual summit focused on ‘hidden harms’, including child sexual abuse. The virtual summit brought key decision makers together to share insight, best practice and agree an approach for tackling these crimes as we move towards easing lockdown measures.

Ahead of the summit, the Home Secretary announced that £9.86 million is being allocated to the National Crime Agency to improve its ability to tackle perpetrators seeking to offend against children via the Dark Web. An additional £3.36 million is being committed to further improve our understanding and tackle all aspects of the child sexual abuse threat. We will also launch a £2.8 million transformation fund to promote and embed best practice in Child Sexual Abuse victim support.

Offences against Children

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 January (HL158), whether they have made any recent estimate of the number of women and girls raped by Muslim men involved in grooming gangs since 1997. [HL4428]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Government does not hold data on the religious beliefs of perpetrators of rape and there is no data that delineates sexual offences which might be described as “grooming gang” offending from other forms of sexual offending.

The Government has estimated that there were approximately 6,850 victims of organised child sexual exploitation in the UK in 2015. This estimate includes all

forms of child sexual exploitation and does not distinguish between rape and other sexual offences. It includes organised child sexual exploitation committed by groups and gangs within a range of contexts.

The Government is developing a first of its kind national Child Sexual Abuse Strategy which will set out our long-term ambition in tackling all forms of child sexual abuse.

Our new strategy, which will be published this year, will set out our whole system response to tackling child sexual abuse and how we will work across government, law enforcement, safeguarding partners and industry to root out offending, protect victims and help victims and survivors rebuild their lives. We will work tirelessly to end these heinous crimes; there will be no no-go areas

Organ Transplants

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made with the devolved administrations to facilitate cooperation and collaboration regarding organ transplants. [HL4750]

Lord Bethell: NHS Blood and Transplant works closely with each devolved administration to ensure there are fair and transparent allocation policies governing all types of organ transplant across the United Kingdom. These are based on factors such as clinical need and guaranteeing the best match between donor and recipient to help ensure the longest possible survival of the transplant. These arrangements will continue.

Organs: Donors

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made to publicise the change of law on deemed consent for organ donation. [HL4749]

Lord Bethell: In April 2019, NHS Blood and Transplant started a two-year publicity campaign to highlight the change of law. The campaign has been using a number of platforms to raise awareness, including television and radio adverts, media and press releases, social media, partner and stakeholder communications channels and posters in public and community places such as general practitioner surgeries. The campaign also targets people with different backgrounds, faith and beliefs. NHS Blood and Transplant is also planning a further burst of communications activity later this year.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the policy that deemed consent should not apply to transplants used to create Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products. [HL4818]

Lord Bethell: Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs) are an exciting technology with new therapies

being developed all the time. Current ATMPs use tissues and cells taken from living donors. However, it is also becoming possible to use material from deceased donors. Such ATMPs would be novel and the Government wants to ensure that under the new deemed consent arrangements for organ donation, donation of cells for ATMPs cannot happen without express consent being in place.

The list of organs, tissues and cells excluded from deemed consent are set out in the Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020. Any changes to the regulations would need to balance evidence, public acceptability and clinical need. Before making any changes, the Government will be guided by recommendations from NHS Blood and Transplant's Research and Innovation in Transplant Advisory Group with advice from the Human Tissue Authority.

Overseas Trade: Africa

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mitigate disruption to UK–Africa supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4607](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Department for International Trade is actively monitoring trade restrictions and their impact on supply chains and is working with partner governments in Africa to reduce disruption to them. At the G20, the United Kingdom supported commitment to keeping supply chains open and ensuring that restrictions are proportionate, temporary, and transparent. We have worked with Egypt on the supply of PPE and other medical equipment, and with Tunisia and Morocco so that electronic certificates of origin for goods they import are accepted for the duration of the Covid-19 period, mitigating disruption to UK–Africa supply chains by streamlining the customs process.

HMG is supporting African countries during the Covid-19 crisis through development assistance. This includes a vulnerable supply chains facility and programmes working in partnership with countries to respond to disruptions in global trade and supply chains in several countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, Mozambique and Lesotho.

Overseas Trade: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Henry Jackson Society Breaking the China Supply Chain: How the 'Five Eyes' Can Decouple From Strategic Dependency, published on 14 May, which states that the UK is strategically dependent on China for 229 categories of goods, 57 of which are used in critical national infrastructure [[HL4665](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is protecting our national security while ensuring the United Kingdom remains a global champion of free trade and an attractive destination for international investment.

My Department is working with other departments and our counterparts overseas to ensure the continued flow of critical equipment and supplies through this pandemic, as well as supporting trading businesses as the economy recovers. This includes diversifying the import and export markets for British businesses, which will allow them to build resilience into their supply chains.

Palantir: Data Protection

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there has been a written contract, or other legal act, as required by the Information Commissioner's Office, between Palantir Technologies UK and the Department of Health and Social Care, governing the processing of personal data by Palantir Technologies UK; and if so, what plans they have to publish that contract for public scrutiny. [[HL4776](#)]

Lord Bethell: Palantir has been contracted by NHS England to work on the NHS Data Store. The contract will be published in due course.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any Data Protection Impact Assessments, required under data protection legislation, or any other impact assessments have been carried out on the processing of personal health data by Palantir Technologies UK; whether the Information Commissioner's Office or other regulatory bodies have been notified of such impact assessments; and what plans they have to publish any such impact assessments for public scrutiny. [[HL4777](#)]

Lord Bethell: A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been carried out for the NHS Data Store and is being published in due course by NHS England.

NHS England and the Department have been working closely with the Information Commissioner's Office during the COVID-19 crisis.

Peers: Allowances

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many members of the House of Lords, recorded as attending sittings of the House or Committees of the House during the 2018–19 financial year claimed (1) over £40,000 (2) £30,000–£39,999 (3) £20,000–£29,999, (4) £10,000–£19,999, and (5) under £10,000, in financial support, excluding travelling costs. [[HL4426](#)]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The number of members of the House of Lords in each band was as follows;

Over £40,000	247
£30,000 - £39,999	150
£20,000 - £29,999	93
£10,000 - £19,999	88
£0 - £9,999	224

Pension Credit: Up-rating

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made, if any, of the costs of up-rating the Pension Credit by the triple lock over the next 20 years, instead of up-rating by earnings. [HL4644]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No estimate has been made on the cost of up-rating the Pension Credit by the triple lock over the next 20 years, instead of up-rating by earnings.

Police Custody: Mental Health and Learning Disability

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect people who have been taken into police custody and have (1) mental health conditions, and (2) learning disabilities, from COVID-19. [HL4018]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office continues to have regular contact with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and other key stakeholders regarding custody related matters. The NPCC have circulated guidance for all police forces in order for them to safely manage their custody suites with respect to all detainees, staff and visitors.

Police Custody: Solicitors

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that individuals who are arrested and questioned by the police have access to solicitors during the COVID-19 pandemic, and can access them in a way that conforms to social-distancing measures. [HL4250]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office are in regular contact with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and other key stakeholders regarding custody related matters.

The NPCC have circulated guidance for all police forces in order for them to safely manage their custody suites with respect to their detainees, staff and visitors. The CPS has also published a temporary interview protocol which clearly sets out the situations where interviews should be prioritised and encourages solicitors to access interviews via video or telephone.

Police have guidance on the use of PPE and should make PPE available to essential visitors to the custody suite.

Police: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the average quantity of personal protective equipment required on a daily basis by the police service; and if they have not made such an assessment, why not. [HL4611]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is working closely with its partners including the emergency services on a range of issues including the availability of suitable PPE. The National Police Chiefs' Council have confirmed that police currently have a good supply of PPE and they are working to oversee its distribution to forces. We will continue to work with them to ensure this continues.

Asked by Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of concerns raised by police officers about the supply of personal protection equipment for frontline duties; and what (1) guidance they have issued, and (2) support they have provided, to police forces in England and Wales in relation to the provision of such equipment. [HL4713]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) have confirmed that the police have a good supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and they are working to oversee its distribution to forces. The Government continue to work closely with the police to ensure this continues.

The Government has published guidance on appropriate PPE for emergency workers, including the police. The NPCC and the College of Policing have issued operational guidance to all forces on the use of PPE tailored to their unique role to ensure officers and staff are protected sufficiently. The guidance covers how, when and what type of PPE to wear across a range of practical scenarios.

An explanatory note of the guidance is available here: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/Documents/Personal-Protective-Equipment-Operational-Guidance-1.pdf>

Polytechnics

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation to convert some universities back to polytechnics. [HL4286]

Baroness Berridge: We currently have no plans to introduce legislation to convert some universities back to polytechnics.

Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for suspending charging for prescriptions in England to assist pharmacies and patients by removing the need to collect and pay such charges during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3544]

Lord Bethell: Prescription charge is a valuable source of income for the National Health Service. We have no plans to suspend them.

Press Freedom

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 7 May (HL3380), and following reports of threats to journalists in Northern Ireland, when they expect to (1) set up the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, and (2) publish their National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists. [HL4501]

Baroness Barran: Journalists play a vital role in our society and must be free at all times to do their jobs without fear of violence. The Minister for Media and Data made this clear recently when he signed the public statement issued by the National Union of Journalists, calling for the freedom of the press to be respected and protected. As he said, "Journalism is a bedrock of democracy and those who are keeping our communities informed and holding the powerful to account must not be intimidated or threatened as they carry out their work. We stand with journalists and will do all we can to support them in doing their jobs without fear or favour."

Plans for the National Committee and the National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists are currently being developed, but have been necessarily delayed as the government turns its attention to supporting newspapers through the current Covid-19 crisis. However, the committee and the action plan remain priorities for us and we hope to be able to make an announcement soon.

Prices: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Tyler

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) recent request for emergency time-limited legislation to give the CMA powers to crack down on companies profiteering from the COVID-19 pandemic by 'price gouging'. [HL4664]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to tackling consumer rip-offs and bad business practices, including profiteering.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has spoken with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), business and

consumer organisations and retailers to review the impact of profiteering and action taken to address it.

The Government are working with the CMA, Which?, and other organisations to monitor the extent of profiteering, and will update the law if it is proportionate to do so.

Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners, both adult and those in young offender institutions, have been granted early release as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4182]

Lord Keen of Elie: On 31 March, we announced that pregnant women and prisoners with their babies in custody will be considered for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of Friday 15 May, 21 pregnant women and mothers with babies in custody have been released.

In addition, prisoners identified as 'extremely vulnerable' as defined in the NHS guidelines will merit consideration for ROTL on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of Friday 15 May, 5 extremely vulnerable individuals have been released.

On 4 April, we announced the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme. This scheme enables risk-assessed prisoners, who are within two months of their release date, to be temporarily released from custody, as part of the national approach to managing public services during this challenging period. As of Friday 15 May, 66 offenders have been released under this scheme.

All offenders released were aged 18 and over.

Alongside the careful release of low-risk offenders, we are taking steps to temporarily expand the prison estate, shield the most vulnerable, and reduce the number of prisoners on remand. This is to strike a balance between limiting the spread of COVID-19 in jails while ensuring the public is protected.

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) male, and (2) female, prisoners have been released from prison due to COVID-19 under (a) the early release scheme, and (b) the compassionate release scheme, in each week since 23 March. [HL4232]

Lord Keen of Elie: On 31 March, we announced that pregnant women and prisoners with their babies in custody will be considered for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prisoners identified as 'extremely vulnerable' as defined in the NHS guidelines will also merit consideration for ROTL on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 4 April, we announced the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme. This scheme enables risk-assessed prisoners, who are within two months of their release date, to be temporarily released from custody, as part of the national approach to managing public services during this challenging period.

Alongside the careful release of low-risk offenders, we are taking steps to temporarily expand the prison estate, shield the most vulnerable, and reduce the number of prisoners on remand. This is to strike a balance between limiting the spread of COVID-19 in jails while ensuring the public is protected.

The tables below provide the number of prisoners released from prison under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme and the number of prisoners released on temporary licence on compassionate grounds. The data in these tables is correct as of Friday 15 May.

W/C	Compassionate release- Male	End of Custody Temporary Release- Male	Total
w/c Mon 30 Mar	0	0	0
w/c Mon 06 Apr	0	1	1
w/c Mon 13 Apr	0	9	9
w/c Mon 20 Apr	0	3	3
w/c Mon 27 Apr	0	15	15
w/c Mon 04 May	5	21	26
w/c Mon 11 May	0	12	12
Grand Total	5	61	66

W/C	Compassionate Release- Female	End of Custody Temporary Release-Female	Total
w/c Mon 30 Mar	3	0	3
w/c Mon 06 Apr	11	0	11
w/c Mon 13 Apr	4	1	5
w/c Mon 20 Apr	3	1	4
w/c Mon 27 Apr	0	0	0
w/c Mon 04 May	0	1	1
w/c Mon 11 May	0	2	2
Grand Total	21	5	26

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners have been released due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and how many of any such prisoners have been in prison due to committing sexual offences and released from (1) open, and (2) closed, prisons. [\[HL4249\]](#)

Lord Keen of Elie: On 31 March, we announced that pregnant women and prisoners with their babies in

custody will be considered for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of Friday 15 May, 21 pregnant women and mothers with babies in custody have been released.

In addition, prisoners identified as 'extremely vulnerable' as defined in the NHS guidelines will merit consideration for ROTL on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of Friday 15 May, 5 extremely vulnerable individuals have been released.

On 4 April, we announced the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme. This scheme enables risk-assessed prisoners, who are within two months of their release date, to be temporarily released from custody, as part of the national approach to managing public services during this challenging period. As of Friday 15 May, 66 offenders have been released under this scheme.

54 offenders were released from closed prisons and 38 were released from open prisons. None of the offenders released were serving sentences for sexual offences.

Prisoners: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many, and what proportion of, persons held in prisons who have been tested for COVID-19 have (1) tested positive, (2) been removed to hospitals, and (3) died following a positive test; and whether persons who are (a) admitted to, and (b) released from, prison are tested at the time of admittance or release. [\[HL4361\]](#)

Lord Keen of Elie: As of Friday 15 May, 422 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19. This is an accumulative total and does not represent the number of live cases. Some of those that previously tested positive will have now made a full recovery.

As of Friday 15 May, 51 prisoners, who have tested positive for COVID-19 were removed to hospitals. However, from available data it is not possible to confirm whether individuals tested positive before or after hospitalisation.

Sadly, as of Friday 15 May, 21 prisoners have died having tested positive for the virus. It is a matter for coroners to determine a cause of death.

Although there is some testing conducted on symptomatic prisoners, COVID-19 testing is not yet a routine part of the prison reception process. New cohorting strategies have been developed however, and as a result prisons are implementing units to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals for a period of 14 days to reduce risk of transmission.

All new receptions into prison are screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 by healthcare professionals.

COVID-19 testing is not part of the prison release process.

These are interim figures as reported by prisons. They are subject to revision as more information becomes available.

Prisoners: Health

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to safeguard the physical and mental health of prisoners, in particular those subject to (1) long periods of being locked in cells, (2) the suspension of all visits, and (3) overcrowded cells. [HL4335]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government takes the health and wellbeing of prisoners very seriously. We work closely with health partners to provide a standard of healthcare in prisons equivalent to that available in the community. COVID-19, however, presents a unique set of challenges that we must address to keep prisoners safe. To mitigate these, we are operating a National Response Model in prisons, and working very closely with public health authorities to ensure our approach is based on the best scientific advice available.

This does, unfortunately, mean that visits have been suspended and people in prison are spending more time in their cells. They are, however, being given access to services including telephone contact with loved ones, access to health services and where possible time in the open air. Additionally, following a successful trial at HMP Berwyn, we are rolling out secure video calling to 10 prisons with a wider roll out in the coming weeks. We continue to make the Samaritans phone service available, and are working with the Samaritans to ensure that the Listener peer support scheme continues to function effectively. We are also providing distraction packs and in cell activities to support mental and physical wellbeing.

We are continuing to provide care and support to people at risk of self-harm or suicide through ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) case management. For those with severe mental health issues, we are doing everything we can to ensure that the process for transfer to hospital continues in as normal a way as possible.

Measures are also being taken to safeguard prisoners with particularly vulnerable physical health from COVID-19 and to satisfy requirements for social distancing. Since February, we have managed to move 4,000 people out of double cells, and work is being taken forward to create extra cells and increase the capacity of the prison estate. Meanwhile, prisoners identified in accordance with NHS guidance as being 'extremely vulnerable' to COVID-19 are being proactively considered for release from custody under existing Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) provisions. Where a prisoner falling within this category is considered not suitable for release, they will continue to be appropriately shielded within custody.

Prisons: Coronavirus

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) prisoners, and (2) prison officers, have died from COVID-19; and what plans they, if any, to (a) increase testing, and (b) introduce further safeguarding measures, for COVID-19 in prisons. [HL4247]

Lord Keen of Elie: We are working hard to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the prison system as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives. We are implementing a range of measures to reduce the spread of the transmission of the virus and the numbers of lives sadly lost.

As of 5pm on Thursday, 14 May, we are aware of 21 prisoners and 8 prison staff who sadly have died with COVID-19

NHS England and Improvement is responsible for testing for COVID-19 both in the community and in secure settings. As such, we do not hold data on staff and prisoner testing. On 24 April, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced the rollout of COVID-19 testing for all essential workers and symptomatic members of their household, including prison staff, those working in Approved Premises (APs) and probation staff (including private sector service providers) in England. We have referred over 3,000 HMPPS staff for testing to date.

In Wales, testing for prison, AP and probation staff and symptomatic members of their household is being delivered through local resilience forum arrangements and through Local Health Boards.

For prisoners, tests will be conducted on symptomatic prisoners on site. The testing capacity and availability can vary between establishments, depending on local circumstances at the time.

We are continuously working with Public Health England and Public Health Wales to improve our safeguards in prisons. Our strategy has shown early signs of success in limiting the transmission of COVID-19.

Prisons: Staff

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) health checks, and (2) tests, are conducted on staff working in prisons on a routine basis. [HL4248]

Lord Keen of Elie: HM Prison and Probation Service makes sure that it fully complies with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in providing a safe place of work and safe systems of work for all of our staff working in prisons.

Prior to employment of a prison officer, a trained nurse will carry out a medical assessment and upon employment, mandatory physical fitness tests are conducted for prison officers on an annual basis. Fitness

tests must be passed for the prison officer to remain fit for work.

Wellbeing days are delivered across prison, probation and HQ sites and includes weight, body fat percentage, blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol checks.

Staff receive occupational vaccinations programmes and vaccine history checks, including blood tests, to ensure prison and probation staff are protected at work. This includes Hepatitis B immunisation, the annual flu vaccine and a 24-hour helpline for suspected and actual body fluid exposure incidents in prisons and at probation sites.

In respect of Covid-19, occupational health is able to give clinical advice to managers on fitness to work. Testing is currently offered to all prison staff through a national programme delivered by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Protective Clothing: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 14 May (HL3016), what criteria were used in determining that the answer given was "excellent", as indicated in Lord Bethell's tweet that same day; and what assessment they have made of which elements of the question were adequately answered. [HL4613]

Lord Bethell: Written Parliamentary Questions are drafted by policy teams specialised in the subject and cleared at Senior Civil Servant level. As per Departmental guidance, answers must aim to be clear, relevant and informative; answer all aspects of the question; be accurate and not misleading; and phrased in a simple and logical way.

At a time of unprecedented pressure on the Department and a marked increase in the number of Written Questions, I am proud of my officials' efforts to keep Parliament informed while tackling this immense national challenge.

Protective Clothing: Deloitte

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they used in their decision to select Deloitte for the procurement of personal protective equipment. [HL4792]

Lord Bethell: Deloitte is providing operational support for the procurement process of personal protective equipment (PPE) from existing and new manufacturers who can assist in scaling-up regulatory-approved PPE resources within the United Kingdom. As an existing professional services provider to the public sector, Deloitte's expertise is being used to supplement in-house resource to deliver significant programmes of work, which currently includes the national response to COVID-19.

Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March. Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. We have also made it clear that authorities must continue to achieve value for money for taxpayers, use good commercial judgement and publish the details of any awards made, in line with Government transparency guidelines.

Protective Clothing: Procurement

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many companies they have requested to manufacture personal protective equipment since 1 January; and what new contracts they have placed (1) inside, and (2) outside, the UK to manufacture such equipment since that date. [HL3333]

Lord Bethell: As of 15 May, over 13,000 businesses have contacted the Government with offers of help on supplying personal protective equipment (PPE). Many are related to the manufacture of PPE for the National Health Service and care sectors, a vast majority of which we are taking forward, predominantly from United Kingdom based companies but also including multinational companies. Some offers were not progressed due to financial and capability considerations.

The Department engages directly with potential manufacturers to qualify and prioritise the opportunity, based on availability of and access to raw supplies, lead-times to manufacture, and other commercial considerations. Product prototypes are submitted to a Technical Product Review process, to ensure they meet essential health, safety and quality standards for PPE. Financial due diligence and fraud prevention measures are also undertaken, after which the Department can contract with the manufacturer.

Lord Deighton is leading the Government's efforts to secure sufficient PPE and ensure this gets to where it is needed. He is also driving forward coordination of the end-to-end process design and manufacture of new domestic PPE supplies. As at 15 May, the Department has entered into contract and placed orders with eight manufacturers to provide millions of items of PPE products to the National Health Service and carers. The volumes will increase in the coming weeks.

Public Expenditure

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to suspend any additional HM Treasury funding provided to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, either through the Barnett Formula or other means, if those countries incur additional costs resulting from any longer period of lockdown than is in place in England. [HL4307]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government is focused on responding to Covid-19 across the UK, both through UK-wide measures and funding to the devolved administrations through the Barnett formula.

We have so far announced almost £7 billion of additional funding to the devolved administrations to support people, business and public services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This means £3.5 billion for the Scottish Government, £2.1 billion for the Welsh Government and £1.2 billion for the Northern Ireland Executive.

This is in addition to the UK-wide measures that the people and businesses in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will benefit from, including the Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

We are working closely with the devolved administrations and will continue to do so as we take steps out of lockdown.

Public Health: Immigrants

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to communicate healthcare messages to immigrant communities. [HL3406]

Lord Bethell: The *COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection* and *COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19* has been translated into 11 languages.

We are constantly evaluating what more we can do to support different groups in society that have particular needs or face particular challenges.

Public Lavatories: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist councils to provide safe toilet facilities at beaches, parks and other leisure facilities as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are eased. [HL4348]

Lord Greenhalgh: The government has published guidance on safer public spaces. It includes advice, information and examples of the potential interventions that can be used in public places to facilitate social distancing in areas of higher footfall such as in parks (attached). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19>

Owners and operators are advised to implement cleaning protocols to limit coronavirus transmission in public places. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning.

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to: configuration of toilet facilities to

ensure they are kept clean, with social distancing achieved as far as possible and with best practice handwashing followed; where possible, providing hand towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities; signs at public toilets for queuing, social distancing and automatic sanitising; using signs and messages to build awareness of good handwashing technique and other respiratory hygiene behaviours, e.g. around coughing and sneezing in public places; where possible, providing hand towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities; and queue marking indicators at main entrance, popular park destinations and toilets.

We have now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities through an un-ringfenced grant so they can address pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The package recognises the additional costs and pressures on finances councils are facing as a result of the current crisis. It demonstrates the Government's commitment to making sure councils, including upper and lower tier authorities, have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Safer public places guidance [200527]

Guidance_Safer_Public_Places_During_Covid - HL4348.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4348>

Quarantine: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the arrangements are for requiring foreign persons who enter the United Kingdom via the Republic of Ireland to comply with a quarantine. [HL4263]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In order to keep overall levels of infection down and in line with many other countries, the Government will introduce a series of measures and restrictions at the UK border.

Firstly, the Government will require all international arrivals to supply their contact and accommodation information. They will also be strongly advised to download and use the NHS contact tracing app. The Government will also require all international arrivals not on a short list of exemptions to self-isolate in their accommodation for fourteen days on arrival into the UK.

Recognising the unique nature of the Common Travel Area, as well as the unique position of Northern Ireland, journeys within the Common Travel Area will be exempt from these measures.

We will continue to work closely with Ireland and the Crown Dependencies on our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Radio: Public Service Broadcasting

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they do not pay community radio stations to broadcast public information notices; and whether they have any plans to do so. [HL4772]

Lord True: The Government is strongly supportive of the community radio sector and recognises the great value that it offers to communities across the UK.

In light of COVID-19, the Government has developed a national campaign to provide information, guidance and reassurance to the public.

The campaign utilises a wide range of channels to maximise reach and engagement and to ensure our messaging reaches as many people as possible. This includes the use of paid-for advertising on community radio. We currently work with over 35 community radio stations on a weekly basis.

Rail Review

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the Williams Rail Review. [HL4299]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Williams Rail Review was in the final stages of drafting at the outbreak of COVID-19. The Government views the purpose of the reforms as important as ever, but further work needs to be done now to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. We are progressing with this work.

Railways: Franchises

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the franchise of each Train Operating Companies is due for renewal. [HL4258]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The attached table shows the renewal date for all franchise agreements.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Franchise agreements - Renewal dates [Franchise agreements - Renewal dates.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4258>

Railways: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from the Minister of State for Transport to Sara Britcliffe MP on 6 May (ref MC/288646), what plans they have to publish the terms of reference of the proposals to reinstate the rail link between Skipton and Colne and enhance capacity for rail freight on existing

trans-Pennine routes; who will carry out this work; and how long the work will take. [HL4358]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Officials are preparing proposals for consideration and agreement by Ministers for further development work, on both the possible reinstatement of the rail link between Skipton and Colne, primarily as a passenger route, and options for enhancement of gauge and capacity for rail freight on existing trans-Pennine routes.

Further information about the scope, expected duration, and who will be carrying out this work will be available as and when such proposals are agreed.

Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide temporary Leave to Remain to all asylum applicants, and others, with insecure refugee status. [HL4026]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has a long and proud history of providing protection to those who need it and we will continue to uphold our obligations under the Refugee Convention during this time. Therefore, whilst ensuring that the Home Office is adhering to Public Health England's advice in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak, decisions are continuing to be served on asylum claims on a case by case basis where there is sufficient evidence for us to make an accurate and well-informed decision in-line with published policy.

Even if an application is refused, measures we have implemented already guarantee that an individual can remain safely accommodated and be able to follow public health guidance, whilst maintaining access to financial support and healthcare until the end of June, and this will be kept under review.

As a result of this, there are no plans to provide temporary leave to remain to all asylum applicants or those with insecure status.

Refugees: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they will suspend the return of refugees arriving on UK territory to northern France. [HL3854]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK does not return those refugees who have been granted refugee status in the UK to France or elsewhere. We do, however, return asylum seekers who are yet to have a decision on their asylum claim in the UK to ensure their claim is considered in the right place. This may be to France or other states who participate in the Dublin Regulation.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we continue to comply with the Dublin Regulation and remain committed to ensuring transfers continue to and from the UK. This is a

fast-changing situation and we, along with other countries across Europe, will be subject to wider Government decisions and travel restrictions.

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that refugees at the UK-France border belonging to at-risk groups, including (1) victims of trafficking, (2) unaccompanied minors, (3) LGBTQ+ persons, (4) people with disabilities, and (5) victims of physical, mental or sexual abuse, can access the necessary protections. [[HL3855](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The identification and relocation of vulnerable migrants on French territory remains the domestic responsibility of the French government, who are currently working to transfer those residing in camps into reception centres. At these centres, asylum claims can be lodged and any other welfare needs assessed. Since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in France, over 600 migrants have been moved to accommodation centres to aid with social distancing measures. Within these centres, individuals are provided with medical and administrative support.

The UK is also committed to meeting our obligations to transfer unaccompanied children to the UK where they have eligible family here and where transfer is in their best interests under the Dublin Regulation. An unaccompanied child must first claim asylum in the EU Member State in which they are present, and the Member State must then raise a Take Charge Request with the UK Government.

Additionally, specialist trained officers are present at all of our Juxtaposed controls, who assist in supporting those identified as vulnerable. We work closely with both French and Belgian partners to ensure that these individuals receive the support they need. All officers receive regular training on safeguarding and when to seek support from a specialist trained officer. Special arrangements are in place at the Juxtaposed controls to refer cases with vulnerability elements to the French and Belgian Police.

Refugees: Greece

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the Joint Action Plan by the UK and Greece on migration in full; what assessment they have made of the impact of that Plan on bona fide refugees, even if those refugees are undocumented; and what plans they have to speed up the transfer of refugees and migrants from the Aegean Islands to the Greek mainland. [[HL4021](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK-Greece Action Plan signed on 22 April 2020 has been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-greece-migration-action-plan>

This takes forward co-operation with Greece on tackling irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean and joint action to improve overall management of migration. It covers joint work on organised immigration crime; sharing of expertise on asylum processes and migrant returns; renewed deployment of a Border Force cutter to the Aegean to carry out search and rescue and save lives; facilitation of family reunification of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children where it is in their best interests as quickly as possible; and establishment of a strategic migration dialogue.

The UK Government continues to engage with Greece regarding the conditions on the islands where appropriate and necessary. At present the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum has enacted emergency measures to contain potential coronavirus outbreaks, including the provision of additional medical facilities and staff to the islands through the EU's Emergency Support Instrument. We also understand that those most vulnerable to COVID-19 – the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions – have been moved to safer accommodation on the islands and the mainland. These measures have so far been effective and there are currently no reported cases of COVID-19 in the camps on the Greek islands.

Regional Schools Commissioners: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to redefine the role of regional schools commissioners during the period of school closures in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4345](#)]

Baroness Berridge: The majority of schools have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers, and as Senior Civil Servants at the Department for Education, Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) have continued to exercise their responsibilities and take decisions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.

In addition during this period, RSCs have led virtual Regional Education and Children's (REACT) teams within the Department for Education and from Ofsted to bring together a wide range of departmental policy and operational interests, in order to provide a coherent interface with local authorities acting in their capacity as local coordinators of the emergency response.

Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with religious authorities about opening places of worship for (1) personal private devotions, (2) formal services, and (3) funerals and weddings, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL4184](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has been working closely with all major faith groups on a wide variety of issues relating to its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this engagement will continue.

The Faith Minister has held meetings with Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders and representatives since the outbreak. Officials also maintain regular contact with Faith leaders across all major faiths, ensuring the Government is responding to issues relating to COVID-19 as they arise. This engagement will continue at both ministerial and official level as the Government looks to lift restrictions, as outlined in the recovery strategy – “Our Plan to Rebuild”, which was launched on 11 May can be found (attached) here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884760/Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf. As the document makes clear in Step 3, the Government’s ambition is to open places of worship; the current assumption is that this Step will be no earlier than 4 July.

As part of the recovery strategy, the Government has launched a Taskforce to look at the possible re-opening of places of worship. The Taskforce will be led by the Secretary of State for Communities, or the Faith Minister, and comprise of representatives from the country’s major faiths. The aim of the Taskforce is to work towards the safe reopening of places of worship, including for private devotions, services and ceremonies like funerals and weddings. It will address the specific issues that places of worship face in the course of reopening safely.

Places of worship are essential in bringing our communities together, which is why we want to reopen them as soon as we can. However, we will not compromise the safety of those who visit and work at our places of worship. The Government’s priority is to protect the public and save lives. We are committed to ensuring our faith communities have access to the latest public health advice, and to support them to adapt their practices in line with the Government’s COVID-19 guidance.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Our Plan to Rebuild [200514
Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy - HL4184.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4184>

Religious Freedom: Turkey

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the right of Turkish citizens resident in the UK to freedom of religious worship. [HL4342]

Lord Greenhalgh: Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, and equal rights define us as a society. The Government is determined to

promote these values, working in partnership alongside all our faith communities.

Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right, and one which underpins many of the others. Where freedom of religion or belief is under attack, often other freedoms are under attack too. It is important that everyone has the right to speak freely, and our strong legal framework provides the appropriate space to do so.

Britain has a proud tradition of religious tolerance, within the law. The Government is committed to creating a society in which all people are free to express their religious identity and live without fear of harassment and crime because of it.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people are protected against discrimination because of religion or belief, and that they are able to exercise the right to hold and manifest their beliefs in a reasonable manner.

The Government will always protect people’s legitimate rights – for example, to free speech and to practise their religion within the law. The right to freedom of expression is a fundamental value of our democracy. It is protected by Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporated into British law the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Remand in Custody

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) men, and (2) women, have been remanded into prison from magistrates courts in each week since 23 March. [HL4233]

Lord Keen of Elie: The requested data is not available at this time. Court data up to the year ending December 2019 is due to be published on 21 May 2020, and data for the year ending December 2020 is planned for publication in May 2021. Prison receptions data covering January to March 2020 is planned for publication in July 2020 and data covering April to June 2020 is planned for publication in October 2020.

Republic of Ireland: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they were consulted in advance by the government of Ireland about its decision to introduce a fourteen-day quarantine period on all passengers travelling to Ireland from Great Britain; and if so, when. [HL4768]

Baroness Sugg: We remain in regular contact at the highest levels with the Government of Ireland on our joint response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including discussions on the public health measures at the border.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for the operation of

the Common Travel Area of the decision by the government of Ireland to impose a fourteen-day quarantine period on people travelling from Ireland to Great Britain. [HL4769]

Baroness Sugg: The Common Travel Area (CTA) is a long-standing arrangement between the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Bailiwick of Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and Ireland. Both the UK and Irish Governments have committed to taking all necessary measures to ensure that these arrangements will continue to be protected.

Road Traffic Offences: Enforcement

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to extend the civil enforcement powers contained in the Transport Management Act 2004 (section 6) to authorities outside London to better enforce moving traffic offences, in order to protect cyclists and pedestrians. [HL4331]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We are giving thought to the role these powers could play in helping councils to deliver their transport recovery plans. Meanwhile, the police retain the necessary moving traffic enforcement powers outside of London.

Roads: Hedges and Ditches

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there has been (1) an increase, or (2) a decrease, in the cutting of roadside verges and hedges by English local authorities since January. [HL4525]

Lord Greenhalgh: The department does not collect data on the cutting of roadside hedges and verges by local authorities. Individual local authorities should be contacted to ascertain any change in activity.

Saudi Arabia: Detainees

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what urgent representations they will make to the government of Saudi Arabia to request the release of any (1) female activists, and (2) political prisoners, who have been detained without charge. [HL4267]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the continued detention of women's rights activists and political detainees in Saudi Arabia. The Foreign Secretary raised our concerns about the ongoing detention of political detainees, including women's rights defenders, during his visit to Riyadh on 4 and 5 March. We raise concerns about individual cases regularly and will continue to call for political detainees to be given adequate legal representation.

Schools: Academic Year

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to ask schools to stay open during what is normally regarded as the summer holiday period. [HL4660]

Baroness Berridge: There are no plans to open schools during the summer holidays.

The department understands that the COVID-19 outbreak has caused disruption to young people's education as teachers and parents have had to adapt to remote education. We are doing everything possible to make sure every child, whatever their background, has the support they need to deal with the impact of coronavirus on their education and wellbeing and are working with partners to consider the best ways to deliver this ongoing support.

Schools: Breakfast Clubs

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to continue to provide support for the National School Breakfast Programme over the May half-term holiday and summer holidays. [HL4638]

Baroness Berridge: As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

Our latest guidance for schools is set out below: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

Alongside our national approach to supporting free school meal pupils, we are committed to supporting schools and children who benefit from our breakfast club programme. Our suppliers, Family Action along with Magic Breakfast, are in contact with schools on the programme, where possible, and are working closely with them to target the children most in need to continue to provide them with a healthy breakfast.

Schools on the programme can choose to support target children in the way which works best for them. This may include parents collecting food parcels from open schools or breakfast food 'drop offs' to target families. This should be arranged alongside the school's wider support for children on free school meals, and schools must follow Public Health England's advice on social distancing at all times.

This programme operates during term time, and we would not expect provision to continue through schools during the May half term holiday week. We continue to work flexibly with Family Action and Magic Breakfast on the best ways to support schools during the COVID-19 outbreak.

These are rapidly developing circumstances. We continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish scientific evidence that schools are safe to re-open before pupils are allowed to return in June. [HL4344]

Baroness Berridge: The government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed SAGE's advice, including evidence related to schools.

These papers are being published in batches. The full list of papers released to date is available by following the link below. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capability of infants and primary school children to (1) understand, and (2) adhere to, the principles of social distancing at school. [HL4452]

Baroness Berridge: We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of protective measures:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

Public Health England is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

Where settings are able to keep children and young people in those small groups 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.

We have published guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings to support settings to get this right. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential health benefits of using outdoor spaces to teach; and what plans they have to (1) support, and (2) encourage, schools to make increased use of outdoor spaces as learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4478]

Baroness Berridge: We recognise that outdoor education can be beneficial for the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and that outdoor space offers additional benefits to allow for distance between people during the coronavirus outbreak. Our guidance to help schools and other education settings prepare for wider opening to more pupils from 1 June, explicitly encourages the use of outdoor space and outdoor education where possible. In particular, we are asking schools to consider which lessons or activities could take place outdoors as part of a range of approaches they can take to help reduce transmission. We are also asking schools to use their outside space for exercise and breaks.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long they plan to postpone Ofsted inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4479]

Baroness Berridge: The Government recognises that this is an extremely challenging time for staff in school and care settings.

In the current circumstances, it is right that routine Ofsted inspections in the school, further education, early years, local authority, and care sectors are suspended. Ofsted retains the power to inspect in all these areas and will use its powers if it has significant concerns. Ofsted also continues to register and regulate children's social care, childminding and nurseries.

No date has been set for a return to routine inspection at this time. We will continue to work closely with HM Chief Inspector, and the sectors Ofsted inspects, in determining when it will be appropriate to re-start routine inspections.

We continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of teachers infecting each other with COVID-19 when schools reopen. [HL4506]

Baroness Berridge: Children, young people and teachers' safety is our top priority. This is why we are taking a phased approach to opening for more children, to limit the risk of increasing the rate of transmission. We have issued guidance to childcare settings, schools and colleges on the [protective measures](#) they should put in place to reduce risk further.

This guidance includes advice to reduce the risk of transmission to and between teachers and other staff, for example, by keeping the same staff and teachers with the same class or groups, where possible, and staggering the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy. Schools should talk to staff about plans for wider opening, including discussing whether training to implement protective measures would be helpful.

School teachers and staff are already eligible for testing, and all staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus. Where a child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their setting should be sent home and told to self-isolate for 14 days.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what reassurance they can give to teachers, parents and children that they will be safe from contracting COVID-19 when schools reopen; and what financial and other support will be provided should anyone in those categories catch the virus. [\[HL4507\]](#)

Baroness Berridge: We want to get children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to be educated and learn. We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by Government justify the changes at the time.

Children, young people and teachers' safety is our top priority. This is why we are taking a phased approach to opening for more children, to limit the risk of increasing the rate of transmission. We have also issued guidance to childcare settings, schools and colleges on the protective measures they should put in place to reduce risk further. These include children and young people staying within their new, smaller, classes wherever possible and limiting contact between different groups. We have also set out a range of additional protective measures including frequent cleaning, encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene, reducing 'pinch points' (such as parents dropping children off at the start and end of day), and using outdoor space.

Staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable children and young people to get back to childcare or education, and their parents to get back to work. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting.

With regard to financial support, schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations – as determined by the local authority for maintained schools and through the general annual grant for academies. In addition, we have announced a fund for schools to cover specific additional costs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak; this remains open and should be used by schools as appropriate.

Schools: Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the withdrawal by Oxford Council of guidance to schools which allowed transgender pupils to choose which toilet facilities to use, what plans they have issued national guidance to ensure the provision of single-sex spaces and facilities in all schools; and what plans are in place to ensure the safeguarding of all female schoolchildren. [\[HL4384\]](#)

Baroness Berridge: All children and young people must be kept safe. All schools must continue to have regard to statutory guidance as stated in the Department for Education document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This document covers issues that disproportionately affect girls, such as peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The department prescribes standards for the premises of all maintained schools, and independent schools including academies and free schools. The department has published guidance for local authorities, proprietors, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies advising on standards for school premises.

Serbia: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Serbia about reports that more than 4,000 Albanians in Medvegja and Bujanoc have been removed from the civil registry in Serbia, consequently rendering them stateless with no voting and other civil rights. [\[HL4576\]](#)

Baroness Sugg: The UK is aware of recent reports of the removal of ethnic-Albanians in southern Serbia from civil registries. Verifying these reports is complicated by high levels of migration and lack of agreed population statistics, but our Embassy in Belgrade is monitoring closely. Our Ambassador, with like-minded partners, has discussed with the Serbian Government the importance of fundamental rights and freedoms in the context of the forthcoming elections. We will continue to pursue this issue in the course of discussions with relevant national and local authorities in Serbia, as part of our ongoing work to promote and protect human and minority rights.

Sex and Relationship Education

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Berridge on 12 May (HL Deb, col 569), what plans they have to ensure that secondary school pupils receive adequate sex education despite the right of parents with objections to request to withdraw them from the lessons. [HL4394]

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps will be taken to ensure that the right of secondary school pupils to opt in to sex education three terms before they turn 16 will be independently exercised in circumstances where their parents had previously withdrawn them from sex education lessons. [HL4395]

Baroness Berridge: We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. That is why we are making Relationships Education compulsory for primary school-age pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for secondary school-age pupils and Health Education compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools, from September 2020.

The statutory guidance sets out that parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16, the legal age of sexual consent. The statutory guidance can be accessed via the following link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf.

Parents will not be able to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of the science curriculum. There is also no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as we believe the content of these subjects is essential in supporting pupils' wellbeing and attainment, and helping young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.

Before granting any such request from parents, it would be good practice for the headteacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Good practice is also likely to include the headteacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child.

Parents should also be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum. This can be an important opportunity to talk about how these subjects contribute to wider support in terms of pupil wellbeing and keeping children safe.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

RSE and Health Education statutory guidance [HL4394-HL4395-DfE-Relationships-RSE-and-Health-Education-statutory-guidance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-13/HL4394>

Shipbuilding: Submarines

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Goldie on 11 May (HL3566 and HL3735), whether COVID-19 safety measures have caused any delay to ASTUTE hulls 5, 6 and 7; and what were the expected planned approximate dates for the commissioning of ASTUTE hulls 5,6 and 7. [HL4543]

Baroness Goldie: We are working closely with our industry partners to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on our submarine programmes. The planned in-service dates of submarines are withheld as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

The individual commissioning dates of the remaining three Astute class submarines are yet to be determined.

Shipping: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to implement the International Maritime Organisation's Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, issued on 6 May, to ensure the continued free movement of seafarers; and what steps they are taking to ensure the swift return to the UK of UK seafarers whose contracts of employment have expired and are now stranded on ships around the world. [HL4302]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government welcomes the framework that was developed by the International Chamber of Shipping and other organisations, which has been supported and circulated by the International Maritime Organisation. The Department wrote to the International Maritime Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation on 23 March 2020, confirming that the UK will continue to meet its international obligations related

to the transit and transfer of seafarers and highlighted that the UK is fully committed to the welfare of all seafarers regardless of their nationality.

The Government is currently considering the framework in more detail to see what more can be done to further facilitate crew changes in UK and we will do this work as quickly as we can, as we are very keen to see a resolution, and support the sector.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to the UK Chamber of Shipping's request that they sign up to a global initiative to repatriate seafarers stranded across the world. [HL4303]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government understands the concerns that have been raised by the UK Chamber of Shipping in relation to crew changes and ensuring that seafarers who have completed their contracts can return home. We acknowledge their request for the UK to sign up to the initiative developed by the International Chamber of Shipping and other organisations, which has been supported and circulated by the International Maritime Organisation. The Government is currently considering the framework in more detail to see what more can be done to further facilitate crew changes in UK and we will do this work as quickly as we can, as we are very keen to see a resolution, and support the sector.

Skipton-Colne Railway Line

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from the Minister of State for Transport to Sara Britcliffe MP on 6 May (ref MC/288646), whether the Further Feasibility Work announced in January has (1) been completed in both Phases, and (2) presented in a full report to ministers; and whether they intend to publish both that report, and the Steer Group report that was delivered to Ministers in December 2018 on the potential reopening of the Colne-Skipton railway line. [HL4359]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The further feasibility work on Skipton-Colne reinstatement and trans-Pennine freight strategy commissioned last year has now been completed and Ministers have received advice on its findings. The Government intends to publish the reports produced, including the earlier reports completed in 2018, alongside decisions on next steps as previously indicated (HL37, 7 January 2020).

Slavery and Forced Labour

Asked by Baroness Young of Hornsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on (1) labour exploitation, and (2) modern slavery. [HL4195]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Modern slavery is a harmful and hidden crime and its victims may be especially isolated and vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to protecting those who may be subject to exploitation and modern slavery, during this time.

We are working closely with the police, the National Crime Agency, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs - National Minimum Wage Team to monitor and assess any emerging changes to the threat of modern slavery during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure law enforcement activity can respond to the changing environment. We are confident that law enforcement agencies continue to pursue high risk modern slavery cases where there is a risk of harm or detriment to individuals.

In addition, we have taken clear steps to ensure that we continue to support some of the most vulnerable people in our society. To ensure victims continue to feel supported and safe, we announced on 6 April 2020, that all individuals in accommodation provided by the government-funded specialist Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract, will not be required to move on from their accommodation for the next three months.

Slavery: Victim Support Schemes

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all individuals currently in receipt of support, including outreach support, through the Victim Care Contract, will continue to receive financial and case work assistance for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4646]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and security of those supported through the modern slavery Victim Care Contract (VCC) is a top priority for government.

Potential victims within the VCC will continue to have access to support during the pandemic. We are continually reviewing how essential services can best be maintained and delivered to ensure victims receive, and have the means to access, the support they need at this time. We are providing support through virtual means as required and have introduced a new contactless payment card to ensure safe receipt of financial support.

The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) informs tailored move on plans to help victims transition out of the VCC and back into the community where appropriate. The assessment considers the availability of alternative, and often more sustainable, support services and victims will only begin a move on process if it is suitable for them to do so, in line with their recovery needs.

The policy change announced on 6 April mean individuals who are accommodated in the VCC, will have continued access to this accommodation until at least the 6 July 2020. The policy will be reviewed before the end

of June in respect of the Government's latest covid-19 advice. This change, alongside the existing support mechanisms within the contract will ensure that vulnerable individuals are not left without the support they need at this challenging time.

Slavery: Victims

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Bristol

To ask Her Majesty's Government what long-term support services they plan to provide to survivors of trafficking to protect them from being re-trafficked and to ensure that they are supported when the COVID-19 lockdown ends. [HL4177]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Bristol

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the level of subsistence support given to victims of modern slavery during the COVID-19 pandemic is sufficient to meet essential needs. [HL4178]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This Government is committed to stamping out modern slavery and providing victims with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

The Victim Care Contract aims to lift victims of modern slavery out of exploitation and establish a pathway to rebuild their lives. The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) informs a tailored move-on plan for confirmed victims, with the aim of establishing longer-term stability by helping victims transition out of VCC support and back into a community, as appropriate. Where this is not possible, VCC support will continue to meet the victim's ongoing recovery needs.

The safety and security of those supported through the modern slavery Victim Care Contract (VCC) is a top priority during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are continually reviewing how essential services can best be maintained and delivered to ensure victims receive and have the means to access the support they need at this time. To ensure our support system remains robust, we have adapted the method by which victims receive financial support. A new card payment solution has been rolled out to allow victims to receive their payments without requiring a cash transaction or a face-to-face meeting with a support worker. These pre-paid cards for users can be used online, in shops or in cash machines.

The policy change announced on 6 April mean individuals who are accommodated in the VCC, will have continued access to this accommodation until at least the 6 July 2020. The policy will be reviewed before the end of June in respect of the Government's latest covid-19 advice. This change, alongside the existing support mechanisms within the contract will ensure that vulnerable individuals are not left without the essential support they need at this challenging time.

As the public health restrictions are lifted, we are committed as ever, to support victims and protect them from re-trafficking.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Bristol

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in their proposal to provide places of safety for victims of modern slavery. [HL4179]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Places of safety' would provide support to adult victims of modern slavery leaving situations of immediate exploitation. They would receive accommodation, assistance and advice for up to 3 working days, allowing them time to consider if they wish to be referred to the National Referral Mechanism. A provision for Places of Safety has been included in the tender for The Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) which will replace the current contract. We are nearing the end of the tender process, and the contract will be awarded in due course.

Small Businesses: Social Distancing

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of changes to physical distancing on businesses that have been ordered to remain closed and therefore have no income. [HL4318]

Lord Callanan: On 11 May the Government published its COVID-19 recovery strategy which sets out our plan for moving to the next phase of our response. The strategy sets out a cautious roadmap for easing existing measures in a safe and measured way. The roadmap will be kept constantly under review, and we will continue to work hard to support business and workers as the situation evolves.

Detailed guidance has been published for various working environments to help businesses make workplaces as safe as possible. We continue to work with stakeholders on developing sensible guidance for businesses that will give UK workers the utmost confidence on their return to work and will now focus on sectors that are not currently open to help them plan for when they can open.

Employers are responsible for taking all reasonably practical steps to address health and safety risks, which would be identified by carrying out a risk assessment. Nevertheless, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced unprecedented support for business and workers, including a Bounce Back Loans scheme.

Social Security Benefits

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the statistics detailing the number of families and children affected by the two-child limit benefit policy up to April. [HL4491]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2019 are available on GOV.UK. Statistics related to the period up to April 2020 will be published in the summer.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the statistics detailing the number of families affected by the two-child limit benefit policy broken down by (1) parliamentary constituency, and (2) local authority. [[HL4492](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2019 are available on GOV.UK. Statistics related to the period up to April 2020 will be published in the summer.

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the last statutory review of the benefit cap under section 96A(1) of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 took place; when they plan to conduct the next review; and what factors determine when the review takes place during a parliament. [[HL4513](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Secretary of State has a statutory obligation to review the levels of the benefit cap at least once in each Parliament unless an early election is called, as it was last year. A review will take place at an appropriate point in the future. When the Secretary of State decides to undertake that review she will consider the national economic situation and any other matters that she considers relevant.

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what would the levels of the benefit cap be if they represented the same percentage of average earnings as they did when introduced in 2016; and what would be the cost of raising the cap to those levels. [[HL4514](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the independent evaluation of the benefit cap. [[HL4515](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We are aiming to publish the results of the two strands of benefit cap evaluation by Summer 2020. We are still hoping to meet that timescale although given the current COVID-19, we advise that there could be further delay, we will endeavour to confirm a publication timetable as soon as possible.

Social Services: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Wheeler***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to monitor the welfare of children and vulnerable adults whose care and support has been reduced under the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020. [[HL3972](#)]

Lord Bethell: Monitoring the welfare of children is a matter for the Department for Education.

The Department is working with the Care Quality Commission and Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) to understand the impact of the Care Act 2014 easements introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allow local authorities to prioritise care and support so that the most urgent and acute needs are met. TLAP hopes to speak to local authorities which are operating under easements to understand what this means for adults with care and support needs. A TLAP Insight Group will be meeting regularly to coordinate intelligence of TLAP partners on the impact and views of people with lived experience.

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to protect care workers from contracting COVID-19. [[HL4454](#)]

Lord Bethell: It is vital to protect the care workers who are providing personal care for vulnerable individuals in the social care sector. On 13 May we announced an additional £600 million to support providers through a new Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund. The Fund sets out the measures providers can take to support the workforce to minimise the spread of infection, including ensuring staff can self-isolate or reduce the number of establishments they work at, without experiencing any loss of income.

Care workers should receive personal protective equipment (PPE) from the care provider they work for in line with the latest Government recommendations. We are committed to ensuring that all areas have access to PPE, and are working around the clock with the industry, the National Health Service, social care providers and the army to ensure urgent supply of PPE.

Social Services: Learning Disability

*Asked by **Baroness Jolly***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many adults with a learning disability live in a care setting. [[HL4238](#)]

Lord Bethell: 2018-19 is the latest year for which data on the number of clients with a Primary Support Reason of Learning Disability Support receiving long term support by care setting is available. According to the 2018-19 dataset 2,065 adults with a learning disability lived in a nursing care setting whilst 30,410 adults with a learning disability lived in a residential care setting.

Therefore, a total of 32,4765 adults with a learning disability lived in a care setting between 2018-19.

Social Services: Protective Clothing

Asked by Baroness Jolly

To ask Her Majesty's Government when specific personal protective equipment guidance for learning disability services will be published. [HL4241]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom Government and devolved administrations have published clear guidance on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for health and social care workers as well as specific patient use of PPE. This has been written and reviewed by all four UK public health bodies and informed by National Health Service infection prevention control experts and the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG).

Our guidance is consistent with World Health Organization guidance for protecting health and social care workers from COVID-19. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of Midwives have played a lead role in developing the guidance.

Southern Africa: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the Department for International Development's budget relates to Africa south of the Sahara. [HL4259]

Baroness Sugg: The UK spends more than £5 billion in ODA in Africa each year, through both country specific bilateral programming and through UK funding to multilateral organisations.

Details of DFID spend are contained in [Statistics on International Development](#). The most recent publication contains [provisional aid spend for 2019](#) and shows DFID region or country specific bilateral official development assistance (ODA) spend in Africa in 2019 was £2.448 billion.

In addition to region/country specific bilateral ODA, £2.607 billion was spent on projects where it has not been possible to assign to any single recipient country or region. A proportion of this will have been spent in Africa.

DFID's total ODA spend in 2019 was £11.107 billion.

Spend in Africa above does not include imputed shares of UK funding to the general core budgets of multilateral organisations. The latest spend numbers available are for [2018](#), and show the imputed UK share of Multilateral Net ODA spent in sub-Saharan Africa was £2.2 billion.

Special Educational Needs: Young People

Asked by Lord Lingfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many young people with special needs who, although they need continuing social care support, were not transferred to Adult Services within six months of turning 18 years old, in 2019. [HL3871]

Lord Bethell: This information is not centrally held.

Whilst the Short and Long Term Services (SALT) collection contains information on the number of requests for support relating to transferring to the care of adult social care services, we do not collect data around delays, needs or exact age.

The SALT collection relates to the social care activity of councils with adult social services responsibilities in England.

Sports and Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish guidance, including in easy read format, for the charity, voluntary and amateur sports sectors in relation to the support available to them during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3977]

Baroness Barran: Information on the current Covid-19 pandemic including the support available to the charity, voluntary and amateur sports sectors can be found on Gov.uk.

Further detail on the support available to sports clubs, including the Sport England Community Emergency Fund, can be found on the Sport England website.

Accessible formats of the guidance are available on request via the Gov.UK website including versions for use with assistive technology.

Sports: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish guidance on the use of changing rooms during competitive sporting fixtures, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3978]

Baroness Barran: The Government has published guidance on gov.uk allowing the phased return of sport and recreation in line with the latest medical guidance. This guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>. A pdf of the web page is attached.

The current guidance for recreational settings states that indoor facilities, apart from toilets and through-ways should be kept closed.

The guidance also includes a set of recommended minimum practice for Step One of 'return to training' (RTT) guidance for elite athletes. This guidance will assist elite sport organisations to deliver a safe return to organised training for its athletes and staff, while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Step Two guidance on a return to close contact training, and Step Three of parameters of Behind Closed Doors competition, will follow in due course.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Sport COVID guidance [Coronavirus (COVID-19)_ guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3978>

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish guidance on a sport-by-sport basis in relation to the resumption of competitive sport following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3979]

Baroness Barran: The Government has published guidance on gov.uk allowing the phased return of sport and recreation in line with the latest medical guidance. This guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>. A pdf of the web page is attached.

The guidance includes a set of recommended minimum practice for Step One of 'return to training' (RTT) guidance for elite athletes. This guidance will assist elite sport organisations to deliver a safe return to organised training for its athletes and staff, while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Step Two guidance on a return to close contact training, and Step Three of parameters of Behind Closed Doors competition, will follow in due course.

Whilst the Government does not plan to publish sport-specific guidance, the national governing bodies of sports are producing guidance for the safe, phased return of play, in line with the overarching guidance that the Government has produced.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Sport COVID guidance [Coronavirus (COVID-19)_ guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3979>

Stamp Duty Land Tax: Foreign Nationals

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase Stamp Duty Land Tax for foreign buyers. [HL4539]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: At Spring Budget 2020, the Government announced that from April 2021, non-UK residents will be charged a Stamp Duty Land Tax surcharge of 2%.

State Retirement Pensions: Uprating

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost to the Exchequer for each of the next 20 years of increasing state pensions by the best of price or earnings inflation in place of a triple lock. [HL4643]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The table below provides the estimated cost to the Exchequer for each of the next 20 years of increasing state pensions by the best of price or earnings inflation ('double lock') in place of a triple lock.

The figures assume that the change in uprating happens from 2023/24. They are based on analysis done in 2018, so they do not take into account any impacts of covid-19.

Expenditure Prices (£billion) as a percentage of GDP

Financial Year	Double Lock	Triple Lock
2020/21	4.6	4.6
2021/22	4.7	4.7
2022/23	4.7	4.7
2023/24	4.7	4.7
2024/25	4.8	4.8
2025/26	4.9	4.9
2026/27	4.9	4.9
2027/28	4.7	4.8
2028/29	4.8	4.8
2029/30	4.9	4.9
2030/31	5	5
2031/32	5.1	5.2
2032/33	5.2	5.3
2033/34	5.3	5.4
2034/35	5.4	5.5
2035/36	5.5	5.6
2036/37	5.6	5.7
2037/38	5.6	5.7
2038/39	5.6	5.7
2039/40	5.7	5.7
2040/41	5.7	5.8

Source: DWP modelling. The figures include the cost of the State Pension. They do not include the cost of Pension Credit or other pensioner benefits.

Supermarkets: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the ability of supermarkets to identify vulnerable people to ensure that they are able to arrange food deliveries, and (2) the concerns raised by many disabled people that personal information may be sold on via marketing companies. [[HL4503](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra works closely with supermarkets to ensure that people who have registered with the Government as extremely clinically vulnerable, and have indicated that they need help to access food, are supported by offering them emergency food parcels provided by the Government.

Supermarkets have been working at pace to expand the total number of delivery and click and collect slots for people in the wider non-shielded vulnerable category.

Data has been made available to supermarkets on a strictly limited and controlled basis for the purpose of helping vulnerable people; supermarkets cannot contact anyone who does not have an account with them and individuals' data will not be passed anywhere apart from to participating supermarkets. We have written agreements in place governing the sharing, use and retention of data. This precludes the sale of data that has been shared with them, or its use in any way contrary to the purpose under which it is shared.

Surveillance: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 14 May (HL3508), what are the specific exemptions the Civil Aviation Authority have granted to the Emergency Services, including the police; and from which particular requirements in the Air Navigation Order 2016 those agencies are so exempted. [[HL4578](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The use of drones is regulated by the Air Navigation Order (ANO) 2016.

In July 2017 the CAA issued an exemption to the emergency services to allow for greater flexibility in the operation of drones in the event of an immediate risk to life or a critical incident; subject to certain safeguards.

- The exemption relates to Article 94(3) – operation of a drone within visual line of sight.
- Article 95 - operation within minimum distances from congested areas, people, vessels, vehicles and structures.

These exemptions are subject to additional safeguards set out by the CAA and remain valid.

On the 27th of March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the CAA issued an exemption to the ANO allowing emergency services to operate drones more flexibly to enforce lockdown requirements. These exemptions related to:

- Article 94(3) – requires that the operation of a drone is done within visual line of sight;
- Article 95 - operation within minimum distances from congested areas, people, vessels, vehicles and structures; the exemption reduces the distance from 50m to 10 or 20 dependent on the weight of the drone.
- Article 94A(2)- relating to the maximum height at which drones are allowed to operate, the exemption increased the distance from 400ft to 600ft. On the 8th of April this height was reduced from 600ft to 500ft due to an increase in general helicopter activity.

These exemptions were subject to additional safeguards such as the need for an operational observer and to maintain the UA in visual line of sight at all times.

The Covid-19 exemptions have now been revoked due to the return of regular aviation activity.

Subject to meeting the requirements within the ANO and any applicable exemptions issued by the CAA, it is an operational matter for police forces to decide how to deploy drones.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International's Nowhere is safe for us: unlawful attacks and mass displacement in north-west Syria, published on 10 May; and what steps they intend to take in response. [[HL4325](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We assess that Amnesty International's report provides useful further evidence of unlawful attacks by the Assad regime and Russia on civilian targets in Idlib. It therefore complements recent reports by the UN Commission of Inquiry and the UN Board of Inquiry. The UK continues to call for accountability for these crimes and for all parties, including the Assad regime and Russia, to respect the ceasefire in Idlib and to abide by International Humanitarian Law. We also continue to support those displaced by the recent offensive, as documented in the Amnesty International report. The Department for International Development has allocated at least £50 million to humanitarian organisations delivering aid cross-border from Turkey primarily into north-west Syria, in addition to the £118 million allocated for this purpose in financial year 2019/20.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Turkey about reports that it is attempting to change the ethnic demography in northern Syria by moving people from west to east across the Euphrates river; and what assessment they have made of reports that houses are being demolished and equipment is being stolen in Tell Abyad and Ras al-Ain by Turkish backed forces. [[HL4574](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We have raised concerns with the Turkish Government over reports of human rights violations by Turkish backed forces in Syria, and have made clear that any attempt at demographic change would be unacceptable. We are aware of the reports relating in Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn but are not in a position to assess their validity. We consistently reiterate the importance of all parties to the Syrian conflict abiding by their obligations under international law.

Syria: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relative burden falling on (1) NGOs, and (2) the Syrian government and its agencies, in managing the COVID-19 crisis in Syria, including in respect of the size of the (a) populations, and (b) geographic areas, they are supporting. [\[HL4568\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In May 2020, the UN launched an appeal of \$384 million to provide a multi sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic (health and non-health sectors) across the whole of Syria. There are currently 58 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Syrian Government-controlled areas, with three deaths. There have also been unconfirmed reports of infections in North West Syria, whilst the Self Administration governing North East Syria have confirmed six cases.

The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, said on 19 May that despite these numbers, a risk of a wider spread is ever present and called for essential, sustained and impeded humanitarian access. The WHO has warned of an impending 'explosion' of cases and a possibly significant outbreak that will be difficult for the already weakened health system to manage after years of conflict.

We are particularly concerned for the welfare of Syrians in IDP camps, who due to poor, crowded living conditions, would be unable to maintain social distance. In areas not currently under Syrian Government control, it is essential that humanitarian access to life-saving services and humanitarian support is unhindered. This must be done in a way that does not increase the spread of the virus, including through support for renewal of the UN Security Council resolution on cross-border humanitarian assistance.

In Syria the UK is one of the leading donors supporting international efforts to deliver vital healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene activities; all of which help to mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19. The UK is monitoring the situation closely and working with humanitarian partners inside Syria to respond to the outbreak and to sustain life-saving services.

Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the reopening of all recognised border

crossings in Syria for the delivery of humanitarian aid. [\[HL4573\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is lobbying for the renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2504, permitting cross-border aid delivery into North West Syria, before its expiry on 10 July. We are regularly raising our view at UN fora, and are using bilateral meetings to encourage other donors to support this position. It is essential that humanitarian actors continue to have the unhindered access they need to address severe needs.

Additionally, the loss of Yaroubiya crossing in January has created several critical gaps in the North East Syria healthcare response, which have not been filled by UN cross-line aid delivery from Damascus. This is particularly concerning in light of COVID-19, and we are therefore lobbying for the reinstatement of Yaroubiya crossing. Similarly, we are raising this at meetings involving the UN and other donors, and will continue to push for cross-line and cross-border aid delivery in Northern Syria.

Syria: Proscribed Organisations

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people in Idlib who belong to an armed group that has been proscribed (1) by the UK Government, and (2) under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267. [\[HL4218\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Given the complex and evolving situation on the ground, it is difficult to accurately assess the number of persons belonging to proscribed armed groups in Idlib, Syria. We estimate there may be around 19,000-25,000 persons belonging to proscribed armed groups in total, of which the majority (approximately 12,000-15,000) belong to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. We estimate Huras Al Din and the Turkistan Islamic Party each have around 3,500-5,000 members. There are also likely to be small numbers of individuals aligned to Daesh. The estimated total number of persons belonging to proscribed armed groups represents less than one percent of the approximately three million people living in Idlib.

Syria: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 13 May (HL Deb, col 681), what assessment they have made of the compatibility of the continuing prohibition on sales of dual use goods such as disinfectants and nitrous oxide for anaesthetics to the Syrian Ministry of Health with the exemption of medical supplies used for humanitarian purposes from sanctions on that country. [\[HL4567\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: EU Syria sanctions do not prohibit the sale, supply, transfer, export or finance of disinfectants, nitrous oxide and other goods required to combat Covid-19. Certain goods and their components can be used for internal repression, including through chemical attacks, and are therefore subject to prohibitions but even in those cases, humanitarian exemptions enable them to be sold or exported where the end user has demonstrated that the goods will be used to deliver humanitarian relief and will not be transferred to a designated person or entity. The Syrian Ministry of Health is not designated in the EU Syria sanctions. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with UK legislation and the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. On 12 May, the European Commission issued guidance on the humanitarian exemptions to the Syria sanctions regulations to support humanitarian organisations.

Taxation: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have in respect of (1) personal taxation, and (2) business taxes, for the post COVID-19 pandemic period. [HL4435]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government's priority is to support the economy through the immediate crisis. The Government has taken unprecedented steps to keep as many people as possible in their existing jobs, support viable businesses and protect the incomes of the most vulnerable. These measures aim to protect the productive capacity of the economy, and to enable a strong and sustainable recovery from this crisis. The Government will continue to keep all taxes under review.

Taxpayers

Asked by **Lord Marlesford**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many taxpayers there were with a gross taxable income (1) over £5,000,000, (2) £1,000,000–£4,999,999, (3) £750,000–£999,999, (4) £500,000–£749,999, (5) £250,000–£499,999, (6) £150,000–£249,999, (7) £100,000–£149,999, (8) £75,000–£99,999, (9) £50,000–£74,999, (10) £30,000–£49,999, and (11) under £30,000, during the 2018–19 financial year. [HL4425]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The table below contains estimates of UK taxpayer numbers grouped into gross taxable income bands for the 2018–19 financial year:

Taxpayers by range of total taxable income, 2018–19

Range of total income (lower limit)	Number of taxpayers (thousands)
£11,850 (a)	19,500
£30,000	7,960

Range of total income (lower limit)	Number of taxpayers (thousands)
£50,000	2,430
£75,000	789
£100,000	569
£150,000	260
£250,000	125
£500,000	27
£750,000	12
£1 million	18
£5 million	1
Total (b)	31,700

(a) Can include some taxpayers who are not entitled to any/a full Personal Allowance whose total income can be less than the Personal Allowance.

(b) Total may not sum exactly due to rounding.

i) Taxpayer numbers are rounded to the nearest one thousand and shown to three significant figures where appropriate.

ii) The figures for 2018–19 are based on outturn data derived from the 2016–17 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) and projected using economic assumptions consistent with the Office for Budget Responsibility's March 2019 Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

In addition to the requested information, the estimated number of income tax payers by total income for 2018–19 are published on page 34 of the HMRC UK Income Tax Liability Statistics bulletin.

Teachers: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose sanctions on any teacher who does not (1) return to teach in schools once it has been deemed safe to do, and (2) teach children online from home if they cannot attend schools; and if so, whether such sanctions will include the suspension of pay and pension contributions. [HL4306]

Baroness Berridge: The department does not have any plans to impose sanctions on individual teachers regarding their attendance or performance, as these are employment matters for employees and their relevant employers to resolve on an individual case by case basis.

The Prime Minister announced on 10 May that as a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of COVID-19 has decreased. We anticipate that with further progress we may be able to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings from the week commencing 1 June, provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the

enabling programmes set out in the roadmap are operating effectively.

As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met. Schools, colleges, and childcare providers should refer to our guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

Any settings operating between now and 1 June should read that guidance in conjunction with Actions for schools during the COVID-19 outbreak, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>.

Theme Parks: Disability

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with theme parks about ensuring that (1) rides are accessible for disabled children, and (2) all reasonable adjustments are made to enable such children to participate; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL4537]

Baroness Berridge: The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) requires service providers to make reasonable adjustments to improve access so that disabled customers of all ages are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled customers. This reasonable adjustment duty is an anticipatory duty, meaning that there is an expectation for businesses providing services, including theme parks, to anticipate the reasonable adjustments that disabled customers may require.

Anyone who believes that they or their children have been discriminated against in the provision of services may wish to contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) which can provide them with free bespoke advice and in-depth support. The EASS can be contacted via its website - <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>, by telephone on 0808 800 0082, or by text phone on 0808 800 0084. The EASS may contact a service provider on a customer's behalf to discuss the scope for meeting the customer's concern; it also liaises with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which has powers to enforce the provisions of the Act.

Tourism: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they are providing to local councils on opening car parking facilities, particularly in tourist areas that might

see large influxes of visitors as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are eased. [HL4349]

Lord Greenhalgh: In line with the Government's position on localism, parking is the responsibility of local authorities and it is for them to determine what is appropriate in their own area. However, central government does have an interest in how car parks are managed and is working closely with local government stakeholders to keep parking policies and guidance under review during the COVID-19 response.

We have recently published guidance on Safer Public Places, which includes recommendations for the adaptation and management of urban centres and green spaces to facilitate social distancing.

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the Tourism Society about establishing an inquiry into the support needed to protect jobs in the tourism industry in England from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what plans they have to consult with the Tourism Society on this issue. [HL4859]

Baroness Barran: The Department has received written representations from the Tourism Society, along with many other Tourism businesses and trade bodies throughout this period.

We have engaged with stakeholders throughout the crisis to monitor the impact on workers in the tourism industry. We will continue to consult stakeholders from across the sector to assess how we can most effectively support businesses and their employees during the recovery period.

The Government has announced a number of measures to help individuals whose work has been impacted by the current economic emergency. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Trade Marks: Legal Opinion

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that there will be equality in the treatment of rights of representation between trademark attorneys in the UK, the EU, and the European Economic Area (EEA) once the UK has withdrawn from the EU; and whether any such plans (1) include a common right of representation for such attorneys before the European Intellectual Property Office, or (2) would not give EU or EEA attorneys the right of representation in the UK. [HL4712]

Lord Callanan: We want a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, and centred on free trade. We are looking for a deal like those the EU has previously struck with other friendly countries like Canada.

FTA precedent is our starting point for legal services. We aim to secure market access commitments for lawyers and minimise barriers to the cross-border supply of services and investment, on the basis of commitments like those in the Canada FTA.

Transport: Excise Duties

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 4 May (HL3177), what was the total fuel duty received from hydrocarbon oils used in inland transport in each year from 2010 to 2019. [HL4329]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Total Fuel Duty received from 2010 to 2019 was as follows. As HM Revenue and Customs does not request usage information within traders' returns to avoid unnecessary admin burdens to business it is not possible to break these down by inland transport.

2010: £27.0 billion
 2011: £26.9 billion
 2012: £26.7 billion
 2013: £26.7 billion
 2014: £27.1 billion
 2015: £27.4 billion
 2016: £28.0 billion
 2017: £28.0 billion
 2018: £27.9 billion
 2019: £27.8 billion

Total Fuel Duty revenue statistics are published within HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin published every March, June, September and December at HMRC's 'UK Trade Info' online portal.

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their announcement of a £2 billion funding package to support alternative ways to travel, how this funding will be distributed to local authorities; whether smaller councils such as district councils and London borough councils will be able to access the funding; and what is their expected timeframe for allocating and distributing this funding. [HL4603]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 23 May, the Secretary of State announced that local authorities would be allocated a share of £225 million to create 'pop up' and permanent cycle lanes and reallocate road space. The funding is being released in two phases. The first tranche of £45 million will be released as soon as possible subject to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) submitting suitably ambitious plans to the Department. London boroughs and Transport for London (TfL) are also eligible for funding. The Department wrote to LTAs, London

boroughs and TfL on 27 and 28 May respectively detailing how they should apply for funding. The deadline for LTAs to submit their plans for tranche one is 5 June 2020.

The second tranche of £180m will be released later in the summer, again, subject to LTAs submitting ambitious plans.

Indicative allocations for LTAs, including London can be found on GOV.UK

Travellers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to establishing a task force to deal with specific challenges experienced by Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4197]

Lord Greenhalgh: We have been in close contact with Gypsy and Traveller Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and are doing everything we can to support them through the pandemic.

We have provided £3.2 billion to local authorities to help them respond to the immediate impact of COVID-19. It is for local authorities to determine how best to support vulnerable groups, in line with their public health responsibilities. To enable compliance with COVID-19 public health guidance, access to basic amenities, including water, sanitation and waste disposal facilities is essential.

On 11 April I wrote to all local authority chief executives to highlight that some Gypsies and Travellers may need specific support, including access to basic services such as water, sanitation and waste disposal (attached):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mitigating-impacts-on-gypsy-and-traveller-communities>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Letter to Local Authority [200522 COVID-19_-
 _mitigating_impacts_on_gypsy_traveller_communities -
 HL4197.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4197>

Trees: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the UK from the import of (1) oak processionary moth, (2) emerald ash borer, and (3) *Xylella fastidiosa*. [HL4650]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has established UK Preparedness Boards for both *Xylella fastidiosa* and the emerald ash borer (EAB), chaired by the Chief Plant Health Officer, to monitor and mitigate

risks and to ensure a swift and effective response should either enter the UK.

On 21 April, Defra also introduced new national measures to impose more stringent import requirements to protect the UK from these threats.

For Xylella, the import of Coffea and Polygala myrtifolia species is now prohibited, due to a high disease rate in these species, and stronger import requirements have been introduced for other high-risk hosts including olive, almond, Nerium oleander, lavender and rosemary.

For the EAB, there are stronger controls on countries within 100km of confirmed outbreak areas. This includes the removal of an option in EU legislation to remove the bark and sapwood to a depth of 2.5cm for all countries regulated for EAB.

In relation to oak processionary moth (OPM), restrictions on oak tree imports were tightened in 2019, so that imports of all oaks from outside Europe are prohibited and the import of large oaks (which are susceptible to OPM) from Europe is prohibited, unless they originate in a pest-free area or a country where OPM is not known to occur, or have been grown under physical protection throughout their life.

Turkey: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with the Turkish Ambassador about the existence of safeguards to (1) prevent the abuse of constitutional rights by state agencies, and (2) uphold the intended purpose of Law No 7242, passed by the Parliament of Turkey on 14 April. [\[HL4575\]](#)

Baroness Sugg: We have regular discussions with the Turkish Government, including with the Turkish Ambassador to the UK, about the situation in Turkey including on human and constitutional rights. The amendments under law 7242 include provisions that are aimed both at lowering the prison population generally and, in response to COVID-19, a temporary release provision for convicts that are serving or have the right to serve time in a minimum security institution and those under supervised release. We encourage Turkey to ensure that these provisions are met.

Turkey: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Turkey about reports of discrimination against religious groups and places of worship, other than those recognized in 1923, in that country; and whether, in such discussions, they raised that any such discrimination is contrary to (1) the Turkish constitution, (2) international agreements on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and (3) the principles of NATO. [\[HL4572\]](#)

Baroness Sugg: The Turkish constitution provides for freedom of conscience and religion, regardless of an individual's citizenship. We regularly discuss with Turkey issues concerning freedom of religion and belief and encourage Turkey to live up to its international obligations. We will continue to engage the Turkish Government at all levels on these issues and to urge respect for Freedom of Religion or Belief, which are essential to the long-term health of Turkish democracy. Defending persecuted Christians, and persecuted individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains a long-standing priority for the British Government.

UK Membership of EU: Referendums

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the investigation into Vote Leave and BeLeave as to whether those organisations broke spending rules during the EU referendum being dropped by the Metropolitan Police, what plans they have to review the work of the Electoral Commission; and what plans, if any, they have to abolish that organisation. [\[HL4383\]](#)

Lord True: The Government notes the recent conclusion of the Metropolitan Police to end its investigation into BeLeave and Vote Leave. Organisations on both sides of the 2016 referendum were investigated. A line should now be drawn under these cases.

The Government's clear view is that democratic decisions and referendum results should be respected. The UK has left the European Union and is regaining its independence.

The Government is committed to strengthening electoral integrity.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Wales

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund matches the (1) money currently received by Wales from EU funding programmes, and (2) level of discretion the Welsh Government has over the use of such funds. [\[HL4824\]](#)

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist: Wales has received more than £4 billion in European structural fund support since 2000, almost half of which will have accrued in the current spending round. The UK Government recognises the vital role that European structural funds have played in Wales over the past two decades, and has committed, at a minimum, to matching current levels of funding for each nation. We are determined that Wales will not be out of pocket now that we have left the EU, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be instrumental in making good on this.

In terms of the powers that the Welsh Government will have over these funds, the UK Government is fully

committed to respecting devolution and the devolved institutions. We want to ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund can deliver for the people of Wales, and the Secretary of State for Wales has had positive discussions with colleagues in the Welsh Government on how our two Governments can work together to make a success of the Fund.

UK Trade With EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what documentation businesses will have to provide to send goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain after 1 January 2021. [HL4497]

Lord True: The Protocol makes clear that Northern Ireland is and remains part of the UK's customs territory and allows the UK to ensure unfettered market access for goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

The Government has set out its approach clearly to implementing unfettered access in the Northern Ireland Protocol, first in the 'New Decade, New Approach' power-sharing deal, and last week in the Command Paper, 'The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol'. Our publication makes clear that we will not require exit declarations or any other regulatory processes or checks as these goods enter the rest of the UK from NI. We committed to legislate to guarantee unfettered access for NI businesses to the whole of the UK internal market, and ensure that this legislation is in force for 1 January 2021.

UN Security Council

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK's responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, in particular with regard to the military enforcement of UN resolutions; and what assessment, if any, they have made of the military capability required by a permanent member of the UN Security Council. [HL4884]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the UK takes its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security very seriously. Through the Council we work hard to achieve constructive solutions to international crises, to promote British values and to confront threats to UK security.

While there are no requirements placed on permanent members of the Security Council by the UN Charter to maintain a particular level of military capability, the UK is fully committed to spending at least 2% of GDP on defence. We have participated in a number of missions authorised to use force by the Security Council, including the UN Protection Force in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. We are the fifth largest contributor to the UN's peacekeeping budget, and contribute around

600 peacekeepers to UN operations. The UK is the lead contributor to the UN mission in Cyprus. In March 2020 we concluded a four-year troop deployment to South Sudan. Later this year, we will deploy a Long Range Reconnaissance Task Group to MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali.

Unemployment: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what long term proposals they have to tackle any unemployment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4601]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We know this is a worrying time for people and we stand ready to support anyone impacted by job loss. In response to COVID-19 we have established an alternative service to our usual face-to-face offer. People will be able to access redundancy help and job search advice on the Department's new Job Help campaign website (www.jobhelp.dwp.gov.uk). There is also information on gov.uk and updated information packs provided to employers to help them signpost employees to the support that is available. The support includes:

- connecting people to jobs in the labour market;
- helping with job search including CV writing, interview skills, where to find jobs and how to apply for them;
- helping to identify transferable skills and skills gaps (linked to the local labour market); and
- advising what benefits they may get and how to claim.

The Rapid Response Service is co-ordinated nationally by the National Employer and Partnership Team and managed by Jobcentre Plus. Delivery partners include the National Careers Service, local training providers, employers, HM Revenue & Customs, Money Advice Service and the skills bodies in England.

These services are offered by equivalents in the Devolved Administrations: PACE (Scotland) and ReAct (Wales). Redundancy support in Northern Ireland is devolved with separate funding and delivery arrangements where no partner support is available

Universal Credit

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the deployment of staff to address Universal Credit claims on the average times taken to process disability benefit claims and appeals. [HL4517]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The latest published Personal Independence Payment statistics, which cover the period April 2013 to January 2020 are published on the Department for Work and Pensions statistics webpages. The tables below show the average actual clearance times covering the period January 2019 to

January 2020 for claimants under a) normal rules (table 1), and b) special rules for terminal illness (table 2); Data covering the period April 2013 to April 2020 will be published on June 11th. Appeal clearance times from the date lodged to the date of disposal are published by the Ministry of Justice, and show that the mean clearance

time for Personal Independence Payment appeals was 32 weeks in the period October to December 2019.

We continue to monitor processing times across the different benefits to ensure that eligible claimants receive the financial support they are entitled to in a timely manner.

Table 1: PIP Average Actual Clearance Times (Median number of weeks) - Normal Rules

Great Britain

(January 2019 -
31st January
2020)

	(i) Registration to issue of Part 2	(ii) Issue of Part 2 to return of Part 2	(iii) Referral to AP to return from AP	(iv) Return from AP to DWP decision	(v) Registration to DWP decision (end to end)	(vi) Referral to AP to DWP decision (end to end)
New Claims						
Jan-19	0	4	7	2	15	10
Feb-19	0	4	7	2	15	10
Mar-19	0	4	6	2	15	9
Apr-19	0	4	6	2	13	9
May-19	0	5	7	3	14	10
Jun-19	0	5	6	3	16	11
Jul-19	0	4	5	4	16	10
Aug-19	0	5	5	4	16	9
Sep-19	0	5	5	3	15	9
Oct-19	0	5	6	2	14	8
Nov-19	0	5	6	2	15	8
Dec-19	0	6	7	3	17	10
Jan-20	0	5	8	5	19	12
DLA Reassessments						
Jan-19	0	4	7	8	20	15
Feb-19	0	4	8	5	17	12
Mar-19	0	4	6	2	16	10
Apr-19	0	4	4	2	12	7
May-19	0	5	4	3	12	7
Jun-19	0	5	3	3	12	7
Jul-19	0	4	5	3	13	7
Aug-19	0	5	5	4	14	9
Sep-19	0	5	6	5	16	11
Oct-19	0	5	7	6	17	12
Nov-19	0	5	7	6	19	13
Dec-19	0	6	8	6	20	13
Jan-20	0	5	10	8	23	15

Source: PIP Computer System claimant records.

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number of weeks.

2. The status of claims as 'normal rules' and 'new claim/reassessment' is shown as at the point of issue of the Part2/return of the Part2/return from the AP/DWP decision, in accordance with the measure. It is possible for claims to transition between normal/special rules and new claims/reassessments during the course of the claimant journey.

3. The figures in the table are the average clearance time of claims cleared within that calendar month.

4. The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.)

5. The 'Registration to issue of Part 2' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of registration of the claim (i.e. the date of the PIP 1 registration phone call) and the date the Part 2 form is sent to the claimant. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase or claims that were disallowed prior to the issue of the Part 2 form because of failure to meet basic eligibility criteria.

6. The 'Issue of Part 2 to return of Part 2' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date the Part 2 form is sent to the claimant and the date the form is received back by the Department. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase or claims that were disallowed because the Part 2 form was not returned within the time limit.

7. The 'Referral to AP to return from AP' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of referral to the Assessment Provider and the date of return of the Assessment Provider's recommendation to DWP. This is a proxy for the length of time the claimant has waited for an assessment, because data on the dates that assessments took place is not held by DWP. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase or claims that were returned to DWP without a report and disallowed because the claimant failed to attend the assessment without good reason.

Note: the new claims data given for this measure is slightly different from the data previously published within the ad hoc statistical release of 28th January 2015. This is because the measure published in the ad hoc included all claims that were no longer outstanding with the Assessment Providers and hence included claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase or claims that were returned to DWP without a report and were disallowed because the claimant failed to attend the assessment without good reason.

8. The 'Return from AP to DWP decision' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of return of the Assessment Provider's recommendation to DWP and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were

withdrawn by the claimant during this phase or claims that were returned to DWP without a report and disallowed because the claimant failed to attend without good reason.

9. The 'Registration to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of registration of the claim and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria or failure to return the Part 2 form within the time limit).

10. The 'Referral to AP to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of referral to the Assessment Providers and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria or failure to return the Part 2 form within the time limit).

11. Note: the individual parts of the claimant journey average times may not sum to the end to end claimant journey average times. This is because each measure is based on the median clearance time of cases cleared at that stage, while the end to end measure is based on the median clearance time for all cleared cases. As the size and distributions of clearance times for the individual stages will vary, the sum of the individual medians will not sum to the end to end median.

12. '-' Fewer than 50 claims in this category.

13. Great Britain only.

Table 2: PIP Average Actual Clearance Times (Median number of working days) - Special Rules

(January 2019
- 31st January
2020)

	Registration to referral to the AP	Referral to AP to return from AP	Return from AP to DWP decision	Registration to DWP decision (end to end)
New Claims				
Jan-19	4	1	1	5
Feb-19	4	1	1	5
Mar-19	4	1	1	5
Apr-19	4	1	1	6
May-19	4	1	1	6
Jun-19	4	1	1	6
Jul-19	4	1	1	6
Aug-19	5	1	1	6
Sep-19	4	1	1	6
Oct-19	4	1	1	6
Nov-19	4	1	1	5

(January 2019
- 31st January
2020)

	Registration to referral to the AP	Referral to AP to return from AP	Return from AP to DWP decision	Registration to DWP decision (end to end)
Dec-19	4	1	1	6
Jan-20	4	1	1	5
DLA Reassessments				
Jan-19	5	1	3	7
Feb-19	4	1	3	6
Mar-19	4	1	2	6
Apr-19	4	1	2	6
May-19	3	1	2	6
Jun-19	3	1	2	6
Jul-19	2	1	3	6
Aug-19	1	1	2	5
Sep-19	3	1	3	6
Oct-19	4	1	3	6
Nov-19	5	1	5	8
Dec-19	5	1	5	6
Jan-20	4	1	3	7

Source: PIP Computer System claimant records.

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest working day, i.e. Monday to Friday (including bank holidays).

2. The status of claims as 'special rules' and 'new claim/reassessment' is shown as at the point of referral to the AP/return from the AP/DWP decision, in accordance with the measure. It is possible for claims to transition between normal/special rules and new claims/reassessments during the course of the claimant journey.

3. The figures in the table are the average clearance time of claims cleared within that calendar month.

4. The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.)

5. The 'Registration to referral to the AP' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of registration of the claim and the date of the referral to the Assessment Provider. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria).

6. The 'Referral to AP to return from AP' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of referral to the assessment providers and the date of return of the Assessment Provider's recommendation to DWP. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase.

8. The 'Return from AP to DWP decision' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of return of the Assessment Provider's recommendation to DWP and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant during this phase.

9. The 'Registration to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of registration of the claim (or the date of transition if the claim moves from being a normal rules claim to being a special rules claim during the claimant journey) and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria).

10. Note: the individual parts of the claimant journey average times may not sum to the end to end claimant journey average times. This is because each measure is based on the median clearance time of cases cleared at that stage, while the end to end measure is based on the median clearance time for all cleared cases. As the size and distributions of clearance times for the individual stages will vary, the sum of the individual medians will not sum to the end to end median.

11. '-' Fewer than 50 claims in this category.

12. Great Britain only.

Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of (1) the number, and (2) the proportion, of new Universal Credit claimants since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic who are covered by the nine month grace period. [[HL4093](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Information relating to Universal Credit claimants who will be exempt from the benefit cap for the nine-month grace period is not readily available, to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 13 May (HL Deb, cols 677–8), what estimate they have made of the proportion of new Universal Credit claimants since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic who will be exempt from the benefit cap for the nine month grace period; whether they plan to raise the current level of the cap during the pandemic; and if not, why not. [[HL4516](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Information relating to Universal Credit claimants who will be exempt from the benefit cap for the nine-month grace period is not readily available, to provide it would incur disproportionate costs. There are currently no plans to change the current benefit cap levels. The Government has quickly and effectively introduced over £6.5bn of measures that benefit those facing the most financial disruption during the current situation. DWP is experiencing significant increased demand as such the safety and stability of the benefits system must be prioritised.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they expect Universal Credit claimants to take during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid the application of the benefit cap. [HL4637]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are exemptions to the application of the benefit cap that do not require a claimant to take additional steps. Claimants may benefit from a nine-month grace period where their benefit will not be capped if they have a sustained work record. Exemptions will continue to apply for the most vulnerable claimants who are entitled to disability benefits and carer benefits.

In addition, Universal Credit households are exempt from the cap if they receive earnings of at least £604 in each assessment period. We would encourage claimants to continue to prepare and look for work where it is safe to do so. There are jobs available in key sectors such as agriculture, distribution and health and social care. In addition, retailers have announced tens of thousands of new jobs in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Claimants are encouraged to explore these opportunities and others, where able to do so. The online service Find a Job can be used to search and apply for them. We continue to offer support to our claimants through their online journal.

Claimants can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payments from their local authority if they need additional support to meet housing costs and over £1 billion has been provided to Local Authorities since 2011 to help the most vulnerable claimants. There is already £180 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for local authorities to distribute for supporting renters with housing costs in the private and social rented sectors in 2020/21. This includes an additional £40 million as announced at the spending round last year.

Universities: Foreign Students

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any (1) immediate, and (2) future estimated, decrease in income for universities from international students; what assessment they have made of the impact of any such decrease on universities' ability to maintain research capacity; and what plans

they have to review the (a) timing, and (b) relevance, of the Research Excellence Framework. [HL4216]

Lord Callanan: In the 2018/19 academic year, tuition fees from international students at UK higher education providers accounted for around £6.9bn of sector income. The Government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak will have an unparalleled impact on all elements of the global and UK economy. The higher education sector, including student recruitment, is no exception. We have been working closely with the sector to monitor the likely impacts of COVID-19, on international student numbers, including restrictions on travel.

We are working with the sector to assess the potential implications for university research sustainability. In order to support this, we have established a joint BEIS/DfE Ministerial Taskforce on University Research and Knowledge Exchange Sustainability to engage with university sector experts, Devolved Administration and research funders to identify and assess risks of impacts, and to consider approaches to help manage these. The aim is to sustain the university research base and its capability to contribute effectively to UK society and economy in the recovery and beyond.

The Research Excellence Framework is operated jointly by the 4 UK HE Funding Bodies, who have recently gathered views on the revised timings for the REF. The Funding Bodies intend to report on the outcome and next steps by the end of May. The role of the REF in identifying and supporting research excellence with impact remains fundamental to maintaining the quality and capability of the university research base and its contribution to UK economy and society.

Unmanned Air Vehicles: Surveillance

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional powers, if any, have been granted to the police and other bodies in relation to the use of drone surveillance technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3959]

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) public bodies, and (2) private companies assisting public bodies, are using drone surveillance technology in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3960]

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have produced in relation to the use of drone surveillance technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3961]

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what mechanisms are in place to ensure that the use of drone surveillance technology during the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary and proportionate. [HL3962]

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance has been issued on the collection, use and storage of data collected by drone surveillance technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3963](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Decisions to use drones and in which circumstances are operational matters for police forces who are subject to the requirements of the Air Navigation Order and Data Protection legislation when operating drones. The Police have not been granted any additional powers to use drones during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Health Protection Regulations 2020 give police the powers they need to enforce compliance with the social distancing measures and all use of police powers must be legitimate, necessary and proportionate.

The Civil Aviation Authority have granted the Emergency Services, including the police, an exemption from some of the requirements contained in the Air Navigation Order 2016, to support the enforcement of Government COVID-19 restrictions. These changes do not grant extra powers to police. They relax restrictions in place for operating drones for the specific case of enforcing Covid-19 restrictions. Mitigation for use of the exemption needs to be written into the Operations Manuals of drone teams and use needs to be reported to the CAA on renewal of the permission.

The Home Office does not hold any information on the use of drones by other public bodies in relation to Covid-19.

The Data Protection Act and the Surveillance Camera Code govern police use of surveillance cameras.

USA: Air Transport Agreements

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to remain a member of the EU-US Open Skies Agreement. [[HL4541](#)]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about remaining part of the EU-US Open Skies Agreement. [[HL4542](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The EU-US Air Transport Agreement will cease to apply to the United Kingdom on 31 December 2020, after the end of the transition period. The UK and US have concluded negotiations on a new bilateral Air Transport Agreement, which will apply from that point and ensures the continuity of air services between our two countries.

USA: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the government of the United States to use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 Business Response Facility to provide conditional grants to private healthcare companies to ensure that healthcare is freely accessible to low-income and disadvantaged groups. [[HL4802](#)]

Baroness Sugg: How the US manages its domestic COVID response is a matter for the US authorities. However, the UK remains in regular contact at the highest levels with our US partners on our joint response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, including discussions on how to deliver a global health response that provides support for the most vulnerable.

USA: Open Skies Treaty

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 30 April (HL3303), in the absence of a suitable equipped aircraft for observation flights, how they carry out or participate in such flights; and whether they have plans to acquire a new Open Skies airframe equipped with the latest authenticated sensor technology. [[HL4234](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since 2008 the UK has not possessed any Open Skies capable aircraft. Instead, the UK hires Open Skies aircraft from other participating States in order to conduct its missions. This continues to be assessed to be the most cost effective way of delivering the capability for the UK. There is currently no intention to procure an Open Skies aircraft for the future.

VAT

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the (1) application, and (2) rates, of VAT will remain the same in Northern Ireland and Great Britain following the end of the transition period for the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [[HL4630](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Northern Ireland Protocol includes provisions that affect the operation of VAT and excise in Northern Ireland after the transition period.

The Protocol ensures that Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's VAT and excise systems, with HMRC continuing to be responsible for the operation and collection of these revenues and Parliament responsible for setting rates across the UK.

The Protocol also ensures that the Government could apply certain zero-rates or reduced rates in the UK, including Northern Ireland, in the future; enabling, for example, the Government to meet its commitment to introduce a zero-rate for women's sanitary products across the UK.

Ventilators

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current ventilator capacity in the NHS in England; and what is the expected ventilator capacity on (1) 1 June, (2) 1 July, (3) 1 August, and (4) 1 September. [HL4598]

Lord Bethell: At the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in March there were more than 8,000 mechanical ventilators in hospitals across the United Kingdom. As of 19 May, we now have around 13,000 mechanical ventilators available to the National Health Service. Over 1,800 of these have been provided by new suppliers responding to the Prime Minister's ventilator challenge and almost 1,600 by established suppliers (with another almost 1,200 available from the private healthcare sector). In addition, there are also almost 8,000 non-invasive ventilators available to the NHS across the UK which were not available before mid-March.

These figures will continue to rise as we procure further equipment and more products from the Prime Minister's ventilator challenge become available. Our expectation is that we will secure several thousands more in the coming weeks.

Veterans: Homelessness

Asked by Lord Fink

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the national Homes for Heroes campaign; and what plans they have to support it. [HL4554]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9bn available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures, including Social Rent, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy. A mix of different tenures is vital to meet the needs of a wide range of people, and allow the sector to build the right homes in the right places.

Building on this, we announced at Budget 2020 that we are investing £12bn to build affordable homes between 2021/22 and 2025/26. This will be the biggest cash investment in affordable housing for a decade.

Voluntary Work: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that volunteers who are providing

support for isolated people can continue to provide that support throughout the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4288]

Baroness Barran: There has been an overwhelming response from the public with over 3 million people stepping up to volunteer to help those most in need.

Volunteers across the country are playing a vital role in the response to COVID-19, including supporting vulnerable people in the community who are isolating, and complementing the delivery of public services. There are over 589,000 approved NHS Volunteer Responders available in England to help with food delivery, transporting medicines and friendly phone calls, a staggering response to the call to action to support the NHS. The programme supports a flexible model of volunteering, with volunteers able to decide when they are on and off duty, to fit task based volunteering around other commitments and work.

The Government welcomes this support and is working closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership to match the country's strong base of willing volunteers with priority needs. This includes specific work examining how changing restrictions during the recovery phase may impact on volunteers and volunteering.

The Government is also working closely with the voluntary sector to ensure that volunteer mobilisation schemes are consistently rewarding, effective and safe for all those involved.

Water: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of COVID-19 in sampled municipal water; and what plans they have to use that data to assess the impact of COVID-19 control measures. [HL3030]

Lord Bethell: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is currently engaging with the research community and Government scientific advisers to investigate whether monitoring COVID-19 in waste water could be used as a way of tracking the outbreak and assessing the impact of control measures. The World Health Organization is clear there is currently no evidence that the virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems.

West Bank: Agriculture

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs West Bank Demolitions and Displacement: An Overview, published in March, what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the creation of a closed firing zone for military training, displacing a Palestinian herding community; and what assessment they have made of

reports that Israeli forces requisitioned equipment provided through humanitarian aid in use by that community. [HL4621]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on this specific issue, we continue to be concerned by the impact of military firing zones in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities and evictions of Palestinians from their homes.

West Bank: Bank Services

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the Israeli military order that forbids banks in the occupied West Bank from processing payments that the Palestinian Authority distributes to the families of Palestinians who have spent time in Israeli jails. [HL4617]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the Military Order and have discussed with the Israeli authorities. We continue to call on the Palestinian Authority to reform the prisoner payments system so that it is needs based, transparent and affordable.

West Bank: Demolition

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the use of Military Order 1797 on Palestinian property and the demolition of unlicensed structures deemed as new in Area C within 96 hours of such an order being issued. [HL4720]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our concerns about the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. We call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

West Bank: Roads

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that roads in the West Bank to Palestinian communities have been blocked by Israeli forces. [HL4622]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on this specific issue, we have lobbied the authorities on the issue of movement and access through our Embassy in Tel Aviv. We remain concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement within the West

Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem, and between Gaza and the West Bank.

West Bank: Sanitation

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that mobile latrines have been demolished and water tanks have been damaged by Israeli forces in Palestinian and Bedouin communities in the West Bank in March and April. [HL4620]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is seriously concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We have also previously stressed the need to take immediate and practical measures to ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank.

White Helmets

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they have provided to the White Helmets in Syria since 1 January; and what assessment they have made of that organisation's alleged links to terrorist groups. [HL4538]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK provided £716,000 from the Conflict Stability and Security Fund to the Syrian Civil Defence, also known as the White Helmets, in the Financial Year 2019/2020. This funding has supported the White Helmets' emergency search and rescue work in Idlib. We assess that allegations linking the White Helmets to terrorist groups are baseless and are part of a concerted disinformation campaign by the Syrian regime and Russia seeking to undermine the White Helmets' valuable work.

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 5 March (HC Deb, cols. 1078–1079), what assessment they have made of the success of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) 2030 project in accelerating the implementation of strong tobacco control policies and advancing sustainable development in low-and middle-income countries; whether, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries participating in the FCTC 2030 project will be given more time to implement the project; and whether official

development funds will be made available beyond 2021 to support low-and middle-income countries to implement the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. [HL4427]

Lord Bethell: As a world leader in tobacco control, the Government is continuing to deliver its commitments under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control 2030 project. The countries receiving support continue to make good progress in strengthening their tobacco control measures.

The five-year project is in its final year and scheduled to end in March 2021. Year 5 (2020/21) objectives have been set and the project delivery revised to take account of the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

No decision has been made on whether Official Development Assistance funding will be made available to support the project beyond the original commitment of March 2021.

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who claimed compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme have died before their claims had been settled. [HL4198]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In unfortunate cases when the claimant passes away after submitting a compensation claim but before the claim is fully resolved, we work with the families to ensure the compensation payment is made to the appropriate person on the claimant's behalf. We have had three such cases so far and are working closely with the families and legal representatives in all of these cases to determine the right person to whom the compensation can be paid.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they have publicised the Windrush Compensation Scheme (1) in the UK, and (2) overseas. [HL4199]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There has been significant outreach and communication activity to publicise the Windrush Compensation Scheme. Evidence has shown the importance of face-to-face communications and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, over 30 outreach events were delivered across the UK with community partners. These events have been promoted by stakeholders and on local and social media. We are now continuing events online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/windrush-online-engagement-events>. We also work with MPs, local councils and stakeholders to raise awareness, and materials on the scheme are available on Gov.uk and have been provided to community groups. In March, the Home Secretary announced a national advertising campaign to raise awareness, and a community fund to help organisations encourage applications among their communities. These will be complemented by new

activity with specialist diverse media outlets and partnerships with community leaders.

To publicise the scheme overseas, we hosted an event for High Commissioners, and working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we provided materials and a briefing to British Embassies and High Commissions overseas to enable them to promote the scheme locally. Plans are in development for additional activity overseas in priority countries.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they have liaised with British High Commissions to deal with the claims of people who are currently overseas to compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme. [HL4200]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There has been significant outreach and communication activity to publicise the Windrush Compensation Scheme. Evidence has shown the importance of face-to-face communications and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, over 30 outreach events were delivered across the UK with community partners. These events have been promoted by stakeholders and on local and social media. We are now continuing events online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/windrush-online-engagement-events>. We also work with MPs, local councils and stakeholders to raise awareness, and materials on the scheme are available on Gov.uk and have been provided to community groups. In March, the Home Secretary announced a national advertising campaign to raise awareness, and a community fund to help organisations encourage applications among their communities. These will be complemented by new activity with specialist diverse media outlets and partnerships with community leaders.

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Women and Children First UK: Finance

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) core, and (2) non-core, funding they provided to Women and Children First UK in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, and (c) 2018. [HL4461]

Baroness Sugg: DFID has provided no core funding to Women and Children First UK in the years referenced. DFID provided £110,983 non-core funding to Women and Children First UK through the Global Poverty Action Fund during 2016/17. Indirect funding through sub agreements with tier one partners is not centrally held and could only be collated at disproportionate cost.

World Economy: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the aim expressed in OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy (CP 239) to deliver a "cleaner, more sustainable" world economy after the COVID-19 pandemic, what steps they are taking to achieve this aim through trade policy. [HL4445]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government intends to support Britain's economy to become stronger, cleaner, and more resilient after this crisis. A clean and resilient economic recovery will boost exports and create employment in the low-carbon industries of the future, while ensuring we address the linked challenges of public health, climate change, and biodiversity. Our ambitious trade policy agenda can support these aims, by promoting trade in low-carbon goods and services through Free Trade Agreements and at the WTO. HM Government will also continue to lead work on the international economic recovery through our upcoming COP26 and G7 Presidencies.

World Health Assembly

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what policy objectives they intend to set for their participation in the 73rd Session of the World Health Organisation's World Health Assembly due to be held from 17 to 21 May; what plans they have to raise the case for a formal international investigation of the government of China's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan at that Assembly; and what discussions they intend to have with other governments, in advance of the Assembly, about conducting such an investigation. [HL3914]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom participated fully in the 73rd World Health Assembly which we saw as an important opportunity to further international collaboration on COVID-19. We believe the World Health Organization (WHO) has an important role to play in leading the global health response. We want to see the WHO continue to learn lessons on how to improve its response to global health emergencies and as such would expect a full review of all elements of their response once they are out of response mode, as has occurred after previous Public Health Emergencies of International Concern. The Secretary of State raised this point in the United Kingdom national address and we were pleased to co-sponsor the COVID-19 resolution, which was an important step forward on the review as well as other

areas of collaboration. The UK intends to engage constructively with a future review, including working with other Governments.

Young Offenders: Health and Rehabilitation

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to safeguard the well-being and rehabilitation of young offenders in custody [HL4336]

Lord Keen of Elie: The safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in custody remains our priority during this unprecedented period. The Youth Custody Service (YCS) has been adapting its approach to delivery in order to meet the needs of children whilst complying with wider guidance around physical distancing. There is a focus on delivering essential activities and ensuring that children remain engaged and stimulated. This includes regular phone calls (additional phone credit has been allocated), access to showers and education materials and time in the fresh air. Establishments are working to create activities that children can undertake in small groups or in their rooms, including workouts and greater access to television, entertainment and in room activity material.

'Secure Stairs' is the framework for integrated care jointly led by NHS England, NHS Improvement and the YCS, which provides the foundations as to how youth secure establishments work with children. An enhanced 'Secure Stairs' team has come together to support staff and children, focusing on an approach that encourages interaction and protects the physical and mental health of young people whilst ensuring compliance with physical distancing requirements.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) recently published a report following short scrutiny visits to Cookham Wood, Parc and Wetherby Young Offender Institutions on 21 April. The report was acknowledged by HMIP as being generally positive, referencing the 'swift actions taken to keep children safe, as well as the creativity of staff and managers in providing opportunities for children to receive meaningful interaction'. They also noted that all the sites were calm and well ordered, with self-harm reduced at Parc and Wetherby and stable at Cookham Wood.

Separately, the YCS conducted the internal review of safeguarding across youth custody, 'Youth Custody Service Safeguarding Review' which was published on Gov.uk last October. The recommendations of this report are being considered and taken forward by the newly-created 'YCS National Head of Safeguarding' to further enhance safeguarding of children within secure settings.

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