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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....3

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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
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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
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
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Lord Frost	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Publication of the Government Response to the Fire Safety Consultation

[HLWS845]

Lord Greenhalgh: Today, the Government publishes its response to the Fire Safety Consultation held from 20 July -12 October 2020.

This public consultation was a vital step in a process to ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the 'Fire Safety Order') continues to be fit for purpose as part of the Government's consideration of the reform of the wider building safety landscape. The consultation sought views on a number of proposals to:

- Strengthen the FSO and improve compliance in all regulated premises (section 1).
- Implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report recommendations that require a change in the law (section 2).
- Improve the effectiveness of consultation between building control bodies and fire and rescue authorities on planning for building work and the arrangements for the handover of fire safety information (section 3).

We received feedback from over 250 stakeholders with an interest in building and fire safety, including residents, responsible persons and enforcing authorities, which we have used to inform our response. The Government has listened, and now we are taking action.

We will be bringing forward a number of changes to the Fire Safety Order, legislating where necessary primarily via the Building Safety Bill, as well as through building regulations fire safety guidance, to strengthen fire safety in all regulated buildings. We will:

- Improve the quality of fire risk assessments by requiring that a Responsible Person (RP) must not appoint a person to assist them with undertaking a fire risk assessment unless they are competent and a requirement on all RPs to record their completed fire risk assessments and prescribed information. The name and/or organisation of any person engaged by the RP to undertake all or part of the fire risk assessment will also need to be recorded to assist enforcing authorities undertaking enforcement action to establish compliance.
- Improve the identification of RPs by requiring them to record (and update as necessary) who they are, and the extent of their responsibility under the Fire Safety Order, and to include a UK based address. This will sit alongside a further proposal to require all RPs to take reasonable steps to identify themselves to each other where they share or have duties in respect of the same premises. A new requirement will also be introduced to ensure that information is transferred effectively between outgoing RPs and their replacements.

- Amend existing provision relating to statutory guidance for RPs to include provision that failure to follow such guidance may be considered in court proceedings for breaches of the Order as evidence of such a breach, and conversely proof of following guidance may be considered as evidence of compliance.

- Increase the level of fines from Level 3 (£1,000) to Level 5 (unlimited) for offences in relation to the impersonation of an inspector, failure to comply with specific requirements imposed by an inspector, and failure to comply with requirements relating to the installation of luminous tube signs.

- Amend the guidance in Approved Document B of the Building Regulations to require all new buildings above 11 metres to provide a readily locatable, accessible and secure Premises Information Box, to tie in with the height threshold for new buildings to require sprinklers and signage.

The Fire Safety Consultation consulted on a range of areas to strengthen fire safety. Where further work is required to develop policy, we will continue to consider the findings of the consultation and engage with the sector and stakeholders to inform ongoing policy development in these areas.

The Fire Safety Consultation also included proposals to implement recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report requiring changes to the law. We will consider these proposals further in light of the consultation responses and – subject to the Fire Safety Bill gaining Royal Assent – intend to lay Regulations before the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One Report which will deliver on the Inquiry's recommendations. These will include measures around checking fire doors and lifts.

Three of these proposals related to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). The Government's commitment to implementing the Inquiry's recommendations remains undimmed, as does our commitment to ensure those most affected by the tragic events at Grenfell Tower – the bereaved and survivors – continue to have a voice in their implementation. It is important that we get this right and ensure the voice of residents and those likely to be affected by the proposals are heard. That is why we have decided to undertake a further consultation this spring to seek additional views on the complex issue of personal emergency evacuation plans in relation to the proposals to implement the relevant Grenfell recommendations. Further details about this will be available soon on the Government's website.

Finally, proposals to improve the engagement between Building Control Bodies and Fire Authorities in reviewing plans for building work and for the handover of fire safety information to the Responsible Person on completion will be implemented through changes to legislation and guidance.

We are determined to ensure that the public feel safe and are safe from fire in all regulated premises regardless of where they live, stay or work. These changes,

alongside the Fire Safety Bill, Building Safety Bill and planned overhaul of the statutory guidance provided under the Fire Safety Order are important steps needed to strengthen the whole regulatory system for building and fire safety. Taken together they will help to ensure there is greater accountability and responsibility for fire and structural safety issues throughout the lifecycle of all buildings regulated by the Fire Safety Order.

Further detail of the changes we are making can be found in the consultation response. The consultation response will be available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>. A copy will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Asylum: Families

Asked by **Baroness Sheehan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their policy paper Statement in relation to legal routes from the EU for protection claimants including family reunion of unaccompanied children, published on 8 February, when they intend to fulfil their commitment to review legal routes of entry to the UK for people seeking asylum and refugee family reunion, including for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in EU member states seeking to join relatives in the UK. [HL13877]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has committed to review safe and legal routes to the UK and has a statutory duty to conduct a public consultation on family reunion for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU.

This review and public consultation will cover legal routes by which protection claimants who are in the EU can enter the UK, to reunite with family members. The review will go beyond those who are in the EU, reflecting our new global approach to the immigration system. This wider review of safe and legal routes will fully address our statutory duties as set out in the Act and the timetable of the two will run together.

The Home Secretary has set out the Government's ambition to overhaul our approach to asylum and illegal migration, delivering a firm but fair system, including bringing forward new legislation this year. The review and consultation are an important part of this.

Aviation: Freight

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the provision of freight services by charter airlines based in the UK. [HL13993]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The new UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) does not place any restriction on air services between points in the UK and points in the EU. Therefore, UK airlines can operate all-cargo services without limitation between the UK and the EU.

Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish their national bus strategy; and whether, and if so when, they plan to provide funding for the

manufacture and purchase of zero emission buses. [HL14057]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The National Bus Strategy for England was published on Monday 15 March.

As set out in Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the Spending Review 2020 Government will invest £120 million in 2021-22 to start the delivery of the 4,000 zero emission buses announced by the Prime Minister last year.

Together with existing funding for the All-Electric Bus Town or City Government funding could support the purchase of 800 zero emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them.

Further details on how the £120 million funding will be distributed will be announced in the spring.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by **Baroness Thornton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of the investigation to find the individual whose identity was initially unknown who tested positive for the 'Brazilian' strain of COVID-19. [HL14071]

Lord Bethell: The incident response team used existing data analysis resources and as such, there was no additional cost to the investigation.

Coronavirus: Travellers

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) publicise, and (2) facilitate access to, COVID-19 vaccinations for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. [HL11569]

Lord Bethell: The National Health Service is working with Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise partners, inclusion health providers and others to develop an accessible model for delivery of the vaccine to people from communities such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller. Through the Community Champions Scheme councils and voluntary organisations are delivering a wide range of measures to protect those most at risk - including communicating accurate health information. Champions have been drawn from these communities themselves to share accurate health information with their neighbours, networks and wider community.

Local vaccination services are playing a vital role in reaching vulnerable groups including those who are in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These services mobilise general practice, working together in groups of Primary Care Networks plus large and small community pharmacy sites. These services provide the largest number of locations and are well placed to support our highest risk individuals, many of whom already have a trusted relationship with their local health services. They also

coordinate and deliver vaccination to people who are unable to attend a vaccination site.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the daily figures of COVID-19 vaccinations that have been administered; and if so, where those figures will be published. [HL11674]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England publishes daily data on vaccination totals in the United Kingdom in an online only format. These figures are published by Public Health England (PHE) and can be accessed online via the UK Government website. NHS England and NHS Improvement also publish daily and weekly data for vaccinations in England only, which is also available in an online only format.

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to improve data sharing between the NHS, local authorities and directors of public health about the number of COVID-19 vaccinations that have been administered. [HL12405]

Lord Bethell: Local authority public health teams have access to NHS England systems where they can view the vaccination event data for the sustainability and transformation partnerships (STP) within their boundaries. This is presented in the Validated Vaccination Events Dashboard and the COVID Vaccination Equalities Tool. The Validated Vaccination Events Dashboard provides views of all vaccination activity at all sites within a STP by delivery model, site, dose, vaccine type and vaccination uptake across ethnicity, age and other key Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation cohorts at STP level.

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about updated research on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and its safety recommendations for use by the public. [HL12440]

Lord Bethell: The Government has had no such specific discussions.

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the call by the Doctors' Association, reported in The Times on 21 January, to guarantee that all patients will be given their second COVID-19 vaccinations within 12 weeks of the first "at the absolute latest". [HL12481]

Lord Bethell: Having studied evidence on both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has advised that we should prioritise giving as many people in

at-risk groups their first dose, rather than providing two doses in as short a time as possible. The four United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers agree this will have the greatest impact on reducing mortality, severe disease and hospitalisations and in protecting the National Health Service and equivalent health services. The evidence shows that one dose of either vaccine provides a high level of protection from COVID-19.

For both vaccines, data provided to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency demonstrates that whilst efficacy is optimised when a second dose is administered, both offer considerable protection after a single dose, at least in the short term. Everyone will receive their second dose within 12 weeks of their first. The second dose completes the course and is important for longer term protection.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to allow dismissal of any NHS staff who refuse to be vaccinated against COVID-19. [HL13654]

Lord Bethell: There are no plans under consideration at present to allow for the dismissal of National Health Service staff who refuse to be vaccinated.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they plan to take to protect immunocompromised, clinically extremely vulnerable people if research evidence demonstrates that COVID-19 vaccines are less effective for those people. [HL13921]

Lord Bethell: Treatments containing COVID-19 neutralising antibodies have been secured from AstraZeneca to support immunocompromised people who will not be able to benefit from a COVID-19 vaccine. The antibody treatment currently being developed by AstraZeneca is a combination of two monoclonal antibodies and has the potential to be given as a preventative option for people exposed to the virus and to treat and prevent disease progression in patients already infected by the virus if successful.

Dogs: Imports and sales

Asked by Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the (1) import, and (2) sale, of dogs with cropped ears in the UK. [HL13856]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The practice of mutilating dogs' ears is abhorrent and has rightly been banned in the UK for 15 years.

We already have some of the world's highest animal welfare standards. The end of the transition period has opened up new opportunities for managing our own pet travel and commercial importation rules. We are actively listening to the concerns of stakeholders and the Government is considering options regarding the importation and commercial movements of dogs with

cropped ears into Great Britain in line with World Trade Organisation rules.

Importers of animals must adhere to welfare standards as set out in Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and in domestic legislation, The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 (WATEO). This legislation aims to protect the health and welfare of animals during transportation and applies to dogs that are suffering injury as a result of non-exempted mutilations including cropped ears.

The maximum penalty for causing unnecessary suffering to an animal or cropping a dog's ears in England is six months' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. However, the Government is committed to increasing the maximum custodial penalty for both of these offences from six months to five years. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill, currently before Parliament, which will implement this increase, will continue to receive Government support as it completes its passage through Parliament.

The Government also continues to raise awareness regarding the improper selling of pets by deceitful sellers in the UK and abroad through our 'Petfished' campaign. This seeks to educate prospective pet buyers on common tricks and tactics used by deceitful sellers which may result in the purchase of a mistreated or unwell pet, including those that have been subject to cropping. The campaign urges buyers to mitigate risks, for example by buying from trusted sellers such as those under the Kennel Club's Assured Breeder scheme, viewing puppies with their mothers and siblings, asking questions of the seller and following the Animal Welfare Foundation and RSPCA Puppy Contract to ensure that puppies are in good health when purchased.

Fly-tipping

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the landfill tax on the level of illegal waste disposals. [[HL13932](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) estimates the difference between expected revenues and the tax that is actually paid in the annual publication, *Measuring Tax Gaps*.^[1]

Measuring Tax Gaps 2020 edition estimated the total Landfill Tax gap for 2018-19 at £275 million.

As part of that total, HMRC estimates that £185.4 million of Landfill Tax was not paid in 2018-19 due to waste disposals at unauthorised waste sites.

Landfill Tax is one of a range of government policies in the waste sector designed to discourage landfill and encourage more sustainable waste management. It is not possible to separate the impact of one policy on illegal disposals.

[1] [Measuring tax gaps - GOV.UK](#)

Food: Advertising

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their consultation on restricting online advertising for products high in fat, sugar and salt, published on 10 November 2020, what assessment they have made of restricting advertisements for such products on social media. [[HL14010](#)]

Lord Bethell: The consultation on how to introduce a total restriction of online advertising for products high in fat, salt and sugar included proposals for how to restrict advertising on social media. The responses will be considered and captured in the final policy decision. We will publish the response to the consultation shortly.

Free Zones

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contribution that will be made by the creation of eight freeports to levelling up the north of England with the south and south-east. [[HL13963](#)]

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how much of the trade through each of the proposed new freeports will be (1) existing trade through that port, (2) new trade, and (3) trade diverted from other UK ports. [[HL13964](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: At Budget, the Chancellor announced the 8 Freeports from 8 regions of England, as selected by the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government – this followed the fair, open and transparent assessment process outlined in the Bidding Prospectus.

Freeports will play a significant role in boosting trade, attracting inward investment and driving productive activity across the UK. This will level up communities across the country through increased employment opportunities. This is more important than ever as we begin to recover from the ongoing economic impacts of Covid-19.

Our focus has been on getting places to send us their bids and proposals, rather than second-guessing what they will do. The modelling we have done to support that process remains sensitive at this point and liable to change significantly now the locations have been announced.

Freezing of Assets

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have had assets frozen in the UK in the last five years; how many of those had assets frozen due to

possible involvement with Islamic State; how many such cases have involved legal challenge by the individuals affected; and in how many such cases was the decision to freeze assets upheld. [HL13913]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2020, 118 individuals and entities were designated in the UK under UN, EU and UK counter-terrorism financial sanctions regimes. Of these 118 individuals and entities, 110 were designated under the United Nation's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List and the EU Autonomous ISIL (Da'esh) and Al Qaida regime. We have not delineated between Al-Qaida and Islamic State affiliation for those designated during this period. Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 ("TAFSA 2010"), the Treasury was required to report to Parliament, quarterly, on its operation of the UK's counter-terrorism asset freezing regime mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1373. Previous reports can be found on the 2015 to 2020 quarterly report to Parliament [page](#). We are not aware of any legal challenges that have been brought in the UK to designations made under these two regimes between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2020.

Gambling: Crime

Asked by Lord Smith of Hindhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent gambling operators from using the 'dark' web for illegal activities. [HL14062]

Asked by Lord Smith of Hindhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unregulated gambling operators were (1) discovered, and (2) stopped, in (a) 2019, and (b) 2020. [HL14063]

Baroness Barran: In 2019/20 the Gambling Commission took enforcement action in 59 cases involving unlicensed online operators. It has taken enforcement action in 74 cases so far in 2020/21. The Commission's action includes coordinating with regulators in other jurisdictions, working with payment providers to prevent payments to unlicensed operators and working with web hosting companies and search engines to remove sites or prevent them appearing on searches.

The Commission have not received any reports of the dark web being used by GB customers for illegal gambling, but the Review of the Gambling Act 2005 will consider the risks posed by emerging technologies and a number of issues around unlicensed gambling operators, including the current scale of the issue and whether the Gambling Commission has the powers it needs to tackle it effectively. The government is also consulting on an uplift to industry licence fees, which will provide the Commission with greater capacity in the short to medium term to investigate and tackle the threat caused by unlicensed operators.

Health Services: Local Government

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the planned reorganisation of the NHS in England on the role of local government in (1) providing, and (2) funding, public health and social care. [HL13359]

Lord Bethell: The Government's proposed Health and Care Bill will help local health and care systems deliver higher quality care to their local communities by establishing integrated care systems on a statutory basis.

The proposals will not change the role of local government in terms of its public health and social care responsibilities, the services it commissions or the funding of those services. An impact assessment for the Health and Care Bill will be published in due course.

Immigration: Hong Kong

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) discussions they are having with, and (2) guidance they have issued to, (a) local authorities, (b) landlord representatives, and (c) housing associations, to ensure that people coming to the UK from Hong Kong under the British National (Overseas) visa are able (i) to secure appropriate housing, and (ii) are not disadvantaged under the Right to Rent scheme by the need to demonstrate their immigration status. [HL13867]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likely number of people coming from Hong Kong under the British National (Overseas) visa moving to different geographic regions in the UK. [HL13868]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: On 31 January the Home Office launched the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Since then, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been working with partners across Whitehall and beyond to help new arrivals to settle into life in the UK. Planning assumptions and guidance on which services may need to prepare for BN(O) arrivals have been shared with local authorities and MHCLG will continue to work closely with local authorities to ensure that impacts on existing service provision are understood and addressed as appropriate.

We are clear landlords must take extra care to ensure no-one is discriminated against when carrying out right to rent checks. Successful applicants for the BN(O) route will receive either a biometric residence permit (BRP) or digital status, which will enable them to evidence their right to rent a property in the UK.

It is not standard practice for the Home Office to collect data around where people choose to settle once they receive their migration status. BN(O) status holders are entitled to settle wherever they choose within the United Kingdom.

The UK Government looks forward to welcoming applications from those individuals who wish to make our United Kingdom their home.

Liothyronine: Prices

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 4 March (HL13668), what comparison they have made of the cost of Liothyronine (T3) in (1) the UK, and (2) EU member states; and what assessment they have made of any such comparison. [HL14040]

Lord Bethell: The Department has made no such comparison or assessment. All United Kingdom marketing authorisation holders of liothyronine are obliged to ensure that the product complies with the minimum standard as specified in the British Pharmacopoeia monograph for liothyronine tablets. Liothyronine on the market in European Union Member States may not comply with the updated British Pharmacopoeia monograph and therefore would not be considered therapeutically equivalent. Therefore, price comparisons would not be 'like for like'.

In the UK, several marketing authorisations have been granted for liothyronine since 2016 and the reimbursement price has slowly been reducing as a direct response to more competition in the market.

Local Government: Meetings

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, after 7 May, local authorities will be permitted to hold (1) remote proceedings, or (2) hybrid proceedings, for (a) council meetings, (b) Executive meetings, (c) committee meetings, (d) sub-committee meetings, or (e) other meetings at which members of the public are able to be present. [HL13965]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government keeps all policy under review. To extend the facility for councils to continue to meet remotely, or in hybrid form after 7 May 2021 would require primary legislation.

We have received representations from local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for the continuation of remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021 and are carefully considering next steps in this area.

Local Restrictions Support Grant

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that local authorities are correctly

issuing grants under the Local Restrictions Support Grants scheme. [HL13882]

Lord Callanan: The Government is working closely with Local Authorities in England to support the implementation of business grants during the Covid-19 pandemic and monitor the distribution of grant funds. This has included the publication of guidance, webinars and one to one engagement to support Local Authorities in delivering this vital support to businesses. In addition, Ministers from the department have met with Local Authority Leaders and senior officers to discuss grant delivery.

Officials also continue to engage with Local Authorities to ensure compliance to both the scheme rules and wider reporting requirements.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 22 January (HL12045), why they have not set a national access and waiting times standard for child and adolescent mental health services. [HL12587]

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 22 January (HL12044), what progress they have made on the piloting of a four-week waiting time for specialist NHS services in relation to children and young people's mental health; and whether there is any difference between such a waiting time and a national access and waiting times standard. [HL12588]

Lord Bethell: We have made good progress on carrying out the core proposals of the children and young people's mental health green paper, including piloting a four-week waiting time to access specialist National Health Service children and young people's mental health services.

In 2018 we announced the first 25 trailblazer sites delivering 59 mental health support teams in and near schools and colleges. Twelve of the trailblazer sites are also testing four-week waiting times specialist NHS services. The pilots will inform a recommendation to Government on the potential development and roll out of access and waiting time standards for all children and young people who need specialist mental health services.

Mental Health Services: Finance

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the £500 million for mental health services announced in the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, will be allocated. [HL13959]

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use the £500 million for mental health services announced in the Spending Review 2020, published on 25 November 2020, to provide mental health services to those with Parkinson's. [[HL13960](#)]

Lord Bethell: On 5 March, we announced £79 million of the funding from the Spending Review that will be used to significantly expand children's mental health services.

Further details about how the remainder of the funding will be allocated will be given in due course.

Navy: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have ordered any new ships for the Royal Navy since the Prime Minister's statement on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy on 19 November 2020. [[HL14018](#)]

Baroness Goldie: There have been no new contracts since 19 November, but with the construction of the Type 26 progressing on the Clyde and the Type 31 frigates beginning later this year, we will have, for the first time in 30 years, two classes of frigate simultaneously under construction in UK shipyards.

NHS: Civil Proceedings

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many legal claims related to the COVID-19 pandemic are currently being pursued against the Department of Health and Social Care; and how much money any such claims are for. [[HL13158](#)]

Lord Bethell: There are currently 23 issued judicial review claims relating to COVID-19 which name the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as a defendant. At present, the majority of claims for judicial review seek public law remedies that are not damages. Only two claims seek damages, one for up to £20,000 and one for an unspecified sum for 'just satisfaction' under Section 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

There is currently one private law claim that has been issued against the Secretary of State and is seeking damages. The value of the losses being disputed is estimated to be up to £29 million.

NHS: Orthopaedics

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide Open Bionics 'Hero-Arms' through the NHS for amputees who have lost upper limbs. [[HL12826](#)]

Lord Bethell: Multi-grip upper limb prosthetics, which include the Hero-Arm are not currently routinely commissioned in England for upper limb amputees. NHS England and NHS Improvement are in the process of reviewing the policy for commissioning all multi-grip upper limbs and an evidence review has just been completed. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by early summer as to whether the current policy will be revised to allow multi-grip upper limbs to be made routinely available to upper limb amputees.

NHS: Procurement

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their White Paper Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all, published on 11 February, what plans they have to provide clarity on the scope and limits of competitive tendering in the NHS; and what steps they are taking to reduce the level of bureaucracy for NHS commissioners and providers. [[HL14041](#)]

Lord Bethell: The National Health Service is currently consulting on the proposal for a new provider selection regime. The new regime is intended to provide significantly more flexibility to make decisions about arranging health care services in a streamlined way, including without competitive tendering, where this can be shown to be in the best interests of patients, taxpayers and the population. The new regime will be supported by regulations and statutory guidance, which will be informed by the results of the consultation. All other procurement will continue to be subject to Cabinet Office procurement processes.

Pedicabs: Regulation

Asked by Baroness Stowell of Beeston

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to regulate pedicabs. [[HL14066](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Outside London, in England and Wales, pedicabs are treated as taxis for the purposes of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Accordingly, pedicabs may be regulated as taxis under the provisions of the 1847 and 1976 Acts.

Within London pedicabs are not treated as taxis for the purpose of the Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869, which is the equivalent legislation in London.

The Government is open to seeking opportunities to introduce legislation that enables the regulation of pedicabs in London, when parliamentary time allows.

Phenylketonuria: Sapropterin

Asked by Lord Austin of Dudley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of NICE draft guidance on using

Sapropterin for treating phenylketonuria, published on 25 February; and what plans they have to meet with the authors of that guidance. [HL14077]

Lord Bethell: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is an independent body and is responsible for assessing new medicines and treatments in accordance with its existing methods and processes. It would not be appropriate for Ministers to intervene in the development of their recommendations.

Pornography: Internet

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture on 11 January (130006), what estimate they have made of the number of online pornography sites which (1) allow, and (2) do not allow, (a) user-generated content, or (b) user interaction; whether they keep a record of those sites; and if so, what plans they have to publish those records. [HL14026]

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture on 11 January (130006), to which online pornography sites their online harms proposals will apply. [HL14027]

Baroness Barran: Where pornography sites host user generated content or facilitate online user interactions (including video and image sharing, commenting and live streaming), they will be subject to the duty of care.

The online harms regime will capture both the most visited pornography sites and pornography on social media, therefore covering the vast majority of sites where children are most likely to be exposed to pornography. In practice, we would anticipate that any commercial pornography site hosting user generated content or facilitating user-interaction will need to put in place robust measures such as age verification to prevent children from accessing it. This would then also protect children from any non user generated content as well.

We will continue to review our proposals to ensure we deliver the most comprehensive protections for children online.

Private Education: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Berridge on 1 March (HL Deb, col 1002), how the education recovery schemes they are designing will operate; and what opportunities independent schools will have to contribute to any such schemes. [HL13869]

Baroness Berridge: The government is committed to helping all children and young people make up learning lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This is why the government has invested £1.7 billion to give education settings support to help pupils get back on track, including additional funding, tutoring, early language support and summer schools. We will provide further guidance to schools on the operation of new education recovery programmes shortly.

In January 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, committed to work with parents, teachers and pupils to develop a long-term plan to help pupils make up their learning over the course of this parliament. We have appointed Sir Kevan Collins as the Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on this broader plan. The objectives of the Education Recovery Commissioner, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, are to advise on the design and implementation of potential interventions that will help students catch up learning lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Education Recovery Commissioner will be expected to engage with a range of education experts and settings to improve implementation and refine proposals to improve the effectiveness of the delivery of outcomes.

Independent schools have been actively involved in cross-sector partnerships, forming impactful and mutually beneficial partnerships with state school colleagues across several areas including curriculum development, quality of teaching, school leadership, and other school improvement initiatives. Independent schools are also involved in the Broadening Educational Pathways programme aimed at increasing the support of the sector for vulnerable children. All of this is consistent with the department's joint understanding with the Independent Schools Council, which outlines how independent schools can work in partnership with state schools to help raise attainment and, in particular, help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. I would very much like to see this spirit of collaboration extended to our COVID-19 recovery efforts.

The terms of reference for the Education Recovery Commissioner is published here (and can be viewed in the attached document):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960070/Terms_of_reference.pdf#:~:text=Education%20Recovery%20Commissioner%3A%20role%20specification%20and%20terms%20of,approach%20for%20education%20recovery%2C%20with%20a%20particular%20focus.

Protective Clothing: Contracts

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Bethell on 6 January (HL10942 and HL10943), whether those purchases had a combined value of half a billion pounds; and why "Details of such decisions on individual contracts is

regarded as commercially sensitive information” remain secret once the purchases have been made; whether they will place in the public domain details of (1) how, (2) why, and (3) by whom, these companies were selected; and if not, why not. [HL12131]

Lord Bethell: Two contracts have been awarded to PPE Medpro by the Department with a total value of £202 million and seven contracts have been awarded to Purple Surgical by the Department with a total value of £226 million. Information concerning whether any of the personal protective equipment (PPE) has not met the required quality standards or a particular specification, whose fault that is and what should be done about it are regarded as commercially confidential information as this process involves negotiations with the supplier where we may seek a refund or other redress as per the contract terms in these contracts.

In terms of how these suppliers were selected, the Government issued a public call to action to support the increased requirements of PPE. The aim was to reach suppliers who had experience of supplying PPE and also those who had no prior experience but who had access to sources of PPE through their business contacts. This resulted in over 15,000 suppliers offering their help and support, including PPE Medpro and Purple Surgical.

All suppliers were evaluated by Departmental officials on their financial standing, compliance with minimum product specifications and ability to perform the contract. All contracts were awarded by the appropriate accounting officer in line with Departmental policy and procedures.

Social Services

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities in England delivering adult social care have increased their adult social care precept for 2021/2022 by (1) 3, (2) 2–2.99, (3) 1–1.99, and (4) 0–0.99, per cent. [HL14004]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Department will publish National Statistics on 25 March setting out the level of council tax charged by local authorities in England for 2021/22. This release will include details on how authorities with responsibility for adult social care have made use of the adult social care precept.

South Sudan: Peace Negotiations

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the reduction in overseas aid, in particular the funding provided through the Conflict Security and Stability Fund, on (1) the peace process in South Sudan, and (2) the contribution made by the South Sudan Council of Churches' Action Plan for Peace to that process. [HL13937]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As announced to Parliament last year, the impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take the tough, but necessary decision to temporarily reduce the Official Development Assistance budget. This includes the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, which will continue to support the delivery of the Government's top national security priorities. The FCDO is reviewing all individual country allocations as part of the Country Business Planning process, including specific implications for all spend in South Sudan. These will be communicated to Parliament in due course. The UK is steadfast in our commitment to supporting victims of conflict worldwide. We will continue our engagement with organisations such as the South Sudan Council of Churches to deliver shared goals on promoting reconciliation, healing and bringing a lasting end to the conflict. In particular, we will continue to press for full, inclusive implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement, which remains South Sudan's best chance for long-term peace and stability.

Stronger Towns Fund

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the £1 billion Towns Fund announced in the Budget 2021, published on 3 March, each English region will receive, and how much of the £1 billion Stronger Towns Fund, launched on 4 March 2019, each English region received. [HL13904]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Towns Fund is helping level up the country, driving economic regeneration, productivity and growth. At Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced 45 Town Deals. Regional totals can be found in the Budget document (attached) here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966868/BUDGET_2021_-_web.pdf.

These are in addition to the first seven Town Deals announced in October 2020, further details of which can be found (attached) here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-town-deals-worth-almost-180-million-announced>.

The Towns Fund superseded the previously announced Stronger Towns Fund, ensuring even more places could be supported. No funding was committed through that Fund.

Further Town Deals will be announced in due course.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Budget [210315 BUDGET_2021 - HL13904.pdf]

Towns Deal [210315 First Town Deals - HL13904.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-03-04/HL13904>

Suicide

Asked by **Baroness Royall of Blaisdon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people per year who have attempted suicide and, prior to their deaths, (1) had been diagnosed with, and (2) had been treated for (a) cancer, (b) neurological diseases, (c) respiratory diseases, or (d) heart or circulatory diseases, in the previous 12 months. [HL13020]

Lord Bethell: We have made no such estimate as information on attempted suicides is not held.

Tobacco: Litter

Asked by **Baroness Hayman of Ullock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific tests they plan to use to determine whether or not tobacco industry plans for a voluntary approach to preventing littering of cigarette filters will be sufficient; and what plans they have to assess such plans against the potential benefits of a mandatory extended producer responsibility scheme. [HL13807]

Asked by **Baroness Hayman of Ullock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the costs incurred by local authorities in dealing with cigarette butts when littered or disposed of in public bins; what that cost is estimated to be; and what is the basis on which any such cost has been calculated. [HL13808]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We believe that the tobacco industry must take responsibility for the litter created by its products. Our most recent composition survey found cigarette butts represent 66% of all littered items.

Preliminary research has shown an estimated cost to UK local authorities and other duty bodies of £40m per annum for the collection and disposal of littered cigarette butts, rising to £46m when including those disposed of in public bins. This has been drawn from an analysis of local authority spend on litter using local authority revenue outturns, litter composition studies across the UK and local authority surveys and interviews. This research is undergoing quality assurance and will be published in due course.

We have made clear that we will continue to monitor the available evidence on smoking related litter and that if it continues to be a significant environmental concern we will reflect on the steps Government can take to ensure that the tobacco industry takes more responsibility. Measures in the Environment Bill will allow us to legislate for an extended producer responsibility scheme for tobacco products, if such an intervention was considered necessary.

Cigarette and tobacco product packaging will be covered by the upcoming reforms to the packaging producer responsibility scheme.

Trade Agreements

Asked by **Lord Grocott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Grimstone of Boscobel on 22 February (HL13173) and 9 March (HL13586), to list in the body of their answer which specific countries they have secured continuity trade agreements with since the UK's departure from the EU. [HL14087]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: In addition to our deal with the EU, we have secured trade agreements with 66 non-EU countries, covering £890 billion of trade in total (2019 data). These are:

Albania;
 Antigua and Barbuda;
 Barbados;
 The Bahamas;
 Belize;
 Botswana;
 Cameroon;
 Canada;
 Colombia;
 Côte d'Ivoire (The Ivory Coast);
 Costa Rica;
 Chile;
 Dominica;
 The Dominican Republic;
 Ecuador;
 Egypt;
 El Salvador;
 Eswatini (Swaziland);
 The Faroe Islands;
 Fiji;
 Ghana;
 Grenada;
 Guyana;
 Guatemala;
 Georgia;
 Honduras;
 Iceland;
 Israel;
 Japan;
 Jordan;
 Jamaica;
 Kenya;
 Kosovo;
 Lebanon;
 Lesotho;
 Liechtenstein;
 Mexico;

Morocco;
 Moldova;
 Mozambique;
 Mauritius;
 Nicaragua;
 Norway;
 North Macedonia;
 Namibia;
 Peru;
 Panama;
 Papua New Guinea;
 The Palestinian Authority;
 Saint Lucia;
 St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
 Samoa;
 The Solomon Islands;
 St. Kitts and Nevis;
 The Seychelles;
 South Africa;
 Switzerland;
 Singapore;
 South Korea;
 Suriname;
 Trinidad and Tobago;
 Tunisia;
 Turkey;
 Ukraine;
 Vietnam; and
 Zimbabwe.

Train Operating Companies: Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish a revised summary of payments made to passenger rail operators under emergency measures agreements since September 2020. [HL13876]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Work on the publication is nearing completion and it is expected to be released shortly.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 16 December 2020, to which specific year or years "early 2020s" refers. [HL14017]

Baroness Goldie: As the contract award for the Batch 2 Type 26 Frigates is subject to commercial negotiation and

Her Majesty's Treasury approval, I am unable at this stage to provide a more precise timescale.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 9 March (HL13634), when the (1) second, and (2) third, ship will enter service [HL14123]

Baroness Goldie: On current plans, HMS Cardiff and HMS Belfast will enter service in the late 2020s.

Universities: Research

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether universities will be eligible to bid to the Shared Prosperity Fund for funding for research projects. [HL14056]

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be a flagship policy in delivering this Government's commitment to level up the country and will target the people and places most in need across the UK. It will be focused on our domestic priorities and seize the opportunities that come from our departure from the EU and the bureaucracy of EU structural funds.

Spending Review 2020 set out the main strategic elements of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the Heads of Terms. We will publish further details about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in a UK-wide Investment Framework later in 2021 and its funding profile will be set out at the next Spending Review.

Vacancies

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government which sectors and roles were identified in the most recent Employers' Skills Survey as being hard to fill; what assessment they have made of the extent to which those gaps could be filled by those coming to the UK from Hong Kong under (1) the British National (Overseas) visa, and (2) any other schemes; and what plans they have (a) to identify, and (b) to recruit, suitably qualified people from Hong Kong for such roles. [HL13879]

Baroness Berridge: On 31 January, the UK launched the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route for those with BN(O) status and their eligible family members to come to the UK to live, study and work in virtually any capacity, on a pathway to citizenship.

There is no cap on numbers on the BN(O) route, nor are there any requirements for BN(O) status holders to have a job offer in order to apply. As such, those on the BN(O) route will be able to work in virtually any capacity (with the exception of working as a professional sportsperson or sports coach) whilst in the UK, including in the sectors and occupations highlighted in the most recent Employer Skills Survey.

The Employer Skills Survey collects data on how many vacancies are proving hard to fill due to a lack of applicants with the right skills, experience, or qualifications – these are called skill-shortage vacancies (SSVs). The most recent survey conducted in 2019 found that 24% of all vacancies were SSVs. By sector, the rates of SSVs were highest in the Construction and Manufacturing industries, with both sectors reporting that 36% of their vacancies were SSVs. By occupation group, the Skilled Trades had the highest rates of SSVs (48% of vacancies were classed as SSVs). The three specific occupations with the highest rates of SSVs were Carpenters and Joiners, Welding trades, and Metal machining setters.

These findings from the Employer Skills Survey can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936489/ESS_2019_Skills_Needs_Report_Nov20.pdf.

Departments across Government are working together closely to ensure that necessary support and guidance is provided for BN(O) status holders who take advantage of the new visa route.

We want the UK to be the first choice for the highly skilled both from Hong Kong and around the world. This can be seen in the focus on high skilled migration in the Budget, including plans to modernise the immigration system and make it easier to use, as well as new routes for high skilled talent. We also want to ensure the UK is seen as open and welcoming to talent by those who are thinking of moving. At this stage we are considering those coming to the UK from Hong Kong as part of the wider picture of high skilled migration.

Index to Statements and Answers

<p>Written Statements.....1</p> <p> Publication of the Government Response to the Fire Safety Consultation 1</p> <p>Written Answers.....3</p> <p> Asylum: Families.....3</p> <p> Aviation: Freight3</p> <p> Buses: Exhaust Emissions3</p> <p> Coronavirus: Screening3</p> <p> Coronavirus: Travellers3</p> <p> Coronavirus: Vaccination.....4</p> <p> Dogs: Imports and sales.....4</p> <p> Fly-tipping5</p> <p> Food: Advertising5</p> <p> Free Zones5</p> <p> Freezing of Assets5</p> <p> Gambling: Crime6</p> <p> Health Services: Local Government.....6</p> <p> Immigration: Hong Kong6</p> <p> Liothyronine: Prices7</p> <p> Local Government: Meetings7</p> <p> Local Restrictions Support Grant7</p> <p> Mental Health Services: Children and Young People7</p> <p> Mental Health Services: Finance7</p> <p> Navy: Procurement.....8</p> <p> NHS: Civil Proceedings8</p> <p> NHS: Orthopaedics.....8</p> <p> NHS: Procurement.....8</p> <p> Pedicabs: Regulation8</p> <p> Phenylketonuria: Sapropterin8</p> <p> Pornography: Internet.....9</p> <p> Private Education: Coronavirus.....9</p> <p> Protective Clothing: Contracts9</p> <p> Social Services10</p> <p> South Sudan: Peace Negotiations10</p> <p> Stronger Towns Fund10</p>	<p>Suicide 11</p> <p>Tobacco: Litter 11</p> <p>Trade Agreements..... 11</p> <p>Train Operating Companies: Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements 12</p> <p>Type 26 Frigates: Procurement..... 12</p> <p>Universities: Research 12</p> <p>Vacancies..... 12</p>
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