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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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# Written Statements

Tuesday, 23 March 2021

## Expanding DWP Services

[HLWS869]

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

As part of the Government's ongoing commitment to support claimants back into work, DWP is moving at pace this spring and summer to introduce new Jobcentres, as a direct response to the pandemic.

On top of the 13,500 new Work Coaches who will be in place by the end of this financial year, this expansion of our Jobcentre network will bolster existing capacity, enabling Work Coaches to provide tailored, face-to-face support in a Covid-secure environment. This expansion will drive forward our ambitious £30 billion Plan for Jobs, helping people back into the Labour Market right across the UK.

During the pandemic, DWP successfully pivoted to a more multi-channelled approach, offering more digital support in line with social distancing measures. However, as restrictions ease, it is vital we adapt our services and reintroduce face-to-face support, given that we know how effective this has been for our claimants in the past.

As the economy recovers, we will review the need for these temporary sites on an ongoing basis, to ensure we are continuing to strike the right balance between providing essential services for claimants and delivering value for money for the taxpayer.

This is not about reversing previous decisions on the broader renewal of the DWP estate, rather it is a temporary measure, in direct response to the pressures the pandemic has placed on the Labour Market.

These new sites provide a high quality, modern and digitally enabled environment for both colleagues and customers. As part of our design requirements, we are reducing the environmental impact, for example, by increasing the Energy Performance Certificate rating across sites. This is something DWP is committed to, as part of the programme to review and renew our estates.

The expansion programme will itself create a further 1,500 ancillary jobs when the sites open, as well as construction jobs generated by the work needed to repurpose the buildings and the supply chain to furnish them, boosting local economies and providing crucial support across the country.

The sites being secured are predominantly in major centres. All new sites meet the planning requirements for a Jobcentre, which means they are fully accessible for colleagues and customers, with good transport links.

Leases have already been secured on 80 sites. A list of these sites can be found on gov.uk, and will be

continually updated as and when new site leases are agreed.

## Healthy Weight Programme: Funding for Local Authority Weight Management Services

[HLWS862]

**Lord Bethell:** My Hon. friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care) (Jo Churchill), has made the following statement:

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March this year, the Prime Minister announced an additional £100 million over 2021/22 to support people living with obesity to lose weight and maintain healthier lifestyles. I am pleased to confirm that the Government is dedicating £34.9 million of this new funding to support the expansion of local authority weight management services for adults, children, and families. Funds will be allocated via two ringfenced grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and will be available to Local Authorities for 12 months from the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year.

The first grant will distribute £30.5 million among all local authorities in England to commission adult behavioural weight management services, based on population size, obesity prevalence, and deprivation. The funding is conditional on local authorities commissioning new, or expanding existing, behavioural weight management services, providing information on current service provision, and regularly submitting user data. This will be critical to demonstrate what works as we build a long-term approach to behavioural weight management services. The grant circular, setting out local authority allocations and the funding conditions, will be published on GOV.UK today.

The second grant will distribute £4.4 million to test the expansion of behavioural weight management services for children and families and pilot an intervention to improve access to local services for children identified as overweight or obese through the National Child Measurement Programme. All local authorities may submit an expression of interest for this funding. Funding will be allocated to local authorities according to the strength of their application and local need based on population size, child obesity prevalence and child-specific deprivation measures. The government will look to fund up to 10 areas, depending on the volume and strength of applications received. As with the adult grant, funding will be conditional on successful local authorities: commissioning behavioural weight management services for children and families; piloting an extended brief intervention linked to the National Child Measurement Programme; providing information on current child and family service provision; and regularly submitting outcome data using a standardised dataset. The expression of interest for child and family weight management services will be announced on GOV.UK today.

Public Health England will administer both grants and will be working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care to monitor and evaluate this important investment in behavioural weight management services.

## HS2 Six-monthly Report to Parliament

[HLWS864]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Transport (Andrew Stephenson), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

### *Overview*

This is the second bi-annual update to Parliament on the progress of High Speed Two (HS2). It marks one year since the Government gave Phase One of the scheme, between the West Midlands and London, the green light to begin civils construction. The report uses data provided by HS2 Ltd to the HS2 Ministerial Task Force for Phases One and 2a and covers the period between September 2020 and January 2021 inclusive. Copies of this report have been placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Covid-19 has made this an incredibly challenging year, and the pandemic has had a devastating effect on individuals, our economy and our communities. However, as we look to the future, with the roll-out of the vaccine firmly underway and a roadmap out of lockdown now in place, this Government is more committed than ever to 'build back better'. HS2 remains at the forefront of our long-term investment plan to better connect people and places, boost productivity and create jobs to help rebalance opportunity across the UK.

Just as importantly, HS2 will play a pivotal role in creating a greener alternative to regional air and road travel. This is essential if we are to meet our commitment to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

The key achievements of the HS2 programme in this reporting period include:

- Progressing the remaining Enabling Works and mobilising Main Civils construction for Phase One whilst employing Covid-safe working practices.
- Achieving Royal Assent of the Phase 2a High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill, cementing in law the Government's commitment to bring the new high speed railway to the north of England.
- Evolving our approach to community engagement, including an enhanced complaints procedure to address concerns about how HS2's impact on communities along the line of route is managed.
- Speedy implementation of over a quarter of the proposed reforms recommended by the Land and Property Review of November 2020, improving the experience of property owners most immediately and directly affected by HS2.
- Supporting over 15,000 skilled jobs and creating more than 500 apprenticeships. Over 2,100 companies now have contracts with HS2 Ltd, with 97% of these being UK-based businesses. At its peak the programme will

support over 30,000 jobs and create at least 2,000 apprenticeships.

- Establishing HS2 Ltd's Environmental Sustainability Committee to strengthen oversight and reporting of efforts to limit and mitigate the environment impacts from the construction of the railway.

- Planting over 430,000 trees so far, with the number expected to rise to over 730,000 trees by spring 2021.

Programme update on schedule, affordability and delivery

### *Schedule*

Some schedule pressures on Phase One have emerged from delays in completing Enabling Works including issues with completing utilities diversions, postponed land acquisition and access during the first Covid-19 lockdown, and slower than planned development of detailed designs by the Main Works contractors.

HS2 Ltd is currently re-planning its schedule for Phase One in conjunction with its construction suppliers with a view to mitigating these delays. The schedule pressures reported above will not impact the projected Delivery into Service date range of 2029-2033 set last year, but further cost pressures could still emerge if mitigation activity is required. The re-planning exercise is due to conclude in the spring and I will update Parliament on its outcome in my next report. We should continue to remain cautious of the accuracy of long-range estimates this early in a 10-year programme.

### *Affordability*

The overall budget for Phase One, including Euston, is £44.6bn (2019 prices). This is composed of the Target Cost of £40.3bn and additional Government-retained contingency of £4.3bn. The Target Cost includes contingency delegated to HS2 Ltd of £5.6bn for managing the risk and uncertainties that are an inherent part of delivering major projects.

The Target Cost for Phase One remains at £40.3bn. Around £11.0bn (actual prices) has been spent to date including land and property provisions. Approximately £12.6bn (2019 prices) has additionally been contracted, with the remaining amount yet to be contracted.

To date HS2 Ltd has drawn £0.4bn of its £5.6bn delegated contingency to specific additional costs, which represents 4% of the overall contingency for Phase One, and reflects an increase of £0.2bn since my last report. HS2 Ltd is currently reporting potential cost pressures of around £0.8bn over and above this. If these, or other costs, come to pass then they would be managed from within the existing total budget using the remaining HS2 Ltd delegated contingency. In the case of verified cost increases resulting from Covid-19, these will be managed from within the Government-retained contingency.

The cost pressures currently being reported by HS2 Ltd which may require a call on contingency if not mitigated are:

- An estimate of £0.4bn, predominately due to slower than expected mobilisation of Main Works Civils

Contractors, associated with delays to approvals of designs, planning consents, protestor action and some Covid-19 impacts.

- As already reported in the autumn report to Parliament, an estimate of £0.4bn that relates to Euston station remains. Work to consider opportunities, efficiencies and scope reductions to address potential pressures is now underway. This may be an underestimate of the unmitigated pressure, so the Department has asked HS2 Ltd to provide a revised estimate once it has concluded its initial design work on the revised design as set out below.

My last report to Parliament included £0.4bn from expected increases in the scope and duration of Enabling Works. These costs are now expected to be incurred and so are not shown as pressures but have instead been taken into the core cost estimate. They will be funded through surplus provision within HS2 Ltd's core budget rather than from its delegated contingency. Estimates of the impact of Covid-19 are set out below.

Other pressures will arise as the programme progresses, some of which may crystallise into additional costs that will need to be covered from the contingency within the existing budget, and some of which will be mitigated or avoided.

Over the last six months HS2 Ltd has made progress on a programme of opportunities for efficiencies designed to identify and realise tangible savings in delivering the agreed scope of Phase One. From a deeper pool of potential opportunities, HS2 Ltd has so far identified up to £0.2bn to pursue to the next stages of development. Going forward I will report on progress towards realisation of these opportunities as well as the identification of others through this efficiency programme.

#### *Delivery*

On Phase One the focus has primarily been on progressing the remaining Enabling Works and preparatory works, and the start of Main Works. This includes dedicated power at launch sites for the tunnel boring machines (TBMs) by the M25 and Long Itchington in Warwickshire and moving two huge modular bridges into place at the Birmingham Interchange station site. The first pair of TBMs, Florence and Cecilia, will launch this summer.

Elsewhere, progress continues to be made on the four new HS2 stations. At Euston, work is underway to develop an optimised design and delivery strategy, alongside work by the Euston Partnership to integrate the HS2 and Network Rail stations and wider placemaking across the Euston campus. The Department has instructed HS2 Ltd to investigate whether building the station in a single construction stage can speed-up delivery and address cost pressures. Notwithstanding this, bringing the station fully back within its existing budget presents a significant challenge. The initial stage of this work is expected to conclude in the coming months, at which

point the Government will confirm any design changes and set out its intended way forward at Euston.

The start of main construction of Old Oak Common Station has now been approved and excavation work for the HS2 underground platforms can begin. I also note the High Court's dismissal of Bechtel Ltd's legal challenge to the Old Oak Common Station Construction Partner award, which found that HS2 Ltd's procurement process was in accordance with the rules of the tender and procurement law.

Tender evaluation is underway ahead of the planned award by the summer of a construction partner for Birmingham Curzon Street Station and tendering for a construction partner at Birmingham Interchange Station is expected to begin this summer. Budget 2021 announced £50m of funding to develop transport proposals around Birmingham Interchange. This will be matched by £45m of funding from Arden Cross Ltd and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. This will support the goal of the West Midlands Combined Authority, by reconfiguring planned car parking at the regional hub station, releasing 28 hectares of land space for new businesses, homes and jobs in the area.

Qualification of bidders is underway for the majority of the rail systems packages for Phases One and 2a ahead of inviting tenders. HS2 Ltd is finalising the procurement of the new HS2 rolling stock for Phases One and 2a, with the contract to be awarded later this spring.

I am a very pleased to report that the HS2 Phase 2a Act, for the section of the route between Lichfield and Crewe was given Royal Assent in February, after its passage through Parliament. This represents a major milestone for the programme and HS2 Ltd can now begin accessing and acquiring land for the necessary construction works as well as taking forward early environmental and enabling works.

Phase 2a will bring high speed services to the north, helping to realise the benefits of the whole programme and to underpin future phases of the scheme, while also supporting regional economic growth through the construction stage.

Local consultation on the scheme was undertaken during February and I will publish the Consultation Report in April before detailing the response to its findings in June, following the election period.

With formal agreement on the scope of the Phase 2a scheme now set, the funding and schedule ranges will be finalised alongside the delivery model for the construction works. I will provide more information to Parliament once this work has concluded.

Before the end of spring, the Department will publish the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) which will consider how best to deliver and sequence HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, and other major rail schemes including schemes within Midlands Engine Rail such as Midlands Rail Hub, to ensure transformational rail improvements are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly.

Preparations are underway for a Hybrid Bill for the Western Leg (Crewe to Manchester) and supporting Outline Business Case (OBC) to be deposited in Parliament in early 2022, or sooner if possible. Further updates on cost and schedule will be provided at the time the OBC is published.

#### *Impacts from Covid-19*

Although Covid-19 continues to pose a considerable challenge to the programme, HS2 Ltd and its supply chain continues to adapt positively. In the early stages of the pandemic, HS2 Ltd successfully kept a high proportion of its sites open and operating safely and at the time of writing this report 100% of HS2 sites are open, in-part due to the collaboration and innovation between HS2 Ltd and its supply chain through initiatives such as rapid testing and the introduction of new social distancing technology. Health and safety guidance at work sites continues to be rigorously followed and remains under constant review. Nothing is more important than the wellbeing of the communities we are working in and the safety of everyone working on HS2.

HS2 Ltd's initial estimates suggest that the financial impact of Covid-19 on the cost of delivering Phase One up to December 2020 is between £0.3bn and £0.4bn, largely as a consequence of schedule prolongation from access delays and reduced productivity.

A proportion of this estimate is already captured within the cost pressures that I have set out above. The full impact of Covid-19 on cost and schedule will continue to be assessed, including work to disaggregate Covid-19 impacts from other cost and schedule impacts on the programme. The Department will be scrutinising these costs very carefully, and only validated and unavoidable costs arising from Covid-19 will be funded from the Government-retained contingency, and therefore covered by the existing HS2 budget. I will continue to update Parliament through my reports as this work progresses.

#### *Local Community Impact and Engagement*

Since my appointment as Minister for HS2 I have been clear that managing the programme's impact on communities along the line of the route is one of my key priorities. That is why last autumn I commissioned a detailed review of the acquisition and compensation process for land and property affected by HS2. The conclusions of the review, detailing opportunities for change across a wide variety of policies and activities, were published in November and will ensure that there is a renewed focus on those people who are being directly impacted by the new railway.

The proposals vary in scale and context, but all seek to improve the experience of property owners most immediately and directly affected by HS2 by improving existing processes and interaction with the public. The Department has worked quickly on implementing the proposals, in close conjunction with HS2 Ltd, the Residents' Commissioner (Deborah Fazan) and relevant Government Departments, with 25% now in place. I expect to begin a public consultation later this spring to

focus on aspects of the proposals that require further engagement. Alongside the Land and Property Review, I am continuing to engage closely with Parliamentary colleagues and the communities they represent.

Due to the scale and nature of the HS2 project, some impacts of construction on line of route communities are unfortunately unavoidable. This January, at the Transport Select Committee, I heard first-hand how HS2 construction is impacting on communities. The testimonies I heard were powerful and strengthened my resolute commitment to ensure that HS2 Ltd properly informs and consults communities and minimises negative impacts wherever possible. I have therefore tasked HS2 Ltd to look again at the way it engages communities to improve the responsiveness, sensitivity and objectivity of its approach.

In response, HS2 Ltd is deploying a package of measures to strengthen its community handling approach including:

- A unified single management system for community engagement and complaints handling across HS2 Ltd and the supply chain, so there is a single consistent record for all organisations operating in a single location.
- Additional proactive local communications to provide notice and raise awareness of HS2 activity in impacted communities.
- Shortened HS2 Ltd helpdesk response times so that construction issues can be picked up, assessed and mitigated quickly.
- New area-based Delivery Unit Managers with geographical responsibility for joining up construction contractors and communities to prevent and tackle local issues.
- New briefing materials to alert MPs and Councillors of the agreed single points of contact along the Phase One and 2a routes so issues can be escalated if they are not resolved in the first instance.
- Enhanced engagement and assurance from the Construction Commissioner (Sir Mark Worthington) and the Residents' Commissioner to provide independent advice on potential improvements to HS2 Ltd complaint handling and community engagement operations.

I have furthermore established a small team of Construction Inspectors reporting to the Department to support the assurance of the delivery of works along the route. An important part of their role will also be to provide a capability to investigate intractable or persistent construction issues working independently of HS2 Ltd and its suppliers where needed.

I expect these measures to improve engagement and responsiveness in relation to avoidable impacts of construction on local communities. I will continue to review this and remain committed to taking further action if necessary.

### Environmental Impact

Another of my key pledges as HS2 Minister is to limit the unavoidable impact of HS2 construction on the natural environment both in terms of direct impacts on biodiversity and its carbon impact.

The first report of the HS2 Ltd Environmental Sustainability Committee will be published in the autumn. The approach and content of the report will be informed by the Global Reporting Initiative methodology, and will also be shaped by seeking input from Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, the HS2 Independent Design Panel and members of HS2 Ltd's Ecology Review Group. The Government has also given a statutory commitment to provide an impact assessment of construction on ancient woodland within the report, building on previously conducted assessments. The environmental impact data in the report will be verified externally.

Alongside the new Committee, HS2 Ltd launched its 'Green Corridor Prospectus' in December, providing information to the public on projects along the route which are being introduced to mitigate and compensate for the environmental impact of HS2's construction. This includes over 30 projects funded through the Community and Environment Fund, and the Business and Local Economy Fund, which add benefit over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation.

Further to the commitments made in my last report to support biodiversity improvements on Phase 2a, the Department and HS2 Ltd have initiated a study to investigate options to consider whether and how we might move the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg scheme from seeking no net loss, to aiming to deliver net gains in biodiversity.

HS2 Ltd has become the first UK transport client organisation to achieve PAS 2080 accreditation, a gold standard for carbon management across the globe. It will continue its work to reduce carbon emissions during construction and operation ahead of COP26 later this year.

#### Forward look

As well as continued focus on its construction programme for Phase One, the next six months will see HS2 Ltd award contracts for a construction partner at Birmingham Curzon Street and for the supply of the new HS2 rolling stock. Work to identify affordable design and delivery arrangements for Euston station is also expected to progress.

On Phase 2a we will conclude work on a preferred delivery model for the construction stage as well as finalising the funding and schedule ranges for the project's schedule and cost. Work on the legislation and business case for the Phase 2b Western Leg will also continue and the Integrated Rail Plan will be published this spring.

I will continue to engage closely with Members of Parliament and will provide my next report to Parliament in October 2021.

### Financial Annex

#### Annex A: 6 monthly financial report

Forecast Costs by Phase	Phase	Target Cost	Total Estimated Costs Ranges
	One	£40.3bn	£35.0-45.0bn
	2a	Not set yet	£5.0-7.0bn
	2b	Not set yet	£32.0-46.0bn*

\*Validation of the Phase 2b cost range is ongoing and will be updated to support the bringing forward of separate legislation for the HS2 route into Manchester, in line with the conclusions of the Oakervee review. The range provided excludes scope intended to be funded by other sources such as Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Historic and Forecast Expenditure	Phase	Spend to Date**	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Forecast
	One	£11.0bn***	£3.79bn	£3.33bn
	2a	£0.4bn	£0.18bn	£0.13bn
	2b	£1.0bn	£0.25bn	£0.16bn
Total		£12.4bn	£4.22bn	£3.62bn

All figures in 2019 prices, are excluding VAT and correct as of 31 January 2021 and made up of a combination of Resource and Capital spend.

\*\* Spend to date is represented in outturn prices.

\*\*\* Spend to date includes a £1bn liability (provision) representing the Department's obligation to purchase land and property.

### Independent Inquiry into Issues raised by Paterson

[HLWS861]

**Lord Bethell:** My Hon. Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Nadine Dorries) has made the following written statement:

It is now 12 months since the Independent Inquiry into the issues raised by the convicted breast surgeon, Ian Paterson, published its report. The report made for difficult reading and describes the terrible harms that can occur when the malpractice of an individual, rogue surgeon goes unchecked.

In my statement to Parliament on 28 April 2020 I reluctantly announced a delay in our work to respond to the report. The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to exert unprecedented pressures on the health system, and this has necessitated a pragmatic response to the recommendations of the Paterson Inquiry.

The independent sector has stepped up and supplied much needed additional capacity for the NHS in its treatment of NHS patients during the response to the pandemic.

We have taken stock of all the recommendations and engaged with stakeholders across the system to gather

views on the best way forwards. As part of this we have listened carefully to former patients of Ian Paterson through regular conversations with representatives of the three main patient groups and a bespoke event to ensure their voices are heard.

The immediate safety of patients has been our top priority and we have sought and received reassurance that the recalls of patients by University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Spire Healthcare have proceeded as quickly as possible.

When the recommendations have provided a clear way forward, we have worked with our system partners to put in place, or require, effective action. We will continue to consider all the recommendations and produce a full response to the inquiry's 15 recommendations during 2021.

Today I am able to update the House on the Government's initial response to the following five recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into the Issues raised by Paterson, and update on three other developments.

*Recommendation 2 - Information to Patients: We recommend that it should be standard practice that consultants in both the NHS and the independent sector should write to patients, outlining their condition and treatment, in simple language, and copy this letter to the patient's GP, rather than writing to the GP and sending a copy to the patient.*

NHS England and NHS Improvement will examine how current guidance published by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) in 2018 on writing outpatient clinical letters addressed to patients (and copied to their GP) using simple, appropriate language can be incorporated into the requirements of the NHS standard contract.

*Recommendation 4 – Consent: We recommend that there should be a short period introduced into the process of patients giving consent for surgical procedures, to allow them time to reflect on their diagnosis and treatment options. We recommend that the GMC monitors this as part of 'Good Medical Practice'.*

The General Medical Council (GMC) published its revised good practice guidance on consent on 30 September 2020. This came into effect on 9 November 2020 and sets out seven principles of decision making and consent, including giving patients the information they need to make a decision and the time and support they need to understand it. The GMC will work with organisations across the UK's health services to support doctors to embed this into their everyday practice.

*Recommendation 5 - Multidisciplinary Team (MDT): We recommend that CQC, as a matter of urgency, should assure itself that all hospital providers are complying effectively with up-to-date national guidance on MDT meetings, including in breast cancer care, and that patients are not at risk of harm due to non-compliance in this area.*

Specific questions relating to MDT are already included in appropriate CQC service frameworks. As part of a longer-term strategy (based upon a short- and medium-term action plan that includes this recommendation) the CQC will work to ensure these become mandatory elements of its assessment and inspection approaches and communicate its expectations to service providers.

*Recommendation 7 – Patient Recall and Ongoing Care: We recommend that the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust board should check that all patients of Paterson have been recalled, and to communicate with any who have not been seen.*

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHB) contacted 4,394 patients between May and August 2020. This has given rise to 355 enquiries. Following receipt of each enquiry, the patient /relative was contacted directly by a member of a dedicated team to ensure that the Trust was responding in a way that was respectful and responsive to individual patient preferences. For patients who underwent a breast procedure, care was reviewed by a Consultant Breast Surgeon who was independent from the Trust. For patients who had a general procedure e.g. hernia repair or a varicose veins/other vascular procedure, care was reviewed by a consultant from UHB.

*Recommendation 8 – Patient Recall and Ongoing Care: We recommend that Spire should check that all patients of Paterson have been recalled, and to communicate with any who have not been seen, and that they should check that they have been given an ongoing treatment plan in the same way that has been provided for patients in the NHS.*

By December 2020 Spire Healthcare had contacted all known living patients of Ian Paterson for whom they had addresses (approximately 5,500). Spire Healthcare is currently ensuring that those patients' care has been fully reviewed, that the outcome of the reviews has been fully communicated to them and that, if required, they are getting the support and care that they needed. Additionally, several hundred people have contacted Spire as a result of the letters sent out last year. A proportion of these are having their care reviewed by an independent consultant surgeon and some have been referred for counselling, follow up support or, where clinically appropriate, treatment. Spire Healthcare will continue their review of patients' care during 2021.

In addition, we are taking three legislative actions to drive up patient safety and ensure care provided by the independent sector is closely scrutinised.

- First, prior to the publication of the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review the Government acted in June last year to amend the then Medicines and Medical Devices Bill to create the power to establish a UK-wide medical device information system. This system will mean that in future, subject to regulations, we can routinely collect medical device, procedure and outcome data from both NHS and private provider organisations

across the UK, ensuring that no patient in the UK falls through the gaps. The Government is also considering how best to supply patients with the details of any device that has been implanted, to ensure they can continue to access that information in the future.

- Secondly, following the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review the Government is establishing a Patient Safety Commissioner (PSC) for England with responsibility for medicines and medical devices. The main duties and powers of the PSC are detailed in the Medicines and Medical Devices Act which achieved Royal Assent on 11 February 2021 and establishes the Commissioner role. The PSC for England will be able to exercise their powers in both the independent sector and the NHS.
- Thirdly the White Paper, published in February 2021 setting out legislative proposals for the Health and Care Bill, announced our intention to extend the remit of the Health Service Safety Investigation Branch to private providers.

The report of the Paterson Inquiry shone a light on a set of harrowing events over many years and recommended a way forward to improve safety and quality in both the NHS and the independent sector. I believe it is right that we have taken urgent action where we can, and we will respond in full to the inquiry during 2021.

### **Operation in 2019 of Terrorism Acts: Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation**

[HLWS863]

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

Jonathan Hall QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, has prepared a report on the operation in 2019 of the Terrorism Acts.

In accordance with section 36(5) of the Terrorism Act 2006, I am today laying this report before the House, and copies will be available in the Vote Office. It will also be published on GOV.UK.

I am grateful to Mr Hall for his report. I will carefully consider its contents and the recommendations he makes and will respond formally in due course.

### **Public Service Pensions: Guaranteed Minimum Pension Indexation Consultation**

[HLWS868]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Government is today publishing its response to the consultation titled 'Public Service Pensions: Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) indexation consultation'. The

consultation, which took place between 7 October and 30 December 2020, considered how the Government will continue to meet past commitments to public service pension members regarding the full indexation of public service pensions, including any GMP element related to membership of a public service pension scheme, beyond 5 April 2021. It considered options to extend the current GMP indexation methodology to 5 April 2024 or to a later date before reconsidering alternative methodologies, namely conversion, or to make the current methodology the permanent solution. The consultation made clear that the Government remains fully committed to the price protection of GMPs for members of public service pension schemes under any solution adopted.

As proposed by the majority of respondents to the consultation, the Government has decided to discount conversion as a long-term policy solution and make full GMP indexation the permanent solution for public service pension schemes. Public service pension schemes will therefore provide full indexation to those public servants with a GMP reaching State Pension age beyond 5 April 2021.

The Government is of the view that this is the most practical solution to GMP indexation. This is because before conversion could be undertaken, schemes would need to ensure that they have accurate reconciled data, along with a finalised methodology to convert those GMP benefits where conversion on a £1:£1 basis would not result in equalisation. This is likely to be resource intensive at a time when public service pension schemes do not have the capacity to undertake conversion until 2024 at the earliest. There also remains a chance that conversion might not be deliverable by then. Furthermore, the benefits of conversion diminish over time as the number of members with a GMP is steadily reducing. It is for these reasons that the Government has decided to make full GMP indexation the permanent solution for public service pension schemes.

The consultation set out the benefits of undertaking conversion, which include a reduction in administrative complexity in the long term regarding those public servants yet to reach State Pension age. In addition, some respondents also highlighted additional benefits of undertaking conversion, some of which were highlighted in the Government's response to the previous GMP indexation and equalisation consultation in 2016/17. However, notwithstanding these arguments, the Government does not consider these benefits to outweigh the benefits of making full indexation the permanent solution.

Public service pension schemes will now provide full indexation to those public servants with a GMP reaching State Pension age from 6 April 2021. The Government's response to the consultation, has been published online on gov.uk and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-service-pensions-guaranteed-minimum-pension-indexation-consultation>.

## Report on Victim Compensation for Gaddafi-sponsored IRA Terrorism

[HLWS865]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

In March 2019, the then Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, appointed Mr William Shawcross as his Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. Mr Shawcross was commissioned to write an internal scoping report on the subject of compensation for UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. Mr Shawcross submitted his report in March 2020.

The Government thanks Mr Shawcross for his report. Since it was commissioned as an internal scoping report, to provide internal advice to Ministers, and draws on private and confidential conversations held by Mr Shawcross, the Government will not be publishing the report.

These important issues have needed careful and thorough consideration across Government given the complexity and sensitivity of the issues raised.

The UK Government reiterates its profound sympathy for UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism and indeed for all victims of the Troubles. We recognise the pain and suffering of victims of violent crime, including terrorism, and provide publicly funded support and compensation schemes for those affected.

The UK Government is clear that the primary responsibility for the actions of the IRA lies with the IRA. Nevertheless, the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA was extensive. It is widely documented in the public domain. It involved money, weapons, explosives and training from the 1970s onwards. It helped fuel the Troubles in Northern Ireland and enhanced the IRA's ability to carry out attacks in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The responsibility for providing compensation specifically for the actions of the Qadhafi regime lies with the Libyan State. The Government has therefore repeatedly urged the Libyan authorities, including at the highest levels of the Libyan government, to engage with UK victims and their representatives, and to address their claims for compensation.

However, there are clear practical difficulties in obtaining compensation from Libya for Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. The conflict, political instability and economic instability that have prevailed in Libya for most of the last ten years since the fall of the Qadhafi regime present particular challenges.

Mr Shawcross has considered these issues, including the difficulties of defining UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism given the extensive nature of Libyan support for the IRA, and the range of proposals for providing compensation to victims. The Government

has reflected fully on these issues. The Government's considered view is that an additional, UK-funded mechanism for providing compensation to victims of the Troubles would not provide accountability for the specific role of the Qadhafi regime in supporting the IRA.

Mr Shawcross also considered whether compensation for UK victims should be funded from Libyan frozen assets in the UK. Under international law, when assets are frozen, they continue to belong to the designated individual or entity. Frozen assets may not be seized by the UK Government.

In implementing financial sanctions, the UK is obliged to comply with the relevant United Nations obligations. UN Security Council Resolution 2009 (2011) states that the aim of the Libya financial sanctions regime is "to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011) shall as soon as possible be made available to and for the benefit of the people of Libya". There is also no legal basis for the UK to refuse the release of frozen assets once conditions for delisting or unfreezing those assets set out in UN Security Council Resolution 2009 of 2011 are met.

Therefore, regrettably, the UK has no legal basis to seize frozen Libyan assets or to refuse the release of frozen assets. The Government cannot lawfully use Libyan assets frozen in the UK to provide compensation to victims.

The UK Government has also considered whether it should provide compensation to victims from public funds, which it may subsequently recoup from Libya. The responsibility for providing compensation specifically for the actions of the Qadhafi regime is the direct responsibility of the Libyan State. It is not therefore for the UK Government to divert UK public funds specifically for this particular purpose.

Victims of violent crime, including terrorism, occurring in Great Britain can access the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, funded by the UK Government, subject to eligibility criteria and time limits. Bereaved family members can access bereavement and funeral payments. In Northern Ireland, victims have access to the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. The Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme, to be delivered by the Northern Ireland Executive, will provide acknowledgement payments to people living with permanent physical or psychological disablement resulting from being injured in Troubles-related incidents. Details of when the scheme will be open for applications, and how people can apply, will be published by the Northern Ireland Executive.

The UK will continue to press the Libyan authorities to address the Libyan State's historic responsibility for the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA.

## Tax Policies and Consultations

[HLWS867]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman)

has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I have today laid before Parliament “Tax policies and consultations - Spring 2021” [CP 404].

The measures set out in this command paper will shape the next steps in delivering the Government’s tax administration strategy, announced in July 2020. The command paper also includes a range of important policy announcements and updates which will support wider improvements in the tax system, including on business rates and environmental taxes, as well as measures to drive down non-compliance and enhance simplification.

By announcing these tax measures and consultations separately from the Budget, the Government is seeking to provide greater visibility and transparency for Parliamentarians, tax professionals and other stakeholders, in order to increase the overall quality of tax policy and legislation.

Copies of the paper are available in the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office and on [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-policies-and-consultations-spring-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-policies-and-consultations-spring-2021).

## **The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021**

[HLWS866]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following statement:

Yesterday the Minister of State made the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 which are today being laid before Parliament. The Regulations have been made because women and girls in Northern Ireland are still unable to access high-quality abortion and post-abortion care in Northern Ireland.

The Regulations have been made to ensure, as required by the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019, that all of the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the 2018 UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) report are implemented in Northern Ireland.

We are disappointed with the continuing failure to commission abortion services that are consistent with the Regulations we made almost a year ago. After a year of engaging to see positive progress made, with no success, the legal duties included in section 9 of the NIEF Act are such that I have to act now.

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 laid in Parliament today give me a power to direct Northern Ireland Ministers and, departments or relevant agencies to implement all of the recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW report, consistent with the conditions set out in the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No.2) Regulations 2020.

We do not take this step lightly. However, the devolution settlement does not absolve us of our responsibility to uphold the rights of women and girls.

Our strong preference remains for the Northern Ireland Executive to take responsibility itself for upholding these rights.

It has always been our expectation and preference that the Department of Health would drive forward the commissioning of abortion services. The approach we took was to put in place the legal framework for how abortion services could be accessed and provided, consistent with our legal duties. However, it is crucial that abortion, as a healthcare service, is delivered and overseen locally by the Department of Health and relevant health bodies with the relevant legal powers, policy and operational expertise to do so. This ensures that abortion can be delivered in a sustainable way, and become embedded into the health and social care system in Northern Ireland in the long term.

In March 2020, I wrote to the relevant Northern Ireland Ministers to achieve this, by asking that they work to ensure the implementation of all of the recommendations under paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW Report. We had anticipated this would be acted upon at the earliest opportunity.

Over this past year the Northern Ireland Office has continued to work closely with the Department of Health, and other relevant Northern Ireland departments, trying to progress this work. I, together with the Minister of State, have continued to engage through political channels to encourage positive progress by the devolved administration.

However, almost one year later, women and girls are still unable to access high-quality abortion and post-abortion care locally in Northern Ireland in all of the circumstances in which they are entitled to under the 2020 Regulations.

We understand that managing the Covid-19 response has been an immense challenge, and has placed the Health and Social Care system in Northern Ireland under considerable pressure.

I put on record my thanks to the medical professionals who have ensured that women and girls have had some local access to abortion services in Northern Ireland to date, and the organisations that have supported this work, particularly in the current circumstances and wider strains on the health system. This includes the work that Informing Choices Northern Ireland have taken forward on the central access point and counselling service for women and girls since April last year.

However, more needs to be done with respect to formally commissioning abortion services and supporting the rights of women and girls in accessing safe local services and relevant support measures; as well as putting in place clear guidance for medical professionals.

While Parliament considers the Regulations, we will continue to engage with the Minister of Health and the Executive to try and find a way forward over the coming weeks before any direction is given.

We have used every opportunity and avenue to encourage progress and offer our support over the past

year so we are disappointed that we have reached this impasse. We take this step now, to further demonstrate our commitment to ensuring women and girls can safely access abortion services in Northern Ireland.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 23 March 2021

## Agriculture: Environment Protection

Asked by *Baroness Young of Old Scone*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain the requirements of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions 7a: Boundaries, as set out in The guide to cross compliance in England 2021, published on 18 December 2020, as a legal requirement for all farmers and land managers (1) during, and (2) after the end of, their proposed plans set out in The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024, published on 30 November 2020. [HL14073]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Hedgerows and field boundaries are the very essence of our British countryside. They provide vital resources for mammals, birds and insect species. As well as being an important habitat in their own right, they act as wildlife corridors allowing dispersal between isolated habitats. Many are also important historical and cultural landscape features.

We are committed to maintaining standards and have domestic legislation which protects the environment, animal health and welfare, and plant health. We will continue to review this as necessary. We will look to use the most effective mechanism to deliver against environmental goals. It may be that another, non-regulatory mechanism is the most effective means to ensure that standards currently in cross compliance are maintained.

Asked by *Baroness Young of Old Scone*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain the requirements of (1) Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions 1: Establishment of buffer strips along watercourses, (2) Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions 4: Providing minimum soil cover, and (3) Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions 5: Minimising soil erosion, as set out in The guide to cross compliance in England 2021, published on 18 December 2020, as legal requirements for all farmers and land managers (a) during, and (b) following the end of, their proposed plans set out in The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024, published on 30 November 2020. [HL14074]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** We currently have regulations which protect water courses under the farming rules for water. Farming rules for water require land managers to leave unfertilised zones adjacent to watercourses and boreholes and to assess the pollution risk of fertilisers and manures they apply.

The farming rules for water require land managers to take action to prevent soil loss caused by agricultural or

horticultural activity. This does not require land managers to take the same specific action as in cross compliance but provide a generalised provision that has the same policy aim as GAECs 4 and 5. Additionally, the farming rules for water require farmers to manage livestock so as to prevent pollution.

We are committed to maintaining standards and have domestic legislation which protects the environment, animal health and welfare, and plant health. We will continue to review this as necessary. We will look to use the most effective mechanism to deliver against environmental goals. It may be that another, non-regulatory mechanism is the most effective means to ensure that standards currently in cross compliance are maintained.

## Agriculture: Regulation

Asked by *Baroness Young of Old Scone*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist on 15 September 2020 (HL Deb, col 1187), when they plan to open the "intensive consultation" on a new regulatory framework for farming. [HL14072]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Our future regulatory system will be developed with a focus on the environment and animal health and welfare, on developing trust between industry and government. We want to deliver an effective transition from the existing regulatory model, mostly delivered through cross compliance, to the new approach based on established good practice and developed in partnership with the sector. We are committed to working with industry to design a system that supports a more resilient sector producing high quality food in a more sustainable way.

Co-designing and establishing a new regulatory model for the long term, will take time and we want to work with the sector and others impacted by regulation to get it right. We will always ensure that we have a robust system of inspection and enforcement in place to maintain regulatory protections.

Involving users (e.g. farmers, land managers, users of the environment) through co-design is key to developing a modern regulatory approach that works, both for users and regulators. These participatory approaches are intended to work alongside and compliment more traditional engagement with citizens and industry, such as consultation. Consultation is still an important engagement method and we will, of course, consult widely on future proposals at the appropriate time.

## Asylum: Napier Barracks

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice on 8 February (148930), when

the recommendations of the independent rapid review by Human Applications will be published. [HL14035]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice on 8 February (148930), when they plan to hold roundtables with stakeholders to discuss (1) the recommendations, (2) actions taken, and (3) proposed next steps, arising from the independent rapid review by Human Applications. [HL14036]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office contracted with an independent organisation, Human Applications, to conduct a rapid review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers, including hotels and the former military barracks. This was to provide assurance of compliance with public health guidelines to prevent the transmission of Covid 19.

Human Applications completed their visits, which included both the Napier and Penally sites, and they have now submitted a report with their findings and recommendations. Once we have responded to the report, we intend to share a summary of the findings and actions taken with key stakeholders.

We have already shared the report with accommodation providers to allow them to action specific findings.

The roundtables were held between 16-26 February, with stakeholders from Local Authorities, Statutory Bodies, Strategic Migration Partnerships and Non-Governmental Organisations; recommendations were shared to inform discussions on the day.

An action plan to move these recommendations forward is being developed, and stakeholders will be consulted, and progress reported through our usual engagement routes; Asylum Strategic Engagement Group, Asylum Support Subgroups, SMP weekly meetings and HO, Local Government Chief Executives meeting.

The recommendations from this review were shared on the 9 March with the Home Affairs Select Committee together with actions taken to address these recommendations.

### **China: Uighurs**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy *The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China's Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, published on 8 March; and what plans they have to discuss its findings with the authors of that report. [HL14024]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government has noted the findings of the report. We will continue to engage with a wide range of experts and review all available evidence to inform our understanding of the situation in Xinjiang and to guide policy development. The Government remains deeply concerned by the human

rights violations occurring in the region and continues to play a leading role in holding China to account, including at the UN.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for establishing an UN independent investigative mechanism to investigate the situation of Uighurs in China. [HL14025]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** It is vitally important that China grants unfettered access to Xinjiang for the UN Human Rights Commissioner or another independent fact finding body, without further delay. The Foreign Secretary made the UK position on this issue clear in a high level intervention at the Human Rights Council on 22 February.

### **Coronavirus: Medical Records**

*Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market*

To ask Her Majesty's Government under which SNOMED code patients with 'long COVID-19' symptoms are categorised. [HL14291]

**Lord Bethell:** The SNOMED-CT codes are as follows:

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Acute COVID-19 infection (1325171000000109)

Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 (1325181000000106)

Post-COVID-19 syndrome (1325161000000102)

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### **Coronavirus: Screening**

*Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the roll-out of COVID-19 home testing kits, whether their preferred testing method is (1) a lateral flow test, or (2) a saliva-based test; and what are the reasons for any such preference. [HL14171]

**Lord Bethell:** Our preferred method of home testing is swab-based lateral flow devices (LFDs) for asymptomatic people and swab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests for symptomatic people. LFDs are used as they are practical, easy to interpret and can be used in a wide range of settings. PCR tests are used for those with symptoms as they are more sensitive to low levels of virus.

### **Coronavirus: Screening and Vaccination**

*Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they take to ensure that information about disability accessibility at COVID-19 (1) vaccination centres, and (2) testing sites, is made available in accessible formats. [HL13261]

**Lord Bethell:** Vaccination centres are subject to the same standards to support people with accessibility needs

as all health care services. The national booking letters are sent in size 16 font as standard as defined by RNIB as large print. As well as providing an option to book online, the national booking letters also provide 119 as an option. British Sign Language (BSL) and text relay services are also available from 119. Booking information for vaccination appointments will be available in braille, audio, larger print and easy read shortly. We are currently also translating this booking information into 16 different languages.

NHS Test and Trace have a BSL video relay service for deaf and hearing-impaired people visiting a testing site, so they can receive instructions on how to take a test via a video call with a BSL interpreter, facilitated by a testing assistant. Live BSL translation is also available via 119.

Non digital users can access the service by contacting the 119 call centre and book a test at all sites across the network.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure patients in rural areas receive the COVID-19 vaccination in a timely manner; whether any such steps take into account the (1) isolation of such patients, and (2) the distances such patients have to travel to medical facilities. [HL11891]

**Lord Bethell:** Currently, in England, more than 98% of the population is within 10 miles of a vaccine service. In a small number of highly rural areas, the vaccination centre will be a mobile unit. The mobile model helps more remote rural communities, particularly those where public transport is limited.

*Asked by Baroness Wheatcroft*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision of vaccines against COVID-19 for (1) elderly, or (2) vulnerable, patients hospitalised for other conditions. [HL12690]

**Lord Bethell:** By mid-February we successfully offered a first vaccine dose to everyone in the top four priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as follows:

- all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers;
- all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers;
- all those 75 years of age and over; and
- all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

The latest NHS England data dated 4 March shows that 7,300,964 individuals aged 70 years old or over have been vaccinated with at least one dose and 1,961,501 clinically extremely vulnerable patients have been vaccinated with at least one dose. This means 88.3% of the population identified as clinically extremely vulnerable have received

at least one dose. We do not hold figures for vulnerable patients hospitalised for other conditions, but hospital hubs will typically vaccinate eligible inpatients where clinically appropriate.

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to suspend without pay any NHS front line staff, and (2) to dismiss any administrative NHS staff, who refuse a COVID-19 vaccination. [HL14082]

**Lord Bethell:** There are no plans to do so. Whilst COVID-19 vaccines are not currently mandated for any groups, the Government strongly encourages healthcare and social care workers to be vaccinated in order to protect those that they care for.

### Corporation Tax: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about the UK Government's decision to increase the level of corporation tax. [HL14229]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive have regular discussions at official and Ministerial level on matters of mutual interest.

### Cumbria University: Newton Rigg College

*Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the abolition of the Northwest Regional Development Agency on 31 March 2012, what plans they have to publish documents previously held by that Agency relating to (1) the Agency's funding of the University of Cumbria's acquisition of Newton Rigg College in Cumbria, and (2) the transfer of (a) assets, and (b) land, between Newton Rigg College and the University of Cumbria. [HL13378]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government has no plans to publish documents concerning the funding and transfer of assets and land relating to the University of Cumbria's acquisition of Newton Rigg College in 2007.

### Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what communications they have had with education trade unions since the reopening of schools on 8 March; and, further to any such communications, what assessment they have made of the current view of education trade unions on the merits of reopening educational settings. [HL14080]

**Baroness Berridge:** Ministers and officials have been in regular contact with education unions both in the run up to 8 March 2021 and beyond that date.

Unions recognise the importance of face-to-face learning and the impact that being out of school has on children and young people.

We continue to work with unions on keeping schools open and on ensuring that no child suffers because of lost education.

### Environmental Land Management Scheme

*Asked by Baroness Young of Old Scone*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use public funding in the new Environmental Land Management scheme for England to fund measures required by the cross-compliance rules for claiming rural payments. [[HL14075](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Cross compliance and the rules they enforce are still in place and will continue to operate for the time being. Whilst farmers continue to receive a basic payment scheme payment or are part of most agri-environment schemes they will be subject to the cross-compliance rules.

The rules within cross compliance are mostly in domestic legislation and will continue to apply as we move away from CAP schemes.

We are working with stakeholders and end users to determine the specific land management actions that will be paid for under our new schemes that will pay farmers to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions. The Agricultural Transition Plan set out examples of the types of actions that we envisage paying for under the schemes. We have also recently published more details on the first phase of piloting the Sustainable Farming Incentive, including the actions we will pay farmers to take to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way.

### Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Berridge on 14 January (HL Deb, col 882), what do they consider a reasonable maximum profit for a contractor to make on the new Edenred school food voucher scheme. [[HL14028](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government has taken unprecedented and substantial action to ensure that children do not go hungry as we take measures to tackle COVID-19, including in relation to free school meals.

Schools were free to decide the best approach for their free school meal pupils. They could provide lunch parcels, locally arranged vouchers, or the national voucher scheme.

The department does not comment on the commercial arrangements of third parties, but can confirm that we are

only paying for the face value of goods delivered, which in this case is vouchers.

### Free Zones: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the Northern Ireland Protocol for the selection of any Northern Ireland ports as freeports. [[HL14224](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** We want to ensure that the whole of the UK can benefit from Freeports. The UK Government is holding ongoing discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive to establish at least one Freeport in Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

The Northern Ireland Protocol does not prevent the establishment of Freeports in Northern Ireland. However, it is appropriate that we take the time, working with the Northern Ireland Executive, to ensure the Freeport offer fully aligns with the circumstances in Northern Ireland and our international obligations, and delivers for ports, businesses and communities in Northern Ireland.

### Further Education: Apprentices

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include funding for companies to train employees at further education colleges in the Apprenticeship Levy scheme. [[HL14069](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** In the 2021-22 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England is £2.5 billion, double what was spent in 2010-11. Employers can use this funding for the training and assessment of apprentices and can choose a training provider from our Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, which may be a further education college, to deliver the high-quality training they need.

From 1 April 2021, all small to medium-sized enterprises arranging new apprenticeship starts will do so through the apprenticeship service, as levy payers do now. This will give them more control over their apprenticeship choices and the ability to reserve funds before choosing the provider that best meets their needs.

### Further Education: Mental Health Services

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking to ensure that mental health literacy is part of all post 16 education programmes. [[HL14067](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Further education (FE) providers provide mental health support to their students in their wrap around, pastoral offer. This includes several initiatives supported by the department. For example, the department set up the 'Wellbeing for Education Return' scheme, an £8 million scheme funding expert advisers

and training in every local authority area to support wellbeing recovery as children and young people returned to school and FE from September 2020.

Some of the colleges funded through the £5.4 million College Collaboration Fund (CCF) are developing new ways to support student and staff mental health and wellbeing, including the 'Let's Chat' programme developed by Weston College. Further information on the CCF is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-collaboration-fund-ccf-projects/resources-college-collaboration-fund-ccf>. Once developed, these resources will be available to all further education providers online.

More recently we have announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, including through Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams – which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges – will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children and young people. This increase means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services.

We also know that some FE providers are creating their own innovative programmes to support student and staff mental health. The Sheffield College have rolled out their Uniheads mental health platform, which helps students develop good mental health knowledge and skills, build mental fitness and address poor mental health.

## Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have for an immigration centre for women on the former site of Hassockfield Secure Training Centre. [HL14034]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre (IRC) for around 80 women by the autumn.

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review, to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity for men and women it proves necessary to detain for the purposes of removal, and to protect the public; and to provide value for money.

## Hate Crime

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 December 2018 (HL Deb, col 1019), whether the definition of a hate crime used by the police and Crown Prosecution Service has been (1) debated, and (2) approved, by Parliament; and if so, when. [HL14049]

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 December 2018 (HL Deb, col 1019), how many UK citizens have a non crime hate incident registered on their police record but have not been (1) charged with, or (2) found guilty of, such an offence. [HL14050]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The police and Crown Prosecution Service define and record hate crime as “any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”

This definition has been produced for operational purposes. Any arrest, charge or prosecution taken forward by the police or Crown Prosecution Service must relate to a criminal offence laid out in legislation that has been approved by Parliament.

Information on how many UK citizens have a hate crime registered on their police record but have not been (1) charged with, or (2) found guilty of, such an offence is not held centrally.

## Hospitals: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they took to improve (1) the efficacy, and (2) the capacity, of hospital ventilation systems following the publication of the report by the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch COVID-19 transmission in hospitals: management of the risk – a prospective safety investigation in October 2020. [HL13443]

**Lord Bethell:** The current National Health Service infection prevention control principles recommend healthcare settings undertake a series of interventions to reduce the risk of transmission of infection, including on cleaning and decontamination of the environment and shared equipment and on ventilation.

In addition, the *Health Technical Memorandum (HTM) 03-01: Specialised ventilation for healthcare premises* is currently being updated and is going through final draft review and approval processes as is normal for all technical guidance. HTMs give comprehensive advice and guidance on the design, installation and operation of specialised building and engineering technology used in the delivery of healthcare.

## Hybrid Bills

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether he plans to initiate a review of hybrid Bill procedures; and if so,

when he expects to start that review and when it will invite evidence. [[HL14249](#)]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** In 2016, a review of hybrid bill procedure was commissioned by the Senior Deputy Speaker and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons. It was planned to take place in two stages. The first stage was completed in 2017 and resulted in a number of changes to the Private Business Standing Orders in both Houses. On the 22 March, I wrote to the Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal informing her that a consultation in relation to the second stage would begin soon. It will last for two to three months. It will be a public consultation and evidence will be invited. This is a joint review, and the Chairman of Ways and Means has written to the Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons in similar terms.

### **In Vitro Fertilisation**

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to answer the Written Question asked by Baroness Deech on 8 February (HL13065); for what reasons their answer has been delayed; and when they expect to respond to the consultation on Statutory Storage Limits for eggs, sperm and embryos. [[HL14140](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** I responded to the noble Lady's question on 12 March.

The Department has been considering the responses to the public consultation about egg, sperm and embryo storage limits and options for a revised scheme. A Government response to the consultation will follow in due course.

### **Occupied Territories: International Criminal Court**

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision on 5 February that its jurisdiction extends to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, what assessment they have made of the implications of that decision for (1) the legitimacy of the ICC, and (2) the enforcement of its subsequent rulings. [[HL14032](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Deech***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for the Israel and Palestine peace process of the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 5 February that the ICC's jurisdiction extends to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [[HL14033](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We respect the independence of the ICC, and we expect it to exercise due prosecutorial and judicial discipline.

### **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 14 January (HL11680), as part of their report Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending, published in December 2020, whether (1) the Home Office, or (2) the External Reference Group, considered the report of the Quilliam Foundation Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation – Dissecting Grooming Gangs, published on 12 December 2017; and, if so, what assessment they made of the finding of that report that 84 per cent of perpetrators had Asian heritage, of which the majority were (1) British-Pakistani, and (2) Muslim. [[HL14051](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 14 January (HL11680), as part of their report Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending, whether any members of their External Reference Group sought to include Islamic teaching among the cultural drivers for offending; and if so, how many. [[HL14053](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** It is important to acknowledge and address the cultural contexts in which group-based child sexual exploitation occurs, and this is something the External Reference Group (ERG) considered at length. However, no member of the Group sought to include Islamic teaching as a driver for offending.

The ERG was established with the specific purpose of reviewing and informing the paper, 'Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending'. The ERG did not specifically discuss Quilliam's report. However, as part of its work in producing the paper, the Home Office published an independently peer-reviewed literature review, which considered published studies of group-based child sexual exploitation. The literature review made the following assessment:

Research by Quilliam asserted that 84% of 264 offenders convicted for grooming gang offences between 2005 and 2017 were Asian, 8% were Black, 7% were White and 1% were of unknown ethnicity. This figure of 84% has been widely repeated as academic evidence for an extreme over-representation of Asian offenders despite a lack of clarity about sampling and data analysis methods. For example, the authors identify 264 offenders, but do not specify how they were found, or how their ethnicity was categorised. These findings are therefore not suitable for drawing conclusions about ethnicity of group-based CSE offenders.

When publishing the paper, the Home Secretary expressed her disappointment in the quality of data on the characteristics of offending and committed to addressing this issue. As such, in the new national Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, the Government commits to

engaging with criminal justice partners, academics, think tanks, charities and frontline professionals on improving the range, quality and analysis of data collected, to help protect children by preventing and detecting offending.

### Offences against Children: Rotherham

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, published on 21 August 2014; and in particular the finding that more than 1,400 girls were estimated to be the victims of child sexual exploitation. [HL14052]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Child sexual abuse is an abhorrent crime and this Government is committed to keeping children and young people safe from all forms of abuse, including child sexual exploitation.

The National Crime Agency's Operation Stovewood in Rotherham is the largest historical child sexual exploitation investigation undertaken to date in this country, and continues to investigate these offences, with more than 170 people arrested to date. Since 2016-17, we have provided £31.1 million of special grant funding to South Yorkshire Police towards the cost of Operation Stovewood. We have also made significant increases to funding for victims, including doubling funding for national services which support victims of child sexual abuse.

This funding forms part of a comprehensive package of measures the Government has set out to prevent offending and help victims and survivors of abuse. The recently published Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy sets out how we will drive action across every part of Government, across all agencies, all sectors, charities, communities, technology companies and society more widely to tackle child sexual abuse in all its forms, including group-based child sexual exploitation.

### Off-payroll Working

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of changes to the off-payroll working rules due to come into effect from 6 April on freelancers; and what steps they are taking to ensure that it is financially viable for freelancers to continue operating as self-employed individuals. [HL14298]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The changes to the off-payroll working rules come into effect on 6 April 2021 and were legislated for in Finance Act 2020. The off-payroll working rules have been in place for over 20 years and are designed to ensure that individuals working like employees but through their own limited company pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) as those who are directly employed.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) <sup>[1]</sup> published at Spring Budget 2021 sets out HMRC's assessment that the reform of the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect about 180,000 individuals working through their own limited companies.

The changes to the off-payroll working rules do not introduce a new tax liability. Those who are complying with the existing rules should feel little impact on their income.

The measure is targeted at individuals who are not compliant with the existing rules, and it shifts responsibility for determining an individual's status from the individual's limited company to the client engaging them. These individuals will be required to pay tax at the correct levels and will therefore face additional tax liabilities. However, there will be continuing savings for the individual's limited company as they will no longer have the requirement to determine status or associated accounting burdens.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021>.

### Palestinians: Children

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Defence for Children International Isolated and Alone, published in December 2020; and, in particular, the finding that Palestinian children are routinely detained in solitary confinement for an average of more than 14 days for interrogation purposes. [HL14046]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the Defense for Children's report entitled, 'Isolated and Alone: Palestinian children held in solitary confinement by Israeli authorities for interrogation'. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention and regularly raise this with the Israeli Ministry of Justice, most recently on 23 February 2021. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv will continue to have a regular dialogue with Israel on this issue. We also fund projects providing legal aid to assist children with legal representation and capacity building assistance to local lawyers. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

### Palestinians: Politics and Government

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about their imprisonment of Palestinian politicians ahead of the Palestinian elections due to be held in May. [HL14047]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome President Abbas' announcement of dates for legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for the first time since 2006. Elections are an important and necessary step towards democratic renewal and strong, inclusive and accountable Palestinian institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights. We urge all parties, including all Palestinian political groups and the Israeli government, to play their part in delivering free, fair, credible and peaceful Palestinian elections.

### **Pentonville Prison: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise the work of the Governor of HMP Pentonville during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL14045]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** The Ministry of Justice is not able to comment on an individual employee's specific recognition or reward.

We do however recognise that HMPPS staff in prisons, probation, headquarters and the Youth Custody Service have had an extraordinary and challenging year. There are recognition and reward procedures in place, and we offer a range of ways to recognise and thank individual members of staff for their particular efforts. This can take the form of personalised recognition, using performance recognition vouchers, or a gift. Special bonus payments may also be an appropriate recognition mechanism for exceptional performance contributions.

### **Prisoners on Remand**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the average length of time that prisoners spend on remand awaiting trial. [HL14044]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** Judges are prioritising the most urgent cases. We were one of the first among other comparable jurisdictions globally to resume jury trials, and Crown Courts currently list thousands of cases each week.

Our systems show that where a defendant is in custody and had a first hearing in February 2021, most cases are listed for trial in the Crown Court prior to September 2021.

In September 2020, Her Majesty's Prison Probation Service (HMPPS) began a trial of a dedicated and proactive Bail Information Service (BIS) in several courts and prisons in the North West of England and Wales. This service provides the courts with timely information relating to the defendant and availability of alternative provisions, such as suitable accommodation, to help to reduce unnecessary remands and increase the appropriate use of bail and bail conditions. In tandem with this trial, HMPPS are rolling-out a Covid-19 response BIS in all

public sector remand prisons. A key aim of both initiatives is to inform the design, resourcing and delivery of a future dedicated and proactive national BIS.

### **Prisons: Standards**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that best practices and lessons learned are (1) shared, (2) adopted, and (3) maintained, among prisons. [HL14042]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** Throughout the pandemic HMPPS has been identifying and sharing lessons learned. We have been listening to different perspectives and have paid attention to the challenges for staff and prisoners. We have considered the many examples of positive practice and have focussed our efforts to do the best for both staff and prisoners in very difficult circumstances. Learning lessons is an ongoing process and we continue to gather and share a range of information, including feedback from scrutiny bodies, staff, those in our care and the voluntary sector.

We are feeding what we have learned into prison safety and wellbeing initiatives, regime redesign, planning and ongoing mitigations for prisoners. Prisons are also using lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic to prioritise resources to focus on safety and wellbeing, adapt provision, reinforce fair and decent behaviours and to show visible leadership. We are building on learning with a programme of events in the Spring which will be an opportunity for operational staff to share and reflect on learning from Covid to inform practice and both recovery and future reforms.

More routinely, bespoke service improvement and work developed in response to common issues uses best practice and lessons learned. This takes place through line management activity, between peers, and through central support such as the Prison Performance Support Programme.

HMPPS Scrutiny Intelligence unit routinely reviews all external scrutiny and internal assurance reports to draw out good practice and themes which are communicated to prisons and more widely across HMPPS. They also identify where lessons could be learned or implemented more effectively. Good practice and the areas requiring improvement are also reported each month to the Prison Performance Committee to ensure best practices and lessons learned are maintained among prisons.

### **Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Arts**

*Asked by Baroness Bull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 12 March (HL Deb, col 1980), what assessment they have made of the impact of the eligibility criteria for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme on the creative

industries; and what plans they have to introduce targeted support to ineligible freelance workers. [HL14255]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government recognises that taxpayers have faced immense challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the creative industries.

Freelancers who are ineligible for the SEISS are likely to be those who receive less than half of their income from self-employment. The design of the SEISS, including the eligibility criteria which require that an individual's trading profits must be at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

Freelancers who are ineligible for the SEISS may be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The CJRS is available to individuals regardless of their employment contract or employment rights, as long as they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

The Government recognises the value of the cultural sectors and has announced £300 million in additional funding to build on the existing £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund. To date, the Culture Recovery Fund has allocated more than £800 million of grants and loans to over 3,000 cultural organisations in England. Organisations supported include independent cinemas, theatres, museums, orchestras and music venues.

### State Retirement Pensions: British Overseas Territories

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 10 March (HL13814), what action does a British Overseas Territory without a reciprocal agreement on state pensions need to take to open negotiations on securing such an agreement. [HL14142]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Government has not received any recent representations for reciprocal social security agreements from British Overseas Territories without such an agreement.

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many citizens resident in each of the British Overseas Territories that has a reciprocal agreement on state pensions with the UK qualify for an annual uprating of their pensions. [HL14143]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The UK has reciprocal agreements with Bermuda and Gibraltar that cover state pensions.

<i>Territory</i>	<i>Number of UK state pension recipients</i>
Bermuda	716
Gibraltar	1,770

Source: StatXplore, August 2020

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the annual cost of uprating the state pensions of all citizens of British Overseas Territories that (1) have reciprocal agreements with the UK on state pensions, and (2) do not have such agreements. [HL14144]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The estimated annual cost of up-rating state pensions is calculated at UK level.

The department has not made an estimate.

### UK Relations with EU: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have provided about the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and its implications for people in (1) Great Britain, and (2) Northern Ireland. [HL14158]

**Lord Frost:** Comprehensive guidance on what the Protocol means for people and businesses in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is available online. In particular, details of available support and of specific processes for different kinds of goods movements (whether by traders or individuals) is available at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/trading-and-moving-goods-in-and-out-of-northern-ireland>.

### Visual Impairment: Social Distancing

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support and advice is available to visually impaired people in relation to social distancing guidelines and requirements. [HL13490]

**Lord Bethell:** We have published support and advice regarding social distancing for blind and visually impaired people in an online only format. The guidance explains how to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19 while in unfamiliar settings, communicating with others, shopping and exercise. This guidance has been developed to permit support, including guiding, to be given whilst mitigating the risk of transmission as far as possible, informed by the available clinical evidence.

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