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**Tuesday
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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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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Frost	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 27 April 2021

General Aviation UK

[HLWS936]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Robert Courts) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

General Aviation (GA) is often referred to as the ‘grassroots’ of aviation and is the bedrock to our successful and world-leading aviation sector.

It’s worth nearly £4billion to the UK economy, supporting nearly 40,000 jobs. The hundreds of aerodromes up and down the country form an important part of the nation’s transport infrastructure.

General Aviation provides the entry point for careers in aviation and is fundamental to inspiring the next generation of aviation professionals. It supports vital services from law enforcement to life-saving airborne medical and search and rescue teams, and provides future pilots, engineers and other highly skilled professionals a first glimpse of a potential career in aviation.

Therefore, it is only right that the Government’s vision is for the UK to be the best place in the world for General Aviation as a flourishing, wealth generating and job-producing sector of the economy. Our ambitions remain high and we have set out our priorities and how we can achieve these in the Government’s GA Roadmap which I am pleased to announce. The Roadmap sets out our vision and strategic priorities for the sector, alongside our ambitious programme of work that will help us to deliver this. We will work alongside the CAA and our GA stakeholders to achieve these ambitions.

The GA Roadmap is available online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/979856/general-aviation-roadmap-spring-2021.pdf.

I also wish to set out the Government’s view that it is clear from the success of our aviation sector there is a national need to protect and enhance our strategic network of GA airfields – to ensure they continue to prosper and drive the economic growth this country needs and to support levelling up right across the country.

Airfields offer potential for highly skilled, dynamic and innovative businesses to grow and flourish – for manufacturing and maintenance of aircraft, aviation services, and for research and innovation.

At the heart of these efforts, we will work with airfields to strengthen their economic and strategic value both locally, regionally and nationally by supporting their development, and promoting mixed-use where there are benefits from offering their unique infrastructure to the wider community including for business, education, cultural and recreational activities. There are already

several airfields within the UK which share their infrastructure with a wide range of industries, as well as providing vital services to other government services. These airfields and many more are not just important to their local economies, but also critical to the success of the aviation sector.

General Aviation will also play a crucial part in our Government’s focus on innovation and decarbonisation. Trialling, testing and rolling out the next generation of zero emission technologies within General Aviation will support their development and pave the way for their wider adoption in larger commercial-scale operations – supporting decarbonisation of the wider sector and economy. This will help us reach our net zero target by 2050.

More widely, many aerodromes have been affiliated with operations during World Wars I and II and have since hosted heritage assets through the form of museums or have become designated historical sites. It is important these sites which are so important to our heritage are able to thrive and grow to be enjoyed and appreciated by generations to come.

Our aviation heritage is rich, deep and rightly a source of great national pride. Looking forward, the Government’s vision is for the UK to be the best place in the world for General Aviation as a flourishing, wealth generating and job-producing sector of the economy.

GOV.UK Verify: Digital Identity Assurance

[HLWS937]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary (Julia Lopez MP), has today made the following written statement:

I would like to update the House on the GOV.UK Verify programme and the development of a new cross-Government single sign-on and digital identity assurance pilot. This update follows the Written Ministerial Statement in April 2020 made by my colleague the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP.

Building on our experiences of Verify, and as we announced in last year’s Spending Review, the Government Digital Service is collaborating with other departments to develop the first phase of a new system that will make it easier for people to access Government services online. This will enable people to find and access Government services more quickly, allow citizens to prove their identity only once – without needing to re-enter information multiple times - and protect people’s privacy throughout.

People rightly expect from the Government a personalised, seamless and intuitive online service of the kind they get from their favourite online retailers. This pilot is an important step in that direction. Work is well underway and we have started the co-design with services and departments across Government.

While this new system is being developed, many users and connected Government services continue to rely on GOV.UK Verify, as has been the case during the pandemic. The Government has therefore decided to extend the current Verify service, enabling new users to sign up until April 2022 and existing users to sign in until April 2023. During this time the Government will continue to update the House on the progress of our pilot.

Post Office Court of Appeal Judgment

[HLWS935]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

This House is well aware of the issues with the Post Office Horizon IT System and the hugely negative impact it has had on the lives of affected postmasters. The Government welcomes the Court of Appeal's decision last Friday, 23 April, to quash the convictions of 39 postmasters. This is in addition to six convictions quashed by the Crown Court in December 2020.

The Court's decision is also another important step towards bringing resolution for these postmasters. The impact this ordeal has had on affected postmasters, their lives and livelihoods cannot be overstated. The Government will come back with a fuller oral statement tomorrow, 27 April, to update the House in more detail on these cases, owing to the scale of the miscarriage of justice we have seen here.

School Condition Funding

[HLWS938]

Baroness Berridge: My Right Honourable Friend, The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb), has made the following statement:

Today, I am confirming £1.8 billion of capital funding allocations for financial year 2021/22 to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate in England, as announced at the Spending Review.

This funding is provided to ensure schools have well maintained facilities to provide students with safe environments that support high-quality education. This funding represents an increase of over 20 per cent on last year's annual allocations and supports the Government's priority of ensuring that every child has the opportunity of a place at a good school, whatever their background.

For the financial year 2021/22, this funding includes:

- £1.1 billion in School Condition Allocations for local authorities, large multi-academy trusts, academy sponsors, and dioceses, and other large voluntary aided school groups, to invest in maintaining and improving the condition of their schools.
- £0.5 billion available through the Condition Improvement Fund programme for essential maintenance projects at small and stand-alone academy trusts, voluntary aided schools and sixth-form colleges.
- £0.2 billion of Devolved Formula Capital allocated directly for schools to spend on capital projects to meet their own priorities.

Figures have been rounded to one decimal place. Full details of the allocations including the funding methodology for financial year 2021/22 have been published on the Department for Education section on the GOV.UK website.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 27 April 2021

Alex Salmond

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 1 March (HL12487), whether they will now commission a report from the Head of the Civil Service on the conduct of civil servants involved in (1) the preparation for the trial *HM Advocate v Salmond*, and (2) the alleged collusion in the Scottish Government regarding the bringing of charges relating to that trial. [HL14574]

Lord True: These remain matters for the Scottish Government. I would refer the noble Lord to the Deputy First Minister's public statement of 23 March, which sets out that "The Scottish Government will carefully consider the recommendations from the Committee, alongside the other two review reports, in order to put improvements and an implementation plan in place."

As with civil servants who support HM Government, the Civil Service in Scotland is accountable to Ministers in the Scottish Government and those Ministers are in turn accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

Animal Products: UK Trade with EU

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact of a veterinary agreement between the UK and the EU on frictionless trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. [HL14887]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The United Kingdom proposed in the TCA negotiations last year that there could be an equivalence arrangement between the UK and the EU. Unfortunately, the EU was not open to such a suggestion. We continue to be open to such an equivalence arrangement, if the EU is interested in it. However, this cannot be on the basis of any dynamic alignment with EU rules, as this would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws and impact our ability to strike trade deals or agree trade facilitations with non-EU countries.

Aviation: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement on 20 April that international shipping emissions will be included within UK net zero targets, whether they will make a similar commitment in relation to international aviation emissions. [HL15132]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As announced on 20 April, we have set the Sixth Carbon Budget to include both international aviation and shipping emissions, as recommended by our independent climate advisors, the Climate Change Committee.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many loans under the (1) Bounce Back Loan Scheme, and (2) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, have had government guarantees removed; how many Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme accredited lenders have been involved in making such loans; what is the number and value of loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme that fell outside delegated authority; how many accredited lenders were involved; and whether they will publish the names of such lenders. [HL14884]

Lord Callanan: All accredited lenders are subject to audit by the British Business Bank (the Bank) to ensure their compliance with scheme rules. If serious non-compliance is identified, the Bank is entitled to take remedial action. Such action might include termination of the Guarantee Agreement or withdrawal of the Guarantee.

It would not be appropriate to comment on individual cases given commercial sensitivities.

Bus Services: Private Sector

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why private coach services have been prevented from running services before 17 May, given that scheduled bus services and train operators are allowed to run services before that date subject to social distancing. [HL15231]

Baroness Barran: The government has committed to taking a gradual, phased approach to reopening in order to keep the virus under control and to avoid another surge in infections that could put unsustainable pressure on the NHS. Decisions about reopening are informed by the latest scientific evidence and seek a balance between our key social and economic priorities, whilst preserving the health and safety of the country.

Step 2 of the Roadmap prioritises outdoor activity over indoor activity, and indoor activity within households rather than between them.

Private hire coach tours are only permitted for a private group of a single household or support bubble. The coach driver and tour guide do not count towards the single household/support bubble rule. Private hire coaches must not accommodate groups containing multiple households (excluding support bubbles) travelling together to the same destination or making the same journey (for example, for the purposes of a leisure tour), as this is

more akin to 'indoor gathering' than it is to 'public transport' and will therefore not be permitted until Step 3.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module continues to apply to the UK; whether there are any restrictions under (1) the Transparency Aid Module, or (2) agreements with borrowers, which prohibit the immediate announcement of details of all facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and if not, why they continue to withhold this information relating to individual borrowers. [HL14882]

Lord Callanan: The requirement to publish certain information via the Commission's Transparency Aid Module continues to apply with respect to aid granted prior to the end of the Transition Period, and in certain other limited circumstances set out in the Withdrawal Agreement.

Our priority is to ensure borrowers are given notice before information about their loans is shared with the European Commission and we are working with lenders and the British Business Bank to facilitate this. A rolling programme of reporting will then publish details of aid granted within the preceding 12 months where required.

Further information can be found on the British Business Bank's website.

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many claimants are in receipt of (1) Working Tax Credit, and (2) Child Tax Credits. [HL14879]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As at 2 December 2020, the latest published statistics, there were 1.99 million families in receipt of Child Tax Credit (CTC) and/or Working Tax Credit (WTC). Of this figure, approximately:

- 524,000 were out of work, receiving CTC only.
- 373,000 were in work and receiving CTC only.
- 868,000 were receiving both WTC and CTC.
- 225,000 were receiving WTC only.

These figures are published in HMRC's latest provisional tax credits awards statistics published on 26 February 2021^[1]. These provided a snapshot of awards in December 2020.

Finalised awards statistics are also published once a year, showing an average position for the entire year after tax credits awards have been finalised^[2].

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-december-2020>.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2018-to-2019>.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Department for Work and Pensions classifies ME/CFS as a musculoskeletal disease for the purposes of statistics and for the guidance and training of their health professionals, rather than as a neurological disease. [HL14895]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Assessment of entitlement to benefit does not depend on the condition itself, the underlying cause or how the condition is classified, but on the disabling effects of the condition(s) present.

The condition insight reports for Personal Independence Payment Health Professionals state that ME/CFS is classified as a neurological disorder; the guidance for CHDA Health Professionals who conduct Work Capability Assessments make no reference to the classification of ME/CFS.

The issue of classification for coding and statistical purposes has recently been brought to our attention. In light of this we are currently exploring moving ME/CFS from the musculoskeletal to neurological section for coding purposes.

Claudia Uruchurtu

Asked by Baroness Clark of Kilwinning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Mexico about (1) the whereabouts of Claudia Uruchurtu, and (2) the steps it is taking to find her. [HL15037]

Baroness Sugg: We are concerned about the disappearance of Claudia Uruchurtu, a Mexican national who has been missing since 26 March. Our Ambassador has raised the disappearance with the Mexican authorities at both state and federal levels, and is continuing to do so in support of Claudia's British dual-national family. The Mexican authorities have committed to carrying out an investigation into Claudia's disappearance.

We are aware that the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances has issued an urgent action request to the Mexican state to locate Claudia. As Claudia is a Mexican national, and is in Mexico, our authority and responsibility for engaging in this case is limited. However, our Embassy staff in Mexico City are in contact with Claudia's sisters, who are in Mexico helping with the search, and our Embassy team is helping the family access assistance from human rights groups in the area, and from the local UN human rights office.

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review areas of the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which have been criticised. [HL14894]

Baroness Berridge: The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report makes an important contribution to both the national conversation about race, and our efforts to level up and unite the whole country.

We are carefully considering the report's findings and recommendations. We will publish a Government response in due course. This Government remains fully committed to building a fairer Britain and taking the action needed to address disparities wherever they exist.

Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the terms of reference for the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities; and when were those terms of reference established. [HL14986]

Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich

To ask Her Majesty's Government when drafts of (1) the foreword, and (2) any sections, of the report of the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities were first seen by (a) the Prime Minister, (b) the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury and Equalities Minister, (c) any Cabinet Minister, and (d) any political adviser to the Government. [HL14987]

Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution (1) the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury and Equalities Minister, and (2) any political adviser to the Government, made to (a) the foreword, and (b) any sections, of the report of the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, prior to its publication on 31 March. [HL14988]

Baroness Berridge: The terms of reference for the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities were set by the Government and published on 16 July 2020. They are available online on GOV.UK. The Commission submitted its independent report to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Equalities on 31 March 2021.

The report is the work of the independent Commissioners. Ministers and political advisers to the Government did not contribute to the report.

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: HSBC

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the involvement of HSBC UK in the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities; and why

no other banks were mentioned or included in the report. [HL14893]

Baroness Berridge: The Commission engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including banks and financial institutions not limited to HSBC, either to hear evidence or to discuss recommendations. The list of those with whom the Commission engaged is available in 'Appendix D: Stakeholders' of the report.

Construction: Billing

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Prompt Payment Code on SMEs in the construction sector, given that only a small minority of construction businesses are signatories to the Code. [HL14896]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to fulfilling its manifesto commitment to clamp down on non-payment and late payment to support small businesses in the UK.

We have introduced a number of measures to tackle late payment. These include the Payment Practices Reporting Duty which creates transparency in payment behaviour, and the Prompt Payment Code which sets standards and best practice in payment culture. Both measures are applicable in the construction sector.

Since September 2019, suppliers also risk being excluded from winning large Government contracts if they cannot demonstrate prompt payment. This policy applies to Central Government contracts valued above £5m per annum, subject to the Public Contracts Regulations.

In addition, in May 2020 the Government issued a Guidance Note on responsible contractual behaviour in the performance and enforcement of contracts impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government will continue to review behaviours in contracting, including public sector procurement, prompt payment and contract management arrangements.

Construction: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist the Construction Leadership Council in achieving zero retentions within the construction sector by the target date of 2025. [HL14897]

Lord Callanan: The Government, in conjunction with the Construction Leadership Council, is working to identify a sustainable strategy on retentions for the whole construction sector.

Through the Business Models workstream of the Council, the practice of cash retentions and route to achieving zero retentions is being taken forward. This includes the options available, or could be developed, to provide an alternative to cash retentions and for the

industry to reduce or eliminate defective construction work and having a procurement and delivery model that recognises, incentivises and rewards good quality work.

Coronavirus: Clinical Trials

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what conclusions they drew from the COVID-19 human challenge trials; and how they used those data to inform their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL14891]

Lord Callanan: The human challenge virus characterisation studies commenced in February 2021, and no results from the study have yet been analysed or published. We expect to see data on whether the virus characterisation study has been a success in the second half of 2021.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many, and what percentage of the total of, (1) care home residents, (2) care home staff, (3) frontline health workers, and (4) patients over 80, have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales, and (d) Northern Ireland. [HL11804]

Lord Bethell: NHS England releases weekly vaccination data which shows that as of 15 April:

- 94.2% eligible residents in older adult care homes in England have received at least their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine;
- 79.4% eligible staff in older adult resident care homes have received at least their first dose; and
- 95.2% of patients over 80 years old have received at least their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The percentage of National Health Service trust health care workers who have received at least their first dose is not currently available, as NHS England's data does not currently include all frontline health workers as a sub-group.

COVID-19 vaccination data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is not collected centrally in the format requested as this is a devolved matter.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to changes in guidance about shielding during the COVID-19 pandemic, what plans they have to ensure that immunosuppressed clinically extremely vulnerable people are prioritised for a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination; and what steps they are taking to ensure that such people are supported prior to any such vaccination. [HL14926]

Lord Bethell: Immunosuppressed people who are clinically extremely vulnerable are included in priority group four of phase one of the vaccination programme.

Everyone who receives a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine should be offered a second dose of the same vaccine within 12 weeks of the first dose. Clinicians can advise their patients based on their knowledge and understanding of their immune status and likely immune response to vaccination and should also consider the risk from COVID-19 and the patient's likelihood of exposure.

Until further information becomes available vaccinated patients with immunosuppression should continue to follow advice to reduce the chance of exposure. This advice applies whether or not the individual has had one or two vaccine doses as we do not yet have evidence of response in immunosuppressed individuals. Although shielding has been paused from 1 April, immunosuppressed clinically extremely vulnerable people are still advised to take extra steps to keep themselves safe and follow the rules and guidance that are in place for the wider population.

Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the release of transcripts of text messages between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Rt Hon David Cameron, what is the nature of the changes to the Covid Corporate Financing Facility that the Chancellor of the Exchequer "pushed" officials to pursue with the Bank of England; and why such changes were rejected by the Bank. [HL14883]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As outlined in HM Treasury's Freedom of Information releases on this issue – as well as in the Chancellor's letter to the Shadow Chancellor, Greensill approached HM Treasury regarding access to the Covid Corporate Finance Facility (CCFF).

These meetings covered requests made by Greensill to, first, allow them to access the scheme by changing its terms and, second, to broaden its scope to allow supply chain finance (SCF) providers to access the scheme in general.

As is a matter of public record both of these requests were rejected but it is right that HM Treasury listened to – and gave due consideration to – all potential options to support businesses to survive the pandemic given the extraordinary challenges facing UK SMEs last Spring.

Credit Unions

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the credit union sector in the UK. [HL14967]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the law in respect of credit unions in the UK. [HL14968]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises the vital role of credit unions in the financial wellbeing of their communities, providing an ethical home for their members' savings, and affordable loans to those who may otherwise have to resort to high-cost lenders.

That is why at Autumn Budget 2018, the Chancellor announced a pilot of a new prize-linked savings scheme offered through credit unions. This operated with 15 credit unions and has helped support the sector through increased membership, awareness and deposits. The Chancellor also announced a new £2 million challenge fund to promote innovative solutions from the UK's Fintech sector to address challenges faced by social and community lenders, including credit unions. The winners of the challenge, which included Capital Credit Union and Serve and Protect Credit Union, were announced at Budget 2020.

The Government has also regularly engaged with the credit union sector, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fair4All Finance, the independent body set up by Government to distribute dormant assets funding to support financial inclusion, has set up a £5 million resilience fund to support credit unions and community development finance institutions in England during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chancellor announced at Budget 2020 that the Government intends to bring forward changes to the Credit Unions Act to allow credit unions to offer a wider range of products and services. This will allow credit unions to continue to grow sustainably for the future and support them in the vital role they play in financial inclusion. The Economic Secretary recently spoke at the Association of British Credit Unions Limited and National Credit Union Forum annual conferences to reaffirm the Government's commitment to legislative change and ongoing support for the sector.

The Government is engaging with the credit union sector and carefully assessing options before bringing forward legislation to ensure that we are delivering reforms which meet members' needs and support the development of the credit union sector.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received about the resources available to the Criminal Cases Review Commission; and what has been their response. [[HL14870](#)]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We are aware that the Westminster Commission on Miscarriages of Justice, set up by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Miscarriages of Justice, has made recommendations regarding the funding of the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC).

The funding allocation the CCRC is reviewed each year internally within MoJ – and in consultation with the

CCRC itself – as part of setting budgets. At each Spending Review the overall MoJ budget is reviewed with HM Treasury. Annual budgets for departments and their Arm's Length Bodies are part of the Main Estimate, which is laid before Parliament each year by HM Treasury.

Everton Football Club: Sportsgrounds

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of the Liverpool waterfront losing its UNESCO World Heritage status due to Everton Football Club's waterfront stadium development. [[HL15119](#)]

Baroness Barran: The construction of a new football stadium at Bramley Moore Dock is likely to increase perceptions that the "outstanding universal value" on which Liverpool's UNESCO world heritage status is predicated will be placed at risk. The Government continues to work with UNESCO, Liverpool City Council, Historic England and others to reconcile the needs of heritage conservation and economic development in and around the world heritage site.

Food Supply

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 13 November 2020 (HC112026), what impact has been made by the winter support package; and whether there is an increasing need for support regarding food insecurity. [[HL14824](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect jobs and incomes. This includes through the furlough scheme, which has now been extended until September 2021, and by spending billions on strengthening welfare support and ensuring the most vulnerable can meet their basic needs. This additional support includes increases to the Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit standard allowances of up to £1,040 this financial year, and uplifts to the Local Housing Allowance rates to cover the lowest 30% of market rents.

Tackling poverty in all its forms is a key priority for this Government. We are committed to helping people with the cost of living and providing a safety net for those that need it through our well-established social security systems. Building on the significant support given to the most vulnerable during the initial months of the pandemic, the Government has also delivered a winter support programme to support the economically vulnerable. This package included increasing the value of Healthy Start Vouchers, the national rollout of the Holiday Activities and Food programme, and a £170 million Covid Winter Support Grant to local authorities

which started in December to support households with food and other essential costs.

The winter package also included £16 million of funding for Defra to support food charities with the purchasing and distribution of food to the vulnerable over a 16-week period starting from the beginning of December. This funding stream is being managed by the food redistributor FareShare.

Defra will also continue to monitor food insecurity. As part of the Agriculture Act the Government has committed to lay a report on food security before Parliament by the last sitting day of 2021 and at least once every three years thereafter.

The report will cover a range of current issues relevant to food security including: global food availability; supply sources for food; the resilience of the supply chain for food; household expenditure on food; food safety; and consumer confidence in food.

Food: Industrial Health and Safety

Asked by Lord McKenzie of Luton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the University of Greenwich Research into Covid-19 workplace safety outcomes in the food and drink sector, published on 29 March. [HL14785]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognises the importance of employee representation to help ensure effective control of workplace risk.

There is a legal requirement for employers to consult employees either directly or through appointed or elected representatives, on health and safety matters. HSE supports the contribution health and safety representatives and trade unions make to maintaining and improving health and safety in the workplace.

Football

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what sanctions, if any, they are considering in response to the potential involvement of English football clubs in the proposed European Super League. [HL15081]

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are planning with (1) the Premier League, and (2) the Football Association, about the potential involvement of English football clubs in the proposed European Super League. [HL15082]

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with the Football Supporters' Association about the potential involvement of English

football clubs in the European Super League; and what steps they are taking to ensure that supporters are more involved in the decision-making of English football clubs. [HL15083]

Baroness Barran: The Government has been vocal in its opposition to the European Super League. The Secretary of State was therefore glad to see the withdrawal of all English teams from the project, which came after the Government had met with multiple stakeholders on the proposals, including The Football Association and Premier League.

The football authorities are best placed to take action on such proposals in the first instance, but the Government continues to stand ready to act if needed.

This is the right result for football fans, clubs and communities across the country. However, these events have demonstrated that now is the right time to launch the fan-led review of football governance which will have fan interests at its heart.

Fossil Fuels: Overseas Investment

Asked by Baroness Blackstone

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 25 February (HL13295), whether they are currently considering any fossil fuel financing projects through (1) UK Export Finance, or (2) Overseas Development Assistance, within the scope of the "very limited exceptions". [HL14907]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The government published detailed guidance accompanying the implementation of the new policy on support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas on 31 March. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-the-government-will-implement-its-policy-on-support-for-the-fossil-fuel-energy-sector-overseas>. We will consider any requests for project financing against the published guidance.

It is not possible to publish all planned, potential transactions, investments, export credit guarantees, loans, and loan guarantees, for reasons of commercial sensitivity. Details of confirmed financial support will be available in FCDO's annual Statistics on International Development report on Official Development Assistance spend, and in UK Export Finance's annual report.

Government Departments: Written Questions

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government which departments use external contractors to prepare responses to questions tabled by members of the House of Lords and Members of Parliament; and, in each case, how often such contractors are used. [HL14683]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of written answers to questions tabled by members of both Houses of Parliament were drafted by external contractors in the current parliamentary session. [HL14684]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure there are no conflicts of interest when the preparation of (1) responses to parliamentary written questions, (2) responses to parliamentary urgent questions, and (3) background briefings, are made by external contractors to departments. [HL14685]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they amended the guidance on responding to parliamentary questions to take account of the use of external contractors in preparing and drafting responses. [HL14686]

Lord True: Departments are responsible for their responses to written parliamentary questions. Written parliamentary questions receive final sign off from Ministers.

The Cabinet Office has produced guidance for civil servants on drafting answers to parliamentary questions. This can be found on the gov.uk website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drafting-answers-to-parliamentary-questions-guidance>.

Civil servants and Ministers conduct these duties in line with their respective codes of conduct.

The Department of Health and Social Care has outlined that the department's contract included a general clause for Deloitte to provide support to civil servants in responding to written questions, freedom of information requests and media queries. They have not been directly responsible for drafting replies.

Greensill: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they assessed the capacity of Greensill Capital to absorb its share of Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan losses alongside the government's guarantee. [HL14880]

Lord Callanan: At the point of accreditation and based on the information provided, the British Business Bank considered that Greensill Capital UK met the criteria set out in the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) Request for Proposals.

The criteria by which decisions were made, were set out in the CBILS Request for Proposals, as a publicly available document. Among the minimum requirements for accreditation was the ability of a lender to demonstrate

that it had sufficient capital available to meet its lending forecasts.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have paid or are obliged to pay Greensill Capital in year one interest payments made under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; what percentage by number and value of such loans extended by Greensill Capital involve higher interest rates than from the average of lenders; and what is the number and value of loans where the interest rate exceeded 14.9 per cent. [HL14881]

Lord Callanan: Recipients of any Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) loans made by any lender are entitled to apply for business interruption payments from the Government which cover the interest and any lender-levied fees in the first 12 months of any CBILS facility.

We are unable to provide of a breakdown of CBILS data by lender as this is commercially sensitive. However, data on individual loans will be published, where required on the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module, in due course.

Health Services: Private Sector

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost to the NHS of resolving problems which have occurred during treatment in the private health sector; and what plans they have to ensure that such costs are recovered by the NHS. [HL14869]

Lord Bethell: No assessment has been made. There is no general provision which allows the National Health Service to recover the costs of problems which have occurred during treatment in the private health sector. Where a private sector hospital or surgeon has been negligent and that negligence results in a damages claim against the party concerned, there is provision for the NHS hospital which subsequently treated the patient to recover specified monetary amounts from the compensator up to a specific maximum, which is currently £54,682 for care and treatment.

Industrial Health and Safety: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of working environments on the mental health of employees. [HL15194]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government is working with business and other stakeholders to share sources of mental health and wellbeing support with employers. In particular, we are supporting the work of the business-led 'Thriving at Work' Leadership Council, which encourages employers to sign up to key mental health

commitments and promotes the use of the Mental Health at Work online gateway developed by Mind. This hosts over 400 resources to inform and advise employers on managing mental health in the workplace. This includes Toolkits that promote staff wellbeing, offer guidance to support employees working from home and advise on change management.

In addition to this, the Department (DWP) is also leading some new work with other government departments and arms-length bodies, including ACAS and the Health and Safety Executive, to improve and join up Government's wider information and advice support for the management of health in the workplace.

Inter-parliamentary Union: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to uphold the human and political rights of parliamentarians in (1) Myanmar, (2) Turkey, (3) Venezuela, and (4) other member countries of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. [[HL14874](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has a long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights internationally and defending democratic freedoms is fundamental to our foreign policy. On Myanmar, we have used our presidencies of both the G7 and the UN Security Council to secure strong statements to uphold the human and political rights of parliamentarians. The Minister for Asia formally summoned the Myanmar Ambassador twice and stressed that State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and others who had been arbitrarily detained should be released. In Turkey, we continue to make clear that we expect the government to undertake any legal processes or actions against opposition MPs fairly, transparently and with full respect for their human rights and the rule of law. In Venezuela, we are concerned at reports of the detention of opposition MPs and continue to call on all Venezuela's leaders to support the restoration of democracy. We will continue to support democracy and the work of parliamentarians worldwide.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support free and fair elections (1) in Palestine, and (2) in Israel. [[HL14872](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have welcomed President Abbas' announcement of dates for legislative and Presidential elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for the first time since 2006. We encourage the Palestinian leadership to work toward strong, inclusive, accountable and democratic institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights. Free and fair elections are an important and necessary step. The UK will work closely with the Palestinian Authority and

international partners to support this, including encouraging the Government of Israel to allow elections in East Jerusalem, in keeping with the Oslo Accords. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa spoke to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 19 April to reiterate the importance of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem being permitted to vote in Palestinian Legislative Council elections. We also look forward to maintaining excellent relations with the new Israeli government, when formed, and working closely together.

Loans: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether banks are being encouraged to lend to entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities; and what plans they have, if any, to improve the lending rate to such entrepreneurs. [[HL14892](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government remains committed to supporting individuals and businesses of all backgrounds access the finance they need and continues to engage with the private sector on this important issue. Since March 2020, the Government has introduced a collection of emergency loan guarantee schemes available to businesses of all backgrounds which collectively approved more than £75 billion worth of finance through more than 1.6 million facilities. The 'Future Fund', launched in May 2020, also provides investment to high-growth companies impacted by Covid, made up of funding from government and the private sector. As of 25 March, the Fund has committed over £1.2 billion to support over 1,200 companies of all shapes and sizes, in every region of the country, and across a variety of sectors. Senior management teams consisting solely of ethnic minority team members and those with both ethnic minority and White team members account for 61.6% of funding to companies that have been approved for Convertible Loan Agreements so far, worth £683.5m. In addition, entrepreneurs of all backgrounds may be able to access finance through the Start Up Loans program that operates through a network of local delivery partners and is managed by Start Up Loans, a subsidiary of the British Business Bank. As at 30 June 2020, the Start Up Loans program had delivered more than 73,700 loans, providing more than £610m of funding. Entrepreneurs interested in exploring their finance options further may also visit the British Business Bank's Finance Hub to understand and identify suitable finance options to help their business to grow.

Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the manufacturing industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL14741](#)]

Lord Callanan: Throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, we have engaged closely with manufacturing industry through sector roundtables and by talking directly to

businesses. This has helped shape the Government's unprecedented package of support which has included loan schemes, grant funding, tax deferrals and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all of which is designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors including manufacturing.

We are also investing £147 million through a Manufacturing Made Smarter Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund programme and have invested £730 million in the seven High Value Manufacturing Catapult centres, supporting manufacturers in bringing new technologies to market.

We recently announced £8 million in new Government funding to help manufacturing SMEs increase productivity, competitiveness and drive up efficiency by adopting industrial digital technology, building on the success of our Made Smarter North West Pilot.

Maternal Mortality

Asked by The Lord Bishop of London

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish a report on the work to reduce health inequalities around maternal mortality rates, in particular the higher rate of death in childbirth for Black women, led by Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE; and what action will be taken as a result of this report. [HL14779]

Lord Bethell: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with a range of national partners, led by the Chief Midwifery Officer for England and the National Specialty Advisor for Obstetrics, to develop an equity strategy which will focus on women and their babies from black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups and those living in the most deprived areas.

The National Perinatal Equity Strategy is in its final stages of development and will be published in the coming months. Following the publication, the Local Maternity Systems will be asked to submit an equity analysis covering health outcomes, community assets and staff experience and a co-production plan by 30 September 2021. Local Maternity Systems will then co-produce equity action plans by 31 December 2021.

Mental Health Services: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the funding they have allocated to mental health services in Northern Ireland. [HL14890]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The UK Government recognises the importance of ensuring proper provision of, and access to, mental health services right across the UK.

Health services are devolved in Northern Ireland. The funding allocated to this specific service is therefore a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive to allocate from

within the substantial resources provided by the UK Government.

The UK Government is providing funding of £14.2bn to the Executive in 2021/22, and we would of course be supportive of them allocating some of this funding for these vital services.

Monetary Policy

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of quantitative easing on the reliability of capital asset pricing models and volatility of different asset classes (1) in the UK, and (2) in other countries. [HL14863]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy. The Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

Monetary Policy: Wealth

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of monetary policy on the distribution of wealth across different (1) age groups, and (2) regions of the UK. [HL14862]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Monetary policy, including decisions on Bank Rate and quantitative easing, is the responsibility of the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England.

The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy, so the Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

The Bank of England's estimates on the distributional impacts of monetary policy can be found in the Bank's working paper: "The distributional impact of monetary policy easing in the UK between 2008 and 2014."

Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of reduced Official Development Assistance funding for research and development on (1) the public health sector, and (2) the health of UK citizens. [HL14865]

Lord Callanan: In line with the requirements of the International Development Act (2002), our Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds take as their focus the social and economic development and welfare of countries identified by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). As per OECD and IDA

requirements, we do not use these funds for the development and welfare of citizens or sectors in the UK or other High-Income Countries. Though there will inevitably be some secondary or indirect benefit to the UK derived through our ODA-funded research partnerships, it would not fit the purpose of ODA funding to actively consider this when making ODA spending decisions.

Asked by Lord Collins of Highbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the 2021–22 Overseas Development Assistance will be allocated to bilateral nutrition programmes. [HL15209]

Baroness Sugg: Information about our nutrition spend in financial year 2021-22 will be publicly available through Development Tracker in due course.

The portfolio, agreed by the Foreign Secretary, will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money.

Pensions: Canada

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Canada about frozen UK pensions for UK pensioners in Canada. [HL15053]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by the government of Canada to grant annual state pension increases to Canadian pensioners living in the UK; and what plans they have to provide annual state pension increases to UK pensioners living in Canada. [HL15054]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has had no discussions with the Canadian Government, regarding the up-rating of the UK State Pension for recipients living in Canada, and has made no assessment of the Canadian Government's up-rating policy.

Pensions: Tax Allowances

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many responses they received to the call for evidence on pensions tax relief administration published in July 2020; when they plan to publish the outcome; and what plans they have to carry out further consultation on the issue of low earners in net pay administration schemes who are paying 25 per cent more for their pensions than if their employer used a relief at source scheme. [HL14860]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises the different impacts of the two systems of paying pension tax relief on pension contributions for workers earning below the personal allowance. The Call for

Evidence – in line with the Government's manifesto commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of this issue – set out the Government's views on proposals already put forward by stakeholders, invited further proposals, and sought views on the operation of the relief at source method of tax relief for pension contributions.

The Call for Evidence is now closed. The Government is carefully analysing this issue and the responses received to understand what deliverable options for change may exist. These responses have raised technical points that we are continuing to explore with HMRC and others. The Government will respond to the Call for Evidence in due course.

Redundancy

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help people affected by large scale (1) retail, and (2) hospitality, sector redundancies to find employment. [HL14742]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Throughout Great Britain, the Department for Work and Pensions through the Rapid Response Service (RRS) gives support and advice to employers and their employees when faced with redundancy. This includes those in the retail and hospitality sector.

The range of support available from Jobcentre Plus and partners may include:

- Connecting people to jobs in the labour market.
- Help with job search including CV writing, interview skills, where to find jobs and how to apply for them.
- Help to identify transferable skills and skills gaps (linked to the local labour market).

Moreover, the Government has announced and implemented the Plan for Jobs measures to create, support and protect jobs, and help everyone to find a job, wherever they are and wherever they live in Great Britain.

The Plan for Jobs measures cover support for youth (Kickstart/DWP Youth Offer) including skills and apprenticeships, for individuals recently made unemployed (Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme), as well as support for those who maybe unemployed for over 12 months (Restart).

The package of measures is underpinned by the extra 13,500 work coaches who have been successfully recruited, who can provide personalised support at the point of need.

Employment support is transferred to Northern Ireland, so this support is provided by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

Road Signs and Markings: Rural Areas

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether no longer having to follow EU directives will lead to a change in

the number of road signs on minor roads in rural England; and if so, what estimate they have made of the amount of money this will save the Government in a year. [HL15107]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Traffic signing was always a domestic matter and as such, the UK's exit from the EU and the end of the transition period, has no impact on the provision of traffic signs in the UK.

Signs are placed for specific reasons; to convey warnings, information, requirements, restrictions or prohibitions to road users. Provision of traffic signs is a matter for local traffic authorities. Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, any signs placed on public highways in England must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, or be specially authorised by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost of the duplication of road signs on roads in rural England. [HL15108]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department has made no assessment of the cost of duplication of road signs on roads in rural England.

Schools: Academic Year

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a potential extension of the academic year on the mental health of (1) staff, and (2) pupils. [HL14898]

Baroness Berridge: The government recognises the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted on mental health and is committed to supporting children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing during this period. Schools can already use their additional funding from the COVID-19 catch-up package for pastoral support for mental wellbeing where pupils need it. We have also set up Wellbeing for Education Return, an £8 million scheme funding expert advisers and training in every local authority area to support education staff to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures.

The government has appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee the long-term plan. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils and teachers to develop this proposal and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on education. We are considering all options to address lost education, including time in education, to ensure the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is addressed as comprehensively as possible. In doing so, we are mindful of the need to manage teacher workload, and staff and pupil mental health, whilst also examining the benefits of change.

The department will continue to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on pupils and staff and their needs to help target support across the system effectively.

Small Businesses: Corporation Tax

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed date change to the payment of corporation tax for small businesses on small business cashflow. [HL14899]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has not announced any changes to the timing of payment of corporation tax for small companies, and has committed not to enact any changes in this Parliament. In March 2021, as part of the Tax Policies and Consultations update, the Government published a Call for Evidence^[1] which begins to explore whether the timing and frequency of tax payments are appropriate.

The Government recognises any changes in tax payment timings would have an impact on business cash flow and administration and it would consult extensively on any proposals ahead of implementation.

[1] www.gov.uk/government/consultations/call-for-evidence-timely-payment.

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) women, and (2) men, over the age of 80 living in the UK received less than £80.45 a week in state pension in the past year. [HL14861]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As of March 2021, there were 15,739 women, and 5,354 men living in the UK that were aged 80 or over and in receipt of a State Pension of less than £80.45.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Agriculture

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk posed to rain-fed agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa from a lack of progress at the COP26 conference in November. [HL15000]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Countries across sub-Saharan Africa are among the worst affected by climate change, despite being some of the least responsible for historical and current global emissions. Future warming of 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius represents a substantial threat to rain-fed agriculture across the continent, which is already being adversely affected by the warming that we have seen to date. Limiting warming as well as adapting to climate change is crucial for this region. Driving global action to reduce emissions and support countries adapt to climate change, and build resilience to its impacts, is a priority for the UK's COP26 Presidency. It is crucial that we target research to find solutions to the needs of local communities, and to understand climate risks, and that is why we are working with partners to address these

research gaps for example through the Adaptation Research Alliance.

Surgery: Waiting Lists

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of when NHS England's waiting times will return to those recorded in February 2020 (1) for all operations and procedures, and (2) for patients waiting for more than a year for non-urgent operations and procedures. [[HL15033](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Department is currently making an assessment of National Health Service waiting times in England, including the capacity to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Transport: National Policy Statements

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 19 April (HL Deb, col 1639), what assessment they have made of the need to review the (1) National Policy Statement for Ports, and (2) National Policy Statement for National Networks, to bring them into line with (a) domestic, and (b) international, (i) climate, and (ii) biodiversity, targets. [[HL15189](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As noted in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus, Government intends to review the National Policy Statement for Ports in 2021. In deciding when to review the NPS, due consideration will be given to the impact of changes in policy of both climate and biodiversity targets.

The case for reviewing the National Networks National Policy Statement remains under active consideration as part of the Secretary of State's duties under the Planning Act 2008. Developments in domestic environmental policy and our international commitments, are assessed against the three considerations the Secretary of State must take into account in deciding whether to review an NPS set out in section 6 of the Act.

Turkey: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision adopted in March by the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the 164th session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in relation to Turkey. [[HL14875](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the decisions adopted at the 164th session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and are considering its findings on the human rights situation in Turkey. We regularly engage bilaterally with Turkey on human rights, including at Ministerial and ambassadorial level, to discuss our

concerns. We are also active participants in Council of Europe discussions on Turkey. We have encouraged Turkey to implement swiftly and fully its newly published human rights action plan as a positive step in improving the situation.

Turkey: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that (1) the government of Turkey has taken steps to ban the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in that country, and (2) members of the HDP have been arrested and imprisoned. [[HL14873](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by the legal action taken against the People's Democratic Party (HDP) and its officials, including MPs and mayors, accused of alleged terrorist links. If those links are proved to be accurate, we urge the HDP to distance itself entirely from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its ongoing terrorist activity. We have made it clear to Turkey that we expect the government to undertake any legal processes or actions against opposition parties, MPs, party officials, elected mayors, human rights defenders and journalists, fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law. My colleague the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and Americas raised these issues with the Turkish Ambassador on 30 March. Officials from the British Embassy in Ankara also regularly meet members of the HDP to discuss their concerns. Working with our international partners, we will continue to encourage Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to make greater progress on wider human rights reforms.

Turkey: Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that refugees have been prevented from reaching the EU by the Frontex border agency, in particular refugees travelling from Turkey; and what steps they intend to take in response to such reports. [[HL14877](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas, Wendy Morton MP, is aware of the allegations of "pushbacks" conducted by Frontex in the Aegean Sea and is monitoring the situation via the British Embassy in Athens. Greece has denied using any illegal practices. Minister Morton understands that Frontex has conducted an internal investigation into the allegations, and that the European Parliament has established a permanent standing committee in order to scrutinise Frontex activity in the Aegean. HMA Athens raised this issue with Greek Migration Minister Mitarakis on 10 March 2021 and we will continue to urge all parties to uphold international human rights standards in respect of the migrants and to avoid any actions that may endanger human life.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with ministers at the Northern Ireland Assembly about the impact that the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland has had on the current situation in Northern Ireland. [[HL14969](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland remains in close and continued contact with Northern Ireland's party leaders. The Government welcomes the unity that the Executive has shown in opposing the recent disorder.

It is clear that the factors behind the recent disorder are complex and multifaceted. The answer to these issues lies in dialogue, engagement, and the democratic process; not through violence or disorder.

The Protocol was designed to protect the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and to safeguard the gains of the peace process. There are outstanding issues with the Protocol which need to be addressed in order to restore confidence on the ground and minimise the impact on day-to-day lives of the people in Northern Ireland. The measures taken in March this year were temporary, operational steps intended to minimise disruption in Northern Ireland and protect the everyday lives of the

people living there. We are working intensively with the EU to address these and working hard to ensure the effective operation of the Protocol, including through tailored support for businesses.

UN World Conference Against Racism

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to their participation in the United Nations General Assembly's commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban in 2001. [[HL14866](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. However, some of the anti-Semitic actions and speeches in and around the Third World Conference against Racism and its various follow-up events gave rise to serious concerns. Therefore we will consider UK attendance in the light of developments between now and the commemoration event, including the likelihood of any recurrence.

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