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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
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Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
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
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 Kamall	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Technology, Innovation and Life Sciences)
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

Monday, 11 October 2021

Draft Revised Energy National Policy Statements

[HLWS293]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng) made the following statement on the 20th September:

Today I am laying before Parliament the draft revised energy National Policy Statements.

The energy National Policy Statements were first designated in 2011. They set out the Government's policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure and provide the legal framework for planning decisions. In key energy policy areas: fossil fuels (EN-2); renewables (EN-3); gas supply and gas and oil pipelines (EN-4); electricity networks (EN-5); and nuclear (EN-6). They each sit below an overarching energy NPS (EN-1) which sets out the need for new energy infrastructure.

The Government announced a review of the current suite of energy National Policy Statements (NPS) in the *Energy White Paper: Powering our net zero future* in December 2020.

The Energy White Paper builds on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan to set a long-term strategic vision for our energy system, consistent with net zero emissions by 2050. It establishes our goal of a decisive shift from fossil fuels to clean energy, in power, buildings and industry, while creating jobs and growing the economy and keeping energy bills affordable. It addresses how and why our energy system needs to evolve to deliver this goal whilst retaining a secure and operable energy system.

We have reviewed all the National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure and determined that the existing EN-1 to EN-5 documents should be amended to reflect the policies set out in the White Paper and support the investment required to build the infrastructure needed for transition to net zero.

A review of EN-6 has concluded that it will not be amended and therefore it is not part of this consultation. A new technology specific NPS for nuclear electricity generation deployable after 2025 is proposed and will be developed to reflect the changing policy and technology landscape for nuclear and support the transition to net zero.

On 6th September 2021 I launched a public consultation on the draft revised energy National Policy Statements, supporting habitats and sustainability reports and associated appendices. These are subject to a 12-week public consultation and are all available on gov.uk.

I will place copies of the public consultation "Planning for new energy infrastructure: review of energy National Policy Statements", the Appraisal of Sustainability and its

appendices: Appendices Supporting Evidence Volumes I and II, and the Habitats Regulation Assessment in the Libraries of the House. The public consultation will close on 29th November 2021. The relevant period for parliamentary scrutiny will be from 20th September 2021 to 28 February 2022.

Employment Rights

[HLWS295]

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) made the following statement on the 23rd September:

The Government has today published a consultation on flexible working and the response to our consultation on a new right to time away from work for unpaid carers. These deliver on commitments in our Manifesto and are an important part of our drive to build back better after the pandemic, deliver for working families by helping people to access and stay in work, and improve business productivity.

Flexible Working Consultation

This consultation considers measures to increase the availability and uptake of the full range of flexible working options – whether that is a part-time or job-sharing working arrangement, flexing working hours or working remotely – freeing employers and employees alike from the default 9 to 5 model.

The consultation proposes that every employee in Great Britain is given the right to request flexible working, regardless of time served, under our plans to modernise the way we work and improve business productivity.

Under the proposals – which would see around 2.2 million more people given the right to request flexible working – employees would also be able to make more than one request for flexible working each year, and the current three-month period an employer has to consider each request would be shortened.

If an employer is unable to accommodate a request, our consultation proposes that they would need to consider what alternatives they could offer. For example, if they couldn't change their employee's hours on all working days, they could consider making the change for certain days instead.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to working arrangements. While certain ways of working may suit some employers and employees, they won't suit everyone. Therefore it is important that Government does not prescribe specific arrangements in legislation. Instead, these proposals would provide a strengthened legislative framework that encourages conversations around flexible working to be more two-sided. They are designed to balance the needs of employee and employer, and encourage all parties to focus on what may be possible, rather than what is not.

Empowering workers to have more say over where and when they work makes for more productive businesses, and happier employees. Flexible working allows employees to balance their work and home life: including helping people manage childcare commitments or other caring responsibilities. It can also be key to ensuring that people who are under-represented in the workforce, such as new parents or disabled people, have access to more employment opportunities.

Alongside clear benefits to workers, there is a compelling business case for flexible working. Benefits include:

- Attracting top talent – Research conducted by Timewise, a flexible working consultancy, has shown that 87% of people want to work flexibly, rising to 92% for young people.
- A highly motivated, productive workforce – Research published by HSBC shows that 9 in 10 employees consider flexible working to be a key motivator to their productivity at work – ranking it as more important than financial incentives. Employers have reported seeing improvements in staff motivation and employee relations.
- A better business environment - the CBI Employment Trends survey found that 99% of all businesses surveyed believed that a flexible workforce is vital or important to competitiveness and the prospects for business investment and job creation.

For both these individual and business reasons, the Conservative Party's 2019 manifesto committed to a consultation on measures to help make flexible working the default unless employers have good reasons not to. Today's publication delivers on that commitment. It also contains our response to measures in the July 2019 "Good Work Plan: proposals to support families" consultation on publishing flexible working and family-related leave and pay policies; and stating whether jobs may be open to flexible working in the advert.

While the consultation focuses on contractual flexible working arrangements, the Government recognises that people don't always need something so formal to help them balance their home and work life. The consultation therefore also sets out our future plans for a call for evidence on how to support more 'ad hoc' and informal forms of flexibility, for example to attend a one-off appointment.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in this consultation extends to England, Wales, and Scotland (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

The consultation runs for 10 weeks until 1 December 2021. I will place copies of the Flexible Working consultation in the Libraries of the House.

Government Response to the Carer's Leave Consultation

The Government has also today published its response to the consultation on Carer's Leave.

Around five million people across the UK are providing unpaid care by looking after or helping a family member, relative or friend. Nearly half do this while also working full-time or part-time. Juggling caring responsibilities and work can be challenging and can limit the participation of unpaid carers in the labour market. Women, who are often still the primary carers within families, tend to be disproportionately impacted.

The 2019 Manifesto committed to introduce an entitlement to one week of leave for unpaid carers. This was followed, last year, by a consultation on Carer's Leave, which recognised that unpaid carers face particular challenges in balancing work and caring responsibilities that may warrant a specific new employment right to time off from work.

The response, published today, sets out key aspects of the leave entitlement, including:

- Employees with caring responsibilities for a dependant with long-term care needs will be entitled to one working week of unpaid Carer's Leave (per employee, per year).
- This new right will be available from the first day of employment.
- Eligibility for the new right, both in terms of who the employee is caring for and how the leave can be used, will be broadly defined.
- The leave can be taken flexibly (i.e. from several half day blocks to a single block of whole week).

The entitlement has been designed to balance the needs of employers and employees, ensuring that employers are able to plan and manage the absence created by Carer's Leave. These include a minimum notice period and enabling employers to postpone (but not deny) the request for Carer's Leave where the employer considers the operation of their business would be unduly disrupted.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in this Government response to the consultation on Carer's Leave extends to England, Wales, and Scotland (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

I will place copies of the Carer's Leave consultation response in the Libraries of the House.

Fortification of Flour: Folic Acid

[HLWS298]

Lord Kamall: My Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) (Maggie Throup) made the following statement on the 21st September:

I am today announcing the Government's decision to introduce mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid to help prevent neural tube defects in fetuses. The Government initiated a consultation in 2019 on the issue of folic acid fortification. Our response is published today and confirms that we will proceed with fortification of non-wholemeal wheat flour, which is the most used type. This was the 'baseline' option in the consultation and accompanying impact assessment.

Neural tube defects are birth defects of the brain, spine, or spinal cord. They happen in the first few weeks of pregnancy, often before a woman even knows that she is pregnant. The two most common neural tube defects are spina bifida and anencephaly. These can be devastating conditions and the Government are fully aware of the effect these have on the individuals themselves and their families.

There is strong evidence that many neural tube defects can be prevented by increasing women's intake of folic acid, which is why existing pregnancy advice to women who are trying to conceive or who are likely to become pregnant is to take a daily supplement of 400 micrograms of folic acid until the 12th week of pregnancy.

However, we know that in the UK around half of pregnancies are unplanned. In those which are planned, it has been estimated that only half of all mothers took folic acid supplements or modified their diet to increase folate intake. This has led to calls for mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid, so women can get it from dietary sources other than foods that naturally contain it, and is why we consulted on the proposal.

I am grateful to the many people who took time to respond to the consultation which helped us accurately consider this policy.

I have agreed with the Governments of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland that we intend to implement this change on a UK-wide basis. We will now commence detailed discussions with stakeholders on the precise details of the fortification and labelling requirements, and agree the appropriate lead-in times. In order to minimise impacts on industry, this will be co-ordinated as part of a wider review of The Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and The Bread and Flour (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1998 being undertaken by Defra – alongside the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and Wales, Food Standards Scotland in Scotland, DHSC, and the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Following those discussions, and in coordination with the progress of the review of the wider Bread and Flour Regulations, we will consult on the draft legislation to implement this policy, and include a full impact assessment on the mandatory folic acid fortification.

Gambling Regulation

[HLWS297]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made on 22 September 2021 in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Chris Philp MP:

On 7 June the government announced that Malcolm Sheehan QC had been appointed to lead an independent review into the regulation of the Football Index gambling product and its operator, BetIndex Ltd. The Terms of Reference set out that the review was to provide an expert account of the actions taken by the Gambling Commission and other regulatory bodies throughout the

period in which BetIndex held a gambling licence, provide recommendations as needed, and to inform the government's ongoing review of the 2005 Gambling Act. The independent review has now concluded, and the [report](#) has today been published on gov.uk.

I am grateful to Mr Sheehan and his team for their extensive investigation, thorough report and clear recommendations. I am also grateful to the Gambling Commission, Financial Conduct Authority and others for their cooperation with the review and their provision of evidence to support Mr Sheehan's deliberations.

This independent expert report has been completed in such a way as to avoid prejudicing a number of ongoing processes and investigations into BetIndex Ltd. Firstly, administration proceedings are continuing, looking at the assets and liabilities of the firm and what is owed to customers. It is likely that this process will result in some amounts being reimbursed to creditors. Secondly, the Gambling Commission is completing its separate regulatory investigation into BetIndex on which it will report in due course. Thirdly, the Gambling Commission has referred the company to the Insolvency Service to ask that they consider whether the actions of the directors prior to administration breached insolvency or fraud laws. Any comment on this matter needs to carefully avoid prejudicing any future legal proceedings.

Football Index was a novel and boundary-pushing product, and its business was materially impacted by Covid 19 and the suspension of football. While the independent review focused on the actions of regulatory bodies, it did find that BetIndex did not properly notify the Gambling Commission of the nature of the product in its licence application, nor did it inform the regulator of changes to the product after launch as it was required to. This made scrutiny harder.

Nonetheless, the report identifies areas where the Gambling Commission could have been more effective in responding to the challenges raised by the novel product from its licensing to eventual collapse, including in early scrutiny, speed of decision-making and action, and escalation of issues when barriers arose. By 2019 it was aware of concerns about the product and launched an investigation, but by that time Football Index had grown to such an extent that large amounts of customer money were already involved. The report helps us understand why certain decisions were made at the time and what we can learn from that.

While BetIndex Ltd was never regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, the report also looked at its role in working with the Commission, identifying some areas of improvement including in speed of response to requests from the Commission and consistency of messaging on regulatory responsibilities.

It is now essential that we learn the lessons from this case and ensure a similar situation does not happen again. I am pleased that the Gambling Commission is carrying out an action plan to address the issues identified. In the weeks since the draft report was shared the Commission has:

- Updated the frameworks for risk based regulation so that product novelty is properly considered alongside other factors in determining the level of scrutiny an operator is placed under.
- Committed to consulting on tighter rules for the terminology used to describe gambling products, putting beyond doubt that gambling must be clearly described as gambling and not an investment.
- Commenced a review of all remote licensees to check for issues relating to boundary pushing products.
- Agreed to provide formal advice to the government on the issue of protecting customer funds as part of the Gambling Act Review. This is in addition to their current business plan's commitment to review the existing three-tiered approach.

The Commission and FCA have also worked together to strengthen their Memorandum of Understanding in response to Mr Sheehan's recommendations, including with new escalation routes and commitments on timeliness of responses to ensure regulatory impasses can not remain unsolved. The FCA has additionally:

- Nominated an Executive Director to oversee the relationship with the Commission.
- Continued to pursue the programme of change as set out in its July Business Plan.

The report has also raised some important questions for the government's ongoing Review of the Gambling Act 2005 which is already taking a comprehensive and evidence-led look at gambling in this country, including a close examination of the Gambling Commission's powers and resources. The Gambling Commission is not required to monitor the financial viability of companies on an ongoing basis. However, our Act Review will consider whether the Commission should require gambling companies to do more to demonstrate their ability to cover liabilities arising from long term bets, especially if they make up a large proportion of their business. The Gambling White Paper which we will publish in due course will answer this question and set out the government's vision for the sector.

A copy of Mr Sheehan's final report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study: Terms of Reference

[HLWS290]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Paymaster General (Michael Ellis QC MP), has today made the following written statement:

On 20 May my predecessor, my Right Honourable friend, the member for Portsmouth North, announced the appointment of Sir Robert Francis QC to carry out an independent study to look at options for a framework for compensation for victims of infected blood. The study will make recommendations for compensation, before the Infected Blood Inquiry reports. Terms of Reference of the

study were to be finalised following consultation between Sir Robert and those infected and affected. The consultation period concluded in August, and Sir Robert wrote to my predecessor with his recommendations.

Sir Robert's consultation received a positive response from the infected and affected community. 447 formal responses were submitted (including from many of the legal representatives of infected and affected core participants of the Inquiry), along with over 150 further representations, primarily personal accounts from the infected and affected on how this tragedy has affected their lives. These accounts were of great assistance to Sir Robert in reviewing the draft Terms of Reference. Sir Robert wishes to express his gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to the consultation, in many cases having to relive the awful experiences they have suffered over so many years, and I would like to echo his gratitude.

Sir Robert's recommendations identify the key issues that the study should consider. They offer assurance to the infected and affected communities that the matters of most concern to them will be considered by the Study. I am therefore happy to accept Sir Robert's recommendations in full, and I am today publishing the following Terms of Reference without amendment:

Rationale for Compensation

- To consider the rationale for compensation as a matter of general principle and in relation to any particular classes of compensation, recognising that it is not for the Study to pre-empt the determination by the Infected Blood Inquiry as to what, if any, rationale is supported by the evidence it has received;

Independent Advice to Government

- Give independent advice to the Government regarding the design of a workable and fair framework for compensation for individuals infected and affected across the UK to achieve parity between those eligible for compensation regardless of where in the UK the relevant treatment occurred or place of residence. While the Study is to take into account differences in current practice and/or law in the devolved administrations, it is not asked to consider whether delivery of that framework should be managed centrally or individually by the devolved administrations;

Scope of Compensation

- To consider the scope of eligibility for such compensation (including the appropriateness or otherwise of any conditions such as 'cut-off' dates), and whether it should be extended beyond infected individuals and their partners, to include for example affected parents and children, the wider affected family (e.g. siblings), and significant non-family carers and others affected, either because of the impact of caring responsibilities or the effects of bereavement or some other impact; to include consideration of former and new partnerships/marriages; and whether the estate of any individual who has died should be eligible for compensation;

Categories of Injury and Loss

• To consider the injuries, loss and detriments that compensation should address, in relation to the past, present and future, including:

(a) the physical impact and consequences of infection/s (including the effect of any treatment, and potential future adverse effects);

(b) infections that cleared naturally; and the risk of any significant or long-term side effects of treatment (such as liver damage, increased risk of cancer) even if they are yet to materialise;

(c) the mental health, social and financial impacts (including access to financial services) - both actual and in terms of loss of opportunities - suffered by both the infected and affected; and

(d) other types of loss if appropriate;

Types of Award and Method of Assessment

• To consider: (a) the extent to which any framework should offer compensation on the basis of an individualised assessment and/or fixed sums or a combination of these (including consideration of the position of an individual who was both infected, and affected by another individual's infection);

(b) whether awards should be by way of final lump sums, periodical payments or both;

(c) whether an individual should be required to prove matters (if so what types of matters, by what means, and to what standard);

(d) whether there should be any limitation by way of time or other bar on entitlement or claim, and whether any existing time bars should be maintained;

(e) the extent to which compensation should be limited to matters currently recognised by the law (taking into account any differences in the law across the UK) on damages and evidence as recoverable for the purposes of compensation, or, if not, the basis on which broader matters should be taken into account;

Measures for Compensation

• To consider the measures for compensation, looking at other national schemes (for example, the compensation tribunal established in the Republic of Ireland) to examine their merits or otherwise, and experiences, both as to form (i.e. administration/process) and the substance of compensation;

Relationship with Current Schemes

• To consider the relationship between a compensation framework and other receipts and payments by individuals, including: (a) the pre-existing financial support schemes; (b) legal claims; (c) welfare benefits and tax;

Options for Administering the Scheme

• To consider options for administering the scheme (including but not limited to what bodies, organisations or tribunals might need to be established to facilitate such

administration); what principles, aims or criteria etc might underpin the development of an appropriate scheme; and any ancillary matters which should be considered such as interim payments, publicity of the scheme, outreach to potential claimants, and support;

Other Issues

• To consider other issues that, in the course of his investigations, Sir Robert considers relevant; and

Reporting to Government by February 2022

• To Submit to the Government its report and recommendations as quickly as possible and no later than the end of February 2022, to provide the Government with advice on potential options for compensation framework design.

Sir Robert and his team will now begin the more detailed conversations and analysis to look into the detail of the issues raised by the infected and affected community. This will allow him to produce a set of comprehensive recommendations to the complex issues involved.

I, like my predecessor, am deeply committed to ensuring that Sir Brian Langstaff's independent public inquiry has all the resources it needs to complete its work; in Sir Brian's words, "as quickly as thoroughness permits". The infected blood scandal continues to claim the lives of infected people, and those directly affected have waited too long for answers, and for justice.

Machinery of Government: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

[HLWS291]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for driving forward the levelling up agenda and elections and UK governance and devolution policy is being moved to create a new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This change will embed levelling up commitments and policy on governance in the United Kingdom and elections within a single department which already manages relationships with local communities, local government and the housing sector. Bringing these responsibilities together will allow the Secretary of State to embed ever closer working with the Territorial Offices and lead coordination with the devolved administrations on my behalf.

The new department will consist of staff previously employed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and staff from the Union and Constitution Group in the Cabinet Office in support of cross-Whitehall efforts aimed at delivering tangible improvements in every part of the UK. A Levelling Up Taskforce has also been established which will report jointly to me and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Machinery of Government: Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme

[HLWS289]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for the operation of the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme will transfer from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Department of Health and Social Care. This change will take effect on 1 November 2021.

National Artificial Intelligence Strategy

[HLWS296]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made on 22 September 2021 in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Nadine Dorries MP:

I am pleased to lay before the House the UK's first [National Artificial Intelligence Strategy](#), which represents a step change in the Government's approach to this transformative technology.

The UK is already a world leader in AI. From trailblazing pioneers like Alan Turing and Ada Lovelace to UK-based AI companies such as DeepMind and Benevolent AI - the UK leads the world in the fundamental research, industrial application and commercialisation of the technology.

The challenge now for the UK is to unlock the power of AI and data-driven technologies, to build on our early leadership and legacy and to look forward to the opportunities of this coming decade. This strategy outlines our vision for how the UK can maintain and build on its position as other countries also race to deliver their own economic and technological transformations. This will be achieved via three pillars:

- 1) investing in the needs of the ecosystem to see more people working with AI, more access to data and compute resources to train and deliver AI systems, and access to finance and customers to grow sectors;
- 2) supporting the diffusion of AI across the whole economy to ensure all regions, nations, businesses and sectors can benefit from AI; and
- 3) developing a pro-innovation regulatory and governance framework that protects the public.

AI will be central to how we drive growth and enrich lives, and the vision set out in the strategy will help us achieve both of those vital goals.

The Office for Artificial Intelligence - a joint unit of DCMS and BEIS - will publish an execution and monitoring plan to track the success of the strategy and the wider impact of AI on our economy, society and Government.

A version of the National AI Strategy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

[HLWS294]

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) made the following statement on the 22nd September:

I welcome that Sir Wyn Williams, Chair of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, has today published a progress update which outlines the work already undertaken by the Inquiry and the planned next steps. The Government looks forward to receiving Sir Wyn's final report by the end of 2022.

Qualifications and Assessments: 2021-22

[HLWS292]

Baroness Barran: The Department for Education committed to our intention that exams and assessments would go ahead in 2022 in April. On 12 July, recognising that students taking exams in 2022 have had considerable disruption to their education, Ofqual and the department published joint consultations outlining detailed proposals for:

- [changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022](#) and
- [arrangements for vocational and technical and other general qualifications in academic year 2021/22](#).

The department and Ofqual confirmed the permitted scope of adaptations for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) included in performance tables, Functional Skills Qualifications and T Levels in an announcement on [6 August](#) following analysis of responses to the VTQ consultation. Depending on the purpose of the qualification, a range of adaptations for VTQs and other general qualifications have been or will be used including, but not limited to:

- a reduction in number of internal assessments, whilst ensuring all content is taught.
- longer and more assessment windows.
- social distancing adaptations (for example, professional discussion in place of certain practical activities).
- greater flexibility in invigilation rules (for example, to allow subject teachers to invigilate their own subject).

On 30 September, the department and Ofqual published the [decision document](#) outlining the decisions taken by the department and Ofqual following analysis of responses to the consultation on changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022.

The department and Ofqual engaged with a wide range of sector representatives during the consultation period. The proposals that were set out in the consultation received a high degree of support and we have therefore

confirmed a package of measures that includes four elements:

- a choice of topics in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history, and choice of topic or content in GCSE geography.
- the provision of advance information on exams in those subjects at GCSE, AS and A level where there is no choice of content.
- changes to the requirements for the delivery of practical activities in science subjects, and assessment in art and design.
- the provision of support materials in the exam in GCSE maths, physics and combined science.

We have confirmed that DfE's policy intention is for advance information to be published by exam boards in early February 2022 to support student revision. The government retains the flexibility to deploy advance information at an earlier point if there is significant further disruption to education.

The changes for both general and vocational and technical qualifications will be for one year only.

Ofqual also set out its approach to grading for general qualifications, confirming that 2022 will be a transition year to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period

and students taking exams in 2022 have experienced disruption to their education. Ofqual set out its plans for grading to be based around a profile that reflects a mid-point between 2021 and 2019 grades in 2022. In 2023, Ofqual plans to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years.

While it is our firm intention that exams will go ahead next year, supported by the permitted adaptations, we understand that contingency arrangements are also needed in the unlikely event that exams cannot go ahead fairly or safely. The department and Ofqual plan for Teacher Assessed Grades to be used in the event that exams cannot take place, and we have jointly launched a [consultation](#) on improvements to the 2021 process for GCSE, AS and A levels and confirmed the [contingency arrangements that will apply to vocational and technical qualifications](#). The consultation closes on 13 October and we will announce final decisions as soon as possible.

Finally, we have confirmed that in 2022 results days will return to their normal timing, on 18 August for AS/A level and 25 August for GCSEs. Vocational and technical qualifications used to progress in a similar way to GCSEs and A levels will be awarded on or before the same days, and other VTQ results will continue to be awarded throughout the year.

Written Answers

Monday, 11 October 2021

Afghanistan: Armed Conflict

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what UK military equipment was abandoned in Afghanistan after the withdrawal. [HL2561]

Baroness Goldie: During Operation PITTING and the withdrawal of the UK military from Afghanistan spare capacity was used on flights to return as much equipment to the UK as possible. However, people were prioritised over equipment at all times to evacuate UK nationals and eligible persons under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). Consequently, a small amount of equipment was left behind or gifted to partner nations.

All sensitive equipment and anything considered attractive to criminal and terrorist organisations was recovered during withdrawal.

Afghanistan: Armed Forces

Asked by *Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to provide mental health support to British armed forces personnel upon their return from duty in Afghanistan. [HL2697]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lord to the reply I gave on 2 September 2021 to Question HL2389 to the noble Lord, Lord Taylor of Warwick.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations [HL2389.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-14/HL2697>

Afghanistan: Asylum

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme helps those funded by the UK Government to work with UK universities on Overseas Development Assistance programmes focused on gender and women's rights. [HL2637]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Afghan relocations and assistance policy was set up to facilitate the resettlement of Afghan nationals who worked with the UK Government in Afghanistan. A number of gender and women's rights activists were evacuated as special cases under Operation Pitting, and those still in Afghanistan may be eligible for resettlement under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Afghanistan: Diplomatic Service

Asked by *Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was changed in June. [HL2445]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In line with FCDO appointment procedures, Sir Laurie Bristow was appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Afghanistan in June this year, following the end of tour of his predecessor Alison Blake who had served as Ambassador in Kabul since April 2019.

Afghanistan: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the threat that the Taliban pose to religious minorities in Afghanistan, with specific reference to the Hazaras. [HL2771]

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the searches conducted by the Taliban on 15 September within predominantly Tajik and Hazard districts of Afghanistan on the safety of members of those communities. [HL2772]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I underscored the UK's commitment to protecting the human rights of all Afghan people when I addressed the UN Human Rights Council on 24 August. This commitment extends to all ethnic and religious groups, including individuals from the Hazara community. On 10 September, the UK, joined a multicountry statement with the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance to reaffirm our concern for all religious minorities in Afghanistan, including from the Hazara community, and called for adherence to human rights obligations. The UK Government co-signed this statement alongside the US, Australia, Albania, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia.

I note a recent Amnesty report highlighted alleged human rights abuses directed against the Hazara in Ghazni province in July. We will continue to press the Taliban to uphold human rights, including those of minority and vulnerable groups such as the Hazaras, and to protect the gains made over the last twenty years. We have said we will judge them on actions, not words. To help us to do this more effectively, we have established an internal human rights tracking mechanism to track Taliban behaviour to inform our engagement. Additionally, we regularly engage with the UN, which has a mandate to monitor and report on human rights in Afghanistan, as well as human rights organisations who are playing an important role in highlighting abuses and violations on the ground.

Afghanistan: Genocide

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their framework for the analysis of the early warning signs of genocide, what assessment they have made of (1) the early warning signs of atrocity crimes in Afghanistan, and (2) the risk of genocide against the Hazaras. [HL2768]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is the long-standing policy of the British Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent national or international court, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies. As Minister for Human Rights, I made clear in my address to the UN Human Rights Council on 24 August, the UK is committed to protecting the human rights of all Afghan people. This commitment extends to all ethnic and religious groups, including the Hazara community. The UK also led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution 2593, which made clear the Security Council's intent to Taliban actions, including their respect for human rights.

Afghanistan: Halo Trust

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the HALO Trust's humanitarian work in Afghanistan, including financial support for landmine clearing equipment. [HL2612]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In Afghanistan, we will continue to provide life-saving humanitarian support and assistance to those most in need. We will also continue to support humanitarian demining and to support agencies to collect data to map emergency humanitarian needs and respond effectively.

Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which countries neighbouring Afghanistan are in receipt of the £30 million of humanitarian aid announced by the Foreign Secretary on 3 September. [HL2535]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 3 September FCDO announced £30 million in additional humanitarian funding to assist the regional response to the surge in refugees. £10 million was immediately made available to humanitarian partners, such as the UNHCR, to enable essential supplies such as shelters, sanitation and hygiene facilities to be erected at the Afghanistan border. The remaining £20 million of funding is flexible to rapidly scale up the response to hosting communities in affected countries if a mass movement of population takes place.

Afghanistan: Internally Displaced People and Refugees

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the current levels of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan, and (2) current and future refugee flows from Afghanistan to (a) Pakistan, (b) Tajikistan, (c) Iran, (d) Uzbekistan, and (e) Turkmenistan. [HL2524]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: NGOs estimate that nearly 400,000 people have been displaced from their homes in Afghanistan since the beginning of 2021, in addition to the 2.9 million already displaced by the end of 2020. FCDO Ministers have been, and continue to be, in regular contact with our counterparts in Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, including most recently on 14 September when Lord Ahmad visited Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan: Overseas Aid

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to undertake a review of the efficacy of UK overseas development aid in Afghanistan since 2001 and the mechanisms by which it was delivered. [HL2521]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK overseas development and humanitarian aid in Afghanistan has been subject to many forms of oversight and scrutiny since 2001 including internal assurance reviews, National Audit Office country office reviews and Independent Commission for Aid (ICAI) impact reviews. The International Development Committee has recently approved the future ICAI work programme that includes a country portfolio review of Afghanistan. Publication of the review is due in summer 2022.

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what the current mechanisms are for delivering UK overseas development aid in Afghanistan, and (2) what steps they will take to ensure the efficacy of this funding and its delivery in the future. [HL2522]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We stand with the people of Afghanistan to support a more stable, peaceful future for the country. Total UK aid to Afghanistan this year is now £286 million, one of our largest bilateral programmes.

As part of this £286m, £30m has been allocated for life-saving aid to Afghanistan's neighbouring countries to help those who choose to leave Afghanistan. Of this £30m, £10 million will be made available immediately to humanitarian partners, such as the UNHCR, to enable essential supplies such as shelters to be despatched to the

Afghan borders as well as to set up sanitation and hygiene facilities. The remaining £20 million will be allocated to countries that experience a significant increase in refugees to support reception and registration facilities and provide essential services and supplies. As with all the FCDO's programming, when delivering the funding we will be guided by our Programme Operating Framework, which supports high standards of programme delivery, risk management and due diligence in the wide range of difficult places we work.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Worcester***

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what reassurances they have sought from, and (2) what reassurances have been given by, the Taliban that future aid to Afghanistan will be used for its intended purposes. [HL2523]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: All aid that was being channelled through the Afghan government has stopped. We are only supporting life-saving humanitarian assistance through the UN and other trusted organisations on the ground, who are continuing to ensure vital aid reaches those who need it most. All UK aid is subject to strict monitoring and verification to ensure it is only used to help the vulnerable people it is intended for. As the Prime Minister has set out, we will continue to judge the Taliban on their actions not their words. The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, has secured a number of assurances from the Taliban in writing about the distribution of aid which he described at the UN flash appeal. We support the UN's important work in this area.

Afghanistan: Politics and Government

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) China, (2) Pakistan, and (3) Russia, regarding the situation in Afghanistan. [HL2476]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: HMG continues to galvanise the international community, and bring together the widest possible group of influential countries, to deliver on UK strategic priorities and exercise the maximum moderating influence on the Taliban that we possibly can. This has included calls and meetings between the Prime Minister and his counterpart in Pakistan, and between Ministers and their counterparts in Pakistan and China. The UK drove the adoption of Security Council resolution 2593 alongside France; we are pressing for further discussions amongst the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and we plan to host an event at the UN General Assembly later this month.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) Tajikistan,

(2) Uzbekistan, and (3) Turkmenistan, about the situation in Afghanistan following the takeover by the Taliban. [HL2790]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I most recently visited Uzbekistan on 14 September, after also visiting Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the week of 30 August for discussions on Afghanistan. The former Foreign Secretary also had telephone conversations with the Uzbek Foreign Minister on 6 September and the Tajik Foreign Minister on 2 September. I called the Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, on 3 September, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan on 25 August and Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan on the same day. We held discussions with counterparts on securing safe passage for those fleeing Afghanistan and advancing the government's international priorities.

Afghanistan: RAF Regiment

*Asked by **Lord Naseby***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Royal Air Force Regiment was not deployed to support the evacuation operation in Kabul, Afghanistan. [HL2624]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence deploys the appropriate unit to each operation dependent on a number of factors. These include readiness, capability and the required task, as well taking into account current commitments. Consequently, elements from the RAF Regiment were deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation PITTING.

Afghanistan: Refugees

*Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the outcome of their discussions with the government of Pakistan regarding safe passage for Afghan and other citizens crossing the border. [HL2536]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The former Foreign Secretary met with Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Qureshi and discussed working together to support the people of Afghanistan and to ensure safe passage out of the country.

We will continue to explore all routes (air or land) with neighbouring countries, and what means can be put in place for Afghans to come to the UK, where that is their most appropriate destination.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions the Foreign Secretary had with his Pakistani counterparts during his recent visit to that country regarding the plight of Afghanistan ethnic and religious minorities fleeing through Pakistan, whether the Foreign Secretary asked for assistance in assisting those Afghans to reach safe third countries; and, if so, what response he received. [HL2570]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The former Foreign Secretary met with Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Qureshi on 3 September and discussed working together, to support the people of Afghanistan and to ensure safe passage out of the country. We will continue to explore all routes (air or land) with neighbouring countries, and what means can be put in place for Afghans to come to the UK, where that is their most appropriate destination. The PM is clear that we will support vulnerable and at risk groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, to come to the UK where appropriate.

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether those who apply to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme receive a receipt or acknowledgment of their application; and what is the timeframe for processing applications following the completion of security checks. [HL2636]

Baroness Goldie: All applicants to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) are directed to a confirmation screen on completion of the application form, with the option to print or save this as record of their submission.

In the latter stages of Op PITTING and subsequently we have received a very large number of applications, including 12,000 since the end of the operation. The time taken to process applications varies enormously, in particular based on the amount of information the applicant provides. Security checks are principally a Home Office requirement and are conducted once eligibility in principle has been established.

Afghanistan: Terrorism

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have held with NATO member states in relation to preventing Afghanistan becoming a base for terrorist training camps. [HL2533]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to monitor closely the terrorist threat from Afghanistan, including from Al Qaeda and ISKP, and has proscribed both of these organisations and their associated groups. These topics are routinely discussed at NATO meetings, and bilaterally with NATO allies including US, Canada, Turkey, France and Germany at Foreign Minister and Head of State level. We are working with our international partners to stop Afghanistan from again becoming a haven and inspiration for terrorism and thereby reduce the terrorist risk to the UK and the international community.

Afghanistan: Universities

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of UK-affiliated

academics and researchers in Afghanistan who (1) are in hiding, or (2) have applications to leave; and what steps they are taking to expedite and assist with their departure. [HL2666]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I addressed the UN Human Rights Council on 24 August to underscore the UK's commitment to protecting the human rights of all Afghan people. The UK led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights. The UK is urgently developing a new settlement scheme for 20,000 Afghans most at risk who will be eligible to apply. We are prioritising vulnerable groups in the UK's response.

Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many doses of all makes of COVID-19 vaccines they have donated to countries in Africa; and how many doses each country has received. [HL2709]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is one of the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), that has delivered more than 57 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to 42 African AMC countries to date. In addition to the £548m donation to COVAX, the UK has donated 5,624,440 doses to countries in Africa. Of this, 5,214,400 doses were donated through COVAX and 410,040 doses through bilateral donations. All the UK donated vaccines were produced by AstraZeneca.

African countries have received 5,138,680 doses (91%) of UK donated COVID-19 vaccines while 485,760 (9%) doses are yet to be delivered. Recipient countries are: Angola (128,640), Democratic Republic of Congo (51,840), Egypt (299,680), Ethiopia (1,520,640), Ghana (249,600), Kenya (817,080), Malawi (119,040), Niger (105,600), Nigeria (1,287,680), Senegal (140,160), Uganda (299,520) and Zambia (119,200).

Africa: Immigration

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of (1) the rate, and (2) the character, of migration north from Sudan, Mali, Niger, Libya and the Mediterranean; and if so, what are the implications for the UK's foreign and development policy of this assessment. [HL2809]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In the year up to June 2021, overall detections of irregular border crossings at the external land and sea borders of Europe were fairly stable compared with the previous year, up 11% to 151,150.

The UK has been a major contributor in the humanitarian response to the Mediterranean migration crisis, having allocated over £175 million since October

2015. We remain committed to engaging with European and other partners on a 'whole of route' approach to tackling the challenges and risks posed by irregular migration.

Agriculture: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the quantity of (1) brassicas, (2) salad foodstuffs, (3) fruit, and (4) vegetables, that remain unpicked due to a shortage of workers; and what impact they expect this to have on (a) food prices, and (b) the Consumer Price Index. [HL2749]

Lord Benyon: The Government recognises the importance of a reliable source of labour for crop picking and packing, and that it is a key part of bringing in the harvest for the horticultural sector. Defra is working closely with industry and other Government departments to understand labour supply and demand, and to help our world-leading growers access the labour they need to ensure our crops are picked and not wasted.

On 22 December 2020, the Government extended the Seasonal Workers Pilot into 2021, with up to 30,000 visas available, granted for workers to come to the UK, from EU or non-EU countries, for a period of up to 6 months to pick and package fruit and vegetables on our farms.

In 2021 and beyond, agricultural and food businesses continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status. Over 5.3 million EU citizens and their families have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme and EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to do seasonal work in the horticulture sector in 2021.

Defra is working with industry and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to raise awareness of career opportunities within the food and farming sectors among UK workers. All horticultural and agricultural businesses are encouraged to advertise roles through DWP's Find A Job website, where they can upload and manage their vacancies. The DWP does not charge for this service and it is available across the United Kingdom.

Defra is leading on a review of automation in horticulture, which will cover both the edible and ornamental sectors in England. The review will work alongside the extended and expanded Seasonal Workers Pilot - and Defra's efforts to attract more UK residents into agricultural work - to support the overall aim of reducing the sector's dependency on seasonal migrant labour.

Defra monitors both wholesale fruit and vegetable prices, and food prices on a weekly basis using the Office for National Statistics' experimental food price indices, as well as on a monthly and annual basis using Consumer Price Index (including Housing Costs). Consumer food prices depend on a range of factors including agri-food import prices, domestic agricultural prices, domestic labour and manufacturing costs, and Sterling exchange

rates. Changes in food prices are dependent on changes in any of these factors.

Air Pollution

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to grant new regulatory powers to councils to combat non-transport related pollution. [HL2763]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Local authorities already have powers to require controls on many non-transport sources of pollution through environmental permitting. Through the Environment Bill we are strengthening the Local Air Quality Management framework to broaden the range of partners required to work with local authorities to tackle local sources of pollution, and making it easier for local authorities to use their powers to tackle domestic solid fuel burning. We will continue to work with local authorities to review existing powers and build capability.

There are already emission standards that Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) must comply with before they are sold, and the Government recently agreed to increase the stringency of these standards. Defra also recently completed a research project aimed at improving the evidence base on emissions from NRMM, and we are currently considering next steps. We have introduced Medium Combustion Plant and Specified Generator controls which require new generators to meet nitrogen oxide emission limits from January 2019. Further, since October 2019, operators of existing diesel generators which may pose a risk to local air quality have been required to hold an environmental permit and comply with permit conditions to protect local air quality.

New solid fuel boilers placed on the market after 31 December 2019 must comply with the requirements of Ecodesign Regulation (EU) 2015/1189 and new regulations will also come into force in 2022 which mean that all new stoves sold in England will need to meet agreed, stringent emission standards. This will raise the minimum standard of new appliances across the country.

As outlined in our Clean Air Strategy we will also consider the case for tighter emissions standards for medium combustion plants to those already introduced and to consider how to tackle emissions from smaller plants which do not fall within the scope of these regulations or eco-design regulations.

Ajax Vehicles: Ammunition

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the cost of (1) the Challenger Tank's 120mm high-explosive squash head (HESH) round complete with charge, and (2) a 120mm fin-stabilised discarding sabot round complete with charge, compare with the cost of one round of the 40mm cannon fitted to the Ajax reconnaissance vehicle in percentage terms. [HL2685]

Baroness Goldie: The Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank and Ajax vehicle are designed for different purposes and their armament and ammunition reflect this. We do not comment on the cost of the 40mm ammunition as this is commercially sensitive.

Antisocial Behaviour: Young People

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of Mosquito devices that emit high level sounds to deter loitering in public places, particularly those where young people gather. [HL2514]

Lord Callanan: Acoustic anti-loitering devices commonly known as Mosquito devices are widely available for purchase and use in commercial, domestic and public settings as a means of preventing potential anti-social behaviour.

Apprentices: Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the apprenticeship levy and use part of the levy funds to support pre-apprenticeship programmes to help young people at school build confidence. [HL2558]

Baroness Barran: The apprenticeships levy was created to support the uptake and delivery of high-quality apprenticeships, allowing employers to make a long-term, sustainable investment in the skills they need, and has been set at a level to fund this employer demand. The department currently has no plans to review what apprenticeship levy funds can be spent on.

As part of the government's Plan for Jobs, we are providing a range of support and funding to help prepare young people for the world of work. The department is investing £126 million in the 2021/22 academic year to support the largest ever expansion of traineeships and we continue to rollout T Levels.

Armed Forces: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the vaccine rollout within British armed forces and security personnel. [HL2701]

Baroness Goldie: As at 10 September 2021, 87% of UK Armed Forces personnel had received at least one COVID vaccination and 67% were fully vaccinated. Given the age profile of our personnel, these rates are slightly ahead of comparable statistics for the general population. Defence continues to work to improve COVID vaccine uptake for all eligible personnel.

Armenia: Azerbaijan

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the importance for the peace process of the government of Armenia releasing Azerbaijani prisoners of war; and what conversations they have had with the government of the United States of America on this issue. [HL2611]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: During visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan in February, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and Americas urged both parties to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to expedite the return of all prisoners of war. In her most recent conversations with the Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers, on 14 June and 6 September respectively, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and Americas raised the importance of the return of all prisoners of war and detainees and welcomed the most recent exchanges that have taken place. The UK continues to work with partners, including the United States in its capacity as Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, to encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to settle all matters related to last year's conflict including the return of all prisoners of war and detainees.

Arms Trade: Afghanistan

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arms export licences to Afghanistan they approved in (1) 2020, and (2) 2021; and what was their total financial value. [HL2615]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: In 2020, 16 Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs) were granted for military rated items to Afghanistan, with a value of £21,710,485. In addition, one Open Individual Export Licence (OIEL) was granted for military rated items. Because OIELs are open-ended, they are not restricted by quantities or values for the specific items the licence is granted for.

For the period 1st January to 31st March 2021, four SIELs were granted for military rated items, with a value of £533,350; and one OIEL was granted.

Information on licences granted between 1st April to 30th June 2021 will be published as Official Statistics GOV.UK on 12th October 2021; and information on licences granted from 1st July to 30th September 2021 in January 2022.

Ash Dieback Disease

Asked by Lord Inglewood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the number of roadside ash trees in England, (2) how many of these trees will need to be felled due to ash dieback, and (3) the average cost of felling and removing each tree. [HL2434]

Lord Benyon: The Government has a long-established Ash Dieback Health and Safety Taskforce comprising the Forestry Commission, Natural England and key stakeholders such as the National Trust, Woodland Trust, Tree Council, CLA, Arboricultural Association, Highways Agency, Network Rail and ten Local Authorities, which meets regularly and guides our approach on reducing the impact of ash dieback on public health and safety.

Working with the Health and Safety Taskforce, we estimate that there are approximately four million ash trees situated alongside roads, of which a large proportion (approximately 1.4 million) will need to be managed. The costs of felling a tree can vary considerably, and we have used case study examples to help inform assessments – these examples range from £400-£500. A strategic approach to planning and coordination can help reduce costs, and to support Local Authorities and other regional bodies dealing with ash dieback, Defra has worked with the Tree Council to develop an Ash Dieback Toolkit. The Government has recently announced a new Tree Health pilot, which is designed to support action against pests and diseases affecting trees, the pilot includes support for diseased and infested trees outside of woodland, for example roadside ash with ash dieback.

Assessments

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether consideration of summer term born children was a factor used in the GCSE and A Level teacher-assessed examinations. [HL2597]

Baroness Barran: This year, pupils and students were awarded grades determined by their teachers. Teacher assessed grades allowed results to be based on the knowledge students acquired as a result of what they had been taught, recognising the variability in teaching that some young people experienced.

As is the case in years in which exams have gone ahead, students' grades this year were not adjusted to take account of their birthday.

Awarding organisations provided assessment materials, guidance, and training to support centres to make fair, consistent, and evidence-based decisions which are without bias. Ofqual also published information for centres about making objective judgements this year, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-for-centres-about-making-objective-judgements>. Centres set out how they would ensure objectivity in their centre policies, which were then reviewed by exam boards. Schools, colleges, and exam boards also undertook internal and external checks to help maximise fairness for students, no matter their background.

Where students required reasonable adjustments and access arrangements, these should also have been in place when evidence was generated. Where they were not,

centres should have taken that into account when coming to their judgement.

Teachers, schools and colleges did an excellent job in using their collective experience to assess students in 2021. These grades reflect students' hard work in a hugely challenging year.

Whatever month of the year a child is born, schools are dedicated to providing for the needs of each child to help prepare them for a successful education. Teachers understand that children have different starting points when beginning school and are trained to adapt their teaching to suit an individual child's strengths and needs and provide extra support where necessary. Despite this, no child is required to start school until they reach compulsory school age, which for a summer born child is a full academic year after they could first have been admitted to school.

Asylum

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many persons claiming asylum have been granted either (1) asylum, or (2) permanent leave to remain, in the UK in each of the last 12 months. [HL2623]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of initial decisions on asylum applications are published in table Asy_D02 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets. The table attached is derived from published data.

Table 1: Number of people granted protection or leave at initial decision following an asylum claim, by outcome, in the year ending June 2021 (see attached).

The latest available data on grants of settlement (indefinite leave to remain) to individuals previously granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave following an asylum application are published in settlement table se_02_q in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

Table 2: Asylum-related grants of settlement in the year ending June 2021 (see attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table 1 & Table 2 - HL2623 [Table 1 & Table 2 - HL2623.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-10/HL2623>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are prioritising Afghan asylum seekers who are (1) women, (2) children, and (3) deemed to be especially vulnerable; and if so, what processes they are using to identify these people. [HL2630]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

On 13th September, further details on this scheme were set out in a statement made in the House of Commons and published on gov.uk. Through these statements, the Government confirmed that the ACRS will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for the values we share such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech and the rule of law, as well as other vulnerable people, including women, girls and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

To help identify those most at risk and vulnerable, the government will work closely with the UN's Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to identify and resettle refugees who have fled Afghanistan based on their protection and humanitarian need. The government will also work with international partners and NGOs in the region to implement a referral process for people inside Afghanistan, where safe passage can be arranged, and for those that have recently fled to other countries in the region.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws

To ask Her Majesty's Government what practical assistance they are providing to Afghan women, particularly judges, lawyers, MPs, journalists, human rights defenders and others at particular risk. [HL2752]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: A bespoke new safe and legal route will welcome Afghans most at risk who have been forced to flee the country, including women, girls and religious and other minorities given their particular vulnerability, to the UK. The ACRS will prioritise:

Those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech, rule of law (for example, judges, women's rights activists, journalists); and vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

Under Operation Warm Welcome, we are taking a cross-government approach to ensuring Afghans arriving in the UK are able to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities.

All those brought to the UK under ACRS will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. To ensure they will be supported properly, changes will be made to legislation so that, if necessary, people arriving under ACRS do not need to meet the habitual residence test.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and

find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to provide visas to Afghan women at risk, especially judges, lawyers, MPs, journalists and human rights defenders, and (2) to work with domestic and international partners on identifying such women. [HL2753]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), announced on 18 August, will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. The scheme will prioritise:

- those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech, rule of law (for example, judges, women's rights activists, academics, journalists); and
- vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

In delivering the ACRS, the Government will work with the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR and other international partners in the region to identify and resettle people at risk, including women and girls.

Autism: Health Services

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to produce a strategy for the transition to adult care of children with autism who have brain tumours, and (2) to review the age classification for when people with autism are considered to be young adults. [HL2743]

Lord Kamall: The Department has no plans to produce a specific strategy or to review the age at which autistic people are considered to be young adults. However, on 21 July, we published *The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026*. The new strategy is aimed at tackling the health and care inequalities autistic people face and includes supporting positive transitions into adulthood for autistic children and young people, including those with co-occurring conditions. A copy of the strategy is attached. Health and social care services should adhere to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines when supporting autistic children to adult care.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Strategy for autistic, young people and adults [the-national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-15/HL2743>

Azerbaijan: UNESCO

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to ask the government of Azerbaijan to allow full access to all the parts of (1) Armenia, (2) Nagorno-Karabakh, and (3) Nakhchivan, that officials from UNESCO wish to visit. [HL2578]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to urge the Governments of both Armenia and Azerbaijan to allow international organisations unrestricted access to all areas of the region. This includes pressing both sides to ensure UNESCO is able to undertake its crucial work in support of historical and cultural heritage. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas has raised this issue with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Governments, including during her visit to the region in February. Our Embassies in Baku and Yerevan continue to raise the question of access with both Governments.

Badgers: Pest Control

Asked by *Lord Beith*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidance to local authorities about the control of badgers in (1) cemeteries, and (2) burial grounds. [HL2400]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In England, licences - for the purpose of preventing serious damage to land, or any other form of property - to kill or take badgers, or to interfere with a badger sett are granted by Natural England (NE). NE is authorised, on behalf of the Secretary of State, to grant licences for this purpose.

In situations where badgers are causing damage to cemeteries or burial grounds, NE can provide case-specific advice to the local authority if requested, and this may include a site visit where this would be beneficial. If the damage is caused by foraging activities, then advice will normally relate to preventive measures that do not require a licence, such as the use of fencing and other proofing. Where the sett itself is causing damage to graves, then an application for a licence to exclude badgers from the sett may be appropriate.

Licences will only be granted where there are no satisfactory alternatives, the action to be licensed is proportionate to the scale of the problem and the licensed action will contribute to resolving the problem.

General guidance on the protection afforded to badgers and licensing activities impacting badgers is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>.

Defra has no current plans to issue any further guidance to local authorities about the control of badgers in cemeteries or burial grounds.

Bereavement Support Payment

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total number of children who, between 6 April 2017 and 30 August 2018, experienced the death of a parent but whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) remains ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021. [HL2794]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made of the total number of children who experience the death of a parent between 6th April 2017 and 30th August 2018 whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Widowed Parents Allowance or Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) will remain ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021.

As part of the BSP claimant process, the number of dependent children are not captured, and therefore we do not hold the data required.

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Supreme Court judgment [2018] UKSC 48, what assessment have they made of the impact on family finances of not providing retrospective Bereavement Support Payment to families where the date of death of a family member was prior to 30 August 2018. [HL2797]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Supreme Court and the High Court have declared the legislation governing Widowed Parent's Allowance (WPA) and Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) respectively to be incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in that surviving cohabitants with children cannot access these benefits.

The draft proposal for a Bereavement Benefits (2021) Remedial Order was laid before Parliament on 15th July 2021 and proposes to extend eligibility for Widowed Parent's Allowance (WPA) and Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) to surviving cohabitants with dependent children.

The changes proposed by the draft Order have effect from 30th August 2018, as this was the date of the Supreme Court judgment in the McLaughlin case. Where a death occurred before 30th August 2018, there can be eligibility for both WPA and BSP, but awards can only be made in respect of entitlement arising from that date.

The proposals in the draft Order are subject to a 60-day laying period during which comments are invited from parliamentarians and stakeholders about the proposals. These comments will then be reviewed and next steps considered.

An assessment of the impact on family finances of not providing BSP to families where the death of a family member occurred prior to 30th August 2018 has not been made.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Supreme Court judgment [2018] UKSC 48, what consideration they have given to providing retrospective Bereavement Support Payment to families where the date of death of a family member was prior to 30 August 2018. [HL2798]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial Order) 2021 was laid before Parliament on 15 July 2021 and proposes to extend eligibility to Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) and Widowed Parent's Allowance (WPA) to cohabitants with dependent children.

The changes proposed by the draft Order have effect from 30 August 2018, as this was the date of the Supreme Court judgment in the McLaughlin case and from when we became aware of an incompatibility. Where a death occurred before 30 August 2018, there can be eligibility for either WPA or BSP, but awards can only be made in respect of entitlement arising from that date.

The proposals in the draft Order are subject to a 60-day laying period during which comments are invited from parliamentarians and stakeholders about the proposals. These comments will then be reviewed and next steps considered.

Bereavement Support Payment and Widowed Parents Allowance

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total number of children who experienced the death of a parent between 9 February 2016 and 30 August 2018 whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Widowed Parents Allowance or Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) will remain ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021. [HL2795]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made of the total number of children who experience the death of a parent between 9th February 2016 and 30th August 2018 whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Widowed Parents Allowance or Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) will remain ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021.

As part of the BSP claimant process, the number of dependent children are not captured, and therefore we do not hold the data required.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total number of children who experienced the death of a parent between 9 April 2001 and 30 August 2018 whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Widowed Parents Allowance or Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) will remain

ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021. [HL2796]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made of the total number of children who experience the death of a parent between 9th April 2001 and 30th August 2018 whose family unit (1) was not eligible for Widowed Parents Allowance or Bereavement Support Payment, and (2) will remain ineligible for support under the Draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2021.

As part of the BSP claimant process, the number of dependent children are not captured, and therefore we do not hold the data required.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Genocide

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the lessons that can be learned from the Genocide of 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and what steps they are taking to ensure there is adherence to the Dayton Accords. [HL2529]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remembers all victims and pays its respects to the survivors of the genocide. The UK continues to fight for justice and to end impunity: this year Radovan Karadžić, convicted in part for his role in the Srebrenica genocide, was transferred to the UK to serve his life sentence. We continue to support the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals' work. The FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton MP, visited the Memorial Centre at Potočari in July this year and the FCDO has funded the Centre's work on genocide prevention.

As a member of the UN Security Council and of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, the UK works to uphold the GFAP's implementation. We worked with likeminded states to prevent Russian and Chinese attempts in the Security Council to close the Office of the High Representative, which oversees implementation of the civilian aspects of the GFAP, and we support the new High Representative in his work. The UK remains committed to supporting BiH's security, democracy and prosperity, underpinned as necessary by limited constitutional reform. It is essential that the authorities in BiH themselves make reforms based on broad consensus and for the greater good of all citizens.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Employee Ownership

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to give struggling companies the option to convert emergency bounce back loans into Employee Ownership Trusts to support their post-pandemic recovery process. [HL2557]

Lord Callanan: The Government launched the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) to ensure that the UK's smallest businesses could access loans of up to £50,000 to help businesses through the pandemic. Under BBLs, no repayments are due from the borrower for the first 12 months of the loan. The Government also covers the first 12 months of interest payments charged to the business by the lender.

We have always been clear that businesses are responsible for repaying any finance they take out. However, we recognise that a diverse range of businesses have taken out Bounce Back Loans and some of these will benefit from more flexibility in making their repayments. That is why the Government introduced the "Pay as You Grow" measures, which allow borrowers to tailor their repayments to their individual circumstances. "Pay as You Grow" provides borrowers with the option to:

- Extend the length of their loan from six years ten.
- Make interest-only payments for six months, with the option to use this up to three times throughout the loan.
- Pause repayments entirely for up to six months.

Borrowers can use these options either individually or in combination with each other. In addition, they have the option to fully repay their loan early and will face no early repayment charges for doing so.

The Government is not currently considering proposals to convert outstanding Bounce Back Loans into equity.

Brain: Tumours

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish a strategy for the (1) prevention, and (2) treatment, of brain tumours in children and young adults, and (3) aftercare for such people. [HL2651]

Lord Kamall: NHS England has no plans to do so.

Services for the treatment of brain tumours in children and young adults falls under NHS England's direct commissioning responsibilities for specialised services. The NHS Long Term Plan includes a number of commitments for improving the outcomes and experience of children, teenagers and young adults with cancer including: implementing networked care; simplifying pathways and transitions between service; ensuring that every patient has access to specialist care and increasing participation in clinical research.

Bribery: Overseas Companies

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with the Serious Fraud Office about reports of British companies engaging in bribery overseas. [HL2729]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: The SFO is an independent law enforcement agency, superintended by the Attorney General's Office. As set out in the Framework Agreement

between the two organisations there are regular meetings between the Law Officers and the Director of the SFO to discuss both the SFO performance at an organisational level and to provide an oversight of high-profile casework.

British Museum: Ethiopia

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to request that the British Museum (1) de-accession 11 Ethiopian altar tablets (tabots) which they have held since 1868, and (2) return them to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. [HL2497]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The British Museum operates at arm's length and independently of HM Government. Decisions relating to the care and management of the objects in their collections are therefore a matter for its trustees. This responsibility of the trustees is set out in the museum's legislation, the British Museum Act 1963, which also describes the limited circumstances under which the museum may deaccession items from its collections.

British Nationality: Children

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish the revised policy guidance on applications for registration of minors as British citizens by discretion under section 3(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981, following their commitment to conduct a review of the policy guidance in settling proceedings brought by five teenagers assisted by the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens in the High Court in April. [HL2439]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are committed to our review of the policy, but due to ongoing litigation, we do not anticipate completing it until a more appropriate time.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 13 July (HL1540), how long after the Supreme Court's final judgment they expect to publish the outcome of the section 55 review of child citizenship fees. [HL2441]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office will publish the outcome of section 55 review at the earliest opportunity following consideration of the implications of the Supreme Court's judgment.

British Virgin Islands: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's exit from the

EU on funding for conservation and biodiversity projects in the British Virgin Islands. [[HL2626](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to support conservation and biodiversity projects in the Overseas Territories following the UK's exit from the EU. The UK Government is monitoring the impact of EU Exit on the territories and taking action to mitigate against the impact of loss of EU environmental funding for the Overseas Territories including the British Virgin Islands, through initiatives such as Darwin Plus. Round 9 of Darwin Plus saw a record investment in 31 projects across the Overseas Territories, totalling more than £8m over three years.

Business: Money

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make the Financial Conduct Authority responsible for tracking whether businesses accept cash money across the economy. [[HL2672](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK.

On 1 July, the Government published the Access to Cash Consultation, seeking views on legislative proposals to protect cash access for the long term. The Government's proposals include making the Financial Conduct Authority the lead regulator for oversight of the retail cash system. The FCA responsibilities would extend to monitoring and enforcing cash access requirements, assessing cash access needs and demands over time, and monitoring the geographic spread of cash access points across the UK.

This builds on legislative changes made by Government as part of the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase by shops and other businesses. The financial services industry is already seeking to take advantage of these changes to the benefit of cash users; working with retailers to get this service rolled out to local communities.

In July, the FCA published updated evidence on cash access. This included research on cash acceptance by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which found that the primary motivation for accepting cash is to provide customers with choice. Nearly all (98%) of surveyed businesses stated they would never turn away a customer if they needed to pay by cash.

Cameroon: Human Rights

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Chichester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Cameroon about ensuring the legal protection of (1) human rights defenders, and (2) civil society activists, in that country. [[HL2735](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, including the disturbing reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and the security forces. In a visit to Cameroon in March, the previous Minister for Africa met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella, where he set out the UK's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution.

We work in conjunction with international partners, such as France and the United States, to raise the crisis in multilateral fora. The UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council on 26 February that the violence must end and urgent, impartial investigations must hold the perpetrators to account. At the UN Security Council briefing on UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) on 7 June, the UK reiterated the UN Secretary General's call for an end to violence and for all actors to refrain from attacks against civilians, including human rights defenders and civil society activists.

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what is their latest assessment of human rights in Cameroon, and (2) what steps they are taking to improve human rights in Cameroon through the bilateral trade agreement with that country. [[HL2780](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Reports of further human rights violations are disturbing. At the UN Security Council in June, the UK's Permanent Representative reiterated the UN Secretary General's call for the violence to end and for all actors to stop attacks against civilians. At the UN Human Rights Council this month, the UK called for an end to violence and impartial investigations to hold the perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account. The former Minister for Africa iterated these calls during his visit to Cameroon in March. HMG also urges the Government of Cameroon to engage fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Government's approach is clear that using trade to support development and prosperity is not mutually exclusive to the rule of law, protecting human rights, and democratic principles. We continue to press the Cameroonian Government to uphold these principles, which underpin the Economic Partnership Agreement.

Cameroon: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Chichester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Cameroon's non-governmental organisation registration directive on the ability of international and local humanitarian and civil society groups to operate in that country. [[HL2736](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to support the work of international and local humanitarian and civil society groups in Cameroon, where the UK has called for unimpeded humanitarian access and open civil society engagement. The UK's representative reiterated these calls at the UN Security Council briefing on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa in June. Alongside others in the diplomatic community and the UN, the British High Commission in Yaoundé continues to advocate for access.

According to the recent registration directive in Cameroon, only international NGOs have been required to submit a set of documents including their acts of authorisation for review by the authorities. Following a coordinated request from international actors, the Ministry has since agreed to extend the deadline by a further two months. The British High Commission will continue to monitor this development, and to take appropriate actions if necessary.

Cameroon: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Chichester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the humanitarian situation in Cameroon. [HL2737]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains concerned about the humanitarian situation throughout Cameroon. In the Far North region, where there are 322,000 internally displaced people, 115,000 Nigerian refugees, and 380,000 people are food insecure, the UK is providing almost £3 million of humanitarian funding through our partners. In the North-West and South-West regions, where 1.15 million people suffer from food insecurity, the UK is providing around £2 million of humanitarian funding.

We regularly discuss the crisis with the Government of Cameroon. During the previous Minister for Africa's visit to the country in March, he met project partners to witness the impact of UK aid and called for unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need. The UK's representative reiterated these calls at the UN Security Council briefing on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa in June. The British High Commission in Yaoundé, alongside the diplomatic community and the UN, continues to advocate for humanitarian access.

Capital Punishment and Human Rights

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they most recently discussed (1) human rights, and (2) the death penalty, with the governments of (a) China, (b) Iran, (c) Saudi Arabia, and (d) the United States of America. [HL2495]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly engage with the governments of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States of America and other partners on a wide

range of issues, including Human Rights and the Death Penalty.

Carbon Emissions: Devolution

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding achieving net zero by 2050. [HL2643]

Lord Callanan: The UK Government is working closely with Devolved Administration colleagues at Ministerial and official level to achieve our climate goals. This includes input into the Net Zero Strategy to deliver on the UK's carbon budgets leading up to 2050.

This close working is facilitated through a Net Zero Inter-Ministerial Group involving Ministers from the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, a senior-official level Net Zero Nations Board which meets on alternate months, a monthly supporting working group, a programme of deep dives this summer across a range of economic sectors and enabling activities, and through considerable sector-specific engagement.

Cardiovascular Diseases: Medical Treatments

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps (1) NHS England, and (2) NHS Improvement, are taking to implement the commissioning policies for cardiovascular procedures to ensure all vulnerable patients have access to them. [HL2584]

Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement with NHSX are working to provide support for people at greater risk of heart failure, heart attack and stroke by increasing access to remote monitoring and management of their blood pressure via the NHS Blood Pressure at home programme.

Providing greater access to echocardiography in primary care will improve the investigation of those with breathlessness, a key heart failure symptom. The National Health Service will also improve cardiac rehabilitation to prevent up to 23,000 premature deaths and 50,000 acute admissions over 10 years.

Carer's Allowance

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in England received the Carer's Allowance in (1) April 2019, and (2) April 2021. [HL2649]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: DWP statistics on the number of Carer's Allowance claims in payment are publicly available online via StatXplore. These statistics are released on a quarterly basis, for the following months: February, May, August and November. The most recent available statistics are for February 2021.

The figures requested are therefore not available for April 2021. The figure from the most recent release of these statistics is included in the response instead. For an annual comparison, the figure for February 2019 is also included in this response.

The number of people in England who received Carer's Allowance in February 2019 was 736,624.

The number of people in England who received Carer's Allowance in February 2021 was 794,816.

Cats and Dogs: Tagging

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, for future legislation of the micro-chipping of (1) dogs, and (2) cats. [HL2415]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: All dogs in England must already be microchipped under the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015, unless they are certified as exempt. We are currently carrying out a post-implementation review of the regulations, which will be published later this year. This review will also consider how the current database system is working in practice.

We committed in our manifesto, and reaffirmed in our Action Plan for Animal Welfare, our intention to introduce compulsory cat microchipping. We carried out a public consultation on these proposals earlier this year. Defra officials are currently analysing the responses. We aim to publish a summary of responses and set out our proposals later this year.

This is a devolved matter and these developments relate to the situation applying in England.

Central Asia: Counter-terrorism

Asked by Baroness D'Souza

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to develop, and (2) to build support for, a regional counter-terrorism programme in Central Asia; from where they will seek to build support for any such programme; and what assessment they have made of their ability to build any such support in the absence of cooperation with the Taliban to counter international terrorist threats from (a) Al-Qaida, (b) ISIS, and (c) related splinter groups. [HL2538]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We must prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a haven for terrorism, including from Al-Qaida and ISIS, and an exporter of instability.

We will continue to convene partners both bilaterally and through the G7, the UN Security Council, and NATO and we expect that NATO will continue to have a role in fighting terrorism. We will work with our partners to use all levers at our disposal to disrupt terrorist groups' access to resources. This will include leading an international

approach to prevent and deter Foreign Terrorist Fighters travelling to Afghanistan and effective implementation of counter-terrorism focused sanctions against terrorists in Afghanistan.

We will engage regional governments, in particular India and Pakistan, to work to prevent Afghanistan becoming a haven for terrorism. I visited Uzbekistan on 14 September, after visiting Uzbekistan and Tajikistan the week of 30 August for discussions on Afghanistan. The former Foreign Secretary also visited Islamabad to address the issue of terrorism and discussed it with the Pakistani and Indian foreign ministers. We will build regional resilience to prevent any spread of instability/extremist and to counter radicalising narratives.

Chemicals: Safety

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to produce an equivalent list to the EU Restricted Substance List for the UK. [HL2543]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as the Agency for the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, publishes a list of those chemicals subject to restrictions on their own, in mixtures or in articles. This list can be found on the HSE website at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/restrictions.htm>.

Children in Care

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children are in unregistered residential accommodation. [HL2761]

Baroness Barran: Any setting that is providing care and accommodation must register with Ofsted as a children's home. If a setting is providing care and accommodation but is operating without Ofsted registration, they are operating illegally as an 'unregistered' children's home. We do not collect national data on how many children in England are in unregistered settings offering care and accommodation.

Ofsted investigates notifications about potential unregistered children's homes and in 2019/20 they undertook 250 investigations[1]. Of these, around a quarter should have been registered with Ofsted. Local authorities have a duty to ensure sufficient appropriate provision for the children they look after and that every looked-after child is placed in an appropriate care setting that meets their needs.

[1]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920>.

Children: Day Care

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) affordability, and (2) availability, of childcare. [HL2759]

Baroness Barran: The government is committed to supporting families with the cost of childcare, which is why the government has made an unprecedented investment in childcare over the past decade.

We have spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on our early education entitlements and the government continues to support families with their childcare costs. The universal 15 hours entitlement, available for every three and four year old, can save parents up to £2,500 per year, and eligible working parents can apply for an additional 15 hours free childcare which can save them up to £5,000 if they use the full 30 hours. 30 hours free childcare was introduced in England in September 2017 and is an entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds, benefitting nearly 330,000 in January 2021.

In addition to the free early education entitlements, the government offers Tax-Free Childcare for children from 0-11 years old, or up to 16 if disabled. This scheme means that for every £8 parents pay their provider via an online account, the government will pay £2 – up to a maximum contribution of £2,000 per child each year, or £4,000 if disabled. 308,000 families used Tax-Free Childcare for 364,000 children in June 2021.

Parents may also benefit from Universal Credit. Working parents on a low income can get up to 85% of their childcare costs for children under 16 reimbursed through Universal Credit Childcare. This is subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1,108 for two or more children, payable in arrears.

Last November, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a £44 million investment for 2021 to 2022, for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers.

With regard to the availability of childcare, national data published by Ofsted shows that there were 72,000 childcare providers registered with them on 31 March 2021, a dip of 4%, or 3,300, since 31 August 2020. The data also shows that of that number, 2,800 were childminders or home child carers and not nurseries. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2021>.

That data also shows that numbers of 'childcare settings on non-domestic premises', which is the Ofsted description of nurseries which are not based in schools, have remained fairly stable over time, with a drop of just 1% since 31 August 2015 and a decrease of 2%, or 400, between 31 August 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Ofsted data currently shows that the number of places available to parents seeking childcare has remained

broadly stable since August 2015. Additionally, the majority of eligible children aged two, three and four, have continued to access free childcare, despite the challenges faced throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. In a recent survey by Ipsos MORI in July 2021, only 6% of parents whose child was not receiving formal childcare said they would like to use formal childcare but have not been able to find a suitable provider. This is only approximately 2% of all parents.

China General Nuclear Power Corporation: Nuclear Power Stations

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove China General Nuclear from further participation in the Bradwell B and Sizewell C nuclear power projects. [HL2502]

Lord Callanan: The Government has been holding constructive negotiations with the developer of Sizewell C since January, CGN has a stake in the project up to the point of Final Investment Decision (FID), however no decisions on the project have been taken, including the potential final configuration of investors. The Government has committed to bring at least one large-scale nuclear project to the point of FID by the end of this Parliament and have entered negotiations with Sizewell C on that basis. Any investment in nuclear projects is subject to thorough scrutiny and needs to satisfy our robust legal, regulatory and national security requirements.

Civil Servants: Pensions

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value to the UK taxpayer of defined benefit pension payments to retiring civil servants. [HL2801]

Lord True: The Cabinet Office submits five year cash forecasts to the Office for Budget Responsibility in order for them to monitor the fiscal implications of the scheme, and the Government considers these long-term projections of expenditure, as published in their Fiscal Sustainability Reports, including expected pension cash flows as a percentage of GDP.

Civil Servants: Remote Working

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Treasury civil servants working from home; and what assessment they have made should civil servants choose to work from other countries. [HL2572]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMT offices have remained open throughout the pandemic with access to staff for business and wellbeing reasons and our building health

and safety assessment has been reviewed and updated during this period. Staff working from home have been supported through a number of measures, including homeworking Display Screen Equipment assessments to support their health and safety. HMT has been able to deliver its full agenda throughout this period.

HMT applies central Civil Service policy in relation to working from other countries.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of when civil servants, in all departments, will be working in their offices for all of their contracted hours. [HL2800]

Lord True: Since the pandemic began, civil servants have been delivering the Government's priorities from home and the workplace. This includes the vaccine rollout, one of the world's most comprehensive economic responses and continuing to run vital public services.

Following the Government's move to Step Four of the Roadmap on 19 July 2021, all Civil Service employers are making corporate decisions regarding the working arrangements of their staff and a return to greater workplace-working. Departments are gradually and steadily increasing the number of staff in workplaces, whilst ensuring they remain safe and secure through the regular review of building risk assessments.

Climate Change

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress towards the globally agreed aim of limiting global heating to below 2°C; and pursuing efforts to limit heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. [HL2509]

Lord Callanan: While we welcome progress made and new Nationally Determined Contributions and commitments made at the Climate Ambition Summit and since by many parties, we agree with assessments by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Energy Agency, and the Climate Action Tracker that there remains a significant gap to achieving below 2°C and to 1.5°C.

The temperature goal of the Paris Agreement is just within reach, but to achieve it, further ambition is needed and must be acted on today. That is why we are asking all countries to come forward ahead of COP26 with enhanced and ambitious commitments to reduce emissions and scale up adaptation.

The UK is driving up global climate ambition and fostering a global, green, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 through our leadership in multilateral forum, our COP26 and G7 Presidencies, our international climate finance commitments and our International Energy Unit.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that sufficient progress is made on strengthening climate adaptation and resilience ahead of COP26. [HL2512]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Driving progress to support vulnerable communities and ecosystems, adapt to climate impacts and build resilience to long term risks is a top priority for the UK's COP26 Presidency. We are working with countries, civil society, businesses and local communities to deliver effective, inclusive adaptation action and to harness the vital power of nature in minimising climate risk.

We are focussed on improving preparedness for climate-related disasters, through a focus on enhanced early warning and early action systems; and supporting national adaptation planning - including a push for countries to publish an Adaptation Communication ahead of COP26 to outline current progress and needs. We are working to mobilise and advance adaptation action across all scales, through parties and non-state actors - including increased support to enable further locally-led adaptation. We are also working to increase the availability, efficiency and accessibility of adaptation and disaster risk finance from public and private sources - including through the Taskforce on Access to finance that was launched by the UK and Fiji at the Climate and Development Ministerial earlier this year.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to mobilise public and private climate finance ahead of COP26. [HL2513]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Presidency is pushing developed countries to significantly increase their financial commitments for mitigation, adaptation and nature for developing countries and to align global financial flows with the Paris Agreement. This includes setting out a \$100 billion delivery plan to be taken forward by Canada and Germany to demonstrate how developed countries are mobilising \$100 billion a year.

Public finance will work in tandem with private finance and be used to mobilise far greater sums of private finance. The UK Presidency is working with other donors and multilateral development banks in collaboration with governments, to promote and support a range of targeted initiatives that tackle barriers to and promote investment into developing countries; such as supporting new market structures, improving policy environments, de-risking investments and creating incentives for deal flow. In April 2021 we founded GFANZ, the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net Zero which accelerates the implementation of net zero commitments and mobilises capital to climate solutions. There are currently over 250 member firms from over 30 countries, representing assets of more than US\$88 trillion.

Climate Change and Environment Protection: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to promote climate action and a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic ahead of COP26. [[HL2511](#)]

Lord Callanan: As part of the Government's commitment to build back better from the pandemic, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out in his Ten Point Plan for the UK to lead the world into a Green Industrial Revolution. This innovative programme set out ambitious policies and £12 billion of government investment to support up to 250,000 green jobs across the UK, accelerate our path to reaching net zero by 2050 and lay the foundations for our green recovery by building back greener from COVID-19.

We are making real progress in delivering the Ten Point Plan while setting out plans for further climate action. Since last November, we have secured new investments in offshore wind, electric vehicles and battery manufacturing and supply chains, and rolled out schemes to decarbonise homes and buildings - supporting green jobs across the UK. We have also published our Energy White Paper, North Sea Transition Deal, Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Industrial Decarbonisation and Hydrogen Strategy and consultation on Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) business models.

This November, the UK will host COP26 in Glasgow bringing together world leaders, climate experts, business leaders and citizens to agree ambitious action to tackle climate change. Ahead of COP26, we will bring forward further bold proposals, including a Net Zero Strategy, to cut emissions and create new jobs and industries across the whole country, going further and faster towards building a stronger, more resilient future and protecting our planet for this generation and those to come.

College of Policing: Disclosure of Information

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the articles of association of the College of Policing Ltd. [[HL2775](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The articles of association for College of Policing will be published by Companies House shortly and made available on their website.

College of Policing: Public Appointments

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government who appoints the members of the board of the College of Policing Ltd. [[HL2776](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The board of the College of Policing consists of:

- the College chief executive officer (CEO).
- four independent directors from various sectors.
- one chief constable.
- one member of police staff.
- one member from the superintendent ranks.
- one member from the federated ranks.
- one police and crime commissioner.

The CEO is employed by the College. The remaining Directors are non-executive and are appointed by the Home Secretary.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding the UK's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. [[HL2757](#)]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Department has engaged extensively with the Devolved Administrations throughout the accession process thus far, both at the Chief Negotiator and at Ministerial level, including the sharing of negotiation positions in devolved areas. At every stage, we have taken into consideration their views and priorities. Our programme of engagement totals hundreds of hours at official level and dozens at Ministerial level.

Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Rawlings*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what constitutes a COVID-19 (1) pilot scheme, (2) event research programme, (3) trial; and how many there have been of each of these in the last two years. [[HL2095](#)]

Lord Kamall: A pilot scheme tests a policy before it becomes operational to identify any delivery challenges and how these can be overcome ahead of wider deployment. A pilot is limited in its delivery by time period, volume, context or geography, or any combination of these. Within NHS Test and Trace there have been 158 pilot schemes.

The Events Research Programme (ERP) is a single cross-Government programme which ran a number of event pilots. It aims to examine the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from attendance at events to enable people to attend a range of events safely. The programme is exploring how a combination of testing and non-pharmaceutical interventions or actions that people can take to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, can inform decisions on safely lifting restrictions at events. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is

currently leading the ERP, which has conducted 42 pilot events within the programme.

Trials are put in place to identify solutions to a specific research question. They are run within formal research governance and are listed on an open science platform, available to the scientific community. The outcomes of trials are prepared for peer-reviewed publications. Information on the number of all such COVID-19 trials is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the incidence of cases of COVID-19 in the UK on 1 September compared to the average incidence rate across Europe on that day, and (2) the reasons why the UK rate was higher than the European average. [HL2638]

Lord Kamall: Data on the incidence of COVID-19 cases in the United Kingdom is not available in the format requested, therefore no such assessment has been made.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the furlough scheme for industries affected by COVID-19. [HL2724]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was designed as a temporary, economy-wide measure to support businesses while widespread restrictions were in place. Closing the scheme at the end of September strikes the right balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work as demand returns. As set out in the Plan for Jobs Progress Update published on 13 September 2021, this approach has worked. The OBR have estimated that without the short-term fiscal easing announced in the Budget, and in particular the CJRS extension, unemployment would have otherwise been around 300,000 higher in the fourth quarter of this year than the 2.2 million in the central forecast.

The Government has shown throughout the pandemic that it is prepared to adapt support if the path of the virus changes. We continue to engage closely with sectors across the economy to understand their recovery horizons as the vaccine is rolled out and restrictions ease.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many of the people who (1) have contracted COVID-19 after being admitted to hospital, and (2) died from COVID-19 contracted after

admission to hospital, were infected by non-vaccinated NHS staff. [HL2607]

Lord Kamall: Public Health England's findings show up to one in six infections among hospitalised patients with COVID-19 in England during the first six months of the pandemic could be attributed to hospital-acquired infection. This represents less than 1% of the estimated three million COVID-19 cases during this period.

Of the patients with hospital-onset COVID-19 that was probably or definitely hospital-acquired, 41.3% died within 28-days of contracting COVID-19.

PHE does not collect data on the number of people who were infected with COVID-19 by non-vaccinated National Health Service staff and subsequently died, as this information is unavailable.

Coronavirus: Protective Clothing and Screening

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the potential revenue of introducing a windfall tax on companies supplying (1) PPE, and (2) private COVID-19 tests. [HL2722]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It is right that, as the economy rebounds, those best able to contribute share in the task of restoring the public finances to a sustainable footing.

That is why, at Budget, the Chancellor announced an increase in the Corporation Tax (CT) rate from 19 per cent to 25 per cent from 2023 onwards. This will, by definition, only apply to companies that are making profits, and profitable businesses have continued to pay CT throughout the pandemic.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have, if any, that businesses have been overcharging for COVID-19 PCR tests. [HL2791]

Lord Kamall: The Department has received no such evidence.

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the base cost for a COVID-19 PCR test. [HL2792]

Lord Kamall: We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide vaccinations against COVID-19 during the winter 2021–22. [HL2527]

Lord Kamall: The National Health Service will be launching a booster programme to protect individuals who received vaccination in phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in priority groups one to nine.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advise that the booster vaccine dose is offered no earlier than six months after completion of the primary vaccine course and that the booster programme should as far as possible be deployed in the same order as during phase one. The first booster vaccine was administered on 16 September and the NHS plans to begin offering booster vaccines at scale to the most vulnerable from the week commencing 20 September 2021.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the occurrence of patients suffering from Guillain-Barré syndrome following their COVID-19 vaccination; and which vaccines were involved in each case. [HL2581]

Lord Kamall: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has been closely monitoring and assessing all reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) during the COVID-19 vaccination program. GBS has occurred very rarely in individuals following vaccination in the United Kingdom. Whilst it was not possible to establish a causal association between any of the vaccines and GBS based on the available data, there was sufficient evidence to warrant a precautionary statement about these very rare reports in the AstraZeneca vaccine Product Information (PI) in order to alert patients and healthcare professionals of the signs and symptoms so that adequate supportive care and treatment can be sought and provided. This was included in the PI for the AstraZeneca vaccine in August 2021.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in England have been notified that they are eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccine. [HL2588]

Lord Kamall: The first COVID-19 booster vaccine was administered on 16 September and as of 20 September 2021, over 1.5 million people in England were invited to receive their vaccine.

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to work with (1) the Northern Ireland Executive, (2) the Scottish Government, and (3) the Welsh Government, to ensure cooperation between the COVID Pass Services in each constituent part of the UK; and in particular to coordinate arrangements for people who have had one dose of the vaccine in one constituent part of the UK and the other dose in another. [HL2696]

Lord Kamall: We regularly engage with the devolved administrations to ensure NHS COVID Pass interoperability. Bi-directional live vaccine data flows

have been established by NHS Digital with Wales and Scotland, which update both general practitioner records and NHS COVID Pass status. There is currently no data sharing process in place with Northern Ireland, although we are aiming to put this in place as soon as possible.

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce a COVID Pass Service for British citizens who have been vaccinated abroad. [HL2699]

Lord Kamall: Work is underway to input eligible British citizens' overseas vaccination data into the existing NHS COVID Pass. The system will only record vaccines that we are confident to recognise. A solution is being launched in England as a pilot from the end of September.

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow GP surgeries to issue COVID Passes to those who are unable to use the website, app or telephone services. [HL2700]

Lord Kamall: We have no plans to do so. However, we are exploring interoperability with third-party general practitioner apps which comply with our robust data protection and security commitments.

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 15 September (HL2404), what steps they are taking to support primary care services in England offering both (1) initial COVID-19 vaccinations, and (2) the COVID-19 booster vaccination. [HL2777]

Lord Kamall: To ensure the vaccination programme is delivered sustainably, NHS England and NHS Improvement recommended that local health systems should spread capacity across community pharmacy, vaccination centres and general practice. Additional funding has been made available to support general practices to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme, including for the Primary Care Network (PCN) Clinical Director role and incentives to support vaccination programme delivery goals.

Throughout the vaccination programme, providers have been able to access centrally sourced workforce, including unregistered vaccinators through the lead employer model, using a national protocol as appropriate to support vaccination delivery. This workforce offer is continuing in the autumn booster programme and includes volunteers.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to facilitate an emergency meeting of the G7 to address the (1) hoarding, and (2) wasting, of COVID-19 vaccines by developed countries. [HL2807]

Lord True: The UK continues to work with our G7 partners to implement the vaccines commitments made at the G7 Leaders' Summit and to coordinate further international efforts, including ahead of the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rome 30-31 October, to support our shared goal of global vaccination from COVID-19.

Credit: Public Consultation

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to begin the consultation on the regulation of buy-now-pay-later services, announced following the Woolard Review – A review of change and innovation in the unsecured credit market, published on 2 February. [HL2681]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On 2 February, the Government announced its intention to regulate Buy-Now-Pay-Later products. On 17 March, the Government tabled an amendment to the Financial Services Bill (now Act) to allow the Government to bring Buy-Now-Pay-Later products into the scope of FCA regulation in a proportionate way. The Government is now working to publish a consultation document soon.

Crimea: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representation they sent to the Crimea Platform summit hosted by President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine in Kyiv on 23 August. [HL2614]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: At the Prime Minister's request, the Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas led the UK delegation to the International Crimea Platform summit on 23 August. She was accompanied by the Minister for Defence Procurement, who also represented the UK at the military parade commemorating 30 years since Ukraine's declaration of independence on 24 August.

Cryptocurrencies: Energy

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require UK (1) crypto, and (2) fintech, industries, to account for energy use in the production of digital currencies. [HL2659]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions that cryptocurrencies were responsible for in (1) the UK, and (2) the world, over the last 12 months. [HL2660]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to account for the blockchain impact of cryptocurrency use in national emissions calculations; and how this relates to the UK's commitments under the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. [HL2662]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has been monitoring developments within the cryptoasset industry, including rising energy usage.

The Cryptoasset Taskforce, comprising HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Bank of England, considers the impact of cryptoassets and assesses what, if any, regulation is required in response. The Government stands ready to respond to emerging risks or changes in the market and will continue to monitor developments in cryptoassets.

In November 2020, the Chancellor announced that the UK will implement a green taxonomy – a common framework for determining which activities can be defined as environmentally sustainable – which will improve understanding of the impact of firms' activities and investments on the environment and support our transition to a sustainable economy. More details on the green taxonomy will be announced in due course.

The Government has already taken action to ensure the UK is the world-leading centre for green finance including through announcing an intention to make disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) fully mandatory across the economy by 2025, making the UK the first country to do so.

The Government is committed to upholding its pledge relating to the Paris Climate Agreement and have enacted a legally binding target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Between 1990 and 2018, the UK reduced its emissions by 43% while growing the economy by 75% – the best performance in the G7 on a per person basis and will continually assess any emerging environmental threats.

Cuba: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of pro-democracy movements in Cuba. [HL2719]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are clear that all Cubans should have the right to protest peacefully and that detention must not be used as a tool to restrict freedom of expression, assembly or religion. The UK was one of the first countries on 12 July to call for the Cuban people to be allowed to express their views freely and peacefully. We have raised our concerns directly with the Cuban Government, both in London and Havana, and called for the authorities to release information on detained citizens, including their whereabouts.

Culture and English Language: Afghanistan

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide teaching and mentoring in English language and culture to recently arrived Afghan refugees; and how they plan to deliver this. [HL2706]

Baroness Barran: We know that language skills are crucial to help people integrate into life in England, as well as to break down barriers to work and career progression. This is why we want to support all new arrivals to England to secure the English language skills they need.

All Afghans being resettled through both the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be granted 'indefinite leave to remain' and therefore are eligible from arrival for funding through the Adult Education Budget, including English language courses. They will also receive a package of integration support to help them acclimatise, learn English and find work, which will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration. We will be working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole of society effort to address this challenge.

Cybercrime: Education

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce cybersecurity education to Key Stage 1 children in order to educate them on tech literacy and online safety. [HL2517]

Baroness Barran: The introduction of e-safety content in key stage 1 reflects the fact that children are increasingly accessing the internet from a young age. As part of the computing curriculum, pupils are taught the fundamental principles of e-safety and cyber security. These fundamental principles include how to use technology safely and respectfully, how to keep personal information private, recognise unacceptable behaviour, and identify a range of ways to report concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies. Cybersecurity knowledge is then developed right through a pupil's time in school, with progression in content throughout each key stage to reflect the different and escalating risks that children face throughout life.

To support the delivery of computing in schools, the department launched the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in November 2018, which is backed by £84 million of government funding, to ensure teachers have the knowledge and expertise to deliver all aspects of the computing curriculum with confidence at each key stage, including e-safety and cyber security. As part of their core offer, the NCCE are delivering online courses on cyber security and a range of resources on e-safety for each key stage. This includes a unit of learning on being a competent, confident and respectful user of IT for key stage 1 pupils.

Deep Sea Mining

Asked by *Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk that industrial-scale deep seabed mining will (1) damage ocean ecosystems, and (2) lead to permanent biodiversity loss. [HL2556]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK recognises the growing pressure to extract deep-sea resources, and is deeply concerned about the potential impacts of mining activities on the fragile marine environment.

We have commissioned an independent review of the existing literature in relation to deep sea mining, which will seek to include elements such as environmental, economic and societal considerations, and to identify key outstanding questions and evidence gaps. The terms of reference and a summary of the evidence review will be published in due course.

We have committed not to sponsor or support the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep sea mining projects, unless and until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impact on deep sea ecosystems, and strong and enforceable environmental regulations and standards are in place.

Further and detailed environmental impact assessments would be required in advance of any exploitation licence being issued.

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what position they took on motion 69 at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's World Conservation Congress relating to the protection of deep-ocean ecosystems, biodiversity, and a moratorium on seabed mining; and for what reason they adopted that position. [HL2571]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: At the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the UK abstained from voting on the motion for a moratorium on deep-sea mining because it did not fully align with UK policy.

However, there is no deep-sea mining currently happening in areas beyond national jurisdictions, there are no exploitation licences for deep-sea mining, and no exploitation regulations have yet been agreed. In addition, the UK has committed not to sponsor or support the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep-sea mining projects unless and until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impact on deep-sea ecosystems and strong and enforceable environmental regulations and standards have been developed by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and are in place.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), it is the role of the ISA to regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the international seabed area for the benefit of mankind as a whole. In so doing, the ISA has the duty to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed activities.

The UK has a strong and respected voice in these international negotiations and the UK position emphasises the need to ensure that the highest possible environmental standards are met in the development of this new industry. We judge that engaging fully with these negotiations is the most effective way for the UK to work with others so that no deep-sea mining takes place in the absence of strong and enforceable environmental regulations and standards. This includes requiring that Regional Environmental Management Plans are adopted for each region before any exploitation licence can even be considered, as well as the adoption of strong and enforceable environmental Standards and Guidelines.

Defence Intelligence

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals are employed by the Defence Intelligence organisation; and what is the budget for its operations. [HL2406]

Baroness Goldie: The Defence Intelligence workforce at 31 March 2021 was circa 4,100 people and the budget for the same period was £349 million. We report annually to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament on the size of the Defence Intelligence workforce and budget. The Committee normally publishes this information in its Annual Reports.

Delivery Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the importance of home parcel deliveries during the last 18 months to the health and well-being of the UK; what conclusions, if any, they have drawn from any such assessment; and what plans they have to further regulate home parcel deliveries to protect the public interest. [HL2567]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises the important role that postal services have played in helping to mitigate the impact of coronavirus on individuals, families and businesses throughout the country. We remain committed to ensuring the universal postal service, through the universal service obligation, remains affordable and accessible to all users.

Ofcom, as the UK's designated independent regulator of postal services, is carrying out a review of the future regulatory framework for post which it aims to complete in 2022. As part of this review, Ofcom is considering whether extra consumer protections may be required and has sought views on the future regulation of the parcel delivery market. A Call for Inputs was launched on 11 March 2021 and closed on 20 May 2021. Ofcom intends to publish a full consultation on the future regulation of postal services later this year.

Department for Education: Ofsted

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was their response to the letter from Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, about Ofsted's monitoring of inspectorates for independent schools, sent to the Secretary of State for Education on 6 November 2018. [HL2742]

Baroness Barran: In her letter of 6 November 2018, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) recommended a review of the monitoring arrangements in place at the time and that new ones should be put in their place. Such a review was carried out by departmental officials, working alongside officials in Ofsted and at the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Following this review, new directions were issued to HMCI on 4 November 2019.

The new arrangements outlined above were aimed at giving greater flexibility to Ofsted and ISI to develop a joint programme of work to exchange and develop their mutual knowledge and understanding of inspecting independent schools.

It is worth noting that the School Inspection Service, which previously undertook inspections of some independent schools, has now closed and that there is now only one independent inspectorate, ISI. As such, and given the new directions issued on 4 November 2019, HMCI should no longer have regard to the matters in the February 2015 directions, which were the subject of the 6 November 2018 letter.

Department for International Trade: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many meetings they have had with the government of China since 12 January at which representatives of the Department for International Trade were present; and what was discussed at each of those meetings. [HL2568]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Neither Ministerial colleagues nor officials in London have met with the Chinese administration during this time.

Devolution: Scotland

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compliance of the Scottish Government in respect of their actions in areas reserved under the devolution agreements. [HL2575]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The UK Government is committed to respecting and strengthening the devolution settlements. We engage closely with the Scottish Government on Scotland Act Orders, which were established under the Scotland Act 1998, to help manage the Scottish devolution settlement. The Scotland Act 1998

sets out mechanisms in the event of activity which may be contrary to the Scottish devolution settlement.

The UK Government engages regularly with the Scottish Government in a wide range of other areas, including on the collective challenges we face, such as our recovery from Covid-19. The UK Government reports quarterly on intergovernmental engagement and activity with the Scottish Government and other devolved administrations.

Diplomatic Service: Mandarin Language

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of their diplomats possess advanced language qualifications in Mandarin Chinese. [[HL2613](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Over the past 5 years 63 FCDO staff have achieved qualifications in Mandarin at C1 or C2 level (in the Common European Framework Reference scale). FCDO language qualifications are valid for 5 years.

Doctors' List of Patients: Travellers

*Asked by **Baroness Whitaker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent finding by Friends, Families and Travellers, published on 8 July, which found that 74 per cent of GP surgeries breached NHS England guidelines and the Equality Act 2010 in March and April by refusing to register nomadic patients. [[HL2599](#)]

Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Department are engaging with Friends, Families and Travellers on their report to understand the issues raised. NHS England and NHS Improvement have been clear on the need to continue to register new patients throughout the pandemic. Patients can register without attending the practice by delivering their applications by any means, including by post and digitally. Any patient refused registration and who is not registered with another practice may request immediate necessary treatment for a new or pre-existing condition for up to 14 days.

Dogs: Licensing

*Asked by **Lord Goodlad***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to give Local Authorities a legal obligation to enforce the dog licensing regulations. [[HL2414](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Local authorities already undertake enforcement action in relation to breaches relating to licensable activity involving dogs, such as sales, breeding and boarding activities, as set out under section 3 of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations).

These regulations were developed to help improve welfare standards across a range of animal-related activities that are licensed by local authorities. The 2018 Regulations built on previous well-established requirements, many of which have existed for over 50 years including the animal boarding legislation which dates from 1963. Standards of welfare have developed considerably since that time, not least with the passing of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

The Government guidance which supports the 2018 Regulations is statutory, and local authorities are required to take it into account. This guidance aims to improve consistency in interpretation and application of the licensing regime across England. A person who carries on any licensed activity without a licence issued under the 2018 Regulations commits an offence under section 13(6) of the 2006 Act and would be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to six months, a fine, or both. Local authorities are provided with broad enforcement powers under the 2006 Act and, under section 30 of the 2006 Act, may prosecute any breach of the legislation.

Drugs: Northern Ireland

*Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that ending the grace period for border checks and controls between Great Britain and Northern Ireland would have on the supply of medicines to Northern Ireland. [[HL2739](#)]

Lord Frost: There would be clear risks to medicine supplies to patients in the absence of sustainable, long-term arrangements that take proper account of the nature of supplies of medicines as an inherent part of the delivery of national health services, such as those proposed by the Government in its [Command Paper](#) of 21 July.

Elections: Proof of Identity

*Asked by **Lord Tyler***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what work they are currently undertaking to prepare for the voter ID provisions in the Elections Bill (HC Bill 138). [[HL2633](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Tyler***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding (1) they have provided, or (2) intend to provide, for (a) staff, and (b) resources, to (i) the Electoral Commission, and (ii) local authorities, to implement the voter ID provisions in the Elections Bill (HC Bill 138). [[HL2634](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Tyler***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the (1) costs, and (2) resource requirements, that will be needed to implement the voter ID provisions in the Elections Bill (HC Bill 138). [[HL2635](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: An Impact Assessment, which includes information on the cost and resource requirements for voter identification, was published (attached) alongside the Elections Bill: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3020/publications>.

HMG will cover the costs for local authorities and will continue the detailed planning ahead of implementation nationally, working closely with those who will be responsible for delivery including Local Authorities, the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Impact assessment [2021-05-07ImpactAssessment - HL2633.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-10/HL2633>

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by the Competition and Markets Authority Electric Vehicle Charging market study, published on 23 July; and what steps they intend to take in response to the issues raised. [HL2627]

Lord Callanan: The Government agrees with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) that a comprehensive and competitive charging network is essential to support the country's transition to electric vehicles. In line with the CMA's recommendations, an Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy will be published later this year.

The Government committed £1.3 billion to EV infrastructure at the 2020 Spending Review. This includes the £950 million Rapid Charging Fund which will ensure that every Motorway Service Area in England has the grid capacity it needs to support the growth in EV usage to 2035. The Government has allocated £275 million in extended support for chargepoint installation at homes, workplaces, and on-street locations, and a further £90 million to support the roll out of larger, on-street charging schemes and rapid hubs in England.

Employment and Further Education: Young People

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research into young people's views on COVID-19 conducted by the Co-op, The Ghosted Generation, published 9 on September, which found that (1) two-thirds said job competition had increased during the pandemic, and (2) almost one third felt less likely to continue with further education due to it; and

what steps they intend to take to reverse this trend. [HL2582]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to respond to the recommendation of the Co-op report The Ghosted Generation, published on 9 September, to appoint a Youth Minister. [HL2583]

Baroness Barran: At the end of 2020, 57.2% of 16 to 24 year olds were in education and training, the highest proportion on record. Whilst 11.5% of this age group were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), at the end of 2020, it is one of the lowest rates on record, the lowest being 11% at the end of 2017.

Ministers at the Department for Education are aware of, and addressing, the issues highlighted by the Co-op report. The Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions are working jointly to monitor NEET rates, considering ways to support young people to continue developing the skills they will need for the future.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are NEET. All 16 and 17 year olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the September Guarantee, regardless of qualifications gained.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress. This includes traineeships that prepare young people for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience, and supported internships offering tailored support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme provides targeted local and regional support on NEET prevention, to raise aspirations of young people in areas of disadvantage and support their post-education progression. It also offers support for local authorities to help them support young people during this time. This includes support activities for staff, teachers, and careers advisors to engage young people, and training workshops to develop knowledge.

Employment: Older People

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they take, if any, to encourage those beyond the state pension age to continue in paid employment if they wish to do so. [HL2712]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As people live longer healthier lives, many recognise the positive financial, health and social benefits of work, and are choosing to work beyond State Pension age. There are currently 1.3 million workers over State Pension age in employment. The Government is committed to enabling them to remain in, and progress in, work if they choose.

The extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer offers the opportunity for individuals of all ages to change or reduce their hours to accommodate other responsibilities, where the alternative would be to give up work altogether. This may be of particular interest to adults over State Pension age who would like to amend their working pattern.

We have appointed a Business Champion for Older Workers to engage and influence employers on the benefits of a mixed-age workforce both strategically and in terms of practical advice.

Government also recognises the importance of supporting adults to plan effectively for the future, including how to stay in work for longer. The mid-life MOT launched a webpage in 2019 which offers support to those considering whether they need to make a change in their work, health or finances in order to get the most out of work and retirement.

Energy: Cryptocurrencies

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the Crypto Climate Accord initiative ahead of COP26; and what steps they plan to take to build support among the UK (1) crypto, and (2) fintech, industries for the cryptocurrency sector to be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy sources. [HL2658]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether managing the high energy impact of cryptocurrencies will be on the agenda at COP26. [HL2661]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government's private finance objective for the upcoming COP26 climate change forum is to ensure that every professional financial decision takes climate change into account. The recovery from COVID-19 will determine the mitigation and adaptation pathways for decades to come.

The finance campaign will provide the conditions for a future that is genuinely greener, more resilient and more sustainable than the past. Action on finance underpins all the other COP campaigns: adaptation and resilience, energy transition, nature and zero-emission vehicles. Without the right levels of finance, the rest is not possible.

The Government has already taken action to ensure the UK is the world-leading centre for green finance including through announcing an intention to make disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) fully mandatory across the economy by 2025, making the UK the first country to do so.

Additionally, the Government has committed to the implementation of a green taxonomy. This will allow us to accelerate our work towards a greener financial sector,

by providing a common definition for environmentally sustainable economy activities.

The Cryptoasset Taskforce, comprising HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Bank of England, considers the impact of cryptoassets and assesses what, if any, regulation is required in response. The Government has been monitoring developments within the cryptoasset industry, including rising energy usage.

The Government is committed to upholding its pledge relating to the Paris Climate Agreement and have enacted a legally binding target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Between 1990 and 2018, the UK reduced its emissions by 43% while growing the economy by 75% – the best performance in the G7 on a per person basis and will continually assess any emerging environmental threats.

Environment Protection: Job Creation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the green recovery programmes for rapid job creation; and how they intend to scale investment in line with G7 peers. [HL2673]

Lord Callanan: Under UK leadership at the G7, we have put Green Recovery from COVID-19 at the top of the international agenda and secured historic commitments such as the first ever 'net zero G7', with all countries committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Last November, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, which brings together £12 billion of government investment to unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030; and support up to 250,000 jobs across the UK by 2030.

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure ethnicity pay gap reporting is mandatory for all large employers by 2023. [HL2762]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to building a fairer Britain and ensuring that equality and opportunity is available for all. That is why my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister established the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which published its independent report on March 31st.

We welcome the opportunity to consider the Commission's findings, and are looking at them in light of the work that has already taken place within government, including the consultation on ethnicity pay reporting. We will be publishing our response to the Commission's report later this autumn.

Fawzia Koofi

Asked by *Baroness D'Souza*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they received regarding facilitating the safe passage to the UK of Fawzia Koofi, a former Deputy Speaker in the Parliament of Afghanistan; whether they responded to any such communications; if not, why not; and what assessment they have made of the possibility of offering Fawzia Koofi safe passage. [HL2537]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This question is about an individual's situation. I have written to the Noble Lady.

Financial Services: Taxation

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to amend the tax regime for the financial services sector; and how they intend to provide more clarity on investment screening laws to attract more inward investment. [HL2520]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government's aim is for a tax regime that supports the competitiveness of the UK as a financial services centre while ensuring it makes a fair contribution to the funding of public services.

The Government has recently taken a number of steps in support of that aim. This includes: a consultation on the UK tax treatment of funds; the development of a new tax regime for asset holding companies in alternative fund structures; a review on the VAT treatment of fund management fees and working group to consider the case for a wider financial services supplies; and, a review of the bank surcharge to ensure that the combined rate of tax on bank profit remains competitive in light of the increase in the corporation tax rate.

On attracting inward investment, the National Security and Investment Act will provide businesses with more certainty that they will not be targeted by hostile actors, ensuring the UK remains the premier investment destination in the world.

The Government is committed to ensuring investors understand the National Security and Investment Act, including what it requires from them, what it offers them, and how they can engage with the government for more information. In July 2021, the Government published an outline of the provisions of the National Security and Investment Act and guidance on a range of issues, and ahead of the January 2022 full commencement of the Act, will publish further guidance on how to submit a notification form, how sensitive data will be handled, interim orders and final orders, and notifiable acquisitions. Within six months of the Act's full commencement, Government will provide market guidance notes to further aid interaction and compliance.

The Government is also actively engaging interested stakeholders, including businesses and investors, to develop their understanding of the Act.

Fisheries: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with representatives of the Northern Irish fishing industry about the effect of (1) the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and (2) the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, on the fishing industry. [HL2691]

Lord Benyon: (1) Since 1 January 2021 the UK Government has met and engaged in written correspondence with representatives of the Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation and the Northern Ireland (NI) Fish Producers Organisation on the effect of the Protocol. Minister Victoria Prentis has also met with NI Members of Parliament, Minister Walker and Minister Poots to discuss NI fishers and industry.

Officials in both Defra and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in NI continue to collaborate and to engage with NI fishers on operationalising the Protocol.

(2) Representatives from all regions of the UK industry were briefed on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement earlier this year.

Fishing Gear: Waste

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of discarded fishing gear from foreign fishing fleets around the UK coastline. [HL2692]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to protecting the marine environment. However, due to the transboundary nature of marine litter from discarded fishing gear and the challenges around identifying the provenance of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear, we have not made an estimate of the amount of discarded fishing gear from foreign fishing fleets around the UK coastline.

Under the Merchant Shipping Regulations on the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships (2020), the discharge of all garbage into the sea is prohibited with very limited exceptions. In all cases the discharge of plastic is prohibited. These regulations bring the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships (MARPOL Annex V) into UK law.

The Regulations require fishing vessels to record the discharge or loss of fishing gear in the Garbage Record Book or ship's logbook and to report the accidental loss or discharge of fishing gear which poses a significant threat to the marine environment or navigation. Under the Merchant Shipping Regulations it is an offence to fail to report the discharge of fishing gear which poses a significant threat to the marine environment or navigation to (a) the ship's flag State and (b) any coastal state who

has jurisdiction over the waters where the loss or discharge occurs.

The UK collects data on the quantity and type of marine litter in our waters including on seafloor litter, floating litter and beach litter, following methodologies agreed through the OSPAR Convention's monitoring and assessment programmes. Data is available through the Marine Online Assessment Tool: <https://moat.cefas.co.uk/>.

Recognising the scale, urgency and transboundary nature of the global action needed to tackle marine plastic litter and microplastics, the UK this year has driven the G7 to commit to step up international action to tackle ghost gear, including an agreement to support organisations such as the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and agreement to carefully consider the recommendations of the UK commissioned OECD report 'Towards G7 Action to Combat Ghost Fishing gear'. The communique and OECD Ghost Gear report can be found here: [G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' meeting, May 2021: communiqué - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' meeting [g7-climate-environment-communique.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-14/HL2692>

Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to place the order for the three new Fleet Solid Support ships. [HL2566]

Baroness Goldie: The Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ship competition was launched on 21 May 2021 with the issue of a contract notice. The manufacture contract award is expected to be made within two years of the competition launch, following approvals. As announced on 1 September 2021, four consortia, all of which include significant UK involvement, have been awarded Competitive Procurement Phase contracts. The award of these contracts means the FSS ship competition has successfully moved to the next stage.

Flood Control: Somerset

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of the flood prevention measures in place on the Somerset Levels in advance of winter 2021–22. [HL2711]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Environment Agency (EA) is acutely conscious of the impacts that flooding has on local communities in the Somerset Levels and Moors and is spending around £3 million each year on flood risk management asset

operation and maintenance in the Levels and Moors. This financial year, the EA is forecasted to spend £1.3 million on repairing 20 assets in the area and will continue to collaborate with partners through the Somerset Prepared initiative to train community flood wardens and improve local resilience to flooding.

The EA has a sizeable fleet of plant and equipment at the centrally located Bradney Depot, including Ultra High Volume Pumps, sandbags, flood barriers, excavators, and other specialist plant and equipment. It also operates a 'trigger point' early warning system on a number of the moors, where incident response activity kicks in well before actual risk to property. This allows the use of permanent pumping stations to be maximised and gives the option of bringing in extra temporary pumping capacity if required, especially at key locations like Currymoor Flood Storage Reservoir.

In addition, construction works are underway to enhance the capacity of the River Sowey/Kings Sedgemoor Drain. These works are being delivered by the EA but funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority and will help reduce the flood risk to a number of communities. This work will be completed before winter.

Football: Racial Discrimination

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include racism in football as a priority in the Hate Crime Unit; and what resources they will provide to that Unit. [HL2675]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government takes all forms of hate crime very seriously. We are clear that victims of racially motivated abuse should be supported and that the individuals who carry out these hateful attacks should be brought to justice.

The Government is working with prominent footballers to understand more about the abuse they suffer on social media. We will continue to work with the Police, football representatives and those affected directly, to tackle this vile abuse, both on and off the football pitch.

We will outline our next steps in the forthcoming Hate Crime Strategy.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Expenditure

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to engage with small development charities in the UK as part of (1) developing the Comprehensive Spending Review, and (2) revising their development strategy. [HL2781]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The International Development Strategy will outline the UK government's strategic priorities and approach to development. As part of a wider engagement process, my ministerial colleagues

have held meetings with several stakeholders, including civil society organisations and small development charities; and we have recently closed a public Call for Evidence, which invited views from all interested parties, including small development charities. The FCDO does not routinely run external engagement exercises when developing the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Fraud

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of financial fraud in the UK. [HL2450]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes estimates on the volume of fraud against adult individuals in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases [1].

The ONS estimated that in the year ending March 2021 there were approximately 4.6 m fraud offences against adults in England and Wales.

The ONS also publishes, as part of its data on crime, the total number of fraud offences that are referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by industry bodies (UK finance and CIFAS) or recorded by Action Fraud each year. In the year ending March 2021, 806,637 cases were referred to the NFIB or recorded by Action Fraud. The ONS also provide a breakdown of this data by fraud type. For example, there were 393,068 cases of banking and credit industry fraud reported and 20,260 cases of financial investment fraud [2].

The Home Office has estimated that the total cost of fraud to individuals in England and Wales in 2015/2016 was £4.7bn [3]. They also estimated that the economic cost of organised fraud against businesses and the public sector in the UK was £5.9bn [4].

[1] Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendix/tables>

[3]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf

[4]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/782656/understanding-organised-crime-mar16-horr103-2nd.pdf

Free School Meals

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand Free School Meal eligibility (1) to all children aged seven to 18 in households earning

£20,000 per annum or less after benefits, and (2) to children that are undocumented or living in households as part of the no recourse to public funds immigration system. [HL2560]

Baroness Barran: Under this government, eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century. We think it is important that FSM support is targeted at those that need it most. FSM is an integral part of our provision for families on low incomes, and our wider actions to promote social mobility. The government is considering the recommendations in the National Food Strategy and will respond in due course.

We are currently working with departments across government to evaluate access to FSM for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the existing temporary extension of eligibility will continue until a decision on long-term eligibility is made. Guidance on this extension can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>.

Gambling: Internet

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of support provided by major online gambling companies to tackle problem gambling. [HL2694]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: HM Government recognises the role the industry can play in supporting efforts to tackle problem gambling. Operators are required by the Gambling Commission to monitor play to detect customers who are at risk of harm, to intervene to prevent harm, to provide safer gambling tools and self-exclusion schemes including Gamstop, and to direct them to safer gambling information and support.

We welcome recent steps taken to raise standards across the sector, such as the Betting & Gaming Council's codes of conduct on high value customer schemes and online product design. Gambling operators licensed by the Gambling Commission are also required to make a contribution to fund research, prevention or treatment of problem gambling. The Government secured a commitment from five major operators to increase their contributions tenfold over 4 years, from 0.1% to 1% of Gross Gambling Yield, raising £100 million for treatment by 2023/24.

The Government is also taking action to tackle problem gambling. Following recent measures such as the ban on credit card gambling and the commitment to increase the number of specialist NHS clinics, we are reviewing the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age. We are considering the evidence carefully and aim to publish a white paper outlining any conclusions and proposals for reform by the end of the year.

Gaza: Israel

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the increased cross-border fighting in Gaza; and what representations they have made to the government of Israel to prevent any escalation and ensure adequate living conditions for the local population. [HL2431]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have made clear our concern about the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza, including significant damage and destruction of civilian infrastructure including homes, schools, hospitals, and clinics. The UK priority now is ensuring timely humanitarian access into and out of Gaza, including for essential health services. We are urging the Government of Israel to ensure this access is maintained.

Gaza: Reconstruction

Asked by **Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of proposals of the new government to Israel for the reconstruction of Gaza while isolating Hamas. [HL2733]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome Foreign Minister Lapid's speech on 12 September, proposing positive policy suggestions to support economic development in Gaza and greater security for Israel. A long-term solution for Gaza is needed to prevent further conflict and make progress towards a two-state solution. The UK will continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

General Practitioners: Finance

Asked by **Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, (1) to remove funding from General Practitioners who do not offer face-to-face appointments, and (2) to amend the funding formula for General Practitioners so that it is based on the number of patients seen rather than the number of patients registered with the practice. [HL2608]

Lord Kamall: There are currently no plans to remove funding from general practitioners (GPs) who do not offer face to face appointments. NHS England and NHS Improvement, have stated that GP contractors should continue to offer a blended approach of face-to-face and remote appointments, with digital triage where possible. Patients input into the choice of consultation mode should be sought and practices should respect preferences for face-to-face care unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary, for example the presence of COVID-19 symptoms.

The global sum allocation formula which underpins capitation payments to general practices is designed to ensure that resources are directed to practices based on an estimate of their patient workload and unavoidable practice costs. Under this formula, practices whose registered patients have greater healthcare needs are paid more per patient than practices whose registered patients have fewer healthcare needs. There are currently no plans to change the formula.

Generic Prescribing

Asked by **Lord Hunt of Kings Heath**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of competition in keeping the price of generic medicine down; and what plans they have to ensure the National Health Service does not pay inflated prices for such medicine. [HL2745]

Lord Kamall: Competition to reduce the prices of generic medicines has led to some of the lowest prices in Europe and allows prices to react to the market. Anti-competitive behaviour, including excessive pricing, is a matter for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The Department asks the CMA to investigate where it has concerns about abuses of competition law for generic medicines. Where companies are found by the CMA to be in breach of the legislation, the Department will seek damages and invest that money back into the National Health Service.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to achieve (1) the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under the Paris Agreement, and (2) the net zero target ahead of COP26. [HL2510]

Lord Callanan: We will publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy. This will raise ambition as we outline our path to meet net zero by 2050, our Carbon Budgets and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021

Asked by **Baroness Wheeler**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the impact assessment for The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 will be submitted to the Regulatory Policy Committee; and when they expect to publish this assessment. [HL2466]

Lord Kamall: The impact assessment for The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 has been submitted to the Regulatory Policy Committee and is currently undergoing independent scrutiny.

Health Professions: Training

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase investment in the medical workforce to fund (1) foundation programmes, and (2) speciality training places. [[HL2723](#)]

Lord Kamall: The forthcoming Spending Review will set out further details of the Government's spending plans for the National Health Service workforce.

Health Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that the NHS spent £400 million per month on private sector healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic, why only one third of private sector capacity was utilised. [[HL2665](#)]

Lord Kamall: Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement worked with the independent sector to secure appropriate inpatient capacity and other resource across England. Initially, contracts placed with the independent sector took 100% of their capacity, including staff and equipment. The arrangements were later refined to provide guaranteed access to sufficient capacity to carry out the required level of activity.

Health Services: Older People

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what input they had into the NHS Surge and Triage briefing paper drawn up by NHS England in 2016 following a pandemic planning exercise which discussed the withdrawal of hospital care from elderly patients in the event of a severe flu pandemic. [[HL2427](#)]

Lord Kamall: The draft 2016 briefing paper was developed by NHS England and NHS Improvement for clinical deliberation and discussion with the then Chief Medical Officer.

Healthy Start Scheme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand Healthy Start eligibility to all households earning £20,000 or less after benefits which include pregnant women or children under five. [[HL2726](#)]

Lord Kamall: There are no current plans to change eligibility for the scheme. The Healthy Start scheme is kept under continuous review and aligns closely with other passported benefits

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chilterns

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any substance which is considered to be hazardous to (1) pollinator populations, (2) aquatic life, (3) animals, or (4) humans, is being used in the construction of the Chilterns Tunnel as part of the HS2 development. [[HL2542](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: All construction projects use substances that have the potential to cause harm if not used or controlled appropriately. All substances HS2 consider using (whether hazardous or not) are permissible within UK law and are subject to detailed risk assessment to assess the potential risk they pose.

With respect to construction of the Chilterns Tunnel, substances are reviewed by the Environment Agency and Affinity Water who are required to provide their consent before use. Their use is also subject to appropriate site management and monitoring regimes to avoid adverse impacts. This includes assessment of groundwater to determine if any substances are present at a concentration that could represent a risk.

All substances have been selected based on their suitability for their primary purpose and the specific environmental sensitivities of this location. Risks are assessed as being low because of how and where the substances or materials will be used. There is no pathway from the substances used during tunnelling activity to pollinators, whether or not a substance being used is deemed hazardous to them. No significant risks have been identified to aquatic life or animals with the substances to be used.

Hikvision

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 1 September (HL2328), (1) whether they have now met with the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner to discuss the issues raised in the correspondence with Hikvision, (2) if so, what the outcome of that meeting was, and (3) whether they intend to follow the decision of the government of the United States of America in banning Hikvision. [[HL2472](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I will be meeting with the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner shortly to discuss the issues raised in the correspondence with Hikvision.

The UK is committed to promoting the ethical development and deployment of technology in the UK

and overseas. We are aware of a number of Chinese technology companies linked to violations taking place in Xinjiang, and are monitoring the situation closely.

On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a series of measures to help ensure UK businesses and the public sector are not complicit in human rights violations or abuses in Xinjiang. These measures, which are being implemented by the UK Government, include a review of export controls; the introduction of financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act; increasing support for UK government bodies to exclude suppliers complicit in violations or abuses; and strengthening the Overseas Business Risk guidance to highlight that businesses engaged in the fields of surveillance, biometrics, or tracking technology are at heightened risk of complicity in human rights violations in Xinjiang.

The UK Government has also published guidance to help cutting-edge UK firms negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter when working with Chinese businesses, supporting safe and appropriate UK-China collaboration in digital and tech. The guidance provides firms with clear, up-to-date information and specialist support which reflect the UK's values and take account of national security concerns.

History: Curriculum

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Black history is a mandatory part of the curriculum in all schools, including those which are not required to teach the National Curriculum. [HL2760]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity. We support all pupils and students in tackling racism and to have the knowledge and tools to do so.

The government believes that all children and young people should acquire a firm grasp of history, including how different events and periods relate to each other. That is why it is compulsory for maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3, and why academies are expected to teach a curriculum which is as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum. This expectation is set out in the Ofsted school inspection handbook, as part of their education inspection framework introduced in September 2019.

The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how

different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experience of Black people. The flexibility within the history curriculum means that there is the opportunity for teachers to teach about Black history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum. For example, at key stage 1, schools can teach about the lives of key Black historical figures such as Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks, or others. At key stage 3, schools can cover the development and end of the British Empire and Britain's transatlantic slave trade, its effects and eventual abolition. The teaching of Black history need not be limited to these examples. There is scope to include Black history and experience in other national curriculum subjects such as English and citizenship, and in the non-statutory subject personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education.

It is positive that teachers and schools are responding directly to the renewed attention on history teaching to ensure knowledge-based subject teaching. More history teachers reflected commitments in the most recent survey of history teachers by the Historical Association to develop more content in their teaching on Black and diverse histories. This change will provide pupils with more breadth and depth in their understanding of history.

Hives

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the socio-economic impact of Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria on individuals and the NHS. [HL2585]

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of people living with Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria in (1) England, (2) each clinical commissioning group, and (3) each integrated care system. [HL2586]

Lord Kamall: No assessment has been made.

HMS Diamond

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the status of HMS Diamond. [HL2465]

Baroness Goldie: The repair to HMS DIAMOND was completed at the end of August. She is currently sailing to re-join the main Carrier Strike Group to resume her operational duties.

HMS Dreadnought

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the new planned acceptance date is for HMS Dreadnought. [HL2565]

Baroness Goldie: There is no new planned acceptance date for HMS Dreadnought. The Dreadnought submarine programme remains on track for first of Class, HMS Dreadnought to enter service in the early 2030s.

HMS Vanguard: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether HMS Vanguard's Long Overhaul Period and Refuel (LOP(R)) has been completed; and if not, when it will be completed. [HL2562]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the cost of HMS Vanguard's Long Overhaul Period and Refuel (LOP(R)) is. [HL2563]

Baroness Goldie: I am withholding information regarding the completion date of the Deep Maintenance Project (Refuel) of HMS Vanguard as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of our Armed Forces. I am also withholding the estimated cost as its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests.

Home Office: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are recruiting extra staff to help process increased numbers of asylum seekers in the UK. [HL2632]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In support of increasing the number of initial asylum decisions, the Home Office has recruitment strategies in place to increase staffing to more appropriate levels.

We are working to almost double the number of decision makers to c.1000 by March 2022.

Home Shopping: Internet

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote consumer confidence in buying online; and what assessment they have made of the performance of delivery companies in this regard. [HL2606]

Lord Callanan: Through the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and other legislation, the Government ensures that consumers have specified rights when shopping online. Furthermore, the Government is consulting on measures to boost these online rights further, including proposals to prevent consumers being misled by fake reviews and preventing online exploitation of consumer behaviour.

Ofcom is the UK's independent regulator of postal services. It monitors competition and consumer protection in the sector. Ofcom is currently conducting a review of

postal regulation so that it remains relevant and fit for purpose in the light of market changes. It intends to publish a consultation later this year before concluding the review next year.

Hospital Wards: Gender

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the processes that NHS trusts use (1) to arrange and specify facilities for transgender patients, and (2) to take into account the needs of other patients who may be sharing facilities with transgender patients. [HL2490]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision of single sex wards by NHS trusts. [HL2491]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether Annex B in NHS England's Delivering same sex accommodation guidance is consistent with the aim to provide of single sex wards by NHS Trusts. [HL2492]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to commission a review of the provision of single sex accommodation by NHS Trusts. [HL2493]

Lord Kamall: No assessment has been made of the process used by National Health Service trusts for arranging these facilities nor the provision of single sex wards.

We expect all NHS trusts to follow all aspects of NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance Delivering same-sex accommodation, which sets out the small number of clinical circumstances where mixed-sex accommodation can be justified and also allows, in Annex B, for people to be allocated to wards according to their presentation, such as their preferred dress and pronouns. A copy of the guidance is attached. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently reviewing this guidance, including whether the Annex is consistent with the provision of single sex wards.

Horizon Europe

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date they applied to join the Horizon Europe programme; on what date the application was accepted; what were the reasons for the delay to the start of the UK's participation in the programme; and what assessment they have made of the effects of that delay on research institutions in the UK. [HL2773]

Lord Callanan: The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

As the underpinning EU legislation was not yet adopted when the TCA was agreed, this was accompanied by a Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services, which set out the parties' intention to formalise our participation at the earliest opportunity.

Now that the EU legislation underpinning the Horizon Europe programme is in force, the UK stands ready to formalise our participation.

Hospitals: Construction

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the communications advice issued by the Department of Health and Social Care to NHS Trusts on the new hospitals programme. [HL2424]

Lord Kamall: In October 2020 we announced details of 32 new hospitals to be built by 2030. To support communications around the plans for their schemes, the Department has issued guidance for information to trusts in the programme. A redacted copy of the guidance is attached, with personal information removed.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

NEW HOSPITAL PROGRAMME COMMUNICATIONS
PLAYBOOK [NHP Communications Playbook (August 2021)
Redacted.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-06/HL2424>

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the basis for the Department of Health and Social Care's reported instruction in communications advice to NHS Trusts to describe new wings or units of existing hospitals as new hospitals. [HL2425]

Lord Kamall: The schemes named on 2 October are all hospitals which are in need of investment, but those needs are not all identical and vary across a number of factors. In determining which schemes to take forward and ensure that each hospital could benefit from the most effective and efficient solution for its local requirements, it was necessary to establish common criteria for what constitutes a new hospital. All schemes that are part of the programme are consistent with these criteria.

House of Lords: Facilities

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker why House of Commons staff are able to bring guests into House of Lords facilities while Members of the House of Lords are currently not allowed to do so. [HL2671]

Lord Touhig: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf. Currently access for non-passholders is limited to one guest per member or full staff passholder and those guests must have a business need. This is the same in both the House of Commons and House of Lords. Committees can bring in non-passholders as required. Catering venues in the Lords are applying usual access arrangements within the limits of these restrictions.

Housing: Access

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will respond to the consultation on accessibility for new homes in England completed in December 2020. [HL2639]

Lord Greenhalgh: We are currently considering responses to the consultation and will set out plans to improve the framework to deliver accessible new homes in due course.

Human Rights

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what criteria they used for including countries in their report Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, published on 8 July, (2) how Cameroon was assessed against those criteria, and (3) what plans they have to change those criteria for next year's report. [HL2778]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The 2020 FCDO Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report (AHRR) features 31 Human Rights Priority Countries (HRPCs). The HRPC list was reviewed and updated in early 2021 ahead of the report's publication in July, with assessment based on the human rights situation in country, the trajectory of change, and the UK's ability to make a difference. African countries including Cameroon were considered using this criteria. We expect the majority of HRPCs to remain in place for the duration of this Parliament pending exceptional developments, as this provides a reasonable base-line against which to assess our impact. While the HRPCs help us to prioritise our work, our interests and work are global, as reflected in the many other country references in the thematic sections of the AHRR.

Immigration: Afghanistan

Asked by Baroness Hamwee

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether dual British-Afghan nationals (1) are, and (2) will be treated as if they are, British nationals, for the purposes of relocation from Afghanistan to the UK. [HL2422]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: A British national will always be treated as such, irrespective of whether they hold nationality of a second country.

Immigration: EU Nationals

Asked by *Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many permissions under the EU Settlement Scheme have been granted to date to (a) EEA, and (b) non-EEA, national family members of the main applicants, for settled and pre-settled status, and (2) how many applications under the EU Settlement Scheme have been received to date from individuals not living in the UK. [HL2416]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics'.

The latest published information on EUSS applications concluded to 30 June 2021, by nationality and outcome type can be found in table EUSS_03_UK available at: EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, June 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

EUSS_03_UK: EU Settlement Scheme: concluded applications by outcome type and nationality, 28 August 2018 to 30 June 2021 - UK total

Country of nationality	Total	of which are Settled	of which are Pre-settled	of which are Refused	of which are Withdrawn or Void	of which are Invalid
Total	5,444,550	2,846,820	2,327,850	109,430	80,600	79,730
Total EU 27	5,065,570	2,725,830	2,103,510	94,800	68,010	73,330

The vast majority of EUSS applications are associated with a UK address, although there is no requirement to give a UK address and applications can be made in-country or in some cases from overseas. In our latest publication, we reported that "total applications include small numbers of records (1.6%) where locational data is not currently in an analysable form from live systems." This proportion includes applications associated with a non-UK address.

Month	BNO Passports Issued
January	13,315
February	8,217
March	7,032
April	4,747
May	4,192
June	3,141
July	2,728
August	5,613

*These figures are correct at the time of reporting and subject to change.

Immigration: Hong Kong

Asked by *Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many British National (Overseas) visas have been granted, including to dependants, since 31 January, (2) how many individuals have been granted leave outside the Immigration Rules at the UK border since 1 January, and (3) how many British National (Overseas) passports issued each month since January. [HL2417]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: (1),(2): The Home Office publishes data on visas and the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

The data relates to the first and second quarter of 2021, January to June, and are derived from management information. These statistics include data on main applicants and dependants and are rounded to the nearest hundred. Data for Q3 2021 will be published on 25 November 2021.

(3): The table below provides the number of British National (Overseas) passports issued to customers each month since January 2021. *

Incinerators

Asked by *Lord Vinson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to reduce toxic landfill by encouraging the use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) incineration of waste. [HL2727]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, published in 2018, sets out how we will minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully. A key principle is to prevent waste in the first place, in keeping with the waste hierarchy, which ranks options for waste management according to their environmental impact. Where waste does occur, we need to manage it in the most efficient way possible. After waste prevention, priority goes to reuse, recycling, and then recovery. Disposal, for example in landfill, is generally regarded as the worst option.

We are therefore encouraging increased use of heat through Combined Heat and Power (CHP) from EfW as it almost doubles the fuel efficiency and can play a really valuable role in our transition to decarbonising the heating

of homes and buildings. There is financial support from government for EfW plants and heat networks developers to do this in the form of the existing Heat Networks Investment Project and the upcoming Green Heat Network Fund. The Heat Network Investment Project is already funding CHP based EfW projects in Leeds, London and Cardiff that will supply low carbon heat to local homes and businesses.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the delivery of flu vaccinations this winter of the shortage of HGV drivers in the UK. [HL2473]

Lord Kamall: The Department works closely with manufacturers to assess the impact of any HGV driver shortages on the delivery of flu vaccinations. Due to the nature of seasonal flu vaccine manufacturing, short delays in production and delivery of the flu vaccine are common and factored into delivery timescales.

Information Commissioner's Office

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government where the money is directed if a company is fined for failing to report a data breach of personal information to the Information Commissioner's Office. [HL2718]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Any monetary penalty issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is paid into the HM Treasury Consolidated Fund and is not retained by the ICO.

Insurance and Pension Funds: Capital Investment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to change the regulation of insurer investment to encourage pension funds and insurers to back capital projects. [HL2674]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government wants to see a prudential regulatory regime for insurers that provides a sound foundation for insurance firms to provide long-term capital to the economy, including investment in long-term productive assets. In July 2021 the Government published its response to the Call for Evidence on Solvency II which set out the process by which this will be achieved.

In addition, the Government will shortly introduce new rules to eliminate unnecessary barriers to pension fund investment in long-term assets. This includes: the calculation of the default fund charge cap for automatic enrolment schemes; consolidation measures to be taken by schemes with less than £100m assets under management; and the publication of net returns.

The Treasury, the Bank of England and the Financial Conduct Authority have also convened the Productive Finance Working Group. This industry group has focused on facilitating pension fund investment in long-term assets. This has included work on the creation of the Long-Term Asset Fund structure, the rules for which will soon be finalised by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Interpreters: Afghanistan

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving to former Afghan interpreters who have been granted asylum in the UK to seek employment. [HL2629]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021, offering relocation to former Locally Employed Staff in Afghanistan who have been assessed to be at serious risk as a result of their work. Work is underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK.

All those brought to the UK under the ARAP scheme will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare, and will be able to apply for public funds. The support provided to them will be similar to that received by those who came on the Syrian Resettlement Programme, ensuring that those who risked their lives by working closely with the British military and UK Government in Afghanistan get access to the vital healthcare, education, accommodation and support into employment they need to fully integrate into society.

Iran: Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take (1) to ensure that a UN inquiry into the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran is launched, and (2) to ensure that the call for such an inquiry is added to any future UN General Assembly resolution on Iran. [HL2468]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they plan to take at the UN General Assembly Third Committee to hold the leaders of the Iranian regime to account for serious human rights violations, including the 1988 massacre of political prisoners. [HL2469]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and takes any allegations of extrajudicial killings seriously. The UK has designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country, and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor

human rights record. This will include using all opportunities during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session.

We urge Iran to allow the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran access to the country, so that he can conduct research and investigations into human rights concerns reported there, including the events of 1988. Meanwhile, we have always been clear that Iran must uphold its own international legal obligations, including conducting thorough and independent investigations into suspected human rights violations, both past and present.

We are in regular contact with the Iranian Government and expect to engage with President Raisi on a number of issues now he has taken office, including human rights. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course and commit to improving human rights in Iran.

Iran: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2020 calling on the government of Iran to investigate past and current human rights violations in the country. [HL2741]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country, and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record. This includes using all opportunities during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session. We urge Iran to allow the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran access to the country, to conduct research and investigations into reported human rights concerns.

We have always been clear that Iran must uphold its international legal obligations, including conducting thorough and independent investigations into suspected human rights violations, both past and present. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with other governments about establishing a United Nations led commission of inquiry into human rights violations in Iran, including the deaths of political prisoners in 1988. [HL2782]

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Iran has (1) destroyed evidence of human rights violations, including mass graves of political prisoners from 1988, and (2) intimidated survivors and families of victims of human rights violations. [HL2783]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country, and we continue

to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record. This includes using all opportunities during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session. We also urge Iran to allow the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran access to the country, so that he can conduct research and investigations into human rights concerns reported there, including the events of 1988, and the reports of intimidation and destroyed evidence.

We have always been clear that Iran must uphold its international legal obligations, including conducting thorough and independent investigations into suspected human rights violations, both past and present. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

Iran: Political Prisoners

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of violent abuse of political opponents and activists in Evin prison in Iran. [HL2784]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO is shocked and appalled at the conditions that appeared in the leaked footage of Evin prison. We have repeatedly urged Iran to allow health professionals in, to assess the situation of British nationals there. We regularly raise human rights with the Iranians at all levels and take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record. At the Human Rights Council session in March 2021, we strongly supported the renewal of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran and made clear to Iran that their repeated violations of human rights are unacceptable. On 8 July 2021, the UK published its Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report, which included our bleak assessment of Iran's human rights record and our efforts to push for improvements. We will look to use all opportunities during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session as well, and call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course by committing to improving human rights and to release British nationals arbitrarily detained there.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ask the government of Israel (1) to freeze settlement building in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (2) to enable the development of Palestinian-owned land in Area C, and (3) to increase trade and employment; and what plans they have to ask the Palestinian Authority to respond with confidence-building measures. [HL2432]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly calls on Israel to end illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank and closely monitors reports of further settlement advancements. We also call bilaterally, and in

international fora, for Israel to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of comments by the Prime Minister of Israel in an interview with The New York Times, published on 24 August, that he will oppose the creation of a Palestinian state and expand Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [HL2458]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. Our position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We urge the Government of Israel to cease its policies related to settlement expansion immediately, and instead work towards the establishment of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines, with its capital in East Jerusalem. We also call bilaterally and in international fora, for Israel to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about licensing Palestinian water authorities to operate in Area C of the West Bank in order (1) to drill additional wells, or (2) to install booster pumps. [HL2459]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has raised the issue of access to water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities, including stressing the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to improve the current situation and ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the number of Palestinians killed or injured by live fire from Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank so far this year. [HL2654]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing

appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli authorities demolished a Palestinian kindergarten in Beit Safafa on 17 August under pretext of illegal building; and what steps they plan to take, if any, to prevent the future demolition of Palestinian homes and other buildings in Jerusalem. [HL2656]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's opposition to demolition of Palestinian property, including schools, is long-standing and well known. The British Embassy regularly raises the issue of demolitions with the Government of Israel, most recently on 10 August. The former Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May.

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and are clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

Kickstart Scheme: Job Creation

Asked by Baroness Wilcox of Newport

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many jobs have been created by the Kickstart Scheme in (1) England, and (2) each English region. [HL2605]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We are pleased to say that, as of the 8th September, over 69,000 young people have started Kickstart jobs. Over 188,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for through the Kickstart Scheme with over 281,000 jobs approved for funding by the Scheme.

In England, over 163,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for as well as over 59,000 starts. The table below lists the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by English region. The figures used are correct as of the 8th September and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Jobs Made Available</i>	<i>Total Jobs Started</i>
East Midlands	11,900	4,170
East of England	14,900	4,870
London	38,400	15,170
North East	7,500	3,170
North West	24,000	8,830
South East	21,700	7,460
South West	14,000	4,660
West Midlands	16,900	6,150
Yorkshire and The Humber	14,600	5,250

*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals. Jobs Made Available include 1,000 non-grant funded vacancies and Total Starts include around 900 starts to non-grant funded jobs.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many HGV drivers who hold either (1) a group C entitlement, or (2) a group C+E entitlement, do not have a driver's certificate of professional competence. [HL2684]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 4 September 2021, the number of drivers holding category C or C+E driving entitlement who do not have a certificate of professional competence is shown below:

- 1) Category C - 149,697 drivers.
- 2) Category C+E - 159,631 drivers.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the wait time for Category C + E driving tests. [HL2680]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is supporting the Government's wider plans to address the shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers and conduct more HGV driving tests.

Since vocational testing restarted, following the easing of restrictions, the DVSA has been making available an average of 3,000 practical vocational test slots each week; this compares to 2,000 tests pre-pandemic.

The DVSA is asking all those qualified to conduct vocational tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, offering a national recovery allowance and annual leave buy back to examiners, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays and weekends).

Following a public consultation, the Government is implementing a number of measures to significantly boost HGV driving test availability by:

- eliminating tests to tow a trailer;
- streamlining the process of securing a licence for certain vehicles;
- speeding up the HGV driving test itself by removing the off-road manoeuvres element (reversing exercise) and allowing it to be assessed separately by the driver training industry. This will free up more DVSA examiners to increase testing capacity by 50,000 tests a year.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Females

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent finding that only one per cent of HGV drivers are female; and what plans they have to address this situation. [HL2720]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is aware of the demographic imbalances in the HGV driver workforce including the lack of women drivers, under 25s and drivers from ethnic minorities. Addressing these issues and creating a workforce that will better reflect society will be key to permanently solving the driver shortage.

This will be for the industry to lead but the Government will continue to support where it can, such as improving the accessibility of facilities for women drivers and increasing the provision of overnight lorry parking.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to change immigration rules to allow more HGV drivers to be recruited from overseas. [HL2679]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In response to the current exceptional circumstances facing businesses at this time, we have made available 5,000 visas for HGV drivers to enter the UK on a short-term basis to support the fuel and food supply sector. In line with other routes, eligibility for the visa is not based on whether an applicant is an EU national.

This is a temporary measure leading into Christmas to mitigate some of the acute issues experienced at this particular time and until the range of other measures, including ramping up testing capacity and the creation of new Skills Bootcamps for HGV drivers, bite.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the shortfall of HGV drivers in Great Britain is addressed in the short term. [HL2642]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has regular discussions with the road haulage industry. We are working together to address the current HGV driver shortage, which is an issue affecting many countries worldwide.

The Government has already taken firm action to bring new drivers into the industry as soon as possible. This includes funding apprenticeships and making an additional incentive payment available, training for jobseekers, and support for drivers to return to the sector, and doubling the number of vocational driving tests available.

Further measures have been announced, including eliminating the need for car drivers to take an additional test to tow a trailer, delegating the HGV test reversing exercise and uncoupling and recoupling to a third party and making it quicker to get a licence to drive an articulated vehicle (Cat C+E), without first having to get a licence for a smaller vehicle (Cat C). These should increase lorry driver testing capacity by a further 50,000 tests a year.

Leader of the House of Lords: Written Questions

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask the Leader of the House on how many occasions she has been asked to respond to Lords written questions about human rights in each of the last three years in respect of (1) Belarus, (2) Mali, (3) Nicaragua, and (4) Cameroon. [[HL2779](#)]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: I have not been asked any written questions about human rights in Belarus, Mali, Nicaragua or Cameroon.

Over the past three years other Ministers have regularly answered questions about these four countries, including most recently: [HL2108](#) (Belarus), [HL2053](#) (Mali), [HL952](#) (Nicaragua) and [HL2735](#) (Cameroon).

Leasehold: Reform

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Greenhalgh on 20 July (HL Deb, col 201), what plans they have to grant the Crown Estate "exemptions from the parliamentary undertaking on enfranchisement rights for leaseholders in the next stage of the leasehold reform programme". [[HL2811](#)]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions, if any, they have had with the Crown Estate on granting it exemptions from the forthcoming second stage of leasehold reform. [[HL2812](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are taking forward a comprehensive

programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. On January 7 the Government announced reforms to enfranchisement valuation, 990-year leases, removing the retirement exemption from zero ground rent measures and commonhold. This was the first part of the Government's response to the Law Commission's reports on enfranchisement, Right to Manage and commonhold.

The Law Commission's report on enfranchisement includes recommendations relating to the qualifying criteria for enfranchisement and lease extensions, including the applicability of these to leaseholders of the Crown. We will bring forward a response to these and the other remaining Law Commission recommendations in due course.

We will translate these measures into law as soon as possible, starting with the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rents) Bill in the current session. This is the first part of major two-part legislation to implement leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament.

Lebanon: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. [[HL2655](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is one of the leading donors in supporting Lebanon to host both Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Since 2011, the UK has allocated over £780 million in humanitarian and development funding to Lebanon. Our humanitarian assistance will continue to promote access to education and provide those most in need with timely, flexible assistance and protection services to cover their basic survival needs and reduce gender-based violence, saving lives and reducing suffering. The UK is also a key supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides vital services to Palestinian refugees across their five fields of operation including in Lebanon. Our annual contribution to UNRWA's programme budget helps UNRWA to provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of whom are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable across the region.

Lebanon: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken (1) to support the new government of Lebanon, and (2) to urge immediate reforms to address the crises in that country. [[HL2788](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a long-standing friend of Lebanon and the Lebanese people. On 10 September, the former Foreign Secretary said: "The formation of a new Lebanese government must be

followed by implementation of urgent reforms, a transparent conclusion of the investigation into the tragic Beirut explosion and timely elections next year. The UK supports Lebanon, but we must see concerted action". We continue to press the new government to implement the reforms needed set the country on a more sustainable footing.

Libraries: Electronic Equipment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce loan schemes at libraries for electronic devices to encourage citizens to become more digitally capable. [HL2765]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The provision of public library services in England is a matter for local authorities to determine. The responsibility for libraries in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales rests with the respective devolved administration.

Local authorities in England have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. They are responsible for determining the delivery of a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities. In considering how best to deliver this statutory duty, each local authority can, if they wish, consider the provision of loaning out electronic devices.

Whilst this is not a matter for the department to require, we understand that the provision of portable devices to lend is something library services are increasingly delivering. We know that at least a quarter of library services in England already provide portable electronic devices for loan, generally targeted to those more likely to be digitally disadvantaged. I learned about an example of this at Manchester Central Library in my visit during Libraries Week.

Life Expectancy

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what comparisons they have made of life expectancy in different communities in the UK; and what policy initiatives they have pursued as a result of such comparisons. [HL2475]

Lord Kamall: In England, life expectancy for men is 9.4 years lower for those in the most deprived areas compared to those in the least deprived areas. For women, it is 7.7 years lower for those in the most deprived areas compared to those in the least deprived areas.

To improve life expectancy and reduce disparities, we have undertaken prevention measures such as an updated obesity strategy, NHS Health Checks, a tobacco control plan and a diabetes prevention programme. The National Health Service also delivers national vaccination and screening programmes. Delivery of public health services is devolved to local authorities where resources are needed for their communities.

Liothyronine

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the finding by the Competition and Markets Authority that drug companies had over-charged the National Health Service, what plans they have to reduce the price that the National Health Service pays for liothyronine. [HL2744]

Lord Kamall: Since 2016, several marketing authorisations have been granted for liothyronine, therefore the National Health Service reimbursement price in primary care has been reducing as a direct response to more competition in the market.

Local Government: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with local authorities regarding achieving net zero by 2050. [HL2531]

Lord Callanan: Ministers in BEIS and across Government meet local authorities on a range of net zero issues through meetings with individual councils, and with organisations such as the Local Government Association and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers.

Officials in Government departments also meet local authorities and other stakeholders on the effective design of their respective policies which help to meet net zero goals.

Local Skills Improvement Plans

Asked by Baroness Morris of Yardley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had prior to the announcement of the Skills Accelerator: Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazers and Strategic Development Fund pilot areas with (1) the mayor of Teeside, (2) the mayors from other trailblazer areas, and (3) council leaders from trailblazer areas. [HL2799]

Baroness Barran: The Skills Accelerator programme was launched on 20 April 2021 with a prospectus inviting expressions of interest from employer representative bodies to lead a Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazer. The successful Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazers were subsequently announced on 15 July 2021.

During this time period, there were no discussions regarding the Skills Accelerator programme or Local Skills Improvement Plans between the former Secretary of State for Education, my right hon. Friend for South Staffordshire; the former Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, my hon. Friend for Chichester; Special Advisors; or officials with mayors or council leaders in

any of the areas which were subsequently announced as Trailblazers. Over the same time period, the former Secretary of State for Education met the Mayor of Tees Valley on 20 May 2021. This was a political meeting in his capacity as a Member of Parliament for South Staffordshire, not on departmental business.

Makomborero Haruzivishe

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the government of Zimbabwe about the detention of Makomborero Haruzivishe [HL2551]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains concerned about the human rights situation in Zimbabwe, including arrests of, and violence towards, civil society and opposition activists. The British Embassy in Harare is in touch with Makomborero Haruzivishe's lawyers as we await the outcome of his appeal.

The UK regularly urges the Zimbabwean Government to meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law and the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution, safeguarding human rights, and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. The Minister for Africa most recently raised the human rights situation in Zimbabwe with Foreign Minister Shava on 9 June. We will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns, and work alongside the international community to support a better future for all Zimbabweans.

Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the consequences of the reduction of the French military actions in Mali for (1) the UK, (2) the UK's joint military operation with France, and (3) the UK's contribution to the United Nation's action in the Sahel. [HL2808]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is in contact with our French partners on their planned changes to operations in the Sahel. We have had assurances that France will retain the critical support functions such as force protection, medical and logistical support, which allow the UK to effectively contribute to operations in the Sahel.

Mathematics: Education

Asked by Baroness Meyer

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Programme for International Student Assessment global ranking in Mathematics from 2019 showing British teenagers in 18th place, what plans, if any, they have to support students to reach the top ten [HL2550]

Baroness Barran: The department has not set specific targets for mathematics rankings in international comparison studies. However, we are taking action to help our pupils excel in mathematics on the international stage.

For example, our previous reform of the mathematics curriculum and GCSE examinations in England sought to match the standards set by high performing East Asian jurisdictions. Building on this work, our network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs across England is also helping local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching. This includes the delivery of the £100 million Teaching for Mastery programme, which is bringing teaching practice from those same high performing jurisdictions to 11,000 primary and secondary schools across England by 2023.

In July the department announced a new multi-million pound scheme to support mathematics catch-up and boost numeracy skills for pupils starting primary and secondary school. This offer will be led by the National Centre for Excellence in the teaching of mathematics in partnership with Maths Hubs. The scheme will provide teacher training and materials to thousands of schools across England this academic year based on Teaching for Mastery approaches.

The UK performed significantly above the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development average in mathematics in the latest Programme for International Student Assessment tests in 2018, the results of which were reported in 2019, with a significant improvement in average score compared to 2015. England's average mathematics score also significantly improved, accompanied by a decrease in the number of countries that scored significantly above England from 19 in 2015 to 12 in 2018.

Across the UK, Wales's average mathematics score improved between 2012 and 2018. Average mathematics performance in Scotland remained stable between 2015 and 2018, but decreased compared to 2006, and has remained stable in Northern Ireland since 2006. Education policy is devolved, and the devolved administrations are responsible for standards in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mathematics: Universities

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frognal

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to protect, and (2) to increase, the funding available for all forms of mathematics at universities. [HL2487]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government strongly supports all forms of mathematics in higher education. We are pleased many students chose to take up courses in mathematical sciences (39,210 students in England[1]) and that many more enrol on courses involving elements of mathematical study such as engineering, computer science, and accounting.

Our student loan system supports students who have the qualifications to benefit from higher education to access higher education, including a range of mathematics courses. Additionally, the government also supports a number of mathematics-based courses via the Strategic Priorities Grant, a funding pot to support the provision of higher education. This includes high-cost subject funding – extra money given to providers to deliver expensive subjects. Mathematical subjects that attract high-cost subject funding are those which have typically higher delivery costs that are not met by tuition fees alone. This includes courses involving the study and application of specialist mathematics such as civil engineering and physics. For the academic year 2021/22, these subjects are in price group B and their high-cost subject funding rate will be £1,515. This is an increase of 4% from the previous academic year – part of our reprioritisation of Strategic Priorities Grant funding towards high-cost subjects which support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs.

[1] Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student data, Table 49: [Table 49 - HE student enrolments by HE provider and subject of study 2019/20 | HESA](#) (English providers only).

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote the study and research of mathematics at universities in England. [HL2488]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the research of all forms of mathematics at universities in England. [HL2489]

Lord Callanan: In academic year 2020-21, Research England allocated £66.4 million to Mathematical Sciences. This financial year the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), is forecasting a spend of £50.975 million on Mathematical Sciences research in English universities. Plans for funding for future years will be dependent on the outcome of the recently announced Spending Review.

Medical Equipment: Innovation

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the National Health Service supply chain's record in adopting innovative medical devices. [HL2746]

Lord Kamall: NHS Supply Chain does not determine which products are appropriate for adoption by the National Health Service but respond where products are selected by NHS England and NHS Improvement for

adoption via routes such as MedTech Funding and the Accelerated Access Collaborative.

Medical devices cover a wide spectrum of products, including digital health. A number of procurement frameworks have been established allow the NHS to procure digital innovations. Such framework agreements already accommodate medical device innovations from existing suppliers and there are currently no plans for additional frameworks. Initiatives such as the Rapid Uptake Products programme facilitate stronger adoption of proven innovations, by identifying products with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's approval which support the NHS Long Term Plan's key clinical priorities.

Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider their response to the recommendation in the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review First do no harm, published on 8 July 2020, that separate schemes should be set up to meet the cost of providing additional care and support to those who have experienced avoidable harm from hormone pregnancy tests, valproate and pelvic mesh interventions. [HL2426]

Lord Kamall: The Government did not accept this recommendation and there are no plans to reconsider this response. Our priority is to make medicines and devices safer and we are pursuing a wide range of activity to further this aim. The response explains the changes that have been put in place since the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report's publication and the further action the Government will take to implement the recommendations accepted and to improve patient safety.

Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the availability of mental health care, following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL2526]

Lord Kamall: In March 2021, we published *COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan: Our plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 to 2022*, funded by an additional £500 million for 2021-22 to address waiting times for services. The plan aims to respond to the pandemic by specifically targeting groups which have been most impacted, including those with severe mental illness, young people and frontline staff. A copy of the plan is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery plan [covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-recovery-action-plan (2).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-08/HL2526>

Mental Health Services: Veterans

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the timeframe is for the £2.7 million funding increase for Operation Courage. [HL2479]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the annual budget for Operation Courage (1) before, and (2) after, the £2.7 million funding increase. [HL2480]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care co-ordinators will be appointed as a result of the £2.7 million funding increase for Operation Courage. [HL2481]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government when care co-ordinators will be appointed as a result of the £2.7 million funding increase for Operation Courage. [HL2482]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many referrals Operation Courage received in (1) June, (2) July, and (3) August. [HL2484]

Lord Kamall: Operation Courage has a recurrent annual budget of £17.6 million. This will increase to £18.5 million per year following the £2.7 million of additional funding. Discussions are ongoing between NHS England and Operation Courage providers on the number of care co-ordinators which can be appointed and when this will take effect. Referrals to Operation Courage in June 2021 were 437; 363 in July; and 362 to 28 August.

Migrant Workers: Large Goods Vehicle Drivers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow EU drivers to return on temporary visas as skilled workers. [HL2460]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK Government is closely monitoring labour supply and working with sector leaders to promote jobs, training, and a range of other initiatives to get more people into HGV driving. Similar challenges are being faced by other countries around the world, with shortages of truck drivers being reported in the EU and the United States of America.

Following the UK leaving the EU and ending free movement, our points-based immigration system looks at what skills and talent people have, rather than whether they hold an EU or Non-EU passport.

Like other sectors the focus for transport should be on training and recruiting from the UK based workforce in the first instance. Our Plan for Jobs is helping people across the country retrain, build new skills and get back into work. The Government encourages all sectors to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options, wage increases and investment, plus dealing with the reasons behind the long term under representation of women in parts of the workforce. Immigration policy is not about providing an alternative to these necessary actions

The Government therefore has no plans to introduce a temporary visa scheme for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

Migrant Workers: Visas

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from (1) the National Farmers' Union, (2) the Food and Drink Federation, and (3) the Road Haulage Association, regarding the desirability of introducing a short-term visa system for foreign workers; and what has been their response. [HL2413]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has received representations from a range of organisations, including the National Farmers' Union, the Food and Drink Federation and the Road Haulage Association, regarding the requirement to introduce a short-term visa system for foreign workers.

The Government position remains we will not be introducing a short-term visa allowing recruitment at or near the minimum wage with no work-based training requirements. Immigration must be considered alongside investment in, and development of, the UK's domestic labour force, rather than as an alternative to it. This is especially relevant in light of the many UK workers who face an uncertain future given the economic impacts of the pandemic and the end of the furlough scheme. Employers facing recruitment difficulties should in the first instance engage with the Department for Work and Pensions about the support they can provide.

The UK Government is closely monitoring labour supply and working with economic sector leaders to promote jobs, training, and a range of other initiatives.

Ministry of Defence: Civil Proceedings

Asked by Lord Tunnicliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many civil claims against the Ministry of Defence have been rejected so far as a result of Part 2 of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Act 2021, since its commencement on 30 June. [HL2598]

Baroness Goldie: The decision about whether a claim should be rejected because of Part 2 of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Act 2021 is ultimately a matter for the court hearing that claim. No civil claims brought against the MOD have been rejected as a result of the operation of Part 2 of that Act since its commencement on 30 June 2021.

Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential investments required in the electric vehicle manufacturing and charging industry in response to the introduction of a zero emission vehicle mandate. [HL2401]

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure a zero emission vehicle mandate could be implemented with enough time to incentivise investment in zero emission vehicles and the charging industry before 2030. [HL2402]

Lord Callanan: The Government had already committed £1.5 billion to support the early market and remove barriers to ZEV ownership. Alongside the new phase out dates for new petrol and diesel cars and vans, we have pledged a further £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles. These ambitions will include up to £1 billion to support the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains, £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure and £582 million for plug in vehicle grants.

The March 2020 Budget included the extension of favourable benefit in kind tax rates for zero emission vehicles out to 2025: company car tax is 1% in 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23 through to 2024/25; and all zero emission cars are exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED)

We are currently consulting on the proposed regulatory framework for the UK with regard to all newly sold road vehicles which includes the option for a ZEV mandate. The consultation closes on 22 September.

Motor Vehicles: Testing

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what data they hold on the effectiveness of the MOT in preventing road accidents. [HL2717]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) collects data on the proportion of vehicles presented for MOT tests that fail, as well as the most common defects that are detected. Last year, 29.9% of vehicles failed their MOT test for 'major' or 'dangerous' defects, that is, those defects most likely to have an impact on road safety. The MOT test ensures that vehicles with such defects cannot be driven legally, and is an important part of ensuring that vehicles on our roads

are safe. The vast majority of road accidents are caused by driver error. Estimates are that only around 2% of accidents are directly caused by mechanical vehicle defects.

Musical Instruments: Customs

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what projections HMRC has made of the number of ATA Carnet applications it will need to process in (1) 2021/22, and (2) 2022/23. [HL2594]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: When moving goods temporarily into or out of the UK, an ATA Carnet provides an option which can help simplify customs formalities by allowing a single document to be used for clearing goods through customs in the countries that are part of ATA Carnet system. The use of a carnet is optional and is a commercial decision depending on an individual or business's specific circumstances. In the UK, ATA Carnets are administered by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

International travel has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the number of goods movements using ATA Carnets has dropped. At the moment it is difficult to project numbers with any certainty. Numbers are likely to increase owing to the UK's withdrawal from the EU and the gradual lifting of travel restrictions throughout the world. HMRC, in conjunction with the LCCI and Border Force, monitor ATA Carnet usage on a regular basis.

An alternative option to an ATA Carnet is the use of the Temporary Admission procedure in conjunction with Returned Goods Relief. Temporary Admission is a customs special procedure that may be used to temporarily import goods into the UK without payment of duties subject to relevant conditions being met.

Businesses and individuals returning goods to the UK, having temporarily imported them to another customs territory, can claim relief from import VAT and any customs duty under Returned Goods Relief providing specific conditions are met. Returned Goods Relief applies to goods exported from the UK and re-imported in an unaltered state.

The EU operates similar procedures therefore, for goods moving temporarily to the EU, the EU's Temporary Admission procedure may be applicable, and the EU's Returned Goods Relief may apply where goods are returned to the EU having been temporarily imported into the UK. The management of EU import and export procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the EU Member States.

Musicians: EU Countries

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the ability of (a) under-25s, (b) musicians from less privileged socio-economic

backgrounds, and (c) working-class musicians, to tour in the EU under the terms of the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and (2) the frequency of such musicians doing so. [HL2593]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many days of visa free and work permit touring is allowed per visit for a musician based in the UK and with UK citizenship, for each of the 19 EU Member States described as allowing visa and work permit free touring. [HL2595]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: This government recognises the importance of the UK's creative and cultural industries, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of our people. We want musicians and performers to be able to tour abroad easily, as we understand it is a vital part at every stage of a musician's and performer's career.

Member States of the European Union are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake in the EU. That is why we have spoken to every Member State about the importance of touring. Following these talks 19 out of 27 Member States have confirmed that UK musicians do not require visas or work permits for some short-term touring. In the majority of cases this is for at least 30 days. Other Member States, including France and Germany, allow visas or work permits for some short-term touring for up to three months. Travellers should always check what requirements they need to fulfil with the EU Member State to which they are travelling.

We want our world-leading creative and cultural artists to travel widely, learning their craft, growing their audiences and showing the best of British creativity to the world. That is why we are looking carefully at proposals for a new Creative Export Office that could provide further practical help to support individuals and businesses in touring.

Myanmar: Minority Groups

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Myanmar to promote a right to citizenship in Myanmar for (1) Rohingya Muslims, and (2) other religious minorities in Myanmar. [HL2528]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has had no high level engagement with the military regime in Myanmar since the 1 February coup. Nevertheless, we have publicly called for the removal of restrictions that withhold citizenship from individuals who are not from a community recognised by the Myanmar authorities as a 'national race', such as the Rohingya, including through the UN Human Rights Council. The UK has supported the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory

Commission's to reform the 1982 Citizenship Law and is clear that Myanmar must fully implement them. Minister Adams raised Myanmar's discriminatory citizenship laws with his counterpart in the civilian National League for Democracy (NLD) government last year.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of the OSCE Minsk Group in identifying peaceful solutions to the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh; and what plans they have to consider alternative mechanisms for seeking a peaceful resolution. [HL2539]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government fully supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to settle all outstanding matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In her most recent conversations with the Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers, on 14 June and 6 September respectively, Wendy Morton MP, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and Americas, reinforced UK support for the efforts of Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Our Embassies in Baku and Yerevan continue to encourage both parties to engage with the Co-Chairs' renewed efforts. The UK Government believes the Minsk group remains the most appropriate mechanism to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has no plans to consider an alternative mechanism at this time.

Nationality and Borders Bill

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 27 July (HL1966), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, whether a child rights impact assessment was carried out for the Nationality and Borders Bill; and if it was, whether it will be published. [HL2442]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the policies being delivered through the Nationality and Borders Bill. This includes consideration of possible impacts on children. The Equality Impact Assessment was published on 16 September.

Nature Conservation

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they define the term "re-wilding" when used in environmental policy. [HL2715]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The concept of 'rewilding' is a relatively new and evolving concept and as such, it is currently defined and approached in different ways. The International Union for Conservation of Nature

(IUCN) is developing a conceptual and methodological framework for rewilding with the goal of restoring functional native ecosystems, which - where possible - are self-sustaining. We will continue to develop our definition and approach to rewilding working with the IUCN and other expert stakeholders.

NHS: Anniversaries

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they did not mark the 70th anniversary of the NHS in 2018 with the creation of a National NHS Charity; and why they intend to mark the 75th anniversary in 2023 with the creation of such a charity. [HL2408]

Lord Kamall: We have no plans to create a national National Health Service charity. There are currently 241 charities in the United Kingdom which collectively raise £1 million a day for the NHS. NHS Charities Together is the national umbrella organisation of which all NHS charities are members.

NHS: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are taken when NHS staff (1) deliberately infect a patient, or (2) carelessly or recklessly infect a patient with COVID-19; and what sanctions apply in such cases. [HL2609]

Lord Kamall: Where there was sufficient evidence to show that an individual had behaved in such a way as to deliberately infect a patient, or carelessly or recklessly infect a patient with COVID-19 or any other disease, the employing organisation would consider the specific facts of the case in accordance with their local disciplinary policy and procedures. This may result in dismissal as the ultimate sanction.

NHS: Management Consultants

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many management consultants have been employed by the NHS at annual equivalent salaries exceeding £100,000 in each of the last five years. [HL2708]

Lord Kamall: This data requested is not held centrally.

Nigeria: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent events in Kaduna State, Nigeria, including (1) the reported killing of Reverend Silas Yakubu Ali and at least 11 others, (2) the reported kidnap of Reverend Benson Yakusak, and (3) the role of Jihadist ideology in violence in the area. [HL2730]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn all violence across Nigeria, the devastating effects of which are felt by communities of different faiths. We condemn the killing of Reverend Silas Yakubu Ali in Southern Kaduna, an area that has a long history of intercommunal violence. We welcome reports that Reverend Benson Yakusak was released. Jihadist ideology is a driver of the conflict involving terrorist groups in the North East. The drivers of intercommunal violence elsewhere in Nigeria are complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality.

The former Minister for Africa visited Nigeria in April where he discussed insecurity, including kidnaps, with the Foreign Minister and the President's Chief of Staff, and raised the importance of protecting all communities. We regularly visit states affected by intercommunal violence to engage with state governments, civil society, faith and community leaders and affected communities. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to protect all those at risk of violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

Nuclear Power

Asked by Viscount Trenchard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish an updated National Policy Statement for nuclear power to reflect the range of applications envisaged for nuclear technology set out in the Energy White Paper published on 14 December 2020. [HL2676]

Asked by Viscount Trenchard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish a planning framework to facilitate the adoption of new potential sites for nuclear reactors, including (1) small modular reactors, and (2) advanced modular reactors. [HL2677]

Lord Callanan: We stated in the 2020 Energy White Paper our intention to undertake a review of the energy National Policy Statement (NPS) suite. This review was published for consultation on 6th September 2021.

This consultation includes the revised overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1). The revised EN-1 sets out that a new technology specific NPS for nuclear electricity generation deployable after 2025 is proposed and will be developed to reflect the changing policy and technology landscape for nuclear and support the transition to net zero. This will be consulted on in the usual manner, in due course.

The revised EN1, also sets out that the need for nuclear could be met by large scale gigawatt nuclear, Small Modular Reactors, Advanced Modular Reactors and fusion technologies.

The publication of this consultation is a first step toward a planning framework to facilitate the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies.

Occupied Territories: Press Freedom

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, to protect journalistic freedom in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [HL2669]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to the protection of media freedom around the world. We continue to reiterate the importance of a free and open press, and freedom of expression to the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority.

Organised Crime: Republic of Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of cross-border cooperation in stopping (1) criminal gangs, and (2) people smugglers, entering the UK from the Republic of Ireland. [HL2693]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There is a high level of cooperation on border security between both the UK and Irish Governments to ensure we are taking all the necessary measures to protect and secure the Common Travel Area, this includes people travelling from Ireland to the UK.

The Home Office, Ireland's Garda National Immigration Bureau and Border Management Unit, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other police forces work together to tackle abuse of the CTA by conducting intelligence-led checks and enforcement operations.

We continue to take a whole route approach in pursuing the crime groups who facilitate people smuggling to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations.

Pakistan: Diplomatic Relations

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the UK Minister responsible for Pakistan made contact with the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs envoy to Afghanistan in (1) June, (2) July, and (3) August. [HL2444]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On his visit to Pakistan on 3 September, the Foreign Secretary met Ambassador Sadiq, PM Khan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, alongside Foreign Minister Qureshi, as well as Prime Minister Khan, and Chief of Army Staff General Bajwa. The Foreign Secretary has also had telephone conversations with the Foreign Minister Qureshi on 15 and 27 August. Lord Ahmad visited Pakistan on 23-24 June and met Foreign Minister Qureshi and Prime Minister Khan, to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. British officials, including the High Commissioner, have

been in regular contact with Ambassador Mohammed Sadiq since his appointment as Special Representative for Afghanistan in June 2020.

Papua: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Indonesia, if any, regarding the displacement of villagers in West Papua; and what response they received. [HL2545]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of internal civilian displacement in the provinces of Papua and West Papua following recent violent clashes between separatists and Indonesian security forces. The UK fully respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia, including the provinces of Papua and West Papua. Within this framework, we strongly support the efforts of the Indonesian authorities and civil society to address the legitimate concerns of the people of Papua and West Papua provinces, including strengthening human rights protections, providing humanitarian assistance and ensuring that all Papuans benefit from the sustainable and equitable development of their province. We support the proposed visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Papua and encourage both sides to agree on dates for a visit.

Papua: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Indonesia in support of a visit to West Papua by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and what response they have received. [HL2546]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of internal civilian displacement in the provinces of Papua and West Papua following recent violent clashes between separatists and Indonesian security forces. The UK fully respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia, including the provinces of Papua and West Papua. Within this framework, we strongly support the efforts of the Indonesian authorities and civil society to address the legitimate concerns of the people of Papua and West Papua provinces, including strengthening human rights protections, providing humanitarian assistance and ensuring that all Papuans benefit from the sustainable and equitable development of their province. We support the proposed visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Papua and encourage both sides to agree on dates for a visit.

Parking: Pedestrian Areas

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat the parking of motor vehicles on pavements; and what assessment have they made of the effect of such parking on those with sight or mobility impairments. [HL2640]

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what they are doing to combat the problem of pavement parking, which especially causes issues for those with sight or mobility impairments. [HL2641]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department carried out a public consultation on possible solutions to the complex pavement parking problem, which ran from 31 August 2020 to 22 November 2020. Members of the public, including many who identified as having mobility or vision impairments, and organisations including those representing people with disabilities, participated. The consultation received over 15,000 responses. The Department has been carefully analysing the consultation responses and will publish the findings as soon as possible.

Patients

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how (1) NHS hospitals, and (2) GPs, were consulted on the lists of those deemed clinically extremely vulnerable. [HL2592]

Lord Kamall: The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers and other senior clinicians developed clinical consensus about which conditions should automatically consider someone as clinically extremely vulnerable. This has been updated throughout the pandemic based on the latest evidence. From April 2020, general practitioners (GPs) and clinicians were asked to review their patient lists and given the ability to add or remove individuals from the Shielded Patient List where appropriate. In February 2021, individuals were identified by the COVID-19 population risk assessment and added to the Shielded Patient List. Significant changes affecting clinically extremely vulnerable people have been communicated with GPs through the Primary Care Bulletin.

Pensions: British Steel

Asked by **Lord Allen of Kensington**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Financial Conduct Authority's finding on 10 August that a pensions adviser was "seriously incompetent" in his work providing advice to 183 members of the British Steel Pension Scheme, what plans they have to set up an industry-wide redress scheme for steelworkers given poor pension transfer advice. [HL2682]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This is an operational matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), who are operationally independent from Government.

The question has been passed on to the FCA who will reply directly to the Noble Lord by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Pensions: Public Sector

Asked by **Lord Patten**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to communicate to the taxpayer the economic costs of public sector pensions. [HL2713]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Public service pensions are a crucial part of the total remuneration package for public sector workers, this includes the current OBR estimate of a £1.9bn Exchequer top-up payment for 2020-21 and £1.89tn in liabilities. The Government pays close attention to the cost of public service pensions to the taxpayer, forecasts of which are regularly published by the OBR on a cashflow basis in its Economic and Fiscal Outlook^[1] and Fiscal Sustainability Report^[2]. Information on long-term public service pension liabilities can be found in the Whole of Government Accounts^[3].

[1] <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2021/>

[2] <https://obr.uk/fsr/fiscal-sustainability-report-july-2018/>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2018-2019>

Pesticides: Pollinators

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of House of Lords report stage amendment 53 to the Environment Bill, which would insert a clause on the protection of pollinators from pesticides. [HL2540]

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of amendment 53 to the Environment Bill at report stage in the House of Lords regarding the diversity of insect life and pollination. [HL2577]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Decisions on pesticide authorisation are based on expert assessment by the Health and Safety Executive. The independent UK Expert Committee on Pesticides advises on novel scientific issues. Current legislation already requires that active substances and pesticide products have "no unacceptable effects on the environment ... having particular regard to its impact on non-target species", which can include impacts on bees and other pollinators.

The scientific risk assessment relies on detailed data requirements and processes, carried across from EU law

at the end of the transition period. The Government will ensure that these are updated to keep in step with developments in scientific understanding. Risk assessments made for active substances are already subject to public consultation. These assessments establish the key risks posed by pesticide substances in representative conditions of use.

Protecting pollinators is a priority. The National Pollinator Strategy, developed and updated alongside many partners following thorough scientific review, identifies pressures on pollinators on which we are acting, including potential harm from pesticide use, habitat loss and fragmentation, and invasive species.

We continue making decisions on pesticides use based on scientific risk assessments, while aiming to achieve high levels of protection for people, wildlife, and the environment.

Pets: Imports

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prepare for the requirement for mandatory veterinary health certificates for imports from the EU, that come into force on 1 October. [\[HL2618\]](#)

Lord Benyon: The Government has set out a new timetable for introducing full import controls for sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) goods being imported from the EU to the UK.

The new timetable considers the challenges businesses have faced due to the global pandemic, as well as its impact on supply chains across the UK and Europe. The Government believes a more pragmatic timetable will help give businesses time to recover from the pandemic and adjust to the new processes.

The controls will now be phased in across 2022.

From 1 July 2022:

- The new requirements for GB Export Health Certificates from EU exporters, which were due to be introduced on 1 October 2021, will now be introduced on 1 July 2022.
- Phytosanitary certificates for lower risk plant produce, due to be introduced on 1 January 2022, will now be introduced on 1 July 2022.
- Physical checks on SPS goods at Border Control Posts will now begin on 1 July 2022.

All current controls for live animals, products of animal origin under safeguard measures and high priority plants and plant products remain unchanged.

In addition, the following customs controls will be phased in:

- Full customs declarations and controls will be introduced on 1 January 2022 as previously announced.
- Safety and Security declarations on imports will be required as of 1 July 2022 as opposed to 1 January 2022.

The new timeline allows importers, exporters and EU certifiers more time to prepare for the requirements and controls. It will ensure we reduce any anticipated disruption when these measures are introduced.

Defra has been working hard with businesses to ensure they are prepared and has run numerous webinars and advice sessions, attended by around 4,000 businesses.

Around 4,600 businesses are already registered for the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS). More than 13,000 individual users are registered for IPAFFS.

The process is simple and only requires a Government Gateway account to register. We have sought to make these processes as straightforward as possible, and many thousands of businesses are already prepared for their introduction.

Defra is working closely with customs agents who are keen to provide import and export support to businesses. We are looking to provide digital solutions to simplify processes and encouraging more agents to offer pre-notification support and support to EU exporters.

Pre-notification procedures from January 2022 to July 2022 have been reduced and now mirror the current import process introduced for live animals in January this year, requiring importers or their agents to complete 15 simple information boxes on IPAFFS.

Planning Permission: Equality

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the National Planning Policy Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development to include an aim of striving for racial equality in all planning processes. [\[HL2725\]](#)

Lord Greenhalgh: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already expects that local plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, of which social sustainability is a key component. The planning system has three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. As well as an economic and environmental objective, this includes a social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, fostering well designed, beautiful and safe places that reflect current and future needs of all in the community.

These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the NPPF, including an expectation that planning policies and decision should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Further, local authorities must comply with their duties under the Equality Act in exercise of their planning functions.

Plastics: Recycling

Asked by *Lord Robathan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is any legal or regulatory restriction preventing suppliers from taking back and reusing large plastic sacks that have contained animal feed or fertilizer; and, if so, whether they plan to review this restriction. [HL2596]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: There are no specific restrictions in fertiliser legislation preventing suppliers from reusing fertiliser sacks. However, guidance around the storage and handling of certain fertilisers such as ammonium nitrate may still apply, which could impact on the feasibility of reusing fertiliser sacks. For example, the Health and Safety Executive recommends precautions to prevent the risk of contamination and spillage, including that bags should be completely sealed on filling. In practice, the reuse of large sacks used by farmers is likely to be limited as they are usually cut open to transfer the fertiliser into the spreading equipment.

There are no provisions in UK animal feed legislation preventing the reuse of plastic sacks. However, feed business operators must demonstrate through their feed safety management systems that the packaging materials used for feed are safe and do not have an adverse effect on animal health, human health, and the environment.

Police: Mental Health

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of frontline police officers. [HL2690]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our police have continued to dedicate themselves to protecting the public during the pandemic. We recognise that this has been a hugely challenging time for them and looking after their mental health and overall wellbeing is a priority for this Government as we deliver the aims of the Police Covenant.

In addition to my previous answer to your question of 24 March, the National Police Wellbeing Service, funded by the Home Office, undertook the annual national police wellbeing survey for 2020-21 with Durham University. The survey was conducted during the pandemic and adapted to include a question set to give an indication of the impact on officers and staff. Over 22,000 responses were received from police officers and staff. The main findings, published on 6 July, show that whilst some factors influencing overall wellbeing have improved, others remain a concern.

The results of the survey are enabling the wellbeing service to prioritise work at a national level, for example, continuing the rollout of the Emergency Services Trauma Intervention Programme. The findings of this survey are also included in the National Police Chiefs' Council's Covid-19 workforce recovery plan.

Prison Accommodation: Mother and Baby Units

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made, if any, of how many additional spaces will need to be provided in Mother and Baby Units as part of the work to build 500 new places for (1) women, and (2) trans men, in prison. [HL2435]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The programme to deliver up to 500 additional prison places in the women's estate does not include delivering additional places in Mother and Baby Units. The current provision provided for Mother and Baby Units is forecast to continue to be sufficient with the increase in prison places.

Our new accommodation design supports transgender needs as required by legislation and prison policy. This includes ensuring that there are adequate areas that support the disclosing of information and private conversations. Single-cell occupancy will also support privacy and dignity, with in-cell sanitation facilities included in designs.

Prisoners: Females

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 20 July (HL1761), what is their policy on whether prisoners whose sex assigned at birth was female should use female pronouns to refer to prisoners who identify as female but were assigned male at birth if such prisoners (1) have, or (2) do not have, a Gender Recognition Certificate; and whether there would be any consequences for failing to use female pronouns in such cases. [HL2647]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service are committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including based on gender reassignment status as defined in section 7 of the Equality Act 2010. The prohibition on discrimination in relation to gender reassignment applies regardless of whether someone has a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Incidents where a prisoner uses incorrect pronouns for another prisoner will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the Prisoner Discipline Procedures policy and the Prison Rules. Prisoners may sometimes make an honest mistake in relation to pronouns and disciplinary action would not usually be appropriate in those circumstances. However, if an officer deems it appropriate to place a prisoner on report, the rule against 'using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour' (PR 51 (20)) may apply. The adjudicator will weigh each incident on its own merits. The policy stipulates that an offence motivated by another person's protected characteristic(s) under the Equality Act 2010 is

an aggravating factor and may merit referral to an Independent Adjudicator.

Prisoners: Gender Recognition

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 21 July (HL1789), what steps they plan to take to prevent pregnancy among biologically female transgender prisoners in the male prison estate. [HL2686]

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 21 July (HL1789), whether biologically female transgender prisoners in the male prison estate have access to contraceptive devices. [HL2687]

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 21 July (HL1789), how many pregnancies have been reported in the male prison estate in each of the last five years; and whether they will provide a breakdown of the outcomes of any such pregnancies. [HL2688]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Sex between prisoners is not permitted. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service ensure the safety of all prisoners by managing prisoners on a case-by-case basis and consider any relevant risks (including risks to, or from, the prisoner, as well as the risk of self-harm).

The NHS England and NHS Improvement constitution mandates that all healthcare delivered within prisons must be equivalent to healthcare delivered in the community and the fact that a patient is a prisoner should not impair their access to any healthcare they require.

All secure and detained settings therefore ensure that prisoners have access to appropriate contraceptives, which are prescribed or made available as necessary. This applies to both the men's and women's estate and includes all prisoners.

There have been no recorded incidents of prisoners becoming pregnant in the male prison estate.

Private Finance Initiative

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to a Freedom of Information request by Schools Week (FOI2021/11434), when they expect the Infrastructure Projects Authority to publish the full data collection of Private Finance Initiative Projects for (1) 2019, and (2) 2020. [HL2721]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The 2019 data will be published this Autumn. A data collection was not undertaken in 2020. The 2021 data collection will commence shortly and be published in early 2022.

Protective Clothing: Imports

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports in *The Diplomat* on 14 September, what assessment they have made of the alleged use of forced labour in Malaysian disposable glove factories; and what due diligence they carried out in relation to the use of forced labour before purchasing disposable gloves from Malaysian companies earlier this year. [HL2683]

Lord Kamall: To date, there have been no substantiated allegations of modern slavery in relation to a Departmental supplier. All the suppliers on our current gloves framework are registered and have been asked to complete a Modern Slavery Assessment and a Labour Standards Assessment.

Due diligence is carried out for all Government contracts and we expect all National Health Service suppliers to follow the highest legal and ethical standards. Public sector contracting authorities are advised on how to assess suppliers to mitigate the risk of modern slavery. Contracts are placed in line with Departmental terms and conditions which include clauses requiring Good Industry Practice to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in supply chains. Suppliers appointed to NHS Supply Chain frameworks must comply with the Labour Standards Assurance System or they can be removed from consideration for future opportunities.

Public Appointments Commissioner

Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the process for appointing the Commissioner for Public Appointments. [HL2731]

Lord True: The role was advertised on the Government's Public Appointments website and also through a number of other channels and networks. Applications were assessed by a panel, which included an independent member, against the advertised criteria. Shortlisted candidates were interviewed and the panel recommended to ministers which candidates they found appointable. Subject to consideration by Ministers of the select committee's report, the formal appointment will be made by Order in Council.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will announce details of the Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme; and whether there will be any special provisions for women. [HL2702]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has worked at pace to develop and launch the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), which will provide a safe and legal route for up to 20,000 Afghans in the region

over the coming years, with 5,000 in the first year –one of the most generous schemes in British history.

On Monday 13 September the Government published a policy statement which set out further details on the policy and operation of the ACRS, and the package of integration support that will be offered to those arriving through the Scheme.

This statement confirmed that the ACRS will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. This will include prioritising vulnerable people such women and girls, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

Further details on the scheme are published on the ACRS webpage: [Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Afghan refugees who have recently arrived in the UK will be given mental health support. [HL2703]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and wellbeing of Afghan refugees is of the utmost importance and we will work closely with accommodation providers and other partners to prioritise their safety and wellbeing. We are providing £3 million to ensure Afghan refugees receive the healthcare they need. This includes access to prescriptions, wound care and dressings, maternity care, mental health support, and screening for infectious diseases. We will also offer the protection of a COVID-19 vaccination as they settle and rebuild.

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with (1) charities, and (2) local communities, to support refugees from Afghanistan; and what steps they are taking to (a) encourage, and (b) coordinate, charitable donations in support of this cause. [HL2704]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Under Operation Warm Welcome, we are taking a cross-government approach to ensuring Afghans arriving in the UK are able to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities.

The challenge of integrating such a large number of people at pace and supporting them to rebuild their lives in safety cannot be met by central and local government alone. We will be actively working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole of society effort to address this challenge.

As part of this, we are creating a portal where people, organisations and businesses can register offers of support. This could include volunteering, offers of employment or to provide professional skills *pro bono*, including helping those arriving deal with trauma, or offering donations of mobile phones, mobile credit or data, laptops, access to training, clothes and toys. This will complement the Afghanistan housing portal which

has been set up to collect offers of additional housing support.

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to help recently arrived Afghan refugees culturally acclimatise and assimilate into the British population. [HL2705]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. The support provided for them will be similar to the commitments in the Syrian Resettlement Programme, with a complete package covering health, education and English Language support costs, and including cultural orientation to the UK.

We will be actively working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole-of-society effort to address this challenge.

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to help recently arrived Afghan refugees find employment. [HL2707]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Those coming from Afghanistan to the UK on the resettlement programmes will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to the benefit system and our existing employment offer, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs.

Direct, personalised support is available from experienced work coaches in the temporary hotel accommodation where Afghans are staying across the country. Work coaches are there to help with any claims or queries and to provide tailored employment support. Resettling Afghans will also have access to our Refugee Leads Network, which links Jobcentres and organisations working with refugees and those on resettlement programmes, to help them integrate and find employment in local areas. We will also work to ensure that English as a Second or Other Language provision, and other support, is available to those that need it.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Afghan women at risk, including judges, lawyers, MPs, journalists and human rights defenders, were resettled to the UK in August and September. [HL2751]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The United Kingdom evacuated around 5,000 Afghan nationals under the ARAP scheme and around 500 special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, including Chevening scholars, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners

for women's rights, judges, and many others. Around half of those resettled were women.

Refugees: English Channel

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of deaths which could be caused by their policy of turning back boats of refugees in the Channel; and what assessment they have made of the implications of this policy for the UK's international reputation. [HL2580]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: These crossings are dangerous, illegal and unnecessary. Lives have been lost through them and we will do everything to deter such crossings and so ultimately reduce the risk to life.

Refugees: English Language

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional funding they are providing to (1) mayoral combined authorities, and (2) upper tier local authorities in England, to facilitate the teaching of English to individuals and families arriving from Afghanistan. [HL2405]

Baroness Barran: Work is underway across governmental departments, and with charities and local authorities, to ensure Afghans are properly supported so they can rebuild their lives. Further detail on the support we provide to those we bring to the UK, including levels of funding, will be made available in due course.

In his statement on 6 September 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, set out a commitment that adults will be able to access English language courses free of charge through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-on-afghanistan-6-september-2021>.

Afghans being supported through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be granted 'indefinite leave to remain', which means that those who are over 19 are also immediately eligible for English for Speakers of Other Languages and other further education provision through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). This is in line with current AEB funding rules, details of which are available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1010290/AEB_2021_to_2022_funding_rules_v2_FINALAugust2021.pdf.

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any grant from the Levelling Up fund (1) to the Council of the Isles of Scilly, or (2) to any other body, for new vehicle transport ships will (a) require those vessels to have

roll-on roll-off capability, (b) need to demonstrate best value for money in accordance with the Fund's rules, and (c) require a full competitive tendering process for the operation of the vessels. [HL2774]

Lord Greenhalgh: Bids for the first round of the Levelling Up Fund are currently being assessed in line with the published assessment process. Whilst we are not able to answer project-specific questions, or provide advice on potential projects during this period of competition, I can confirm that value for money forms part of the criteria used to assess all bids. More information on the full assessment process, including the assessment of value for money, can be found (attached) in the Levelling Up Fund technical note - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992647/technical-note-for-application-form.pdf.

Successful bidders will need to adhere to any legislation relevant to the delivery of the project, such as procurement. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced later in the year and bidding authorities will be informed in due course.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Levelling Up Fund [Levelling Up Fund - HL2774.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-16/HL2774>

Religious Freedom

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of whether extremist Islamist ideology is a driver of intercommunal attacks in Nigeria; and what assessment they have made of the findings of the Bishop of Truro's Independent review of persecution of Christians and freedom of religion or belief. [HL2695]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria, the devastating effects of which are felt by communities of different faiths. The underlying drivers of intercommunal violence are complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and increasing criminality. Islamic extremism is a driver of conflict in the North east and not a driver of intercommunal violence.

We have accepted the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's report. On Nigeria, the report considered intercommunal violence in the Middle Belt and terrorism in the North East. In response to the issues raised in the report on intercommunal violence, the Government co-hosted a Wilton Park conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria' in February 2020, exploring the complex causes of conflict and solutions to help ease tensions and reduce violence. Since then, we have increased our visits to areas affected by violence to engage with state governments, civil society, faith and community leaders and affected communities. The

Minister for Africa visited Nigeria in April, where he discussed insecurity across the country with the President's Chief of Staff, the Foreign Minister and community leaders.

Reparation by Offenders

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to improve awareness of restorative justice throughout the criminal justice system, and (2) to increase the capacity of (a) professional, and (b) volunteer, restorative justice practitioners. [HL2653]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government continues to support the provision of good quality, victim-focussed restorative justice to help victims cope and recover from the effects of crime.

Under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code), all victims have the right to receive information about how to access restorative justice services in their local area.

The new Victims' Code, which was published in November last year and came into force on 1 April this year, includes information which explains what restorative justice is and how it works. As part of the launch of the new Code, the Ministry of Justice engaged in publicity to raise awareness of the Code and victims' rights therein. Criminal justice agencies also used internal communications to raise awareness of victims' rights among practitioners.

The Ministry of Justice funds Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to provide victim support services including commissioning restorative justice services to meet local need. Individual PCCs determine the capacity of restorative justice services required and the model of service appropriate for their area. PCCs are also able to utilise other funding streams outside of their MoJ grant for restorative justice.

In addition to the PCC commissioned schemes, the Government-funded national Homicide Service includes access to restorative justice services as part of the package of support it provides to families bereaved by homicide. Further restorative justice capacity is also made available in the youth justice system and by HM Prison and Probation Service.

Reparation by Offenders: Finance

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to provide dedicated funding for restorative justice to provide equal access across the country and avoid discriminating against either (1) offenders, or (2) victims. [HL2576]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government recognises the value of restorative justice and the benefits it can bring to enable victims to cope and recover, and for offenders to be part of that process.

As part of the core funding provided to Police Crime and Commissioners (PCCs) for victim support services, they are able to commission restorative justice services according to their local need. This year, MoJ has allocated around £64.3m to PCCs for core funding. For information, in 20/21, PCCs spent around £3.7m from their core funding on restorative justice. PCCs are also able to utilise other funding streams outside of their MoJ grant for restorative justice.

In addition, the Government has provided £4.6m this financial year to fund the Homicide Service. This service provides practical and emotional support to families bereaved by Homicide, including access to restorative justice services.

Retail Trade: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the redevelopment of retail space to attract consumers back to local high street shops and support their recovery process. [HL2518]

Lord Callanan: The retail sector remains a key part of the high street and thriving high streets will continue to need a strong physical retail offering. In order to help our high streets recover and flourish, we are:

- Providing funding that has real impact for high streets across the whole country.
- Ensuring planning laws help councils to be flexible and make the most of their high streets and take control of vacant property, shops and shopping centres.
- Giving communities the power to repurpose empty shops and spaces.
- Making sure businesses are supported as landlords and tenants of high street properties.

Robert Mugabe: British American Tobacco

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations in the BBC's Panorama programme on 13 September that British American Tobacco paid a bribe to the then President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe. [HL2728]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: Following a three-year investigation into British American Tobacco, in January 2021 the SFO determined that this case did not meet the evidential tests as defined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. As with all cases that fail this first limb of the Code, it was therefore not in the public interest to continue with the investigation.

The SFO is aware of the allegations made in the BBC's Panorama programme in September 2021.

The SFO continues to assist its international law enforcement partners with ongoing investigations related to this matter, and will assess any new material on its merits, as with any allegation of serious fraud, bribery or

corruption. The SFO does not disclose the actions it takes to assess allegations.

Schools: Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide mental health support for students and staff returning to school. [HL2461]

Baroness Barran: Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have prioritised keeping schools open above all else because they are vital for young people's wellbeing, as well as their education.

We are investing £3 billion to boost learning, including £950 million in additional funding for schools which they can use to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £7 million additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme in 2020/21, which provided free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year. Wellbeing for Education Return has been used by more than 90% of councils since its launch last summer: https://www.minded.org.uk/Catalogue/Index?HierarchyId=0_48943_49165&programmeId=48943.

Up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025.

Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting. It will encourage staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate.

This support for practice in schools is in addition to the £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support we announced in March, which will include increasing the number of 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.

The department has brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health

and wellbeing support: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

In May, we published the first ever Education Staff Wellbeing Charter: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>. The charter sets out the actions that government and other organisations, including Ofsted, will take to improve wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges.

Since June 2020, we have funded peer-support and one-to-one telephone supervision from experts, which has supported over 300 school leaders. This June, we launched an invitation to tender seeking a contractor to provide peer support and one-to-one counselling to least 2,000 school leaders, starting in the autumn 2021.

We know flexible working opportunities can promote staff wellbeing and have appointed the training provider 'Timewise' to train school leaders to implement flexible working practices in schools.

Asked by Lord McNicol of West Kilbride

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional resources to schools for addressing mental health issues experienced by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL2548]

Baroness Barran: Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have prioritised keeping schools open above all else because they are vital for children and young people's wellbeing, as well as their education.

We are investing £3 billion to boost learning, including £950 million in additional funding for schools which they can use to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £7 million additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme in 2020/21, which provided free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year. Wellbeing for Education Return has been used by more than 90% of councils since its launch last summer.

Up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025.

Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting. It will encourage staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving

young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate.

Additionally, our Mental Health in Education Action Group, has worked to identify and put in place further specific help to education settings to provide support for children and young people's mental wellbeing at this critical time, and in the longer term.

This support for practice in schools is in addition to the £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support we announced in March, which will include increasing the number of 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.

The department has recently brought together all its sources of advice or schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>. This also includes guidance to support relationships, sex and health education curriculum planning, covering of the key issues children and young people have been concerned about throughout the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

Schools: Radicalism

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the University College London report *Addressing Extremism Through the Classroom*, published on 7 September; and what steps are they taking to provide schools with the training and tools to teach pupils how to reject extremist views. [HL2519]

Baroness Barran: Officials in the Department for Education have reviewed the report with interest and are engaged with the research team at University College London.

The government is committed to supporting the education sector to equip pupils and staff to understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. The 'School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2017' report indicated that 98% of leaders and teachers were confident that their school effectively teaches the values of respect and tolerance of those from different backgrounds, and that 94% of teachers were confident in their responsibilities to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Our 'Educate Against Hate' website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views and keep their children safe, including from online extremist influences. The School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2017, published in 2018, highlights that 85% of school leaders and teachers that used Educate Against Hate thought it helped them to understand how to raise a concern. Additionally, 82% felt it helped them to identify signs of radicalisation and 79% stated it helped them promote mutual respect tolerance and understanding of those with different faiths.

The department continues to identify and produce high-quality resources to assist teachers to build pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies. This includes hosting resources from the charity 'Since 9/11', who the department has worked with to develop teaching materials ahead of the 20th anniversary of September 11th attacks.

The department works closely with and supports the network of Prevent Education Officers based in local authorities, who play an important role in supporting schools. This network provides support and guidance to schools, develops bespoke lesson resources, and provides training to school staff, empowering teachers to approach extremism in the classroom. These practitioners help to inform the development of policy and practice nationally.

Schools: Uniforms

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms under the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021. [HL2440]

Baroness Barran: The Department plans to publish the statutory guidance in Autumn 2021.

Schools do not need to make any changes before the guidance is released. The Department want schools to implement changes in a timely and considered manner to ensure that parents do not incur additional costs from sudden uniform changes.

Once the guidance is published, all schools will need to review their uniform policies and make necessary changes as soon as possible to ensure that parents see the benefits of the guidance.

Scottish Government: Communication

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 9 September (HL2410), what topics were covered in the 11 letters (attached to emails) that the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland received from Scottish Ministers in relation to reserved matters; and what plans they have to publish these letters. [HL2644]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: UK Government Ministers and Scottish Government Ministers regularly communicate on a range of matters. There is a strong public interest in allowing Ministers a private space within which to communicate, discuss and share information. Therefore, we do not routinely publish interministerial letters and we have no plans to publish these letters or their contents.

Sheltered Housing

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in setting up the task force on housing with care; and what is its remit. [HL2645]

Lord Greenhalgh: Both the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department of Health and Social Care are committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people. We are engaging closely with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders on this issue. This includes considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals from the sector for a cross-Government taskforce.

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to increase the provision of (1) extra-care housing, and (2) retirement villages for older people. [HL2646]

Lord Greenhalgh: Both my Department and the Department of Health and Social Care are committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people. We are engaging closely with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders on this issue. This includes considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals from the sector for a cross-Government taskforce.

Shipping: Navigation

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusions from the Maritime Resilience and Integrity of Navigation (MaRINav) study. [HL2678]

Lord Callanan: MaRINav was funded by the UK Space Agency, through the ESA NAVISP Innovation programme. It was led by UK industry as a collaboration of 8 organisations and completed in 2020. The outputs can be viewed on MaRINav's website.

The UK Government welcomed the project outcomes, and the detail was incorporated into the evidence assessment during the development of a UK PNT Strategy, in particular the need for maritime integrity and a system-of-systems approach to PNT resilience in the UK.

Sierra Leone: Bilateral Aid and Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision by Sierra Leone on 23 July to abolish the death penalty; and whether they have any plans to increase bilateral aid to that country. [HL2494]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the decision by Sierra Leone's Parliament on 23 July to abolish the death penalty. The Foreign Secretary and Minister for Africa congratulated President Bio and the people of Sierra Leone on this important milestone and we hope President Bio will soon give Presidential assent to make the bill into law. The UK will remain a strong supporter of democracy, development, and the promotion and protection of human rights in Sierra Leone.

We have had to take difficult decisions about Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in all countries as a result of the pandemic. The UK remains a significant global aid partner, with plans to spend more than £10 billion in ODA this financial year, and we continue to have a strong development partnership with Sierra Leone. The Minister for Africa will continue to work with the Government of Sierra Leone to advance our shared priorities.

Sizewell C Power Station

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to legislate to allow the use of a Regulated Asset Base funding model for (1) new nuclear infrastructure, and (2) other energy projects. [HL2499]

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for them to have a stake in Sizewell C nuclear power project; and whether the financial return accrued by (1) the taxpayer, and (2) private sector investors, would be the same. [HL2500]

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the cost of all government funding up to the date of the final investment decision on the Sizewell C nuclear project will fall to the taxpayer or be passed on to consumers of electricity. [HL2501]

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the deterioration of the fuel rod sealings at pressure reactors installed in Taishan, China, for the Sizewell C nuclear power project. [HL2503]

Lord Callanan: As we stated in our response to the consultation on a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) for nuclear published on 14th December 2020, we believe that a RAB

is a credible model for funding nuclear projects, as it should reduce the cost of finance and thereby reduce consumer bills.

We are also considering whether a RAB model could be applied to other low carbon technologies, including transport and storage infrastructure for carbon dioxide (outlined in the government's response to the carbon capture, usage and storage business models consultation).

We have always been clear that any new nuclear project must provide value for money for consumers and taxpayers.

Currently no decisions have been taken concerning Government financing of the Sizewell C nuclear power project, ahead of the final investment decision.

The Government continues to explore the use of a Regulated Asset Base model for new nuclear projects and believes that this could be a viable means by which to finance new projects. Decisions on how the model would be applied to new projects have yet to be taken and would be subject to value for money and all relevant approvals.

BEIS officials are engaged regularly with representatives from both EDF Energy and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (the ONR) on a wide range of matters relating to nuclear reactors.

Social Services: Finance

Asked by Lord Lipsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the extra money for social care announced on 7 September will go to pay for (1) the cap, and (2) the revised means test; and how much will go to improving care provision for those in need. [HL2547]

Lord Kamall: Allocations and profiles will be confirmed as part of the forthcoming Spending Review, which will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care for future years. We will work with care users, providers and other partners to develop a white paper for reform later this year.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care, published on 7 September, what plans they have to make changes to the formula used for eligibility funding in adult social care financial assessments. [HL2648]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what tariff income formula they will use to calculate personal care funding entitlement for those with assets between £20,000 and £100,000 under the plans for England set out in Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care, published on 7 September. [HL2650]

Lord Kamall: The upper capital limit will increase from £23,250 to £100,000 and lower capital limit from

£14,250 to £20,000. Anyone with assets between the capital limits will be expected to contribute towards the cost of their care from their income, but if that is not sufficient, they will contribute no more than 20% of their chargeable assets per year. Those with £20,000 or less will pay what they can afford from their income only, leaving their assets fully protected. These changes allow for an increase in number of people who benefit directly from state support in the social care system from around half to two thirds in the long term.

Somalia: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) political, and (2) security, situation in Somalia; and what discussions they have had with international partners in order to prevent political instability in that country. [HL2785]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 18 September, the Minister for Africa published a national statement setting out the UK's deep concern for the escalation of the current political crisis, which risks the safety and future of the Somali people. We are working closely with international partners, including in Mogadishu, to discourage Somalia's leaders from unilateral actions that could deepen tensions or increase the risk of violence and instead to encourage meaningful mediation. As penholder on Somalia at the UN Security Council, the UK tabled a discussion on the ongoing situation on 17 September, following which the UN Security Council issued a joint press statement.

The UK is also concerned by the impact of this crisis on the broader political and security situation. It is vital that all stakeholders maintain peace to avoid any risks to Somalia's stability and security. We have underlined the need to restore focus on the priority of conducting peaceful elections, as agreed on 27 May, without further delay to prevent further insecurity and avoid exacerbating the grave humanitarian challenges the country is facing. Likewise, it is important that Somalia's security forces remain focused on countering the common threat from Al Shabaab, who stand to gain from this ongoing political crisis, and progress discussions on a successor mission to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to support the transition to Somali-led security, in accordance with the Somalia Transition Plan.

South Sudan: Peace Negotiations

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to revive peace agreements in South Sudan following President Salva Kiir Mayardit's withdrawal from talks in Rome. [HL2810]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has consistently urged all armed groups in South Sudan to bring an end to conflict and to abide by their commitments to the 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. This includes via

longstanding support to, and engagement at, peace talks convened by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. We are however deeply concerned by continued incidents of violence, including an attack in August on the Juba-Nimule highway, which triggered President Kiir's decision to withdraw from talks.

Our Ambassador in Juba publicly condemned this incident and we continue to engage with all sides to press them to meet their commitments and end such violence. We remain in contact with Sant'Egidio to support their efforts to revive talks as part of our wider efforts to drive progress on the implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement.

South Sudan: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political and security situation in South Sudan and, in particular, the impact on the peace process of the reported attempt to oust Vice President Riek Machar. [HL2617]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: South Sudan remains one of the world's most fragile states, with 7.2 million people facing acute food insecurity and high levels of sub-national violence. The full and inclusive implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement remains South Sudan's best chance for sustainable peace and stability and recent progress, such as the formation of a new national legislature is welcome. Overall implementation however, is slow and inconsistent: important tasks such as the unification of armed forces have been significantly delayed, contributing to increased instability and a worsening humanitarian situation.

This slow and partial implementation of the Peace Agreement has generated discontent among several parties in recent months. This includes a split within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement 'In Opposition' (SPLM-IO) but 1st Vice President Riek Machar remains in post. In a Troika statement (with Norway and the US) on 13 August we called for all parties to abide by the Peace Agreement, for signatories to show a greater sense of unity, and for an end to the fostering of divisions and splits that risk further delays to the peace process and violence. Where there are legitimate grievances, however, we have made clear that it is important for voices to be heard and for freedom of expression to be protected.

Special Educational Needs

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide more special educational needs and disability (SEND) support to schools. [HL2559]

Baroness Barran: Our ambition is for every child and young person to have access to a world-class education

that sets them up for life, regardless of the challenges they face.

The government is making a major investment in education, and this includes increasing high needs funding for children and young people with more complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by £780 million, or 9.6%, in the 2022-23 financial year. This will follow an increase of more than £1.5 billion over the previous two years and will bring the total high needs budget to £8.9 billion, an increase of over a third since 2019-20. We have also provided, so far, more than £3 billion to support children, including those with SEND, to catch up with their learning.

More generally, it is also providing over £42 million in the 2021-22 financial year to: continue funding projects to support children and young people with SEND and their families; strengthen local area performance; and ensure that they have a voice in the development of SEND services, and information and advice. This includes £27.3 million to support over 60,000 low-income families with children and young people with disabilities or serious illnesses; £2 million funding to continue to equip the workforce to delivery high quality teaching to children and young with SEND through the Whole School SEND consortium; and £600,000 funding to the Autism Education Trust to provide a hub of guidance and resources to support families, teachers and other professionals.

The government is carrying out a review of the SEND system, which includes looking at the support available in mainstream schools for children with SEND. The review is looking at how to ensure support across all education settings is consistent, high quality and joined up across health and care. Proposals for consultation will be published as soon as possible.

Special Educational Needs: Reviews

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to complete their review of special educational needs. [HL2758]

Baroness Barran: The special educational needs and disability (SEND) review was set up to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND, with a focus on targeting and distributing resources in a way that best ensures children's needs are met quickly and effectively.

The department is working with a range of partners including children and young people with SEND, the Children's Commissioner, parents and carers, system leaders, SEND sector organisations, representatives from educational establishments and many others.

Proposals are being developed and we will consult publicly on them. We are not yet in a position to provide a firm date for publication of proposals but are looking to do so as soon as possible.

Speed Limits

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what speed restrictions apply to cyclists in 20 mile per hour zones; and what is their policy on ensuring all road users observe speed limits, whatever their mode of transport. [HL2628]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Speed limits are designed for motor vehicles, and do not apply to cyclists.

Enforcement of speed limits is for the police. Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners are operationally independent and how roads policing is undertaken, and available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local circumstances.

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost savings that will be achieved through the suspension of the "triple lock" on state pension payment increases. [HL2541]

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost savings that will be achieved through the suspension of the "triple lock" on state pension payment increases. [HL2579]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Our latest estimates are that the difference between maintaining the Triple Lock in the face of the earnings spike and the double lock could be £4-5 billion. But we will not know the final numbers until later in the autumn.

Since 2010, we have increased the value of the full yearly basic State Pension by over £2,050, in cash terms. We now spend over £129 billion a year on pensioners in 2021/22.

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of rising wages on the feasibility of re-introducing the "triple lock" on pensions in 2022. [HL2710]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has introduced the Social Security (Uprating of Benefits) Bill which will suspend the earning linked measure of the Triple Lock for up-rating for 2022/23 only. The Government remains committed to implementing the Triple Lock in the usual way for 2023/24 and the remainder of the Parliament.

Decisions on the rates for State Pensions are made each Autumn as part of the Up-rating review by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. These are normally informed by earnings and prices data published in

October each year. We will review the 2022 earnings growth figures at the appropriate time.

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to take the Consumer Price Index into account when calculating the state pension for 2022–23. [HL2750]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government has introduced the Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Bill which will enable State Pensions (the basic State Pension, the new State Pension and Pension Credit) to be uprated for 2022/23 only by at least the higher of the increase in prices or 2.5%.

Decisions on up-rating for all pensions and benefit rates are made in the Autumn as part of the up-rating review by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and announced ahead of the up-rating of benefits in April 2022. The conventional measure of price increases used for up-rating is September to September Consumer Price Index, this is released in October.

Students: Plagiarism

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the growth of essay mill companies during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether this growth has caused an increase in students cheating. [HL2516]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government has consistently made it clear that using essay mill services is unacceptable. We have worked with the higher education sector to clamp down on essay mills and to support students who might be targeted by these services. We have also committed to supporting a legislative solution to criminalise essay mill companies.

Essay mills are online entities operating across the globe and it is difficult to determine exactly how many are currently in operation – the Office for Students (OfS) recently estimated this figure could be close to 1,000[1]. The COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online learning and assessment appears to have led to a recent increase in the number of websites targeting their services at students in the UK.

We have challenged companies from the technology sector to identify how anti-cheating software can tackle the growth of essay mills, and we have worked alongside the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Universities UK and the National Union of Students to produce guidance for providers on how to combat the threat of 'contract cheating' and guidance for students to make them better aware of the consequences of contract cheating, sending a clear message that these services are not legitimate.

The OfS has published information and guidance for providers and students, and the QAA has also published a

series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards, and to support student achievement during the pandemic. This includes QAA guidance for providers on how to assess digital delivery with integrity.

We expect educational institutions to do everything in their power to prevent students being tempted by these companies and to detect and address cheating.

[1] <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/trouble-at-mill-protecting-students-from-contract-cheating/>.

Students: Quarantine

Asked by *Baroness Morgan of Huyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the differences between the COVID-19 self isolation rules applying to domestic and international students who are fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved for use in this country; and what is the scientific or clinical basis for these differences. [HL2663]

Lord Kamall: No such assessment has been made as domestic and international students are treated in the same way as any other individual. All those testing positive must self-isolate, regardless of vaccination status or where they were vaccinated. Those fully vaccinated in the United Kingdom are exempt from self-isolation if identified as a close contact. Those vaccinated abroad, are required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) support for, and (2) framing of the debate around, terrorists involved in the Troubles in Northern Ireland; and what steps they are taking to work with (a) communities in Northern Ireland, (b) the political representatives of those communities, and (c) representatives of victims of the Troubles, to reduce tensions and aid reconciliation. [HL2740]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government remains committed to addressing the legacy of the past in a way that focuses on reconciliation and helping society in Northern Ireland look to the future. Since the publication of the Government's Command Paper in July, we have engaged bilaterally and multilaterally with stakeholders from Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland on our legacy proposals - including political parties, victims groups and other representatives from across the Northern Ireland community.

The Government continues to engage and reflect on the many different perspectives we have heard, while being clear that we will never accept any equivalence between those who perpetrated violence in Northern Ireland, and those who sought to uphold the law or abide by it.

The Government also continues to invest in social development across Northern Ireland, strengthening social

cohesion and building stronger, safer communities, including through the £730 million PEACE PLUS programme announced in September 2021 to support economic stability, peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Tigray: Crimes against Humanity

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports in the Daily Telegraph on 5 September that ethnic cleansing and atrocity crimes against Tigrayans have been committed in the Ethiopian city of Humera, (1) what assessment they have made of the reports, (2) whether they intend to verify the reports, and (3) whether they will take any action to bring those responsible to justice should those reports be verified. [HL2467]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by reports of ethnic cleansing and atrocity crimes against Tigrayans committed in Humera within Tigray as the Minister for Africa made clear in the Westminster Hall debate on 8 September. The UK is supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is independent, transparent and impartial and holds the parties to this conflict directly responsible for their actions.

Trade Agreements

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent progress they have made in negotiating new Free Trade Agreements. [HL2802]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government signed a new free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) in July. Building on the success of the United Kingdom's recent Agreement-in-Principle with Australia, we have been accelerating talks to reach an Agreement-in-Principle with New Zealand too.

We are progressing plans to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and recently concluded a public consultation for FTA negotiations with India, as well as a call for input for new FTA negotiations with Canada and Mexico.

Trade Agreements: Conditions of Employment

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the rights of workers are protected in future trade deals. [HL2805]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The UK is committed to ensuring that the rights of workers are upheld in trade deals. HM government has made clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of labour standards, and this is reflected in our UK trade policy.

In its public mandates, the Government committed to protect the UK's world-leading labour standards.

Trade Agreements: Environment Protection

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with UK trade partners on inserting clauses on environmental standards into future trade deals. [HL2804]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The UK is seeking ambitious environmental provisions in all future trade deals, including those which preserve our high levels of environmental protection and ensure our trade and environment policies are mutually supportive.

Negotiations, including with both Australia and New Zealand, are progressing and the UK is also preparing for the next phase of negotiations, including with India, Mexico and Canada.

Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with UK trade partners on inserting clauses on human rights into future trade deals. [HL2806]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: HM Government is clear that more trade will not come at the expense of human rights. The UK will continue to show global leadership in encouraging all states to uphold international human rights obligations and hold those who violate human rights to account. By having stronger economic relationships with partners, we can have more open discussions on a range of issues, including human rights.

Trade Agreements: Ukraine

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what errors, if any, have been identified in the Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement with Ukraine; and what is the status of that agreement until any errors have been rectified. [HL2505]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The United Kingdom-Ukraine Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement is in force and operating effectively. It is standard practice for agreements to be amended, corrected or updated over time, depending upon individual circumstances. However, there are no plans for a wholesale reopening of the agreement.

Trade Promotion

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they apply to the appointment of trade envoys; and what remuneration and expenses, including for travel, they are they entitled to receive. [HL2412]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Prime Minister's Trade Envoys are drawn from both Houses and across the political spectrum. They are chosen based on relevant skills and experience required to undertake the role. This experience can be related to their assigned market or UK industry knowledge, or their Government-to-Government experience, as well as willingness and an ability to undertake some international travel.

The trade envoy role is voluntary. No remuneration is paid to trade envoys. The Department for International Trade meets the cost of travel and subsistence when trade envoys travel overseas, as well as any other incidental costs incurred by the trade envoys when they fulfil their role.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what factors determine which of the UK's trading partners are allocated a trade envoy. [HL2421]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Programme supports British businesses overseas and attracts investment into the UK. The programme works in collaboration with other trade promotion activities, and it focuses on emerging and high growth markets where additional senior interactions can be valuable, or larger economies where multiple interactions at different levels are effective. Trade Envoys are appointed to markets where there are opportunities to increase bilateral trade.

The Department for International Trade is constantly reviewing suitable countries, regions, and markets to identify where the appointment of a Trade Envoy can be of greatest benefit to the trade and investment aims of the UK, with the Prime Minister ultimately making the decision to appoint.

Transcaucasus and Ukraine: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Minsk Agreement; and whether they have investigated possible alternatives to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. [HL2610]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government fully supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to settle all outstanding matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as set out in the Madrid Principles. The UK Government believes the Minsk Group remains the

most appropriate mechanism to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has no plans to consider an alternative mechanism at this time.

Travel: Quarantine

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to cover the cost of quarantine for those forced to flee Afghanistan, as a red list country. [HL2337]

Lord Kamall: There is a cross-Government effort to design a package for arrivals from Afghanistan, including the support that is needed to help these families relocate to the United Kingdom. The cost of managed quarantine is being considered in these discussions and we are actively looking to provide support where the need is greatest.

Travellers: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) departments, and (2) other publicly-funded bodies, categorise Gypsies, Travellers and Roma as "white minority ethnic groups" for statistical and reporting purposes, rather than designating them either as "white British" or "minority ethnic". [HL2813]

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

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician

Baroness Whitaker

House of Lords

London SW1A 0PW

22 September 2021

Dear Baroness Whitaker,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what steps have been taken to ensure that departments, and other publicly-funded bodies, categorise Gypsies, Travellers and Roma as 'white minority ethnic groups' for statistical and reporting purposes, rather than designating them either as 'white British' or 'minority ethnic' (HL2813).

A core principle of the UK Statistics Authority's strategy *Statistics for the Public Good* [1] is inclusivity. I can assure you that we are taking steps towards ensuring our statistics reflect the experiences of everyone in our society so that everyone counts and is counted, and that no one is forgotten.

Following consultation, research, and testing by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), a new 'Roma' response option was added to the ethnic group question within the higher-level 'White' category for Census 2021 for England and Wales[2]. This was in addition to the

'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' response option, which has been included since the 2011 Census[3].

Our Census 2021 output and analysis plans[4] include separate tailored analysis on both the Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities and the Roma communities in England and Wales. As part of developing this analysis we are engaging with Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller community organisations, as well as other government and expert users, to better understand the data and analysis needs around these communities.

The GSS (Government Statistical Service) harmonised standards set out how to collect and report statistics to ensure comparability across different data collections in Government. For ethnicity[5], we suggest reporting with greater granularity, which has been recommended by the Minister for Equalities ('Departments and other agencies should publish a statement on GOV.UK outlining their plans to move their data collections to the Government Statistical Service's (GSS) harmonised ethnicity data standard'.[6]) Over the past 12 months these standards have been adopted as the GDS's (Government Digital Service) design pattern[7] for equalities information, meaning that Government digital services collecting administrative information are recommended to adopt these standards.

In addition, the GSS Harmonisation Champions Network[8], which includes representatives from all departments across Government which publish National Statistics, also encourage their departments to adopt these harmonised standards.

Finally, I'd like to highlight the work of the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF), a group of senior academics and civil society leaders with expertise on a range of equalities topics and research methods. In October 2020, I commissioned this group to develop recommendations on how to make a step-change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence in a broad range of areas, including ethnicity. Their recommendations will be launched on 28 September and will form the basis of a programme of work to be taken forward across government and more widely to radically improve the UK's inclusive data infrastructure, including in relation to different ethnic groups.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1] <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/statistics-for-the-public-good/>

[2] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/nationalidentityethnicgrouplanguageandreligionquestiondevelopmentforcensus2021>

[3] https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/2011census/howourcensusworks/howweplannedthe2011census/questionnairedevelopment/finalisingthe2011questionnaire/final-recommended-questions-2011-ethnic-group_tcm77-183998.pdf

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/census2021outputs/2021dataproductions/analysis/ethnicgroupnationalidentitylanguageandreligion>

[5] <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/>

[6]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/second-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

[7]

<https://design-system.service.gov.uk/patterns/equality-information/>

[8]

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/about-us/champion-networks/harmonisation-champions/>

Tree Planting

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to meet their target for planting trees outlined in the Queen's Speech. [HL2496]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has committed to increasing tree planting in the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament. The England Trees Action Plan (ETAP), which was published in May, sets out our target of trebling woodland creation in England to reflect its contribution to that target. The ETAP is supported through £500 million from the Nature for Climate Fund. This funding will support tree planting and protection during this Parliament.

We also continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations to ensure we are on track collectively to deliver the commitment.

Trident Submarines: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the next ballistic missile submarine will enter its Long Overhaul Period and Refuel (LOP(R)). [HL2564]

Baroness Goldie: The Government does not disclose operational information about Royal Navy submarines as to do so would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Tunisia: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take in response to the president of Tunisia's suspension of the Tunisian parliament, including the immunity of its members. [HL2430]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is closely monitoring the situation in Tunisia. We recognise the legitimate demands of its people for a better standard of living and honest, effective governance. We believe that

the solution to Tunisia's challenges can only be achieved through the principles of democracy, transparency, respect for human rights, and free speech. Minister Cleverly spoke to Tunisian Foreign Minister Jerandi on 11 August. G7 Ambassadors in Tunis, led by the UK, issued a joint statement on 6 September setting out our joint position.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Human Rights Watch that there have been "arbitrary and politically motivated acts of repression" in Tunisia since that country's parliament was suspended; and what discussions they have had with the government of that country about these issues. [HL2787]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of this report and we continue to closely monitor the situation in Tunisia. We recognise the legitimate demands of the Tunisian people for a better standard of living and honest, effective governance. We believe that the solution to Tunisia's challenges can only be achieved through the principles of democracy, transparency, respect for human rights, and free speech. Minister Cleverly spoke to Tunisian Foreign Minister Jerandi on 11 August. G7 Ambassadors in Tunis, led by the UK, issued a joint statement on 6 September setting out our joint position, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-ambassadors-in-tunisia-issue-joint-statement-6-september-2021>.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about the Subsidy Control Bill and its implications for Northern Ireland under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL2738]

Lord Callanan: The UK Government has been engaging regularly with the Northern Ireland Executive on the Subsidy Control Bill, at official and ministerial level. BEIS officials have met with Northern Ireland Executive officials 23 times since September 2020. BEIS Ministers have also met with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers 6 times since September 2020. The primary purpose of these discussions has been to discuss the detail of the Subsidy Control Bill, and to invite feedback from Northern Ireland Executive Ministers and officials. We are committed to continuing our close engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive, including as the Bill passes through Parliament.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of trends in the level of UK trade with the EU since January 2020. [HL2803]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: UK goods trade (excluding precious metals) with the EU was £368.9bn in 2020, down 15.8% compared to 2019, mainly due to decreases in April 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

UK trade in goods with the EU suffered a further decrease in January 2021, down 36.0% for the month (compared to December 2020).

Since January 2021, monthly goods trade has increased, with monthly exports now almost at pre-covid levels (July 2021 was 5.6% below 2019 monthly average), and imports growing but still below pre-covid levels (July 2021 was 14.6% below 2019 monthly average).

UK trade in services with the EU have shown little recovery since falling in April 2020. Services trade with the EU was £160.2bn in the 12 months to end of June 2021 down 22.3% on the previous 12 months.

UK Trade with EU: Import Controls

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide financial support for businesses whose checks and paperwork were delayed as a result of preparing for import control deadlines. [[HL2764](#)]

Lord Frost: The revised timetable for import controls set out in my [written statement](#) of 14 September 2021 allows businesses more time to adjust to new processes as they recover from the pandemic which has impacted supply chains across Europe. The nature of the border import controls for which businesses are preparing has not changed, and therefore any time or resource spent by businesses preparing for them will still be of value. The additional time will be used to further businesses' readiness for the introduction of these new requirements.

The Government also continues to support businesses trading with the EU in all sectors of industry, including putting in place additional staffing, comprehensive guidance for businesses and funding infrastructure to ease border processes.

UN Climate Conference 2021

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to prepare for COP26 in November. [[HL2508](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: COP26 is an event of global importance where the world must work together to secure a comprehensive and ambitious set of outcomes that accelerate climate action and get the world on track to a 1.5 degree pathway. This includes finalising the Paris Rulebook, supporting the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and addressing the gaps on ambition in reducing emissions this decade, mobilising finance, and adapting to our changing world.

COP26 logistical preparations are well established and we have a robust governance structure, involving close cooperation between Scottish, wider UK and international partners to ensure we host a safe and secure event that meets our objectives. Our preparations include a thorough risk assessment and mitigation plan along with a robust testing and exercise programme.

In terms of COVID, the COP26 unit has been working closely with public health officials, the Scottish Government, the WHO, the UNFCCC and all our partners to create a comprehensive set of COVID mitigations to ensure preparedness for the conference - the safety of participants and the local population is at the heart of all our planning. This includes a specific test, trace and protect regime, social distancing, enhanced ventilation, face coverings and vaccinations.

UN Climate Conference 2021: British Overseas Territories

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable full (1) participation, and (2) attendance, by representatives of each of the UK Overseas Territories at COP26. [[HL2625](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is working closely with the Overseas Territories to ensure that their valuable contribution to address the environmental issues they face is featured appropriately during COP26, including in the UK Pavilion. The Overseas Territories are collectively participating in COP26 to showcase their unique biodiversity, environments and marine protected areas.

Representatives of the Overseas Territories will attend COP26. However, the number of attendees from the Overseas Territories is not currently finalised.

UN Climate Conference 2021: Taiwan

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that Taiwan is represented at COP26. [[HL2573](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the contribution Taiwan is voluntarily making to combat climate change, despite not being a signatory to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UK Government has consistently stated its support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations where statehood is not a requirement and where we believe Taiwan has a valuable contribution to make on issues of global concern. This includes climate change, which recognises no territorial boundaries.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to allow Taiwanese representatives to participate in informal gatherings at COP26. [[HL2574](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the contribution Taiwan is voluntarily making to combat climate change, despite not being a signatory to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UK Government has consistently stated its support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations where statehood is not a requirement and where we believe Taiwan has a valuable contribution to make on issues of global concern. This includes climate change, which recognises no territorial boundaries.

UN General Assembly

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their priorities for global action at the UN General Assembly high-level session taking place on 21 September. [HL2786]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government's priorities for the UN General Assembly High Level Week from 20 to 27 September were to secure further climate commitments ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November, to work with our partners to respond to the Afghanistan crisis, to strengthen and establish new international partnerships particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, and to improve global access to vaccines.

Undocumented Migrants

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to show by nationality the number of illegal immigrants who have been taken into custody upon arrival in the UK in the 12 months from September 2020. [HL2621]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office does not have plans to show by nationality the number of illegal immigrants who have been taken into custody upon arrival in the UK in the 12 months from September 2020.

Undocumented Migrants: Deportation

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many illegal immigrants have been deported from the UK in each of the last 12 months. [HL2622]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'. The latest data on enforced returns (of which 'deportations' is a subset) go to the end of March 2021 and are published in Ret_D01 of the Returns detailed tables.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal

from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available.

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many migrants are known to have crossed the English Channel by unauthorised or irregular sea transport and landed in England in each week during 2021. [HL2619]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office collates figures of channel migrant arrivals for management information purposes, and weekly arrivals data is therefore held. However, the Home Office preference for validation and assurance of data is for monthly figures as weekly data are not representative of trends and other factors that we deem important to understand small boat crossings.

The following figures for both monthly and weekly arrivals of migrants by small boat in 2021 are from a live database, and are subject to revision following those data validation and assurance processes.

<i>Week commencing</i>	<i>Week ending</i>	<i>Total arrivals by small boat</i>
28/12/2020	03/01/2021	58
04/01/2021	10/01/2021	161
11/01/2021	17/01/2021	36
18/01/2021	24/01/2021	0
25/01/2021	31/01/2021	17
01/02/2021	07/02/2021	62
08/02/2021	14/02/2021	0
15/02/2021	21/02/2021	23
22/02/2021	28/02/2021	223
01/03/2021	07/03/2021	150
08/03/2021	14/03/2021	115

<i>Week commencing</i>	<i>Week ending</i>	<i>Total arrivals by small boat</i>
15/03/2021	21/03/2021	10
22/03/2021	28/03/2021	327
29/03/2021	04/04/2021	259
05/04/2021	11/04/2021	49
12/04/2021	18/04/2021	82
19/04/2021	25/04/2021	272
26/04/2021	02/05/2021	594
03/05/2021	09/05/2021	130
10/05/2021	16/05/2021	592
17/05/2021	23/05/2021	29
24/05/2021	30/05/2021	528
31/05/2021	06/06/2021	732
07/06/2021	13/06/2021	508
14/06/2021	20/06/2021	352
21/06/2021	27/06/2021	400
28/06/2021	04/07/2021	933
05/07/2021	11/07/2021	642
12/07/2021	18/07/2021	504
19/07/2021	25/07/2021	1529
26/07/2021	01/08/2021	160
02/08/2021	08/08/2021	1282
09/08/2021	15/08/2021	902
16/08/2021	22/08/2021	869
23/08/2021	29/08/2021	0
30/08/2021	05/09/2021	165
06/09/2021	12/09/2021	1862

<i>Date</i>	<i>Total arrivals by small boat</i>
Jan-21	224
Feb-21	308
Mar-21	831
Apr-21	750
May-21	1627
Jun-21	2177
Jul-21	3512
Aug-21	3053
Sep-21 (to 12 Sept)	2027

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the annual cost of each illegal migrant that is picked up by Border Force having crossed the English Channel by boat. [HL2620]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data on the costs of migrants from this specific group is not collected. The cost of the asylum system to the taxpayer was published in the New Plan for Immigration policy statement.

New Plan for Immigration policy statement

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972517/CCS207_CCS0820091708-001_Sovereign_Borders_Web_Accessible.pdf

Immigration and Protection data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q1-2021>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

New Plan for Immigration Policy Statement
[CCS207_CCS0820091708-001_Sovereign_Borders_Web_Accessible.pdf]

Table - UKVI_IP_Q1_2021 [UKVI_IP_Q1_2021.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-10/HL2620>

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding their policy to end illegal crossings of the English Channel by migrant vessels. [HL2631]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Security is a reserved matter. Consequently, discussions on this subject have not taken place with the devolved administrations, and there are no plans to do so.

United Kingdom

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on UK sovereignty. [HL2689]

Lord Frost: The Government's position on this matter is set out in [Command Paper \(CP 502\)](#), published on 21 July.

Article 1 of the Northern Ireland Protocol states that "This Protocol respects the essential State functions and territorial integrity of the United Kingdom." Nonetheless, the Government is clear that the current governance arrangements under the Protocol must evolve to reflect the reality that the Protocol is an agreement between two sovereign and autonomous entities, not a relationship of subordination where one party's rules have to be applied mechanically by the other. That is why the UK's Command Paper sets out the Government's intention to remove the remaining role of the EU institutions and of the CJEU in Northern Ireland.

Universal Credit

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost of ending the £20 uplift to Universal Credit. [HL2555]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made. The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; Restart, which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year; and JETS, which provides light touch employment support for people who are claiming either Universal Credit or New Style Jobseekers Allowance, for up to 6 months, helping participants effectively re-engage with the labour market and focus their job search. We have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job. In total, our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

Asked by **Baroness Wilcox of Newport**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how much poverty will rise in the worst-case scenario from any modelling they have conducted on the impact of ending the £20 uplift for Universal Credit. [HL2603]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the Universal Credit uplift on poverty or related issues. This is particularly the case at the moment given the uncertainty around the speed of the economic recovery, and how this will be distributed across the population.

The latest poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (both before and after housing costs) for working-age adults in working families have fallen since 2009/10. In 2019/20, 8% of working age adults in working families were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), compared to 9% in 2009/10.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic

shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

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This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

This year, we are also investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children will benefit from a range of support, including a healthy and nutritious meal as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. We also increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 in April, which helps eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins.

Asked by **Baroness Wilcox of Newport**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how much food bank usage will rise in the worst-case scenario from any modelling they have conducted on the impact of ending the £20 uplift for Universal Credit. [HL2604]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made. Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation. There is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage at a constituency or national level.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the Universal Credit uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital

safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced with the success of the vaccine rollout. Now the economy is reopening and as we continue to progress with our recovery our focus is on helping people back into work.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; Restart, which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year; and JETS, which provides light touch employment support for people who are claiming either Universal Credit or New Style Jobseekers Allowance, for up to 6 months, helping participants effectively re-engage with the labour market and focus their job search. We have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job. In total, our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

This year, we are also investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children will benefit from a range of support, including a healthy and nutritious meal as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. We also increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 in April, which helps eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins.

*Asked by **Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the impact assessment for removing the £20 uplift to Universal Credit. [[HL2732](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No impact assessment has been made.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first

introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

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Universal Credit: Homelessness

*Asked by **Baroness Wilcox of Newport***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how much homelessness will rise in the worst-case scenario from any modelling they have conducted on the impact of ending the £20 uplift for Universal Credit. [[HL2602](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No impact assessments have been made.

Discretionary Housing Payments provide critical support to vulnerable claimants, including those who are at risk of homelessness, that need help with their housing costs.

For 2021-22 the Government has made available £140m in Discretionary Housing Payments funding for local authorities in England and Wales. In 2020-21 we boosted investment in the Local Housing Allowance by almost £1 billion and have maintained rates in cash terms for 2021-22. In addition, earlier this year we extended the exemptions from the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance for care leavers and those who have spent at least three months in a homeless hostel. From 31st May 2021 the care leavers exemption applies up to age 25 and the homeless hostel exemption applies up to age 35.

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Universities: Admissions

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many students have been paid to defer their university course for 12 months; and what the total amount of money spent is. [HL2515]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Throughout this year's admissions cycle, we have encouraged providers to do everything they can to enable students who wish to enter higher education this year to do so. In a small number of cases, providers have seen more students meet the terms of their offers than they have capacity to accommodate, and these providers have agreed alternatives with these students, which may include a place on another course or an incentivised deferral. We do not record the number of students who have accepted incentivised deferrals at providers: this is a private arrangement between the provider and the individual student. In any year, some students choose to defer for a number of reasons.

The latest data for the admissions cycle (as at 28 days after A level results day) show that the total number of English students accepted has increased compared with 2020 and 2019, with both deferrals and non-deferrals increasing. The proportion of successful English applicants deferring this year is 0.7 percentage points greater than in 2019.

No funding has been provided by the government for incentivised deferrals. Rather, we have provided funding to increase capacity so that more students can take up their places this year, making available up to £10 million in additional grant funding to higher education providers through the Office for Students to help them to increase capacity in medical, dental, nursing, science, technology, engineering, maths, and other high-cost subjects. The government has also provided funding to provide incentives to students to switch from oversubscribed providers to providers with capacity in medicine and dentistry.

Alongside this, we have worked with universities, Health Education England, the Medical Schools Council and the General Medical Council to assess and agree how many additional places on medical and dentistry courses could be provided. Students who held a firm or insurance

offer at an oversubscribed medical or dental school were contacted by their current university about a £10,000 incentive to change schools under the 2021 Medical School Student Incentivised Transfer Scheme. Students were given the opportunity to transfer to an alternative university which has space and to receive a financial incentive to do so. Participation in the scheme was entirely optional. This has supported more than 80 students to move from oversubscribed medical and dental schools to those which had additional capacity.

Universities: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have provided any financial support to universities which have chartered flights to the UK to ensure that students from China are able to return for in-person studies in the UK. [HL2470]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assessment they have made of the cost for universities to charter flights to ensure that students from China are able to return for in-person studies in the UK, and (2) what details it holds on the universities which have chartered these flights. [HL2471]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government has provided no financial support to higher education providers for the purpose of chartering flights for international higher education students from China to travel to the UK, for the academic year 2021/22.

The government has received applications from Queen's University Belfast, as well as three consortia of higher education providers seeking approvals for charter flights for Chinese students while scheduled direct flights remain suspended between the UK and mainland China. The three consortia comprise 16, 24, and 55 named higher education providers respectively. The airlines involved have chartered the planes to travel companies, which sell tickets to the students. The airlines and travel agencies take the financial risk.

The government is proud that so many international students choose to study here and is looking forward to safely welcoming them in the new academic year. We have worked closely with the sector to ensure that international students will be appropriately supported and welcomed, including with quarantine requirements. Universities UK International has published bespoke self-isolation guidance for higher education providers to help them prepare for the arrival of students.

USA: Travel

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how often the taskforce set up with the United States of America to

discuss the establishment of a travel corridor has met; and what progress has been made on agreeing a date to open such a corridor. [HL2616]

Lord True: The Prime Minister and US President announced the establishment of a UK/US Expert Working Group on international travel following their meeting on 10 June 2021. Since then, the group met in full regularly over the summer to discuss the reopening of travel between the UK and US, as well as further engagement between the UK and US chairs, our embassy in Washington, and technical discussions.

Facilitated by the UK/US Working Group, the UK reopened travel for double vaccinated US residents on 2 August, meaning that they no longer need to self isolate on arrival into the UK.

On 20 September, the US announced that they will allow double vaccinated British nationals to enter the US from November, completing the fully vaccinated travel corridor. Travellers will need proof of full vaccination and a negative COVID test taken three days before departure and will not need to quarantine.

Vatican: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of relations between the UK and the Holy See. [HL2716]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's relationship with the Holy See remains strong. The UK continues to work with the Holy See on a range of shared challenges, and we are proud of the global nature of our partnership. These priorities include addressing the scourge of modern slavery, seeking peaceful solutions to long running conflicts, and, particularly in view of the upcoming COP26 Conference in Glasgow, driving international collaboration to tackle the growing threat of climate change. On this issue, the UK is proud to be co-hosting the "Faith and Science: Toward COP26" event, alongside the Holy See and Italy, on 4 October - bringing together key religious figures from across the globe to build momentum towards November's summit. Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See discussed how the UK and the Holy See can further deepen our collaboration on these issues with His Holiness the Pope when he presented his credentials on 4 September and Minister Morton met key Holy See Ministers during her visit on 16 September.

Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the role of the Veterans Advisory and Pension Committees. [HL2544]

Baroness Goldie: We are currently working with the Veterans Advisory and Pension Committees (VAPCs) to ensure they can continue to make veterans' voices heard

within Government, and support both the Ministry of Defence and the Office for Veterans' Affairs as we improve veterans' services and deliver on the Strategy for Our Veterans. This may include, in agreement with the VAPCs, some additional activities over and above their existing statutory functions. We will have an update on this in due course.

Waste Management

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist local authority waste and recycling departments with driver shortages. [HL2747]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of some current impacts driver shortages are having on local authorities. We continue to work with the Department for Transport and the other departments to resolve this.

The Government recently announced a significant package of measures, including plans to streamline the process for new drivers to gain their HGV licence, and increased capacity for HGV driving tests. As driver shortages across Europe demonstrate, this is a widespread problem caused by a range of factors, including an ageing workforce.

We are moving to a high wage, high skilled economy and the government is encouraging all sectors to adapt and make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options and wage increases. The waste sector is already making good strides in this, highlighting that many rounds can be conducted close to home with defined hours, promoting a healthy work/life balance.

More information about the measures we are taking to tackle the haulier shortage is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-support-to-help-people-to-become-hgv-drivers-among-package-of-government-measures-to-ease-risk-of-shortages>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

More support to help people to become HGV drivers [More support to help people to become HGV drivers among package of government measures to ease risk of shortages - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-09-15/HL2747>

West Bank: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, to protect Palestinians in the West Bank from attack by Israeli settlers and forces. [HL2657]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every

instance to bring those responsible to justice. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli forces (1) shot and killed four Palestinian men during raids on the Jenin refugee camp on 16 August, and (2) prevented Palestinian ambulances from reaching the men before detaining their bodies. [HL2667]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of these reports. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we urge the Government of Israel to conduct swift and transparent investigations. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire. The long-lasting movement restrictions and the serious constraints imposed by the occupation can impact on the provision of medical care. The wounded or critically ill should be able to access the urgent medical care they need. We urge all sides to treat the dead with respect and return any bodies they are holding.

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Palestinian children in the West Bank are facing increased violence from Israeli settlers. [HL2668]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, to protect Palestinian homes and agricultural structures in Area C of the West Bank from destruction by Israeli forces. [HL2670]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's opposition to demolition of Palestinian homes and structures is long-standing and well known. The British Embassy regularly raises the issue of demolitions with the Government of Israel, most recently on 10 August. The former Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May.

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and are clear that in all but the

most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

Working Class

*Asked by **Lord Patten***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they use the term "working class" in official business; and if so, how they would define it. [HL2714]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The ONS guidance document titled 'National Statistics Socio-economic classification' explains and defines socio-economic groups and this is guidance we follow.

World Health Assembly and World Health Organisation

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any of the UK delegates to (1) the 74th meeting of the World Health Assembly, and (2) the 149th session of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization, were qualified nurses; and if so, whether these delegates attended specifically to represent the nursing profession. [HL2446]

Lord Kamall: No members of the United Kingdom delegation were qualified nurses.

Yazidis: Missing Persons

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to locate missing Yazidi women and children following the genocide of Yazidis by ISIL in 2014. [HL2769]

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to work with (1) the #BringBackTheYazidis initiative, and (2) international partners, to ensure that missing Yazidi people are located and rescued. [HL2770]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to press the Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Governments for more progress on security and services in the liberated areas of Iraq and to solve disputed internal boundaries. The passage of the Yazidi Survivors Law in March 2021 is a welcome first step toward justice and reparations for survivors of Daesh atrocities. This law also includes provisions to search for missing survivors. The UK is supporting the implementation of the law, including through support to the Directorate for Survivors Care. We are also funding psycho-social care for female minority survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Iraq.

Yemen: Peace Negotiations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the peace process in Yemen; and when they last discussed the situation in that country with the government of Oman. [[HL2789](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We support fully the UN-led peace process in Yemen and urge the parties to

engage constructively with the new UN Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg. UK Ministers engage with their regional counterparts on Yemen regularly to encourage efforts towards a political solution and end the humanitarian suffering. We welcome the recent diplomatic activity by Oman. On 14 September, the UK Ambassador to Yemen met Omani Foreign Minister Sayd Badr to discuss how best to coordinate our efforts.

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