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Thursday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND
WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

| <i>Minister</i> | <i>Responsibilities</i> |
|---|---|
| Baroness Evans of Bowes Park | Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal |
| Earl Howe | Deputy Leader of the House of Lords |
| Lord Agnew of Oulton | Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office |
| Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
| Lord Ashton of Hyde | Chief Whip |
| Baroness Barran | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education |
| Lord Benyon | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist | Whip |
| Lord Callanan | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy |
| Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen | Whip |
| 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 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities |
| 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, Department of Health and Social Care |
| Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport |
| Baroness Penn | Whip |
| Baroness Scott of Bybrook | Whip |
| Lord Sharpe of Epsom | Whip |
| Baroness Stedman-Scott | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and 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

Thursday, 21 October 2021

Development Consent Application under Planning Act 2008: AQUIND Ltd

[HLWS335]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng) has today made the following statement:

This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by AQUIND Limited for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the UK elements of a 2,000MW bi-directional subsea electrical power interconnector between Normandy in France and Lovedean in Hampshire.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it. The original deadline for the decision on the AQUIND Interconnector application was 8 September 2021. This deadline was previously extended to 21 October 2021.

I have decided to set a new deadline of no later than 21 January 2022 for deciding this application. Following receipt of the report from the Examining Authority, I required clarification from the applicant on several issues. Interested parties were given the opportunity to comment on the applicant's response. I have decided that further work is necessary to consider the application in detail including whether further information is required, and this requires an extension to the deadline.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

Cabinet Committees

[HLWS333]

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

Today I am publishing an updated Cabinet Committee list. I have placed a copy of the new list in the Libraries of both Houses.

DWP: Expanding Our Services Update

[HLWS336]

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

On 23 March 2021 I outlined how, as part of the Government's commitment to support people back into work, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was expanding its services by introducing additional temporary Jobcentres. This expansion of DWP estates is supporting our comprehensive £30 billion Plan for Jobs, helping people back into employment across Great Britain.

As of March 2021, DWP had secured 80 additional temporary Jobcentres. This number has now risen to 177. DWP has been opening these temporary Jobcentres to the public gradually over the past few months and I am pleased to announce, on 7 October, Maidstone became the 100th additional Jobcentre to open to the public.

These additional, temporary, Jobcentres enable DWP to continue to provide the tailored support that claimants need to get back into and progress in work. They also provide space for the 13,500+ new Work Coaches we have recruited since March 2020.

These new sites provide a high quality, modern, accessible and digitally enabled environment for both colleagues and customers. Furthermore, as part of our design requirements, we are aiming to reduce the environmental impact per site, for example, by increasing the Energy Performance Certificate rating across sites.

They will enable many more customers to be supported, with Work Coaches often working with employers directly and using the new premises to hold job fairs which local employers attend.

To highlight just one example, the temporary site in Barking opened in July 2021 and so far the site has hosted over 30 employer events attended by 173 employers conducting over 1000 interviews. This has resulted in 424 successful job outcomes to date, in a range of job sectors, changing the lives of some of our most vulnerable customers.

As the economy recovers we will look to close these temporary sites to ensure that we balance providing essential services for our customers with value for money for the taxpayer. If any of the new sites offer better, more suitable, accommodation than our existing offices we may look to retain them instead and I will update the house accordingly.

DWP continues to update the list of temporary Jobcentres regularly on Gov.uk and notified MPs of new openings and additional services which cover their constituencies including our new Youth Hubs.

Higher Education Student Finance

[HLWS332]

Baroness Barran: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education (Michelle Donelan) has made the following statement:

I am announcing details of student finance arrangements for higher education students undertaking a course of study in the 2022/23 academic year starting on 1 August 2022.

The Government announced in the ‘Interim Conclusion of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding’ in January that maximum tuition fees would be frozen for a further academic year to deliver better value for students and to keep the cost of higher education under control.

I can confirm today that maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23 academic year in England will be maintained at the levels that apply in the 2021/22 academic year, the fifth year in succession that fees have been frozen. This means that the maximum level of tuition fees for a standard full-time course will remain at £9,250 for the 2022/23 academic year.

Maximum undergraduate loans for living costs will be increased by forecast inflation (2.3%) in 2022/23. And the same increase will apply to maximum disabled students’ allowance for students with disabilities undertaking full-time and part-time undergraduate courses in 2022/23. Maximum grants for students with child or adult dependants who are attending full-time undergraduate courses will also increase by forecast inflation in 2022/23.

We are also increasing support for students undertaking postgraduate courses in 2022/23. Maximum loans for students starting master’s degree and doctoral degree courses from 1 August 2022 onwards will be increased by forecast inflation (2.3%) in 2022/23. And the same increase will apply to the maximum disabled students’ allowance for postgraduate students with disabilities in 2022/23.

I am confirming today that current and former employees of the UK Government and their family members that have been relocated from Afghanistan to the UK under the Home Office’s Relocation and Assistance Scheme will qualify for student support and home fee status in relation to new higher education courses from 1 August 2022 onwards if they have been resident in the UK and Islands since the grant of such leave. They will also qualify for advanced learner loans for further education courses. Students who are in this category will not need to demonstrate three years ordinary residence in the UK and Islands before the start of a course.

I am also confirming today that home fee status and tuition fee loans will be extended to the family members of all persons settled in the UK, subject to three years residence in the UK and Islands immediately before the start of the course. Currently only the family members of UK nationals are eligible under this residency category.

I am announcing today that persons who have settled status on arrival in the UK, who come to the UK from specified British Overseas Territories and who are starting full-time and part-time undergraduate courses in 2022/23 will be eligible for tuition fee loans. To qualify, persons resident in the British Overseas Territories will need to satisfy the three-year ordinary residence requirement in the UK, Islands or specified British Overseas Territories. Eligible persons in Gibraltar may continue to satisfy the three-year ordinary residence requirement in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland to qualify for student

support for courses starting on or before 31 December 2027.

UK nationals and their family members in the British Overseas Territories already benefit from access to home fee status if they meet the residency requirement of three years in the UK, Islands and British Overseas Territories immediately before the start of the course. Family members of all persons settled when in the UK will now have access to home fee status.

Corresponding changes will be made in respect of students in the above categories who are starting postgraduate master’s degree courses and postgraduate doctoral degree courses in 2022/23 who will qualify for postgraduate loans and those starting further education courses in 2022/23 who will qualify for advanced learner loans.

The changes set out above demonstrate our commitment to supporting economic development in the British Overseas Territories and enabling those who wish to study at one of our world class education providers to be able to do so.

Further details of the student support package for 2022/23 are set out in the attached document.

I expect to lay regulations implementing changes to student finance for undergraduates and postgraduates for 2022/23 in November. These regulations will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

The Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Augar Panel carefully. We plan to set out a full response to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding in due course.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Higher Education Student finance for 22-23 details [Higher Education Student Finance for 22-23 - Details.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-10-21/HLWS332/>

Intergovernmental Relations Quarterly Report

[HLWS328]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove), has today made the following written statement:

Today the UK Government published the second quarterly report of our engagement with the devolved administrations on the GOV.UK page for intergovernmental relations (IGR). This report has also been deposited in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

The report aims to be useful, accessible, and engaging to a broad audience, recognising the public interest in how the UK Government and the devolved administrations work together to deliver outcomes for all citizens across

the UK. It reflects the government's continued commitment to increased transparency of IGR and effective scrutiny of the UK Government's role in intergovernmental meetings.

Our second quarterly report on IGR provides information on intergovernmental meetings across the UK Government with counterparts in the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive between 1 March and 30 June 2021. It covers an important period of ministerial engagement following the parliamentary elections in Scotland and Wales, and continued joint working as we focus on the UK's COVID-19 response and recovery.

Planning Update

[HLWS331]

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

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State to make this Written Ministerial Statement. This statement confirms that it has been necessary to extend the deadlines for decisions on the following two applications made under the Planning Act as indicated below to allow for further consideration of environmental matters:

- **M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange:** for the proposed development by National Highways which would authorise a number of improvements to the junction between the M25 and the A3. The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority's report on 12 October 2020 and the current deadline for a decision was 12 November, having been extended from 12 January 2021 to 12 May 2021 and then to 12 November 2021. The deadline is now extended to 12 May 2022; and
- **M54 to M6 Link Road:** for the proposed development by National Highways which would authorise a link road between Junction 1 of the M54, Junction 11 of the M6 and the A460 to Cannock. The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority's report on 21 July 2020 and the current deadline for a decision was 21 October 2021. The deadline is now extended to 21 April 2022.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a Statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Department will also endeavour to issue decisions ahead of the deadlines above wherever possible.

The decision to set new deadlines is without prejudice to the decisions on whether to give development consent for the above applications.

Public Appointments Data Report 2021

[HLWS334]

Lord True: I am pleased to announce the publication of the Public Appointments Data Report 2021 and will today be depositing a copy in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Public Appointments Data Report provides a breakdown of the diversity of public appointees who were in roles covered by the Governance Code on Public Appointments on 31 March 2021, and those appointed to such roles between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. The latter data is a subset of the information published in the Commissioner for Public Appointments' annual report.

Reformed Annual Electoral Registration Canvass

[HLWS330]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Equalities and Levelling Up Communities (Kemi Badenoch) has today made the following statement:

In 2020, the Government brought in changes to the way in which the annual electoral registration canvass is conducted, streamlining a previously outdated and cumbersome process. Reform of the annual canvass is part of the Government's drive to create a more efficient registration system; make the process clear and simple for citizens; and give Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) more discretion, whilst maintaining completeness and accuracy of the registers.

The success of the canvass reform is clearly demonstrated by research conducted by the Cabinet Office, which I have today published on GOV.UK and deposited in the Libraries of the House. As part of the Modern Electoral Registration Programme, the first stage of evaluation of the reformed annual canvass was conducted in 2020 and 2021 through surveys and interviews with EROs and electoral administrators. This research focused in particular on citizen and ERO experiences of the canvass, as well as giving some indication of the impact of canvass reform on completeness and accuracy of the register, and efficiencies in the registration system.

This research clearly shows a major improvement over the pre-reform canvass, with an increase across the board in satisfaction of EROs and administrators in the reformed system, and largely positive impressions from participants regarding the changed processes.

This improvement in satisfaction demonstrates how the Government successfully works with the electoral sector to develop effective policies, and also supports the sector with implementation of a programme of change.

The Government worked closely with stakeholders in the electoral sector during the development and implementation of this change, but whilst reform was welcomed by electoral administrators and the Electoral Commission, it also faced opposition, with some claiming

the changes would disenfranchise some electors. These fears have proven to be unfounded, as is often the case with changes to electoral systems.

I note that concerns were previously expressed around the Government's introduction of individual electoral registration in 2014, and with the decision to hold polls earlier this year during the COVID-19 pandemic; both of which subsequently proved successful. Evidence has shown that the individual system drives up registration figures and enhances the accuracy of the registers, and the independent Electoral Commission's evaluation of the May 21 polls showed that people had high levels of satisfaction with the polls and the challenges of COVID-19 did not stop voters taking part.

Along with the previous introduction of individual electoral registration and the measures in the Elections Bill, this reform of the annual canvass is a further example of the improvements that the Government is making to registration and elections in the UK. This Government is committed to ensuring our democracy is secure, fair, modern and transparent and our electoral system is kept up to date for our age.

Response to Trade and Agriculture Commission Report and Launch of New TAC

[HLWS326]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP) has today made the following statement:

New Trade and Agriculture Commission announced alongside publication of the Government's response to the original Trade and Agriculture Commission's report. The Department for International Trade written statement.

In July 2020 the Government established a Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC) to advise the Government on trade policies that will secure opportunities for UK farmers while ensuring the sector remains competitive and making sure that animal welfare and environmental standards in food production are not undermined. The TAC fulfilled its remit and reported in March 2021. Today, the Government has published a response to the TAC's advisory report, having carefully considered the recommendations detailed within it.

The Government recognises the key principles behind these recommendations which have been instrumental in establishing an ambitious framework for our trade policy development. Our bold approach will deliver world class trade deals whilst protecting our domestic interests.

The response outlines a commitment to maintaining high animal welfare and environmental standards for future trade agreements. The UK will continue to use its influence in the international sphere to push for improved environmental and animal welfare, food safety, human rights and labour standards.

The Government's response builds on the steps already taken to deliver for UK farmers, food producers and consumers as an independent trading nation. Earlier this year, the highly successful Open Doors campaign was launched to help the industry seize new opportunities through trade agreements with priority markets.

The Government is also pleased to announce the launch of the new Trade and Agriculture Commission, [Chaired by Professor Lorand Bartels]. As an international trade lawyer and academic, Professor Bartels will bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the role. The new Commission will fulfil a different purpose to that of the original TAC, in line with the provisions debated and agreed by Parliament during the passage of the Trade Act 2021. The new TAC will bring together experts in a number of relevant fields such as animal and plant health, animal welfare, the environment and trade policy. It will scrutinise the UK's new Free Trade Agreements and assess whether they are consistent with the maintenance of UK levels of statutory protection in relation to: animal and plant health; animal welfare; and the environment. Its reports will be published and will make a vital contribution to Parliament's understanding of the UK's new trade agreements, helping to ensure effective scrutiny and demonstrating the Government's commitment to transparency.

A copy of the Government's response to the original Trade and Agriculture Commission report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and has been published on GOV.UK.

Service Complaints Ombudsman Annual Report 2020

[HLWS327]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Leo Docherty) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The MOD's formal response to the Service Complaints Ombudsman's (SCO) annual report for 2020 on the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the service complaints system has today been placed in the Library of the House.

The Ombudsman's report assessed the fifth year of operation of the reformed Service complaints system which was implemented on 1 January 2016 and the work of her office in 2020. The response sets out MOD's comments and approach to each of the Ombudsman's observations that she has made and includes a summary of our position on recommendations made in previous annual reports.

The MOD values the strong independent oversight that the Ombudsman brings to the Service complaints process, and remains committed to having a system in which our personnel can have confidence. This will include progressing outstanding recommendations and observations, together with improvements identified in

Air Marshal Wigston's Report in April 2019 on Inappropriate Behaviours.

Sir Richard Henriques Review

[HLWS337]

Baroness Goldie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

It is vital for UK Defence that our Service Justice System has the most up to date framework, skills and processes in place to deal with all allegations of offending. At the heart of the Service Justice System must be robust, independent, and trusted investigation processes that have the confidence of service personnel and the international community. It is for this reason, that on 13 October 2020, I announced a review by Sir Richard Henriques to examine investigative and prosecutorial processes for dealing with allegations of offences on overseas operations and improve the quality of investigations and their outcomes.

The review was to build upon but not reopen the recommendations of the Service Justice System Review by HH Shaun Lyons and Sir Jon Murphy. The review was to be forward looking and, whilst drawing on insights from the handling of allegations from recent operations, was not to reconsider past investigative or prosecutorial decisions or reopen historical cases.

I am pleased today to publish that report. I am very grateful for the comprehensive and considered work Sir Richard has undertaken and I particularly welcome his recognition of the need for a separate system of military justice. With the improvements which will flow from his recommendations we can be confident it will be a more efficient and effective system for the accused and for victims.

Sir Richard's report contains 64 recommendations, approximately a third of which are focused on taking forward the establishment of a Defence Serious Crime Unit, which was originally proposed in the earlier Lyons/Murphy Review of the service justice system. There are also operations-related recommendations (improved training, detention processes and record-keeping), recommendations for non-statutory protocols between the Service police, the Service Prosecuting Authority and the Judge Advocate General relating to the investigation of allegations against UK forces of unlawful killing and ill-treatment in the context of overseas operations, recommendations for improving the technical/IT systems supporting the service courts, and recommendations relating to summary hearings. I particularly welcome Sir Richard's support of the provisions in the current Armed Forces Bill to retain concurrent jurisdiction, and that the creation of the Defence Serious Crime Unit will help drive up conviction rates for serious offences.

We have considered Sir Richard's recommendations carefully, and will be taking forward the work in the following ways:

- The new Defence Serious Crime Unit is key to meeting our commitment to further strengthen the service justice system. The Defence Serious Crime Unit will brigade the investigative capability for serious offending of the existing three service police forces. Under the leadership of a new provost marshal for serious crime, it will be instrumental in ensuring our service police are fully capable of meeting the challenges faced by the service justice system now and in the years ahead. I have therefore prioritised this work. The Government will be bringing forward amendments to the Armed Forces Bill to implement the recommendations on this topic which require primary legislation at this stage. These amendments will ensure that the new provost marshal will have all of the legal powers and responsibilities of the existing provost marshals; and in particular, that the new provost marshal will be responsible for guaranteeing the independence of investigations conducted by the new Unit.

- In respect of the recommendations which draw on the work of former Judge Advocate General His Honour Jeffrey Blackett and Lord Thomas of Gresford for the creation of a non-statutory protocol about the handling of serious allegations arising in the context of overseas operations, the Government believes these are matters for the independent service police, the Service Prosecuting Authority and the Judge Advocate General to consider in the first instance.

- Work on implementing four other recommendations is also expected to be taken forward over the coming months. These will amend Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that Service police are informed with minimum delay of reportable offences, establish a Serious Incident Board within the Permanent Joint Headquarters, create or upgrade an Operational Record Keeping System, and adopt a uniform approach in respect of training of Service legal personnel prior to their posting to the Service Prosecuting Authority.

- The remaining recommendations including legal support to personnel, improved technology/IT for the service courts and improvements to the summary hearing process, raise wider implications relating to policy, legal and resourcing issues. Those will be considered further by the department over the coming months. The goal will be to ensure that the recommendations dovetail with our overarching intent to maintain operational effectiveness, including the swift delivery of fair and efficient justice for victims and offenders. Where appropriate and necessary, legislation will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows. I will update the House in due course.

I am confident that this review – along with the earlier Service Justice System Review – sets out a template for the Service Justice System for the future. As I have set out above, where possible we are seeking to implement the most important of the recommendations as quickly as possible; and we are committing to progress the rest in the way I have described. The government believes that the

recommendations by Sir Richard will significantly improve the quality of investigations, will be fully compliant with the requirements in the European Convention on Human Rights and will help improve service to victims of crime within the forces.

A copy of Sir Richard's report will be placed in the library of the House.

Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (1 June 2021 to 31 August 2021)

[HLWS329]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Security and Borders (Damian Hinds) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM) Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

| | |
|--|---|
| TPIM notices in force (as of 31 August 2021) | 5 |
| Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period) | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 August 2021) | 5 |
| TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period) | 0 |
| TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period) | 1 |
| TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period) | 0 |
| Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period) | 4 |
| Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period) | 1 |
| The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period) | 3 |

On 2nd June 2021 a former TPIM subject was sentenced to an eighteen month community order having pleaded guilty to a breach of the association measure of the TPIM notice.

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. Second quarter TRG meetings were held throughout September 2021.

Written Answers

Thursday, 21 October 2021

Civil Servants: Remote Working

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 22 September regarding Treasury civil servants working remotely (HL2572), what plans they have to investigate the possibility of cost savings by employing non-British staff working from homes overseas. [HL2897]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: HMT applies Civil Service central policy in relation to working from other countries.

All HMT staff are contracted to attend offices on a regular basis and there are no current plans to investigate the possibility of employing staff who live overseas.

Climate Change: Developing Countries

Asked by *Lord Cashman*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the 2015 Paris climate talks commitment to provide \$100 billion to developing countries; and whether they intend to make any such assessment publicly available during COP26. [HL3054]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The commitment to jointly mobilise \$100bn of climate finance a year promised to developing countries in 2009, and again in 2015, is critically important to helping developing countries transition to cleaner economies and protecting those worst affected by the impacts of climate change. The UK Presidency has been pushing developed countries to meet existing commitments and come forward with ambitious post-2020 climate finance pledges, to achieve and surpass the \$100bn a year goal. The COP President Designate has also asked Germany and Canada to lead on the development of a Delivery Plan which sets out how donor countries will meet the goal. This plan will be published in advance of COP.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by *Baroness Wilcox of Newport*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many schools have met the threshold specified in the Department for Education document Contingency framework: education and childcare settings for further steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within schools since the beginning of the academic year; and whether they will publish regular updates on this. [HL2986]

Baroness Barran: The department does not collect the data in question and does not currently have any plans to publish regular updates on this. However, we closely

review data, analysis and advice from a number of different sources – including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, and the Office for National Statistics. We also continue to work closely with local authorities and their Directors of Public Health to inform our planning and response.

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings and sets out the measures that settings should be prepared for if they were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. It also sets out thresholds for managing COVID-19 cases and when settings should consider seeking public health advice.

As the guidance outlines, local authorities, Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described in the framework in individual education and childcare settings as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.

We have worked with the UKSHA to develop the thresholds outlined in the contingency framework. These are designed to help settings identify when it might be sensible to seek public health advice when it appears that COVID-19 might be spreading between people who closely mix in the setting. Identifying a group that is likely to have mixed closely will be different for each setting.

DsPH or HPTs will give settings advice reflecting the local situation. In areas where rates are high, this may include advice that local circumstances mean that the thresholds for extra action can be higher than set out in the contingency framework. This will take into account a range of factors reflecting the setting's particular situation and local circumstances. If they judge that additional action should be taken, they might advise the setting to take some or all of the other measures described in the contingency framework.

Coronavirus: Drugs

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the (1) existing stock levels, (2) planned order quantities, and (3) delivery dates, for the COVID-19 antibody drug Ronapreve; and what is the (a) current, and (b) planned, geographic distribution of Ronapreve across England. [HL2858]

Lord Kamall: We are unable to provide the information requested on existing stock levels, planned order quantities and delivery of Ronapreve, as this is commercially sensitive. A contract is in place for stock held in the United Kingdom which is available to order across the four nations. However, information on the distribution of this stock is not held centrally. Hospitals are able to replenish their supplies of Ronapreve according to their admission rates, with the majority of hospitals in England providing acute care now registered to administer the drug.

Disability: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to tackle the backlog in health and social care assessments for disabled children and young people. [HL2947]

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to fund dedicated COVID-19 recovery policies for disabled children and young people and their families. [HL2948]

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Disabled Children's Partnership *Then There Was Silence*, published on 10 September, which found that nearly three quarters of disabled children had seen their progress managing their condition regress during the pandemic. [HL2949]

Lord Kamall: As part of COVID-19 recovery planning, we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health and care services for disabled children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who require additional provision will receive an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 make clear that local authorities must complete an EHC plan assessment within twenty weeks after the request is received unless exceptional circumstances apply. The Department for Education monitors local authority performance on EHC plan assessments to establish where there are long-standing delays and provide support.

The forthcoming Spending Review will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care for future years. We have announced an additional £5.4 billion for the National Health Service to support the COVID-19 response over the next six months. This includes £2 billion to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

We welcome the findings of the five reports by the Disabled Children's Partnership between February and September 2021 and we are considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled children and their families.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Remote Working

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that 50 per cent of civil servants at the DVLA are refusing to come back into the workplace, what steps they will take to outsource DVLA work to companies based in the UK and overseas. [HL2900]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: It is not correct that 50 per cent of civil servants at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) are refusing to come back into the workplace. In line with Welsh Government covid measures all staff who are carrying out a role that can be done from home, continue to do so. Staff who perform operational duties which cannot be done from home are working on site.

The DVLA continues to explore opportunities to improve the time taken to deal with paper applications and has been developing new online services and recruiting additional staff. The DVLA has temporarily utilised the private sector for some elements of work only where it has been appropriate to do so.

The DVLA is also looking to secure extra office space to accommodate more staff as surge capacity accommodation and resource to help reduce backlogs while providing future resilience and business continuity.

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency: Remote Working

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) what percentage of, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) staff are working from home; and how many are able to give full service to DVSA customers from home. [HL2898]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: During September 2021, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) had 1,389 staff members, 28.5% working from home continually. The DVSA is satisfied that all members of staff currently working from home are able to provide a full service to its customers as they adapt to hybrid working. Other staff are already either working a hybrid approach and providing a full service or working continually back in their work locations.

Driving Tests

Asked by *Baroness Grender*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many driving licence test centres have closed in the last two years; and where any such closures have taken place. [HL2927]

Asked by *Baroness Grender*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many test centres for driving theory examinations have closed in the last two years; and where any such closures have taken place. [HL2928]

Asked by *Baroness Grender*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many driving licence test examiners based in Surrey there were in (1) 2019, (2) 2020, and (3) 2021. [HL2929]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has three driving test centres in Surrey: Reigate/Redhill, Guildford and Chertsey. The below figures show the number of full time and part time driving examiners permanently based at these centres:

(1) 2019 – 17 full time and 6 part time driving examiners;

(2) 2020 – 18 full time and 2 part time driving examiners; and

(3) 2021 – 17 full time driving examiners.

The DVSA will deploy other driving examiners into the Surrey area depending on the demand for testing.

In the last two years, the DVSA has closed 12 driving test centres. Those test centres are:

Lerwick (Shetland) LGV, Patrick Green goods vehicle testing station (GVTS), Macclesfield multi-purpose test centre, Cheadle, Birmingham (Cocks Moor Woods), Llandrindod Wells, Westbury, Bristol, Hemel Hempstead, Greenford, Canterbury GVTS and Hayes.

The DVSA continually reviews its operational estate to ensure that it is fit for purpose and represents good value for money for the public purse, while maintaining a good service provision across its operation.

In the last two years, the DVSA has closed 18 theory test centres. The DVSA has relocated the testing provision for these 18 theory test centres to alternative locations within the new network that has greater coverage for candidates nationally to ensure testing provision can continue.

The 18 closed theory test centres are:

Blackpool, Clydebank, Driffield, Morpeth, Oldham, Salford, Scunthorpe, Skipton, Southport, St Helens, Wigan, Crawley, Basildon, Dereham, Ely, Harlow, Mansfield and Stevenage.

Note that from 6 September the contract for running theory test centres has been split into three regions. The number of theory test centres in Great Britain will increase from 180 to 202.

English Language: Overseas Students

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value to language learning in secondary schools of foreign language classroom assistants. [HL2912]

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on (1) language learning in UK schools, and (2) the teaching of English in schools overseas, of the removal from the tiered visa regime for unpaid student internships. [HL2913]

Baroness Barran: We continue to welcome talented individuals from overseas to teach or train to teach in the

UK, including through the Language Assistants Programme (LAP). The programme is owned by the Department for Education and delivered by the British Council.

Over 150 UK institutions hosted language assistants last year. Annual evaluation reported that language assistants made a significant impact on attainment and learning outcomes for pupils, including improved exam grades, improved cultural awareness, improved standards in listening and speaking, and improved confidence in using the language.

In addition, as part of the LAP, around 2,500 UK students are able to travel to 15 destinations to support the teaching of English, through paid teaching placements around the world. UK students rated their experience positively, with improved teaching and language skills.

The Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) scheme also provides individuals with opportunities to come to the UK for a short time for work experience, training, to complete an Overseas Government Language Programme, and for research or a fellowship. Students are also permitted to undertake a work placement as part of a course on the student route, provided the work placement is an integrated and assessed part of the course of study. The Appendix GAE lists all the schemes available and more information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-government-authorised-exchange-schemes>.

Hospitality Industry: VAT

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the 12.5 per cent rate of VAT on hospitality until 2024 to help rebuild the nightlife sector. [HL3079]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. As announced at Budget 2021, the Government has extended the temporary reduced rate of VAT of 5% for the tourism and hospitality sector. This relief ended on 30 September 2021. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5% was introduced to help ease affected businesses back to the standard rate. This new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

This relief will cost over £7 billion and, while the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to extend the 12.5% reduced rate of VAT. Applying this relief for a longer period would come at a very significant further cost, with any reduction in tax paid resulting in a reduction in the money available to support important public services, including the NHS and policing.

Languages: GCSE

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the responses to the consultation on proposed reforms to modern language GCSEs. [HL2911]

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the submission to the consultation on reforms to modern language GCSEs from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages will be recorded as one response, or reflect its endorsement by almost 100 organisations and 1,000 individuals. [HL2916]

Baroness Barran: The government intends to publish its response to the consultation before the end of this year.

The response of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Language (APPGML) to the government's consultation on the revised GCSE modern foreign language subject content review will be recorded as one response. Individuals and organisations are always advised to respond directly to government consultations, rather than to be signatories of independent campaigns.

In addition, we know that a number of organisations and individuals who endorsed the APPGML statement also responded to the government consultation separately. By doing so, the government is able to consider responses systematically, including the responses of individuals and organisations to the specific questions in the consultation.

London Underground

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Mayor of London about restarting the Night Tube in London to help business recovery in the winter period. [HL3041]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport is working closely with Transport for London (TfL) and other government departments to support London's economic recovery. However, the responsibility for transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London and TfL. This includes the decision to reinstate any night services on the TfL network and on 14 October TfL announced that the Night Tube will resume on Central and Victoria lines on 27 November.

Railways: Season Tickets

Asked by *Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 29 June (HL1509), whether they are now in a position to publish the research commissioned into potential interest in flexible rail season tickets; and what assessment they have made of long-term elasticities of

demand for such tickets based on (1) the commissioned research, and (2) the public reaction to their introduction. [HL2907]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport commissioned quantitative and qualitative research to assess potential interest in flexible season tickets amongst rail users and non-users.

This research is planned to be published in due course.

Shipbuilding: Isles of Scilly

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what, if any, funding (1) they, or (2) the EU, have (a) provided to, or (b) earmarked for, the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group in connection with its work on developing plans for a new shipping vessel. [HL2895]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport is not aware of any UK Government or EU funding which has been provided or earmarked for the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group, in connection with developing plans for a new shipping vessel.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly have submitted a bid through the Levelling Up Fund, which includes the replacement of the existing freight and passenger vessels operated by the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group. Bids are currently undergoing assessment, with Ministers expected to announce successful bids in the autumn.

Social Services

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the provision of social care for (1) the elderly, and (2) physically and mentally impaired people, at a (a) local, (b) regional, and (c) national, level. [HL2938]

Lord Kamall: The Department has not made a specific assessment. However, the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF), provides a consistent basis for local accountability and for measuring the outcomes and experience of people who use social care services, including people over 65 years old, younger adults, adults with a learning disability and adults in contact with secondary mental health services.

The ASCOF figures are available at local authority, regional, and national level and is used to measure progress, set priorities for care and support and strengthen transparency and accountability. The Government does not seek to performance manage councils in relation to any of the measures set out in this Framework. The ASCOF informs and supports improvement led by the sector itself, underpinned by strengthened transparency and local accountability.

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by **Baroness Altmann**

To ask Her Majesty's Government for each of the past ten years, how many (1) women, and (2) men, have had their state pension reduced owing to the death of a partner. [HL2990]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested is not normally held as part of normal business and cannot be provided as this would incur disproportionate cost.

Teaching Methods

Asked by **Lord Blunkett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many tutoring opportunities for children in England are currently available at (1) primary schools, (2) secondary schools, and (3) schools catering for special educational needs. [HL2903]

Baroness Barran: For this academic year the National Tutoring Programme will offer access to high quality tuition for up to 2 million pupils.

The latest figures for the current academic year, to the end of September 2021 are:

- 40 Tuition Partners have been accredited.
- 2,800 schools have placed orders with Tuition Partners.
- 6,400 pupils started a tuition program with Tuition Partners.
- 353 Academic Mentors have been placed in schools.

All state-funded primary and secondary schools in England, including academies and free schools, have also received funding to deliver school-led tutoring giving them the flexibility to choose their own tutors. Funding has been calculated based on the number of pupil premium students in individual schools.

There is currently no comprehensive break down between primary schools and secondary schools. The department will have this information by the end of the autumn term.

Specialist settings including special schools and academies, alternative provision, pupil referral units and hospital schools, will receive an uplift to their school led tuition funding to cater for the additional per pupil costs they face.

I can confirm we have Tuition Partners who between them have capacity to support a total of 80,000 pupils in special educational needs settings.

Universal Credit

Asked by **Baroness Wilcox of Newport**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what modelling they have conducted on the impact of ending the £20 uplift for Universal Credit on (1) homelessness, (2) poverty, and (3) food bank usage; and what the modelling predicted the impact would be for each issue. [HL2601]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on poverty or related issues. This is due to the uncertainty around the speed and distribution of the economic recovery.

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.

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.

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. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

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. Our Plan is working, as we see record numbers of job vacancies and numbers of employees on payrolls back at pre-pandemic levels.

However, we recognise that some people may require extra support over the winter as we enter the final stages of recovery, which is why vulnerable households across the country will now be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials. The Household Support Fund will provide £421 million to help vulnerable people in England and allocations to individual local authorities are set out below. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

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