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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Answers.....1

[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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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
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Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
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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 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 Answers

Thursday, 28 October 2021

Afghanistan: Taliban

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Taliban-issued passports will be accepted as valid. [[HL3036](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK continues to recognise Afghanistan as a state and as such we continue to accept their passports.

Azerbaijan: Foreign Relations

Asked by **Lord Hussain**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to further strengthen bilateral co-operation with Azerbaijan. [[HL3285](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government continues to work with Azerbaijan to strength our bilateral cooperation. In her recent call on 14 June with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Bayramov, the Minister for Europe and Americas welcomed the continued strengthening of UK-Azerbaijani relations including in key areas such as trade and English language learning. Our Embassy in Baku continues to explore areas where the UK and Azerbaijan might increase cooperation.

Coastal Areas: Finance

Asked by **Lord Mountevans**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they are providing to the UK's coastal communities. [[HL3123](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: As an island nation, the Government is committed to supporting coastal communities and levelling-up across the Union. We are working with local leaders to ensure every coastal region, city and town will recover from Covid-19 and ultimately level-up.

We have continued to make significant progress in supporting coastal communities in a number of areas, demonstrated by the Coastal Communities Fund now having supported 359 projects, totalling over £229 million since 2012. This has funded ambitious schemes such as 'Waters of the Wash' in Kings Lynn, transforming a Norfolk harbour town into a unique sailing destination complete with a new pontoon and swing mooring.

Our coastal economies and communities add unique value to the country and offer significant growth potential. Our commitment to unlocking this growth was demonstrated at Budget 2021, where the Chancellor announced 8 Freeports in 8 regions of England, 7 of them in coastal areas. Freeports will be national hubs for international trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK; attracting new

businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities across the country including in coastal areas.

Our £106 million Welcome Back Fund is helping local councils to bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic by reinvigorating their local communities and supporting local economies. Funding has been allocated to all local authorities in England with additional assistance of up to £100,000 for coastal authorities. This helped our seaside resorts fully capitalise on a rise in domestic tourism over the spring and summer months.

General Practitioners: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to lift social distancing regulations to allow an increase in face to face appointments at GP surgeries. [[HL3115](#)]

Lord Kamall: On 14 October, the UK Health Security Agency published an online review into changes to COVID-19 infection prevention and control guidance to help ease pressure on the National Health Service, *Recommendation 4: a more flexible approach to patient consultations in primary care and general practice*. The review states that face to face consultations should be permitted where this is safe for patients and staff, whilst recognising that telephone and video consultations continue to have an important role. Physical distancing can be reduced from two metres to one metre with appropriate mitigations, such as the continued use of face coverings or masks.

General Practitioners: Working Hours

Asked by **Lord Balfé**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have given advice and direction to GPs on their mandatory working hours; and what assessment they have made of whether GPs working their mandatory hours would lead to a reduction in the number of patients referred to Accident and Emergency departments without first being seen by their GP. [[HL3050](#)]

Lord Kamall: We have provided no such advice or direction as general practitioners are independent contractors with no mandatory working hours. Therefore, no specific assessment has been made.

Hives

Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve GP education on the topics of diagnosis, management, and treatment of Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria. [[HL2587](#)]

Lord Kamall: Each medical school in the England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC) in its Outcomes for Graduates. The GMC would expect that,

in fulfilling these standards, newly qualified doctors are able to identify, treat and manage any care needs a person has, including chronic spontaneous urticaria and similar conditions. The training curricula for postgraduate trainee doctors is set by the relevant Royal College and must also meet the standards set by the GMC.

Housing: Insulation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce an insulate homes scheme to help deliver their commitment to cutting carbon emissions. [HL3188]

Lord Callanan: The Government has announced more than £3.9 billion of new funding for decarbonising heat and buildings. This will fund the next 3 years of investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Home Upgrade Grant scheme, the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and the Heat Networks Transformation Programme, as well as reducing carbon emissions from public buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

The Government has allocated £500 million funding to support energy efficiency upgrades of homes of low-income households across England through Phase 1 and 2 of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme. The Government announced a further £200m to a third phase of this scheme which will be delivered alongside an initial £150m of the Homes Upgrade Grant Scheme from early 2022 to March 2023.

The Energy Company Obligation has installed 3.3 million measures in 2.3 million homes, and we are increasing the amount energy suppliers invest in energy efficiency measures for low-income households until 2026, boosting its value from £640 million to £1 billion a year. This will help an extra 305,000 families with green measures such as insulation, with average energy bill savings of around £300 a year.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 13 September (HL Deb, col. 1213), who are the "third parties" referred to. [HL3209]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In my statement to the House on Monday 13 September I referred to the delegation of the reversing exercise element of the HGV driving test and, for vehicles with trailers, the uncoupling and recoupling exercise, to third parties. These parties are HGV driver training providers.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is in discussions with the training industry to understand their capacity to deliver this part of the test. They will also work with them to develop a robust and clear process by

which to assess, accredit and audit any trainers who wish to assess these elements of the test.

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by the Secretary of State for Transport on 18 October (HCWS311), what are the "25 proactive actions" that are being taken to address the shortage of HGV drivers. [HL3210]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The 25 proactive actions are:

To increase efficiency in existing supply chains.

1. Temporary extension of drivers' hours to allow short-term extra flexibility to the industry.

2. Relaxation of late-night delivery restrictions to supermarkets, food retailers, and distribution centres in England providing greater operational flexibility.

3. 4,700 HGV drivers were added to the existing visa scheme to help food industries with driver shortages during exceptional circumstances this year. Up to an additional 300 fuel drivers are also being allowed to come to the UK immediately through a separate scheme.

4. Opened consultation on increasing cabotage for foreign hauliers in the UK to make their trips more efficient.

To support and train new HGV drivers.

5. Department for Education is investing up to £10 million to create new skills bootcamps to train up to 5,000 more people to become HGV drivers.

6. New £7,000 Large Goods Vehicle Driver apprenticeships launched 1 August 2021.

7. Expansion of DWP driver training pilot delivered through Jobcentre Plus to bring job-seekers into the industry.

8. Temporary incentive payment of £3,000 for employers taking on a new apprentice until 31 January 2022.

9. Accelerated development of new Urban Driver Apprenticeship for Category C driving.

10. DfT provided grant funding to Road to Logistics (a national, not for profit, logistics training organisation) which is working with the Welsh Government and HM Prison Service to train ex-offenders to drive lorries as well as supporting the Jobcentre Plus pilot.

11. Additional Government funding for both medical and HGV licences for any adult who completes an HGV driving qualification accessed through the Adult Education Budget in academic year 2021/22.

12. DfT provided grant funding to Think Logistics which, with Career Ready, is working to attract young people to the profession.

To expand HGV driver testing capacity and improving licencing processes.

13. DVSA has increased the number of HGV vocational driving tests by 90% compared to pre-pandemic levels

through measures including overtime and allocating additional employees into testing, alongside the recently introduced capacity from Defence Driving Examiners.

14. Regulatory changes on trailer towing test requirements, staging of HGV tests and reversing manoeuvres to increase the number of HGV tests following consultation and the entry into force of new legislation.

15. Recruitment campaign launched 16 August for 40 new vocational examiners.

16. The MOD is providing Defence Driving Examiners to be trained and redeployed to conduct civilian tests with the DVSA until the end of the year.

17. New legislation to allow delegated driving examiners at the three emergency services and the MOD to be able to conduct driving tests for one another.

18. DVLA operational prioritisation to process provisional HGV driving licences has reduced processing time to around five working days. Most drivers applying to renew their HGV licence can continue driving while their application is being processed.

To attracting drivers back to the sector and improving conditions.

19. Public messaging and direct letters to existing HGV licence holders not driving professionally (i.e. those who do not hold a Driver CPC card) to encourage them to consider returning to HGV driving.

20. Support for industry-led communications efforts to promote and improve the image of the sector including an industry-led proposal for Year of Logistics, the promotion of good practice and an International Road Transport Union's driver charter.

21. A review of lorry parking and facilities.

22. Flexible support funding for job seekers and those on Universal Credit who hold an HGV licence towards the costs of obtaining Driver Certificates of Professional Competence required for most professional lorry or bus driving.

To address the interruptions to fuel supplies.

23. Extension of ADR (Dangerous Goods) licence validity for those expiring between 27 September 2021 and 31 December 2021 until 31 January 2022, providing immediate relief to the shortage of fuel drivers by permitting affected drivers to maximise their available capacity instead of being taken out of circulation for refresher training purposes.

24. Targeted communications to ADR licence holders through the Training Advisory Panel Secretariat to make ADR members aware of the extension to ADR licences validity periods and to encourage their members and all ADR driver training providers to increase their capacity for providing the full initial ADR driver training courses.

25. Military tanker drivers have been mobilised to assist in fuel deliveries.

Lord Speaker: Staff

Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many staff are employed in support of the Lord Speaker; their costs in each of the last three years; the budget for staff employed to support the Lord Speaker in the next financial year; and of the existing staff, how many are required to support the Commission. [HL3097]

Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker why it was necessary to extend the staff accommodation in support of the Lord Speaker; how many extra staff are involved; and what are their duties. [HL3098]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In January 2021 the Commission published the report of the independent External Management Review. One of the specific recommendations of that Review was that a small secretariat should be appointed to provide dedicated support to the Commission. In response to this recommendation, at its meeting on 10 February 2021, the Commission agreed that new secretariat posts should be created as soon as possible.

Accordingly, two new post-holders have now been recruited to provide support for the whole Commission. These two postholders are not part of the Lord Speaker's Office but, as the Lord Speaker is Chair of the Commission, they are now physically co-located with the Lord Speaker's Office in order to enable effective communication and information sharing. The Secretary to the Commission ensures that the Commission receives the information and support they need to take effective strategic decisions and meet their objectives. This includes, but is not limited to, briefing the Chair, liaising between Commission members and senior staff, drafting papers, following up issues after meetings, assisting with Commission communications, overseeing the arrangements for meetings and line managing the Executive Officer to the Commission. The Executive Officer to the Commission provides the administrative support to the Commission. This includes, but is not limited to, organising the administrative arrangements for meetings, circulating papers, maintaining internet and intranet pages, managing Commission records, helping with Commission communications, and liaising with staff involved with Commission meetings.

The staff count for the Lord Speaker's Office is 4.8 full-time equivalent posts: a Private Secretary, Assistant Private Secretary, Diary Manager, Events and Outreach Officer, and an Executive Officer. Due to vacancies not all of these posts are currently filled. An internal staffing review of the Office is currently taking place.

Other staff are also co-located with the Lord Speaker's Office, including a member of the Communications team who provides communications support to the Lord Speaker and Commission, and a member of staff who

forms the International Relations team. They are not part of the Lord Speaker's Office.

In the last three financial years, the actual staffing costs for the Lord Speaker's Office were:

2018-19: £200,654

2019-20: £182,904

2020-21: £205,692

The forecast outturn for staffing for the Lord Speaker's Private Office for the current financial year (2021-22) is £227,262, prior to any agreed pay award.

The draft budget for 2022-23 is £310,430. This larger figure assumes a full complement in every post for the full financial year, which has not always been the case in preceding financial years. These figures include the costs of salaries as well as other on-costs such as pension and National Insurance contributions.

These figures do not include the costs of the two members of staff who support the Commission. As outlined above, these posts are not part of the Lord Speaker's Office, although they are co-located with the staff of the office.

Lung Diseases: Research

Asked by Lord McKenzie of Luton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support and funding they are providing for research into respiratory diseases. [HL3174]

Lord Callanan: Over the last 5 years (2016/17 to 2020/21), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)'s Medical Research Council (MRC) has spent over £155.6 million on research relevant to respiratory health and disease.

This figure includes just under £142 million spent on research specifically relevant to respiratory disease (including areas such as Asthma, Pulmonary Tuberculosis, Pneumonia and other respiratory Infections, Cancer, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). Figures do not include spend on research relating to Covid-19.

Martin Galvin

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many ministers have met Martin Galvin in the USA in the past month. [HL3102]

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date officials from the British Embassy in the USA last met Martin Galvin. [HL3103]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government continues to speak to a wide range of stakeholders as part of its commitment to engage all parties and groups on issues relating to Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland undertakes regular wide engagement with civic society and politicians in the USA. As part of this, he and officials met with the Ancient Order of Hibernians on Sunday 10 October. Martin Galvin was part of their delegation. Officials from the UK Consulate in New York were also in attendance.

Medical Records: Databases

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the benefits of (1) a centralised web-based system to support the sharing of local health and social care records, and (2) ensuring that community pharmacists are able to populate such records. [HL3118]

Lord Kamall: The NHS Long Term Plan and the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework envisage an increased role for community pharmacy and there is agreement across stakeholders that read and write access to patient records, where they are involved in the patient's direct care, is necessary to support this.

NHSX is developing interoperable National Health Service IT systems, focussing on shared data standards and infrastructure across settings to allow clinicians including community pharmacists to safely and securely access patient records, make informed clinical decisions and populate records. NHSX will engage with stakeholders including pharmacy contractors, IT suppliers and the public to test any proposed digital solutions and consider issues such as patient consent and data security.

Palm Oil: Production

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 12 October (HL2433), how they assess the impact on global climate of converting existing (1) high forest, or (2) rain forest, to palm oil plantations, in particular if this is done over large acreages; and, in any such assessments, whether they have found a significant impact on biodiversity. [HL3060]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate and Land Use (2019) reports that agriculture, forestry and other land use accounted for 23% of total net emissions of greenhouse gases from 2007-16 caused by human activity, with deforestation alone accounting for half of this. This provides the best available estimate of the impact on greenhouse gas emissions from converting existing forests.

The UK does not directly assess the impact on greenhouse gas emissions of converting forest to palm oil plantations, though several of our programmes aim to minimise their impact. This includes the Partnerships for Forests programme.

Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal can consider the treatment of 555 sub-postmasters who are now excluded from the shortfall scheme of financial consideration. [HL3126]

Lord Callanan: The revised Terms of Reference for the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry were announced by the Government on 19 May when the Inquiry was converted to a Statutory Inquiry. Last month, the Chair of the Inquiry set out his draft Lines of Inquiry. It will be for Sir Wyn Williams, as Chair of the Inquiry, to make whatever findings or recommendations that he sees fit.

Transport: National Policy Statements

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the review of the National policy statement for national networks will not be completed until Spring 2023; how many road schemes are expected to commence before that date; and why have they decided to apply current policies developed before the commitment to net zero, for this interim period. [HL3208]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Secretary of State announced on 22 July 2021 that a review of the National Networks NPS would be completed no later than Spring 2023. This is the time required to complete the entire review process including the review of the NPS itself and, should any amendments to the NPS be proposed, a public consultation on the revised NPS, and its designation by Parliament.

This review will include a thorough examination of the modelling and forecasts that support the statement of need for development and the environmental, safety, resilience and local community considerations that planning decisions must consider. This review will ensure it remains fit for purpose in supporting the Government's commitments for appropriate development of infrastructure for road, rail, and strategic rail freight interchanges.

Twenty schemes are due to start work between now and spring 2023, with 13 of them requiring development consent orders.

The Planning Act 2008 gives the Secretary of State the power to suspend an NPS in part or in whole pending a review, on the condition that the considerations in Section 11 of the Act have been met. In this case, suspension of sections in the NPS relating to carbon emissions would have the effect of removing all guidance to planning inspectors on this subject, creating significant uncertainty (including lengthening the time applications will take) and the risk of inconsistency of approach between different applications. The review of the National Networks NPS will ensure that it is fully aligned to our

commitment to net zero and the Government's other climate change commitments.

UK Border Agency: ICT

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assessment they have made of the problems affecting the Border Force's IT systems, and (2) what steps they are taking to reduce the impact of such problems on international travellers. [HL3129]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In recent weeks there have been a series of short interruptions of service for the Border Crossing system and eGates. We have taken actions to review and address the cause of these issues and have increased monitoring to identify system pressures early to avoid interruptions to service.

Border Force work closely with technology partners to minimise the impact of service interruptions and have a series of operational mitigations to manage the impact on passenger flows and ensure border security has been maintained at all times.

UK Endorsement Board: Accountancy

Asked by *Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK Endorsement Board has sought the advice of Martin Moore QC in the course of seeking endorsement of for its accounting standards either (1) directly, or (2) indirectly through Michael Todd QC. [HL3092]

Asked by *Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, the UK Endorsement Board have made of any potential conflict of interest of instructing Martin Moore QC to work on the endorsement of accounting standards either (1) directly, or (2) indirectly. [HL3093]

Lord Callanan: The UK Endorsement Board is an independent, unincorporated association which will report annually on the carrying out of its functions to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. This report will also be laid in Parliament.

The UK Endorsement Board does not intend to seek advice from Martin Moore QC in the course of developing its endorsement assessment of international accounting standards either (1) directly, or (2) indirectly.

UK Endorsement Board: Legal Opinion

Asked by *Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the UK Endorsement Board is not using in-house counsel to instruct barristers for public interest legal advice; and why they are instead using Katherine Coates. [HL3094]

Lord Callanan: Procurement of legal advice is a matter for the UK Endorsement Board.

Any instructions to Counsel will be provided by in-house authorised persons at the UK Endorsement Board.

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will place copies of the tender documentation of the UK Endorsement Board for the procurement of legal advice and legal opinions in the Library of the House. [[HL3095](#)]

Lord Callanan: The UK Endorsement Board is an independent, unincorporated association which will report annually on the carrying out of its functions to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. This report will also be laid in Parliament. Procurement of legal advice is a matter for the UK Endorsement Board.

UN Climate Change Conference 2021: Northern Ireland Executive

*Asked by **Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive in preparation for COP26. [[HL3233](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are committed to working with the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as the other devolved administrations, to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success.

The COP President Designate, Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, has invited climate change Ministers from the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to participate in a regular devolved administrations group to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 in support of the delivery of an inclusive and welcoming COP26 representative of the whole of the UK. The last meeting took place in September.

Officials in the COP26 Unit are also in regular discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as the other devolved administrations, about preparations for COP26.

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