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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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 Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
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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 Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
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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, 2 December 2021

Acquired Brain Injury

[HLWS426]

Lord Kamall: My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Care and Mental Health) (Gillian Keegan) has today made the following statement:

The Government is committed to supporting all people living with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and those living with other neurological conditions and seeks to prevent Acquired Brain Injuries wherever possible.

The Government recognises the strength of support for a more collaborative and cross-departmental approach to ensuring that people with ABI receive the support that they need from statutory services. I would like to express my gratitude to both the Right Honourable Member for South Holland and the Deepings and the Honourable Member for Rhondda for continuing to champion this important cause and recognise their significant contributions to improving services for people living with an ABI. As the Prime Minister announced on 24 November 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care will be leading work to develop a cross government strategy on ABI. I am pleased to confirm today some further details regarding the strategy.

The content of the strategy will be informed by a Call for Evidence which will be launched early in 2022, inviting stakeholders nationwide, including healthcare professionals, people living with an acquired brain injury, their families and carers, to put forward their views about what should be prioritised within the strategy. These priorities could include guidance on action to prevent acquired brain injury, including through concussion in sport; on research into the societal, congenital, medical and environmental causes of ABI; on the provision of relevant services for the purpose of diagnosing ABI, including in prisons, schools and the armed forces; on the identification of adults and children with ABI; on the assessment of their needs; and on the planning of relevant services. We will also ask for feedback on whether there are other related neurological conditions which should be considered for inclusion.

Development of the strategy will be overseen by a dedicated Programme Board, which, in my capacity as Minister of State for Care and Mental Health, I will co-chair with the Honourable Member for Rhondda. Senior officials in all relevant government departments will be invited to join the board to ensure that the strategy addresses the wide range of issues that affect the day to day lives of those living with an ABI. This will include representatives from the Welsh government and other devolved administrations, as appropriate.

Following publication, the strategy will be kept under review and may be revised periodically to ensure that it

continues to reflect the priority areas and actions needed to best support people living with ABI and their families.

Agricultural Transition

[HLWS425]

Lord Benyon: My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (George Eustice) has today made the following statement:

We are almost one year into the agricultural transition. Farming in England is moving away from the arbitrary land-based subsidies and top-down bureaucracy that epitomised the EU era, towards schemes that recognise the work that farmers do as stewards of our natural environment. Our reforms will support productive and profitable farming and food production alongside environmental, climate and animal welfare outcomes.

Since January, we have increased the money going to Countryside Stewardship and seen a 40% increase in applications compared with the previous years, launched the farming in protected landscapes scheme, consulted on a voluntary exit scheme, launched the Farming Investment Fund to boost farm profitability and started a pilot of our new Sustainable Farming Incentive.

I would like to update the House on the progress that we have made, working with English farmers to co-design our new systems and support the choices that they make for their own holdings. By the end of the transition, we expect spending to be evenly split across farm-level, locally tailored, and landscape-scale investment.

Sustainable Farming Incentive

The Sustainable Farming Incentive will fund sustainable farming activities alongside food production, and it will eventually be open to all farmers. It will open in 2022 with the first payments being made before the end of the year. Today I am publishing more detail on how it will operate in 2022 and how the offer will be expanded from 2023-2025.

Local Nature Recovery

Local Nature Recovery is the improved and more ambitious successor to the existing Countryside Stewardship scheme. Its focus will be on making space for nature in the farmed landscape and the wider countryside. As with Countryside Stewardship, it will comprise a menu of options. The options will be broader and more ambitious, focusing on biodiversity, climate, water quality and other co-benefits alongside food production. It will fairly pay farmers for using perhaps less productive areas of their farms for those purposes. We will support collaboration between farmers such as in the way that cluster farms currently operate.

Landscape Recovery

Landscape Recovery will create at least 20,000ha of wilder landscapes, habitats, rewetted peat and afforestation at a landscape scale, and we are ambitious in going even further in harnessing our landscapes for the natural environment. This option will reward landowners

or managers who want to take a more radical and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes on their land. Industry engagement has confirmed that there is demand for this scheme, and we will launch the application process – and further details of this and the local nature recovery scheme – in the New Year.

Whilst we roll out our new schemes, we are encouraging farmers to enter into Countryside Stewardship. Today I am also confirming that we will be updating Countryside Stewardship payment rates from January 2022, which will be published in the new year. We will help farmers in Countryside Stewardship and other schemes make the transition to our new schemes from 2024 onwards.

We are also investing in animal health and welfare. The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will drive continual improvement in farm animal health and welfare across our national flocks and herds.

I also want to set out the high-level environmental priorities for our programme: climate change mitigation and adaptation; species abundance; water quality; and soil health. Farmers and land managers are central to delivering these priorities, to reach our commitments in the Net Zero Strategy and the statutory targets that will be set under the Environment Act 2021, including to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.

We will set out high level priorities and design incentives for actions that will contribute to them. Within this overall framework, it will be for farmers to choose

how they want to get involved, whether that's by sparing small areas of unproductive land, changing to a more regenerative approach, or pursuing more radical land use change.

We will pay farmers for the actions that they take in these areas, and activities that provide co-benefits in other areas, such as building the resilience of the environment to climate change, improving air quality, natural flood management and coastal erosion risk mitigation. We will also continue to pay for heritage, access and engagement through our existing schemes and we will consider how to maintain investment in these areas as part of future schemes.

Machinery of Government Change: Boycotts, Disinvestments and Sanctions

[HLWS427]

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.

The Government has committed to legislation to ban public bodies from imposing their own direct or indirect boycotts, disinvestment or sanctions campaigns against foreign countries. Responsibility for this will transfer from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This change will take effect on 8 December 2021.

Written Answers

Thursday, 2 December 2021

Africa: Development Aid

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their strategy for (1) development, and (2) the provision of official overseas aid, in Africa. [HL4391]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy sets out the Government's vision for the UK in the world, including in relation to African countries and our development and official overseas aid work in Africa. HMG's approach to Africa was set out in Lord Parkinson's response on behalf of the FCDO to the House of Lord's International Relations and Defence Committee report on Sub-Saharan Africa in the House of Lords on 8 September Development [Hansard vol. 841 column 230GC-238GC [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-09-08/debates/472E179A-7BAF-4972-A47E-D3E48B0B90D8/Sub-SaharanAfrica\(ReportFromTheInternationalRelationsAndDefenceCommittee\)?highlight=lord%20parkinson#contribution-6AEEBD7E-C265-4004-B14C-6403DB6CF932](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-09-08/debates/472E179A-7BAF-4972-A47E-D3E48B0B90D8/Sub-SaharanAfrica(ReportFromTheInternationalRelationsAndDefenceCommittee)?highlight=lord%20parkinson#contribution-6AEEBD7E-C265-4004-B14C-6403DB6CF932)]

Work in Africa will also be guided by HMG's International Development Strategy, which is due to be published in Spring 2022.

Asylum: Appeals

Asked by **Lord Brabazon of Tara**

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) what proportion of, asylum appeals were successful due to the absence of a Home Office legal representative at the appeals tribunal. [HL4185]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Information on Home Office attendance at Immigration & Asylum Tribunal hearings is not collated centrally by HM Courts and Tribunals Service. Any decision to allow an Asylum appeal is made by a Judge based on the merits of each case.

Asylum: Standards

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic impact of offering the right to work to asylum seekers who have spent six months awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. [HL4207]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue, not least given the potential incentive it can provide to make dangerous journeys to the UK or to make ill-founded claims simply to be able to work whilst they are considered.

A review of the policy is ongoing.

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers have spent at least six months awaiting a decision on their asylum claim in the UK. [HL4208]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes information on asylum applications and resettlement in the Immigration statistics quarterly release. Data on the number of asylum applications that are currently awaiting an initial decision are published in table Asy_D03 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets (which is attached), which includes whether cases have been waiting less or more than 6 months.

The number of people awaiting an initial decision is a subset of the total number of people in the asylum system ('asylum work in progress'), which also includes those awaiting appeal outcomes and failed asylum seekers that are subject to removal from the UK. The total number of cases in the asylum system is published in the 'Immigration and Protection' data of the Migration Transparency Data collection.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

table Asy_D03 [asylum-applications-awaiting-decision-datasets-sep-2021.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-18/HL4208>

Banks: Forgery

Asked by **Lord Sikka**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in (1) investigating, and (2) prosecuting, allegations of banks forging customers' signatures. [HL4311]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government expects all companies to obey the law and relevant regulations. Anyone with evidence of such forgery taking place should report it to their bank in the first instance. If their concerns remain, or they do not have a direct relationship with the lender, they should report it to the relevant authorities.

Although the Treasury sets the legal framework for the regulation of financial services it does not have investigative or prosecuting powers of its own and is not able to intervene in individual cases. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) requires all authorised firms to have systems and controls in place to mitigate the risk that they be used to commit financial crime. Whilst the police have primary responsibility for investigating fraud the FCA also has powers to take a variety of enforcement action against firms that carry out fraudulent activity.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) is continuing to assess the material submitted by the Bank Signature Forgery Campaign and information obtained following preliminary enquiries to clarify matters with certain members of the public who had raised the issue. The NCA is making a thorough assessment to determine

whether there are grounds for a criminal or regulatory investigation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to impose sanctions on those undermining the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [HL4193]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Sanctions are an important potential element in the UK toolkit for the Western Balkans. A specific legal regime is in place that allows sanctions to be imposed on individuals to counter anti-Dayton activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Experience has shown that sanctions are most effective when used in conjunction with other partners, and we are in close touch with our allies. We keep all evidence and potential sanctions designations under close review. It would not be appropriate to speculate about future sanctions targets as to do so could reduce their impact. We will also continue to use the wider range of tools we have available, including support for the High Representative and his executive powers, our programming work to strengthen the rule of law, media environment, civil society and the democratic process, and our public and private diplomatic engagement. We take a comprehensive approach in BiH, aiming to tackle corruption and state capture as well as targeting those who undermine the integrity of the state.

Children in Care: Refugees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many child refugees are currently in looked after care in the UK. [HL4217]

Baroness Barran: The department does not collect data on all child refugees that are currently in care, but does collect data on the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who are looked after by local authorities in England. Of the 80,850 children looked after up to 31 March 2021, there were 4,070 UASC, down 20% from the previous year which was 5,060.

Figures on the number of children looked after who were UASC were published recently in the annual statistical release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>.

Figures on children who were UASC outside England is a matter for the devolved administrations.

Developing Countries: Children

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the economic impacts of the COVID-

19 pandemic do not reduce children's global access to (1) health, (2) education, and (3) nutrition. [HL4393]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As per my answer to HL3398, the UK is committed to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on children's global access to essential health, nutrition and education services.

We continue to achieve this through our ambitious global health agenda, set out in the Integrated Review, and the government's manifesto commitment to help end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children by 2030 as part of our efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage. We are the largest donor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and have pledged £1.65 billion from 2021 to 2025 to support the provision of vaccines to 300 million children, saving up to 8 million lives. The Nutrition for Growth summit in Tokyo in December will be a key moment for galvanising international support for access to nutrition for children and the UK will set out its future ambitions there.

The Prime Minister launched the UK Girls' Education Action Plan setting out the UK's leadership and commitments on girls' education in the face of the challenges presented by COVID-19 to get 40 million more girls into school and 20 million more girls reading by the age of 10 by 2026. The UK and Kenya co-hosted the refinancing summit for the Global Partnership for Education in July in London, raising \$4 billion on the day to help education systems build back better following COVID-19 and ensure girls return to school and learn.

Electoral Register: British National (Overseas)

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether BN(O) citizens who have arrived from Hong Kong are required to become British citizens before they can register to vote in a UK general election. [HL4334]

Lord Greenhalgh: British Nationals Overseas (BN(O)s) who have arrived from Hong Kong are not required to become British Citizens in order to register to vote in UK general elections.

Although BN(O)s are not classed as British citizens, the British Nationality Act 1981 determines that they have the status of Commonwealth citizens. This means that Hong Kong BN(O)s, with leave to enter or remain in the UK, are entitled to register to vote as an elector in UK parliamentary elections, providing they fulfil the age and residence requirements for such registration and are not subject to any other legal incapacity.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they are taking to recruit HGV drivers to meet (1) the current shortfall, and (2) the predicted demand given the increase in online retail and e-commerce. [HL4493]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We have taken decisive action to address the acute driver shortage, with 32 specific measures taken by the Government already. These include funding apprenticeships, skills bootcamps training for jobseekers, and support for drivers to return to the sector, expanding HGV driver testing capacity and improving licencing processes.

We will continue to work with the road haulage industry and other stakeholders to evaluate the impact of these measures, identify further areas for action and monitor changes in demand.

Nigeria: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the findings of the British High Commission's recent visit to Benue State in Nigeria; and what steps they are taking in response. [[HL4360](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Officials from the British High Commission in Abuja regularly visit areas affected by intercommunal violence. Most recently, the Governance and Stability team visited Benue State between 22-24 November. During their visit, they spoke about the ongoing security situation with the state governor Samuel Ortom, local faith leaders, and Non Governmental Organisations active in peacebuilding and reconciliation. The High Commission is currently assessing bids to carry out a project on interfaith peacebuilding, alongside considering other potential opportunities to work in Benue State.

We continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including all ethnic and religious groups, and protecting human rights for all.

Nigeria: Religious Freedom

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the US State Department's decision to remove Nigeria from its list of Violators of Religious Freedom. [[HL4359](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The removal of Nigeria from the list of Violators of Religious Freedom is a matter for the Government of the United States of America.

Offenders: Deportation

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there has been a decrease in the number of foreign national offenders deported from the UK since 2016; and what plans, if any, they have to reverse this trend. [[HL4190](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is clear foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by

committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them and since January 2019 we have removed 8,441 foreign national offenders.

We deal with significant and complex challenges when seeking to deport FNOs. These challenges can include travel documentation, late claims, late legal challenges and broader non-compliance with a lawful returns process.

Despite having numerous opportunity to raise grounds at any stage of the immigration process asylum claims, appeals and judicial reviews are all commonly raised by people awaiting return, and generally lead to release from detention – despite the vast majority not ultimately receiving a positive outcome for the applicant when the claim is reviewed. The prevalence of this issue is increasing, and evidence on how the system is open to abuse, which can divert resources away from genuine victims of trafficking, persecution and serious harm, can be found in an article under the 'deportation, removals and curtailment' on gov.uk. There is supporting data in the report 'Issues raised by people facing return in immigration detention', which can also be found on gov.uk. And whilst removals have continued, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our ability to deport as many FNOs as in previous years, due to travel restrictions, fewer scheduled routes and significant disruption to other services which support the removal of foreign criminals (such as court closures).

The New Plan for Immigration will make it easier and quicker to remove FNOs and those with no right to be in the UK. The Nationality and Borders Bill will extend the period an FNO can be removed from prison under the early removal scheme (ERS) from a maximum of 9 months to 12 months, providing the minimum requisite period has been served. The Bill will also streamline the appeals process by introducing an expanded one stop process aimed at reducing the extent to which people can frustrate removals through sequential or unmeritorious claims, appeals or legal action. A new power will also be implemented to impose visa penalties on countries who do not cooperate with the UK on the removal of their nationals who do not have a right to be in the UK.

Further information can be found in the New Plan for Immigration statement and the factsheet - Nationality and Borders Bill, which can both be found on gov.uk.

Passports

Asked by Lord McNicol of West Kilbride

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of individuals holding an expired British passport. [[HL4199](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data cannot be provided in accurate volumes. This is due to exceptions, including where a passport has not been automatically cancelled on renewal, and where a passport holder is deceased, and their passport record has not been updated.

Asked by Lord McNicol of West Kilbride

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) 18–19 year olds, (2) 20–29 year olds, (3) 30–39 year olds, (4) 40–49 year olds, (5) 50–59 year olds, (6) 60–69 year olds, (7) 70–79 year olds, (8) 80–89 year olds, and (9) 90+ year olds, they estimate to hold an expired British passport. [HL4200]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data cannot be provided in accurate volumes. This is due to exceptions, including where a passport has not been automatically cancelled on renewal, and where a passport holder is deceased, and their passport record has not been updated.

Prerogative of Mercy*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Royal Pardons have been issued to those convicted of terrorism in the last 30 years. [HL4189]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Our records date back to 2014 and there were no Royal Pardons issued to those convicted of terrorism in that time.

Selahattin Demirtaş*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Turkey to secure the immediate release of Selahattin Demirtaş. [HL4191]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: With our international partners, we call on Turkey to meet its obligations as a founding member of the Council of Europe and release Selahattin Demirtaş from his extended pre-trial detention. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will supervise the implementation of the judgment in *Demirtaş (No.2) v Turkey*, a process in which the United Kingdom actively participates. Working with international partners, we will continue to encourage Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to act in line with

the conventions of the Council of Europe and to make greater progress on wider human rights reforms. The Minister for Europe and Americas, Minister Morton, raised human rights, including the case of Selahattin Demirtaş, with the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister during her trip to Turkey on 28 June.

Turkey: Kurds*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to send an observer to attend the trial in Turkey of 108 Kurdish politicians over the 2014 Kobani protests. [HL4192]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: British Embassy officials have been attending the Kobane trials and, whenever possible, will continue to do so, alongside other like-minded missions. We follow events in Turkey carefully, particularly government moves to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP), the lifting of immunity for its MPs, and the replacement of opposition mayors by state-appointed officials. While these decisions are for the Turkish Government, we expect Turkey to undertake legal processes fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

Winter Fuel Payments: Cohabitation*Asked by Lord Lipsey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to prevent two separate Winter Fuel Allowances being offered to a cohabiting couple who own two properties. [HL4196]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Entitlement to a Winter Fuel Payment is based on the circumstances of the household which the claimant has reported as their permanent address. Claimants of benefits, pensions and Winter Fuel Payments have an obligation to report relevant changes to the Department, including changes of address and (where material to entitlement) changes to their household make-up.

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