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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 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
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 Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
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

Monday, 6 December 2021

National Security Vetting

[HLWS431]

Lord True: I am pleased to announce the introduction of a new level of National Security Vetting on 1 January 2022.

The Accreditation Check, which will be applicable to certain roles within the civil aviation industry, will help mitigate the threat from insiders at airports whose access can be exploited to harm national security. An updated Statement of the HMG Personnel Security and National Security Vetting Policy, which details the Accreditation Check, will be published within the Personnel Security Controls on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) from 1 January 2022. A copy of the Personnel Security Controls will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Transforming Public Procurement

[HLWS432]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Public procurement accounts for around a third of all public expenditure. Now that we have left the EU we have a huge opportunity to reform how this money is spent so that it better meets the needs of this country. We can create a new, simpler procurement regime that will reduce costs for business and the public sector by reducing bureaucracy and improving commercial outcomes. Such a huge amount of government spending must be leveraged to play its part in the UK's economic recovery from the pandemic and unleash opportunities for small businesses and social enterprises to innovate in public service delivery.

This Government intends to put in place a new regime that will ensure we remain compliant with our international obligations. This includes the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Government Procurement which gives British businesses access to £1.3 trillion in public procurement opportunities overseas. This two-way street allows us to maximise value for money for UK taxpayers, whilst ensuring that UK companies are able to compete abroad.

In December 2020 we published the Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement which set out the proposed new regime. We received over 600 responses with feedback from procurement professionals in central and local government, the education and health sectors, small, medium and large businesses, the charity and social enterprise sectors, academics and procurement lawyers. This, in addition to feedback from a series of workshops attended by almost 1000 stakeholders, provided us with a

range of views and insight from contracting authorities, suppliers to the public sector and other interested parties.

The analysis of feedback has been completed and I am now announcing the publication of a detailed document that summarises responses received to the consultation and provides the Government's response to each individual question. We have considered carefully all of the comments received. Overall, levels of support for the proposed reforms were high and many responses recognised the ambition and breadth of the package of proposals. The majority of answers to individual questions were positive. In many instances, there is no change to the proposals set out in the Green Paper, however in others the Cabinet Office has clarified or amended the proposals based on the consultation feedback. I am grateful for all those who took the time to respond.

In summary the proposals will:

- simplify and consolidate the current legislation as far as possible into a single, uniform regulatory framework, which will remove duplication and make procurement more agile and flexible;
- provide a number of sector-specific features where necessary, including tailored rules to better suit defence and security procurement in order to protect our national interests;
- ensure that procurement supports local and national priorities, allowing public sector buyers to give more weight to bids that create jobs and opportunities for communities, and support action on climate change;
- strengthen the approach to the exclusion of suppliers from procurements, making it simpler, clearer and more focused on suppliers who pose an unacceptable risk;
- give much greater transparency throughout the procurement lifecycle;
- give new rights for subcontractors experiencing payment delays in public sector supply chains; and
- put in place a new Procurement Review Unit to oversee the integrity of the public procurement system.

We are working closely with all the devolved administrations on the development of the new regime. On 18 August 2021, the Welsh Government published a written statement confirming that provision for Welsh contracting authorities is to be made within the UK Government's Bill.

The publication of the consultation response is a key milestone in delivering the ambition to create a procurement regime that better meets the needs of our country. We are currently finalising the Bill to implement these proposals and intend to introduce it as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Written Answers

Monday, 6 December 2021

Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to liaise with (1) charities, and (2) local organisations, in order to speed up the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to frontline countries in Africa. [HL4559]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK has donated £548 million to COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), that has delivered over 188 million vaccine doses to 44 African AMC countries. In addition to the financial contribution to COVAX, the UK has donated 6 million surplus doses to 14 countries in Africa, mostly through COVAX. COVAX, and its key partners including UNICEF, work with the national governments, charities and local organisations to distribute the vaccines. The UK is an active member of the Vaccine Funder's Forum that meets bi-weekly to monitor progress and ensure better coordination among partners. The UK has also contributed £20m to the African Union's COVID-19 Response Fund.

The UK is actively working to speed up the supply and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in African countries by engaging directly with governments, regional organisations and other partners. For example, the UK has recently developed toolkits to guide and encourage local health practitioners and social media influencers to address COVID-19 misinformation, and are planning to engage with partners in African countries to implement these tools.

Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995

Asked by *Baroness Rock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 to include similar provisions to those set out in section 19A of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986. [HL4295]

Lord Benyon: Following consultation, the Government implemented new provisions to help resolve disputes relating to requests for variations to Agricultural Holdings Act tenancy agreements. This is because these agreements were negotiated over 30 years ago in a very different policy and commercial context than we have today, and they are more likely to need variation and modernisation. Consultation responses did not support the same changes to the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 because Farm Business Tenancies are modern agreements more recently negotiated and entered into by both parties.

The Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 enables the tenant and landlord to agree at the start of a tenancy that diversified activity (such as environmental activities) can

take place on the holding whilst still confirming they intend it to remain a Farm Business Tenancy throughout the length of the agreement. The Government encourages landlords and tenants of Farm Business Tenancies to work together to find solutions to agreed diversifications including using the land for environmental improvements which can often be delivered alongside agricultural production. To encourage this further, the Tenancy Reform Industry Group, which includes representatives of tenants and landlords, has recently produced a Code of Good Practice providing guidance to help tenants, landlords and their advisers take a positive approach to agreeing variations to tenancy agreements.

The Government is working to ensure that the design of our future farming schemes is accessible to as many land managers as possible, including tenant farmers. As part of this, we are considering questions around landlord consent and length of scheme agreement and we are exploring and testing how our new schemes might work in practice across different types of holdings and different types and lengths of tenancy agreements. The Government is grateful for the ongoing constructive contribution that industry representatives of agricultural tenants and landlords are making to this process as we move through the agricultural transition period.

Air Pollution

Asked by *Lord Tope*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations, if any, they plan to hold on measures to control air pollution from (1) small combustion plants, and (2) non-road mobile machinery. [HL4318]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: (1) In the Clean Air Strategy, published in 2019, we committed to review the regulatory gap between the current Ecodesign and medium combustion plant regulations to tackle emissions from plants in the 500kW to 1MW thermal input range. We are considering the case for tighter emissions standards for medium combustion plants and generators. We are reviewing the evidence and considering policy options for these sources of emissions. A consultation will be conducted in due course.

(2) Defra recently completed a research project aimed to improve the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery. We are addressing some remaining evidence gaps. Depending on the policy options being considered, we will consult with stakeholders and the public as appropriate.

Animal Products: Imports

Asked by *Lord Ravensdale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their response to the consultation that closed in February 2020 on trophy hunting imports; and what plans they have to introduce the Animals Abroad Bill. [HL4282]

Asked by Lord Ravensdale

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their commitment in the Queen's Speech to end trophy hunting imports will apply to all hunting trophies; and if not, whether there will be exceptions for certain (1) animals, and (2) countries. [HL4283]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government takes the conservation of endangered species very seriously, which is why we are banning the import of hunting trophies from endangered species, as set out in the Government's manifesto. Our approach will be robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide.

This year we have already introduced our Animal Sentience and Kept Animals Bills to Parliament and we intend to legislate further to protect animals abroad as soon as parliamentary time allows. We will be setting out our detailed plans shortly, including by publishing the Government's response to the consultation on trophy hunting imports which will set out in more detail the scope of our intended ban.

Armenia: Azerbaijan

Asked by Lord Sheikh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Armenia on sharing information with the government of Azerbaijan about Azerbaijanis who went missing during the First Nagorno-Karabakh War. [HL4395]

Asked by Lord Sheikh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Armenia on sharing mining maps and data with the government of Azerbaijan to facilitate the process of de-mining. [HL4396]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Minister for Europe and Americas continues to raise with both Governments the importance of the return of all missing persons, the return of the remains of the deceased and the return of mine maps. She did so most recently in her meetings with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ambassadors on 4 and 17 November respectively. We welcome the most recent returns of prisoners of war in exchange for mine maps. The UK continues to urge both Governments to settle all matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through negotiation under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Armenia: Genocide

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 17 November (HL3864), what steps they have taken

to either (1) institute proceedings in the International Court of Justice that would lead to a pronouncement of genocide in Armenia, or (2) give British courts a role in determining whether states are guilty of committing genocide. [HL4361]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government has not taken any steps to institute proceedings in the International Court of Justice that would lead to a pronouncement of genocide in Armenia. The Government's longstanding policy is that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent national or international court rather than for Governments or non-judicial bodies. We do not consider that it would be beneficial to empower the High Court of England and Wales to make a preliminary finding that a State has committed genocide or crimes against humanity. These are crimes that require the application of a criminal standard of proof on the basis of individual criminal liability. Any decision must be made after consideration of all of the evidence available in the context of an actual and credible criminal trial of an individual or individuals. British courts can, however, determine whether individuals have committed the crime of genocide.

Asylum: Calais

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions, if any, they have had with the government of France regarding the treatment of asylum seekers in the Calais area. [HL4290]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees lies with the authorities of the country in which they are present in accordance with their international obligations. France has a fully functioning asylum system and is party to both the ECHR and the Refugee Convention.

Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they gave to signing up to the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance at COP26; what were the reasons for not signing; and what plans they have to consider signing in the future. [HL4250]

Lord Callanan: The Government's policy on the future of Oil and Gas is set out in this year's landmark North Sea Transition Deal. At the centre of this deal are jobs and a transition towards a net zero economy. As the Climate Change Committee has recognised, the UK will unavoidably continue to rely on oil and gas in its energy mix for some years to come. Although the Government will remain a net importer, domestic production of these fuels will continue to play an important role, as the Government achieves its Net Zero ambitions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Serbia

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported threats from Serb separatists in Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina to join Serbia; what steps, if any, they intend to take in response; and what discussions have they had with NATO regarding those threats. [HL4511]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK takes very seriously talk of secession and other threats to undo the progress of the last twenty-six years in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). We have called on those responsible to cease this destabilising and divisive rhetoric. The UK works closely with our partners in NATO and the EU to support the integrity of BiH as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities. In the UN Security Council in recent weeks we helped to renew the stabilisation force's (EUFOR's) mandate for a further 12 months and support the High Representative. We also support the NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo, including through the secondment of UK staff officers, whose work includes building the capacity of the BiH Armed Forces. The UK will continue to support BiH in implementing domestic reforms and tackling challenges to peace and security. Further discussions of how to support stability in BiH took place at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Riga, which the Foreign Secretary attended.

Bosnia: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to reinstate a military contribution alongside the EU-led stabilisation force in Bosnia. [HL4512]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In November, the United Nations Security Council authorised the EU stabilisation force's (EUFOR) mandate for a further 12 months. Although the UK no longer participates in EUFOR following our withdrawal from the European Union, we liaise closely with Commander EUFOR and his team. We also support the NATO HQ in Sarajevo including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are playing an important role in building the capacity of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Armed Forces.

Bus Services: Finance

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Financial Times article Bus operators say £5bn funding gap threatens England's transport plan, published on 25 November, how much additional funding they plan to allocate to the National Bus Strategy, and over what timescale, to address any shortfall. [HL4440]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: During this parliament the Government will invest £1.2 billion of new funding to

deliver improvements in bus services, fares and infrastructure in England outside London, and £525 million to deliver zero-emission buses (of which £355 million is new funding announced at the Spending Review). This is part of over £3 billion of new spend on buses over this Parliament, which represents a doubling of dedicated bus funding over this spending review period compared to Spending Review 2015.

The Government provides an annual £43 million directly to Local Authorities through the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) so that they can subsidise socially necessary bus services. In addition, over £200 million of BSOG is provided directly to commercial bus operators to support bus services.

China: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the five-year extension of Xi Jinping's tenure as president of China on their policies. [HL4287]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The recent 6th Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party's 19th Central Committee formally decided that the 20th National Party Congress will commence in the second half of 2022. This is widely expected to reconfirm Xi Jinping as the Chinese Communist Party's General Secretary, followed by the extension of his mandate as President of the People's Republic of China for a third term from Spring 2023.

China's increasing power and international assertiveness will perhaps be the most significant geopolitical factor of the 2020s. The scale and reach of China's economy, size of its population, technological advancement and increasing ambition to project its influence on the global stage will have profound implications worldwide and we expect these factors to continue.

We will continue to pursue a robust relationship that allows us to manage disagreements, defend our values and preserve space for cooperation where our interests align.

Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the just-in-time nature of the fashion creative business model. [HL4262]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises fashion businesses rely on smooth and efficient supply chains and we are taking action through industry engagement, including through a new Cabinet Committee on logistics. At present the position for UK freight is more positive than other locations globally who have experienced continued severe difficulties. We are continuing to work with the freight sector, including ports such as Felixstowe, to manage the impacts of a surge in container demand and HGV driver shortages.

My Hon. Friend the Minister for Small Business, Labour Markets and Consumers holds regular roundtables with the consumer goods manufacturing sector, including the UK Fashion and Textiles Association and British Footwear Association, and Lord Frost has chaired the Brexit Business Taskforce on fashion and textiles in May to fully understand the sector's concerns.

On 1 October, the Government launched the Export Support Service (ESS) - a single telephone helpline and digital enquiry service that will help British businesses export to Europe. It brings together information from across Government, making it easier for exporters to find what they need in one place. ESS will simplify and improve access to guidance for businesses, especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

High Value Manufacturing Catapult UK provides support for both SMEs to help develop, de-risk and support the journey of bringing new innovations to market and improve productivity; and large businesses who seek to investigate innovative technologies or scale-up new products or processes. From April 2021 until the end of March 2023, manufacturing companies can claim 130% capital allowances on qualifying plant and machinery investments. Under the super-deduction, for every pound a manufacturer invests, their taxes are cut by up to 25p.

Company Accounts

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 30 January 2019 (HL12948), when the accounting framework for the purposes of sections 92, 498 (1) and (2), 519, 714(4), 836, and 837 of the Companies Act 2006 will be considered by the UK Endorsement Board to ensure that the detailed rules of IFRS 17 do not run contrary to those sections. [HL4213]

Lord Callanan: The UK Endorsement Board (UKEB) has been delegated powers to consider International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for endorsement and adoption in the UK. This is to ensure that the financial information presented by the companies required by section 403(1) of the Companies Act 2006 to prepare their group accounts in accordance with UK-adopted international accounting standards.

The UKEB's draft Endorsement Criteria Assessment against the adoption criteria for IFRS 17 *Insurance Contracts* was published for public consultation on 11 November 2021. The consultation will be open until 3 February 2022.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to tackle the inequality of COVID-19 vaccines available in low income countries. [HL4394]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to equitable, global vaccine access and is working with international partners to increase global supply and bring the acute phase of the pandemic to an end. The UK has committed to share 100 million doses, at least 80% of which will go through COVAX. This commitment is part of a G7 agreement to share at least 870 million doses by mid-2022. We have already delivered 10.8 million AstraZeneca doses to recipient countries. COVAX is currently processing a further 11 million AstraZeneca doses for allocation and delivery. An additional 9 million AstraZeneca doses will be sent to COVAX in the coming weeks.

This is on top of the UK's £548 million support for COVAX's Advance Market Commitment, which has helped COVAX deliver over 537 million vaccines to low-and-middle-income countries and will aim to supply up to 1.8 billion doses by early 2022. The UK and COVAX partners are working with country governments to ensure that their health systems are well-prepared to deliver vaccines to priority groups, such as health workers. This includes engaging with communities to address vaccine hesitancy, build confidence and encourage uptake.

Developing Countries: Females

Asked by Baroness Sugg

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement by the Foreign Secretary on 16 November that funding will be restored for women and girls to its former level before the Overseas Development Assistance cuts, what year they plan to use as a benchmark for reinstating former funding levels; when they estimate that this commitment will be fulfilled; and whether the commitment includes restoring funding to sexual and reproductive health services. [HL4442]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: On 16 November the Foreign Secretary announced how women and girls will be at the centre of our foreign policy priorities, with more than £20 million of new funding to help stop violence against women and girls around the world. We are restoring funding for women and girls to pre-ODA cut levels, focusing on giving more girls a quality education; ending the extremely harmful practice of female genital mutilation, supporting girls' health; and ending the abhorrent use of sexual violence around the world.

The UK is firmly committed to defending comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) globally - this includes family planning and maternal health, both central to the empowerment of women and girls. Any funding for SRHR will contribute to UK objectives to improve the lives of women and girls across the world. Following the Spending Review, decisions on allocations and individual programmes will be published in the usual way.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ethiopia regarding the safety of the Tigrayan population living outside of the Tigray region. [HL4286]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Minister for Africa spoke with Ethiopian State Minister Redwan on 18 November and raised our concerns about ethnic profiling and detentions, stressing the need for all parties to the conflict to engage in meaningful talks and avoid further bloodshed.

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed by all sides to the conflict. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Deputy Prime Minister Demeke on 5 November. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa spoke to Prime Minister Abiy on 28 October. The Minister for Africa spoke at a Westminster Hall Debate on 3 November and highlighted the horrific scale and nature of human rights abuses against civilians as reported by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is essential that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses be held to account. All parties must implement the report's recommendations and ensure that victims have access to support.

Ethiopia: Repatriation

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the UN is evacuating families of international staff from Addis Ababa. [HL4354]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of reports that the UN is in process of evacuating families of international staff from Ethiopia. We have drawn down non-essential staff and families from our Embassy in Addis Ababa.

The Minister for Africa issued a statement on 24 November addressing the deteriorating situation, urging British nationals to leave while commercial flights were still available. To support those wishing to leave, the UK has made available interest-free loans to those who would otherwise be unable to afford commercial flights back to the UK, and has temporarily suspended the requirement for unvaccinated travellers to take a COVID-19 test pre-arrival in the UK.

Fish Farming

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which public body is responsible for ensuring the welfare of farmed fish at processing sites. [HL4372]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Animal and Plant Health Agency is responsible for carrying out any investigations concerning the welfare of farmed fish at processing sites.

Food: Sales

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce a legal duty for large food businesses to provide annual data on their sales of High in Fat, Salt or Sugar (HFSS) products, to be collated and published by the Food Standards Agency. [HL4349]

Lord Benyon: The Government will publish its Food Strategy in early 2022, to create a food system that feeds our nation today and protects it for tomorrow. As part of this, we will consider the recommendations of Henry Dimbleby's independent review of the food system, including on mandatory reporting. The strategy will build on existing work across Government and identify new opportunities to make the food system healthier, more sustainable, more resilient, and more accessible for those across the UK.

Free School Meals: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which schools in England had more than 40 per cent of pupils who (1) identified as White British, and (2) were in receipt of Free School Meals, in the summer of 2019. [HL4339]

Baroness Barran: The department publishes annual statistics on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and identifying as different ethnicities. The figures are based on January school census data and included in the statistical release 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics'. We do not routinely publish summer term FSM figures and we do not collect ethnicity as part of the summer census. Therefore, figures derived from the spring census 2019 have been provided. Figures for January 2019 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>.

The attached tables show schools which had more than 40% of pupils identifying as white British and schools that had more than 40% of pupils eligible for FSM in January 2019.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Number of pupils eligible for FSM [HL4339_FSM.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-23/HL4339>

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which 50 schools had the highest average Progress 8 scores for (1) boys, and (2) girls, in the summer of 2019; and for

those schools, what were the percentage of White British (a) boys, and (b) girls, who received Free School Meals; and for each of these groups, what was their average Progress 8 score. [HL4340]

Baroness Barran: The attached file contains the top 50 schools with the highest average progress 8 scores for boys and girls in the 2019 academic year. Each of these lists is populated with the closest information currently available. Amongst other variables, each list of schools contains the following information: the adjusted progress 8 score, the adjusted progress 8 score for boys and girls, and the adjusted progress 8 score of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

Disadvantaged status considers whether the pupil has received free school meals in the last six years or were looked after for one day or more.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL4340_table
[HL4340_table_showing_school_progress_scores.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-23/HL4340>

Fuel Poverty: Disabled and Older People

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the number of (1) disabled people, and (2) elderly people, who will be unable to heat their homes this winter. [HL4306]

Lord Callanan: The Priority Service Register (PSR) records domestic customers who, due to their personal characteristics or otherwise being in a vulnerable situation, may require Priority Services. In Ofgem's Consumer Protection Report: Autumn 2021 the Priority Service Register (PSR) had recorded 7,032,854 consumers for electricity and 5,935,528 consumers for gas in 2020.

Elderly and disabled consumers are protected. As per Ofgem's rules, in winter, energy suppliers must not disconnect domestic premises where the customer is of pensionable age. Additionally, suppliers must take all reasonable steps to avoid disconnecting a premise if the occupants include a person who is of pensionable age, disabled, or chronically sick. Vulnerable customers who feel they are struggling to pay their energy bills should contact their energy supplier as soon as possible to agree on a payment plan.

Helicopters: Procurement

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will issue a tender for a new medium helicopter to replace the Puma. [HL4268]

Baroness Goldie: It is the Department's expectation that the procurement of the New Medium Helicopter will be subject to competition. The formal acquisition process has not started and the timescales for the issue of any tender are subject to agreement of both the Key User Requirements and the approvals process.

Asked by Lord Tunnicliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, to ensure any replacement for the Puma helicopter is built in the UK. [HL4319]

Baroness Goldie: Our current expectation is to run a competitive process, the full details of which will be published in due course.

House of Lords: Electric Vehicles

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many electric car charging points there are in the House of Lords. [HL4277]

Lord Touhig: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chair of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf. There are currently no electric car charging points on the House of Lords estate. The Services Committee has been considering a proposal for the installation of charging points, the Clerk of the Parliaments as Accounting Officer has decided that the project does not offer value for money. The Services Committee endorsed this decision and has asked the Administration to consider alternative options for the provision of electric car charging for members.

Iran: Detainees

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iran regarding (1) Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, (2) Anoosheh Ashoori, and (3) other British nationals detained in Iran. [HL4284]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary most recently discussed the cases of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Anoosheh Ashoori, and Morad Tahbaz and all detained dual nationals with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on 8 November. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised their cases with his Iranian counterpart Deputy Foreign Minister, Bagheri Kani when he visited the FCDO on 11 November. Our Ambassador in Tehran continues to regularly raise Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Anoosheh Ashoori and Morad Tahbaz with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the concern expressed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on 19 November about the killing of 15 year old Mohammad Daadas; and what assessment they have made of the number of Palestinians (1) killed, and (2) injured, by live fire since the beginning of the year. [HL4300]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 6 November the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly publicly expressed condolences to the family of 13 year old Mohammed Daadas, who was killed near Nablus following clashes between Palestinians and Israeli Defence Forces. We have urged the Israeli authorities to carry out a swift and thorough investigation. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the case with Israel Defence Forces directly. We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We also regularly raise the importance of the Israeli security forces' adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they plan to make to the government of Israel concerning the Israeli Defence Force lining up children at night to photograph them after reported stone throwing incidents. [HL4301]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children. We encourage Israel to deploy security measures in a way which minimises tensions. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel about the use of skunk water to disperse gatherings of Palestinians at the Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem. [HL4299]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We also urge the Israeli Government to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of peaceful, legal protestors.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Accidents

Asked by Lord Tunncliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the wreckage of the F35 jet that crashed in the Mediterranean sea has been found. [HL4322]

Baroness Goldie: An operation is ongoing to recover the F-35B. Due to reasons of operational security, it would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

Kickstart Scheme

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Afghan refugees aged 16 to 24 who have arrived since January will be eligible for the Kickstart Scheme. [HL4275]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: All refugees brought to the UK through the Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) have the right to work and will have support in finding employment as part of a comprehensive integration package. The Department for Work and Pensions will support Afghan refugees who are eligible for the Kickstart Scheme to access it if it is appropriate to their needs.

Madeleine McCann

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 June (HL709), whether further funding for Operation Grange into the disappearance of Madeleine McCann was granted; if so, (1) how much, and (2) until when; whether any further review of the effectiveness of Operation Grange has been undertaken; and how much has been spent on it up until the end of October 2021. [HL4255]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has agreed to provide up to £350,000 of Special Grant funding in respect of Operation Grange up to March 2022. The current total spend as of October 2021 rounds to £13.2 million.

The Home Office regularly liaises with the Operation Grange investigation team to assess progress and challenge the use of funds as necessary. I also refer the Lord to my response to HL1446 and HL1447 concerning the National Audit Office's review of Operation Grange in 2019 which determined that its oversight and governance by the Home Office was effective and that the

Operation was compliant with the principles of Managing Public Money.

Mathematics: Higher Education

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total annual investment at Higher Education level in the pure mathematical sciences; and how, as a share of GDP, this compares with that of countries with the best mathematics results at that level. [HL4330]

Baroness Barran: The government strongly supports mathematical sciences in higher education. Ensuring that there is high-quality provision in a range of subjects is critical in order to build our workforce and support our public services. We are pleased many students chose to take up courses in mathematical sciences, with 39,210 students enrolling in England in 2019/20 academic year: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-49>.

Our student loan system supports students who have the qualifications to access higher education, including a range of mathematics courses. In the 2019/20 academic year, a total of £300 million was made available as tuition fee and maintenance loans for students doing mathematics courses.

The UK continues to be a world leader in mathematics. To support mathematics research and development, UK Research and Innovation has awarded £104 million of additional funding into Mathematical Sciences, over and above the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's core Mathematical Sciences Theme budget. The additional investment has funded institutes, small and large research grants, fellowships, doctoral studentships and postdoctoral awards.

Migration

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reinstate 0.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product for Overseas Development Assistance to address migrant displacement. [HL4317]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on official development assistance (ODA) when the fiscal situation allows and has provided a clear measure for this. The two key tests are (1) When we are not borrowing to support day-to-day spending. That means when the current budget is in surplus. (2) When underlying debt is falling. This is measured by Public Sector Net Debt (excluding the Bank of England) as a percentage of GDP. When these tests are met then the Government will increase ODA spending above 0.5% of GNI to 0.7% of GNI. On 13 July, the Government provided members of Parliament the opportunity to debate its proposed course of action and pathway back to 0.7. The House voted

clearly with a majority of 35 votes to approve the approach set out in the Treasury's 12 July Written Ministerial Statement. Improving economic forecasts show that HMG may meet its test to return to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on aid in the final year of this Spending Review.

Military Aid: Armed Forces

Asked by Lord Tunnicliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK Armed Forces are deployed in response to Military Aid to the Civil Authorities requests; and in what capacity any such forces are deployed. [HL4320]

Baroness Goldie: As of 6 December 2021, there were circa 1,336 Service personnel deployed on 19 MACA tasks. These tasks range from: personnel supporting local communities affected by Storm Arwen in the North of the UK; medical personnel in support to the NHS in Scotland; drivers assisting the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust; personnel supporting the COVID-19 vaccination programme across the UK; fuel tanker drivers to ensure the continuity of fuel supplies around the UK; and defence driving examiners supporting the Department for Transport.

Nuclear Weapons

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States of America regarding countries attempting to acquire nuclear weapons ahead of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in January 2022. [HL4285]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has a close and special relationship with the United States of America. The Foreign and Defence Secretaries hold regular discussions with their US counterparts on a range of issues, including on nuclear counter proliferation policy. These discussions are reflected, and supported, by daily cooperation at official level between the UK and the US on counter proliferation, arms control, nuclear deterrence policy and strategic stability.

Olympic Games: China

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to represent the UK (1) politically, and (2) diplomatically, at the Beijing Winter Olympics. [HL4288]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Government has previously made clear, no decisions have yet been made about Government attendance at the Beijing Olympics in 2022.

Prisoners: Mothers

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many women in prison aged (1) 18 to 24, or (2) 25 years or older, have dependent children. [HL4272]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We do not hold current figures on how many women in prison aged (1) 18 to 24 or (2) 25 years or older have dependent children. Information on a prisoner's caring responsibilities and their children living in the community is currently monitored locally by prison Governors/Directors to ensure appropriate support can be provided to offenders and their families. We are making changes to the questions within the Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST) in the first quarter of 2022 and, once this has been done, we will be able to collect primary carer data via the BCST and access this information centrally. Consideration will then be given to how and what we can publish.

Prisons: Location

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average number of miles that a (1) woman, or (2) man, in prison is held from their home address. [HL4273]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: As of 19 November 2021, prisoners living in the female prison estate were, on average, 46 miles away from their origin address.

As of 19 November 2021, prisoners living in the male prison estate were, on average, 45 miles away from their origin address.

There are complex and wide-ranging issues involved in transferring and locating prisoners, and allocation decisions must reflect both the specific needs and circumstances of the prisoner, including their security assessment, as well as the operating environment and range of services at the receiving prison.

HM Prison and Probation Service is committed to ensuring, where practicable, that prisoners are accommodated as close as possible to their resettlement communities and families. Whilst this is a priority, it is not always possible due to a variety of factors including wider population pressures, or where prisoners have specific sentence planning needs which can only be met at certain establishments.

Refugees

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of how the number of people applying for refugee status in the UK compares to the figures for (1) Greece, (2) Italy, (3) Spain, and (4) France. [HL4292]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes information on asylum in the [Immigration statistics quarterly release](#). Section 2.2 of the 'How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?' chapter includes international comparisons on the number of people applying for asylum in the UK and in the EU+ (as published by Eurostat).

There were 37,235 people (applicants and their dependants) who applied for asylum in the UK in the year ending June 2021 (the latest comparable statistics available). This is less than France (87,180) and Spain (67,425), but higher than Italy (24,885) and Greece (24,275). When looking at the EU+ and UK together, the UK received the 4th largest number of applicants, or 8% of the total asylum applicants across the EU+ and UK combined over that period (France and Spain received the second and third largest).

Asylum applications in the UK and the EU have declined in the latest year, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the fall in applications seen by the EU+ (the EU, EEA and Switzerland) (-21%) was steeper than the decline in applications to the UK (-9%).

The number of applications to the UK has remained fairly stable in the last 5 years in comparison with the EU, where application numbers have fluctuated more.

Refugees: Children

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reinstate the scheme protecting unaccompanied refugee children to provide a safe route for unaccompanied migrant children. [HL4314]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government remains committed to the principle of family reunion and supporting vulnerable children.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Europe with family members in the UK are able to apply under existing routes to join eligible sponsors, such as those with refugee leave or humanitarian protection or with British or settled status. The Immigration Rules already make provision for a child to be reunited with a parent in the UK either under the Refugee Family Reunion Rules or via Appendix FM - depending on the immigration status of the parent.

In addition, paragraphs 319X and 297 of the Rules are extremely flexible provisions that already allow for children to apply to join a wide range of adult family members who are not their parents, if the relevant requirements are met. Under these Rules, we do not restrict the range of those family members. The requirements are there are serious and compelling family or other considerations which make exclusion of the child undesirable, suitable arrangements have been made for the child's care and those relatives can adequately maintain and accommodate the child without recourse to public funds.

Russia: Ukraine

Asked by *Lord Coaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British armed forces personnel have been sent to (1) Poland, (2) Lithuania, (3) Latvia, and (4) Estonia, in response to the build-up of Russian forces on the Ukraine border. [HL4263]

Baroness Goldie: As part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, the UK already has 850 service personnel in Estonia, where we are the framework nation and 130 in Poland in support of the US battlegroup. No additional personnel have been sent to either Poland, Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia in response to the build-up of Russian forces on the Ukrainian border.

Asked by *Lord Coaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British Navy vessels have been sent to the Black Sea in response to the build-up of Russian forces on the Ukraine border; and what type of vessels have been sent. [HL4264]

Baroness Goldie: No Royal Navy vessels have been sent to the Black Sea as a response to the build-up of Russian forces on the Ukraine border.

Asked by *Lord Coaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many briefings the Secretary of State for Defence has received on the build-up of Russian forces on the Ukraine border. [HL4265]

Baroness Goldie: The Secretary of State for Defence receives regular updates on the situation in Ukraine, especially in light of his recent visit to Kiev. We have significant concerns about Russia's aggressive pattern of military build-ups on Ukraine's border and in illegally-annexed Crimea. We remain clear that Russia's threatening and destabilising behaviour is unacceptable. We will continue to monitor events on the ground closely and call on Russia, alongside our Allies and Partners, to adhere to its international obligations and commitments.

Sea Level

Asked by *Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the sea-level rise that will result from decisions at COP26; and whether any modifications will be required for the Thames Barrier to resist such rising sea levels. [HL4281]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Rising sea levels can cause coastal flooding and coastal erosion. Our long-term policy statement sets out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. It includes five ambitious policies and over 40 supporting actions we will take to accelerate progress to better protect and prepare the country against flooding

and coastal erosion from more frequent extreme weather as a result of climate change.

No assessment has yet been made of the impact of COP26 pledges on sea level; however the UK Climate Projections published in 2018 (UKCP18) project potential impacts on sea levels from a range of global warming scenarios. An initial comparison shows that the UKCP18 projections are broadly consistent with the IPCC's latest findings, so we can be confident that our current projections take into account the COP26 pledges and commitments.

The Environment Agency's (EA) Thames Estuary 2100 Plan (TE2100) sets a long-term approach, designed with climate change at its core. It was the first adaptive flood risk management strategy developed in England and is internationally recognised as a leading example of a climate adaptation strategy. By taking an adaptive approach, the EA can better anticipate and respond to a range of future climate scenarios, ensuring it is investing in the right flood risk management actions at the right time, to ensure the resilience of the estuary and its communities in the future.

The EA expects the Thames Barrier to continue to protect London from tidal flooding until 2070. TE2100 identifies several options for a future Thames Barrier to protect the Thames Estuary and London to the end of the century and beyond. It outlines three possible options, including upgrading the existing Thames Barrier and two proposed locations for building a new barrier.

Social Security Benefits: Older People

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will provide a table showing (1) each of the benefits that individuals reaching the state pension age are entitled to claim, (2) the number of individuals who are entitled to claim such benefits, and (3) the number of individuals claiming them. [HL4308]

Baroness Stedman-Scott:

1) Individuals at or above State Pension age may be entitled to apply for financial support from amongst the following DWP benefits, depending upon their personal circumstances:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Christmas Bonus
- Disability Living Allowance
- Housing benefits
- Industrial Injuries Disability benefits
- Pension Credit
- Personal Independence Payment
- State Pension
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Winter Fuel Payments

2) We have data available for the number of families who are entitled to claim such benefits for Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. We do not hold this information for the other benefits in which pensioners may be entitled. These are from the Income-related benefits: estimates of take up: financial year 2018 to 2019.

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number of families entitled 2018/19</i>
Pension Credit	2,490,000
Housing Benefit (Pensioners)	1,440,000

There are already around 1.4 million people claiming around £5 billion in Pension Credit. We want to make sure that all eligible pensioners claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled. The DWP conducted a media day in June with support from Age UK and the BBC and others, using national and local media to help reach older people reticent about claiming Pension Credit. There have also been press articles since then to encourage take-up.

The working group which DWP has established includes a diverse range of organisations including pensioner charities as well as the BBC, British Telecom, Virgin Money and the Local Government Association. The group met most recently on 19 October and we hope that it will identify new practical initiatives to help address Pension Credit take up.

3) The number of individuals claiming the following benefits can be found on Table 2c of the Benefit Expenditure and Caseload tables 2021 on Gov.uk.

<i>Benefits directed at Pensioners</i>	<i>Caseload 2020/21</i>
Attendance Allowance	1,388,000
Carer's Allowance	287,000
Christmas Bonus	12,275,000
Disability Living Allowance	523,000
Housing Benefit	1,164,000
Industrial Injuries benefits	150,000
Pension Credit	1,480,000
Personal Independence Payment	306,000
State Pension	12,379,000
Severe Disablement Allowance	15,000
Winter Fuel Payments	11,205,000

Somalia: Food and Water

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the announcement by Somalia's United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on 19 November, that in Somalia (1) more than 2 million people face food and water

insecurity, and (2) an estimated 2.3 million people face water, food and pasture shortages. [HL4245]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in Somalia with large parts of the country now experiencing severe drought. The UK is working closely with the Somali Government, the UN and international partners to support an early and rapid response.

Eighty percent of the country is now facing severe famine, and the Government of Somalia has declared a 'humanitarian emergency'. Multiple shocks, including threats from Covid-19, desert locusts and floods, have deepened Somalia's protracted climate and conflict-induced humanitarian crisis with over 5.9 million people in need of assistance and disrupted progress towards stability and economic recovery. In 2020 the UK provided 2.5 million vulnerable Somalis with life-saving cash assistance (874,409), nutrition (303,938), health (453,639) and emergency WASH-Water and Sanitation (895,002).

Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with partners on the UN Security Council about the extension of the mandate for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) beyond 31 December. [HL4232]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK regularly engages international partners on the security situation in Somalia, including the threat from Al Shabaab, the role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia's ongoing needs for international support as it transitions to take greater control of its own security. The UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate for AMISOM runs until 31 December 2021. A UNSC briefing on Somalia took place on 17 November, during which the UK reiterated the necessity for progress on discussions on a successor mission to AMISOM to support the transition to Somali-led security in accordance with the Somalia Transition Plan. We continue to work with international partners, including those on the Council, on our collective interests in supporting long-term security and stability in Somalia and how a future mission can meet shared objectives.

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the median state pension for (1) men, and (2) women. [HL4310]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The median weekly amount of State Pension paid, by gender, at the end of May 2021 is shown in the below table. These show payments under the two systems: - (i) the basic State Pension (bSP) plus other components such additional State Pension (SERPS and State Second Pension) and Graduated Retirement Benefit, which operated for people who reached State

Pension age before 6 April 2016; and (ii) the new State Pension (nSP) system for people reaching State Pension age from that date onwards.

Please note that this does not include any payments of Pension Credit which people may be receiving in addition to their contributory State Pension.

Median weekly amount of State Pension (£) by gender, Quarter ending May 2021

Type of State Pension	Women	Men	Total
Pre 2016 State Pension	150.25	172.83	160.82
New State Pension	174.47	178.52	176.93

Source: DWP, Data and Analytics, Digital Group - Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, and other administrative data.

Notes:

i) Coverage: All cases in payment in Great Britain, plus claimants residing abroad. This excludes cases administered in Northern Ireland.

ii) This data table provides temporary estimates for May 2021. The data will be withdrawn and replaced with new data on Stat-Xplore once the Get Your State Pension (GYSP) system data have been reliably developed and tested.

iii) Table 11 of the latest published statistics provides the mean weekly amount of State Pension paid, by gender, at the end of May 2021.

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) men, and (2) women, in receipt of a state pension receive less than £100 a week. [HL4312]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The latest published caseload figures are published and available on www.gov.uk, in Table 4 of DWP Benefits Statistics: November 2021.

State Retirement Pensions: Females

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman Women's State Pension age: our findings on the Department for Work and Pensions' communication of changes, published on 19 July; and what compensation they will pay to the women affected by maladministration identified in the report. [HL4309]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has not completed his investigation. This a multi staged process and the report published on 20 July 2021 concluded stage-one of the 3-stage investigation.

It would not be appropriate to comment on the PHSO's report whilst the investigation is ongoing; section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

Students: Grants

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a voucher subsidy scheme alongside maintenance grants to enable students to upgrade their devices if they are becoming outdated. [HL4352]

Baroness Barran: Students attending full-time undergraduate higher education courses and part-time degree level and equivalent courses can apply for loans as a contribution towards their living costs, including the costs of computers. All students qualify for a minimum loan for living costs with additional support for poorer students.

Students from the lowest income families have access to the largest ever amounts of living costs support in cash terms. Maximum loans for living costs have been increased by 3.1% for the current 2021/22 academic year, with a further 2.3% increase announced for the 2022/23 academic year.

In addition to the standard living costs package, many universities and colleges offer specific funds, bursaries, and scholarships for eligible students. Students experiencing financial hardship can contact their higher education provider. Many providers have hardship funds which students can apply to for assistance.

In the academic year 2020/21, we made £85 million of one-off student hardship funding available to higher education providers on top of the £256 million of Student Premium funding they were already able to draw on towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made about whether the discussions between the President of Kenya and the Secretary of State for the United States have made progress towards ending the conflict in Tigray. [HL4246]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We support efforts by US Secretary of State Blinken to resolve the conflict in Ethiopia on his visit to Kenya on 17 November and his call for an unconditional ceasefire in Ethiopia. Alongside the US, we are fully supportive of the African Union (AU)'s mediation efforts. The Minister for Africa spoke with AU Special Envoy Obasanjo on 4 November, and with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole on 8 November. We continue to closely engage US counterparts on how best to end the conflict in Ethiopia in Washington DC, Addis Ababa and

in capital to capital discussions, including with the US envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman.

Tigray: Education

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that no school students in Tigray have been able to register for exams to enter university, and (2) the impact this will have on the education of girls in that region. [HL4247]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: An estimated 2.7 million children in Northern Ethiopia are affected by destroyed or damaged schools, or by schools being used as shelters for internally displaced people (IDPs). In Debre Birhan (Amhara) children are missing out on learning opportunities due to six schools being used as collective sites for newly displaced people. There are also reports of property destruction by the IDPs in the schools and the schools will need rehabilitation after the IDPs have left. In parts of Oromia and Benishangul Gumz the education infrastructures were heavily damaged by looting and vandalism and the education system is reportedly close to collapse. As the conflict continues children, especially girls, are at increased risk of gender-based violence, child marriage, and sexual exploitation and abuse. We will keep under consideration how to support education of children affected by conflict in future programming.

Tourism

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to widen the representation of the fashion industry on the DCMS-led working group on touring. [HL4260]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Touring Working Group was set up at the beginning of 2021 to help the creative and cultural sectors understand and adapt to new requirements following the UK's exit from the EU.

Membership of the Working Group includes the British Fashion Council, and we encourage all members of the working group to reach out to others to ensure that it hears and understands the views from across all the sectors it represents.

We have published a specific [page](#) on gov.uk to help the fashion sector navigate the guidance available online, and provide clarity regarding the practical steps that need to be taken by UK fashion professionals working in the EU.

The Government has also engaged with representatives of the fashion industry specifically on EU customs and export issues, through the Brexit Business Taskforce on Fashion and Textiles, chaired by Lord Frost in May, two of DIT's Trade Advisory Groups, and a seminar jointly organised with the British Fashion Council.

Trade Agreements

Asked by Baroness Mobarik

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there are any countries, other than Iran, to which the UK owes money for contracts agreed, and for which money was received, but for which goods were not delivered; and if so, (1) which countries are involved, and (2) what reasons are there for the decision to withhold delivery of the goods in each case. [HL4204]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: There are no such countries, other than Iran.

Transcaucasus: Land Mines

Asked by Lord Hussain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make representations to the government of Armenia to (1) provide maps of landmines in the Nagorno-Karabakh region to the government of Azerbaijan, and (2) cooperate with the government of Azerbaijan in clearing landmines in the region. [HL4370]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Minister for Europe and Americas continues to raise with both Governments the importance of resolving all outstanding matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including the return of mine maps, through negotiations facilitated by the OSCE Minsk Group. She did so most recently in her meetings with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ambassadors on 4 and 17 November respectively. We welcome the most recent returns of prisoners of war in exchange for mine maps. The UK continues to urge both Governments to settle all matters related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through negotiation under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group.

In June the Ministry of Defence sent Counter Explosives Experts to survey parts of Azerbaijan worst effected by unexplored ordnance to understand how the UK can best support Azerbaijan in this area. The Minister for Europe and Americas announced in September that the UK had contributed £500,000 to a United Nations Development Programme initiative to take action on mines left in the region as a legacy of the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. These funds will assist with training and personnel to support de-mining in Azerbaijan.

Universal Credit

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 11 November (HL3461), what assessment they have made of the number of disabled households living in poverty following the end of the Universal Credit uplift; what assessment they have made of the impact of increasing inflation and cost of living on disabled households; and

what plans they have to support disabled people who are unable to work. [\[HL4304\]](#)

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made. Official poverty statistics for individuals living in disabled families, covering the period 2020/21, will be published in March 2022, as part of the Department's Households Below Average Income publication, subject to the usual checks on data quality. This is an annual publication.

As well as receiving support through ESA or UC Health, disabled people may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment, which helps towards some of the extra costs arising from having a long-term health condition or disability. Spending on benefits for disabled people and people with long-term ill health has never

been higher and is set to increase further. In 2021/22 we are forecast to spend £59 billion.

Vulnerable households in most need of support will also benefit from the £421m Household Support Fund (HSF), a new grant made by DWP to upper tier Local Authorities across England. The Devolved Administrations will receive £80m through the Barnett Formula.

We are reviewing responses to the Health and Disability Green Paper and intend to publish a White Paper next year, setting out changes to the benefits system that will better meet the needs of claimants now and in the future by improving claimant experience of our services, enabling independent living and improving employment outcomes.

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