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WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND
WRITTEN ANSWERS

Press F9 key to generate Table of Contents here

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 8 December 2021

Asylum Seekers: Right to Work Policy

[HLWS439]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration (Tom Pursglove) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Following the October 2018 publication of the Lift the Ban coalition's report into asylum seeker right to work policy, which concluded that amending the policy could generate £42m per year for the Government, the former Home Secretary – Sajid Javid – committed to a review. Today I would like to announce the findings of that review.

For clarity, current asylum seeker right to work policy allows asylum seekers to apply for permission to work if a decision on their asylum claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, where the delay is no fault of their own. If granted permission to work, asylum seekers may then apply for jobs on the Shortage Occupation List.

Lift the Ban's report recommended relaxing policy to allow asylum seekers to work after six months, with no restrictions on access to the labour market such as limiting eligible jobs to the Shortage Occupation List. In July 2020, a follow-up to their 2018 report was published with the same policy recommendation but with updated estimated benefits to the Government of £98m per year. A further update in summer 2021 revised this further upwards to £180.8m per year.

The Home Office has carried out a comprehensive review of the Lift the Ban report; however, our evidence indicates the assumptions underpinning the recommendations are highly optimistic. Having considered a wide range of available evidence the Home Office believes that a more realistic set of assumptions would present a more nuanced picture. In particular, the Home Office believes that a more realistic set of assumptions would consider the following:

- demographic characteristics (such as family groupings and likelihood of care responsibilities impacting access to the labour market)
- how employment rates for migrant groups tend to increase gradually over time
- the propensity for part time employment
- the likelihood that any employment is more likely to be close to the minimum or living wage rather than the UK median wage.

In addition, a significant proportion of the fiscal benefits calculated by Lift the Ban are predicated on an assumption that once asylum seekers are granted access to the workforce they will no longer require financial support. The Home Office believes that given the likelihood for part time and insecure employment this

benefit is unlikely to fully materialise. This is because it expects that the administrative cost associated with moving asylum seekers on and off support as they cycle through periods of employment and support will be substantial.

The Home Office has therefore concluded that the fiscal benefits arising from a relaxation of the right to work policy are likely to be significantly lower than the figures claimed by Lift the Ban. In light of wider priorities to fix the broken asylum system, reduce pull factors to the UK, and ensure our policies do not encourage people to undercut the resident labour force, we are retaining our asylum seeker right to work policy with no further changes.

It is key this policy continues to protect our immigration system from those lodging unfounded asylum claims in an attempt to avoid work visa rules, particularly at a time when dangerous journeys made by small boat are increasing.

Ultimately we must ensure asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay. Our resources are therefore better deployed to pursuing an ongoing programme of transformation and system improvement initiatives that will speed up decision making, reducing the time individuals spend in the system awaiting an interview or decision.

We recognise there are extraordinary circumstances affecting certain parts of the labour market at present. In response to these, we are offering time-limited visas to 4,700 HGV drivers in the food supply chain, 5,500 poultry workers, and 800 butchers to ease supply chain pressures this year. We will look at how the sectors concerned make use of these routes which were created in response to their requests.

The Government continues to support industries in solving such issues in the long term through making roles more attractive to UK workers, with better pay and working conditions.

Export Control Regime

[HLWS437]

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

HM Government is committed to a robust and transparent export control regime for military, dual-use and other sensitive goods and technologies. The purpose of these controls is to promote global security and facilitate responsible exports. They help ensure that goods exported from the United Kingdom do not contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or a destabilising accumulation of conventional weapons. They protect the United Kingdom's security and our expertise by restricting who has access to sensitive technologies and capabilities. Export controls also help ensure that controlled items are not used for internal repression or in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law. They are one of the means

by which we implement a range of international legal commitments including the Arms Trade Treaty.

The controls also support the UK's defence and security industry. The legitimate international trade in military equipment and technology, as well as in dual-use items, enables governments to protect ordinary citizens, to preserve law and order against terrorists and criminals, and to defend against external threats. The Government therefore remains committed to supporting the UK's defence and security industry and to promoting the legitimate trade in items controlled for strategic reasons.

We keep our controls under regular review to ensure that they continue to properly address the threats we face, keep pace with new technologies, and adapt to changing circumstances such as our exit from the EU, while providing an efficient service which does not impose an unworkable administrative burden on the defence and security industry.

That is why today I am announcing a package of measures to update the export control regime.

First, I am laying before Parliament a revised version of the licensing criteria for strategic export controls, to be known as the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, as set out at the end of this statement.

These Criteria will be applied with immediate effect to all licence decisions (including decisions on appeals) for export, transfer, trade (brokering) and transit/transshipment of goods, software and technology subject to control for strategic reasons (referred to collectively as "items"); and to the extent that the following activities are subject to control, the provision of technical assistance or other services related to those items. Certain of the Criteria may also be applied to MOD Form 680 applications alongside other considerations and assessment of proposals to gift controlled equipment to other nations' governments.

As before, they will not be applied mechanistically but on a case-by-case basis taking into account all relevant information available at the time the licence application is assessed. While the Government recognises that there are situations where transfers must not take place, as set out in the following Criteria, we will not refuse a licence on the grounds of a purely theoretical risk of a breach of one or more of those Criteria. In making licensing decisions I will continue to take into account advice received from FCDO, MOD, and other government departments and agencies as appropriate.

The application of these Criteria will be without prejudice to the application to specific cases of specific measures as may be announced to Parliament from time to time. This statement does not impact upon existing specific measures which remain extant until revoked.

Second, the Government will be taking steps to enhance the Military End-Use Control. Currently, the control can only be applied to the export of otherwise non-controlled items which are intended for use as components in, or production equipment for, military equipment in an embargoed destination. This does not allow us to fully address threats to national security, international peace

and security, and human rights arising from the use of non-listed items by the military, police or security forces, or entities acting on their behalf, in an embargoed destination.

We will therefore be amending the definition of "military end-use" to remove this limitation. The control would only be applied where the Government informs the exporter that the proposed export is or may be intended for a military end-use in an embargoed destination. To minimise the impact on legitimate trade, there will be exemptions for medical supplies and equipment, food, clothing and other consumer goods.

The review also concluded that there were anomalies and inconsistencies within the UK's export control regime. As a result of this review, China will be added to the list of those destinations subject to military end-use controls.

Taken together, these changes will also strengthen our ability to prevent exports that might be used directly or indirectly to facilitate human rights violations in all destinations subject to military end-use controls. It also completes the export control review announced to Parliament on 12 January 2021 by the then Foreign Secretary.

Both of these changes concerning military end-use controls require amendments to the Export Control Order 2008. We intend to lay the secondary legislation to implement these changes in the Spring of 2022.

The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria

This statement of the Criteria is guidance given under section 9 of the Export Control Act 2002. It replaces the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria announced to Parliament on 25 March 2014.

CRITERION ONE

Respect for the UK's international obligations and relevant commitments, in particular sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council, agreements on non-proliferation and other subjects, as well as other international obligations.

The Government will not grant a licence if to do so would be inconsistent with, *inter alia*:

a) the UK's obligations and its commitments to enforce United Nations and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) sanctions, as well as national sanctions observed by the UK and other relevant commitments regarding the application of strategic export controls;

b) the UK's obligations under the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty;

c) the UK's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention;

d) the UK's obligations under the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (the Oslo convention), the Cluster Munitions (Prohibitions) Act 2010, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Ottawa convention) and the Land Mines Act 1998;

e) the UK's commitments in the framework of the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Zangger Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement; and

f) the OSCE principles governing conventional arms transfers.

CRITERION TWO

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country of final destination as well as respect by that country for international humanitarian law.

Having assessed the recipient country's attitude towards relevant principles established by international human rights instruments, the Government will:

a) Not grant a licence if it determines there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate internal repression;

Internal repression includes, inter alia, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; summary or arbitrary executions; disappearances; arbitrary detentions; and other serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms as set out in relevant international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

For these purposes items which might be used for internal repression will include, inter alia, items where there is evidence of the use of these or similar items for internal repression by the proposed end-user, or where there is reason to believe that the items will be diverted from their stated end-use or end-user and used for internal repression. The nature of the items to be transferred will be considered carefully, particularly if they are intended for internal security purposes.

b) Exercise special caution and vigilance in granting licences, on a case-by-case basis and taking account of the nature of the equipment, to countries where serious violations of human rights have been established by the competent bodies of the UN or the Council of Europe;

Having assessed the recipient country's attitude towards relevant principles established by instruments of international humanitarian law, the Government will:

c) Not grant a licence if it determines there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

In considering the risk that items might be used to commit or facilitate internal repression, or to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law, the Government will also take account of the risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women or children.

CRITERION THREE

Preservation of internal peace and security

The Government will not grant a licence if, having assessed the potential that the items would either contribute to or undermine internal peace and security, it determines there is a clear risk that the items would, overall, undermine internal peace and security.

When assessing the potential that the items would contribute to or undermine internal peace and security, the Government will take into account, inter alia and where relevant:

a) Whether the grant of the licence would provoke or prolong armed conflicts;

b) Whether the items are likely to be used other than for the legitimate national security or defence of the recipient;

c) Whether the items would be likely to cause, avert, increase or decrease conflict or instability in the country of final destination, taking into account (inter alia):

(i) the balance of forces between states or actors concerned;

(ii) the potential for the equipment to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of existing capabilities or force projection;

(iii) humanitarian purposes or impacts;

(iv) the nature of the conflict, including the conduct of all states or actors involved, and any involvement by the UK and allied states;

(v) border stability and legitimate national security interests of the recipient; and

d) Whether the items might be used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women or children.

CRITERION FOUR

Preservation of peace and security

The Government will not grant a licence if, having assessed the potential that the items would either contribute to or undermine peace and security, it determines there is a clear risk that the items would, overall, undermine peace and security.

When assessing the potential that the items would contribute to or undermine peace and security, the Government will take into account, inter alia and where relevant:

a) The existence or likelihood of armed conflict in which the recipient would take part;

b) Whether the recipient has in the past tried or threatened to pursue, by means of force, a claim against the territory of another country;

c) The likelihood that the items would be used in the territory of another country other than for legitimate purposes including national or collective self defence;

d) Whether the items would be likely to cause, avert, increase or decrease conflict or instability in the region, taking into account (inter alia):

(i) the balance of forces between the states or actors in the region concerned;

(ii) their approach to expenditure on defence;

(iii) the potential for the equipment to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of existing capabilities or force projection;

(iv) humanitarian purposes or impacts;

(v) the nature of the conflict, including the conduct of all states or actors involved, and any involvement by the UK and allied states;

(vi) border stability and legitimate national security interests of the recipient; and

e) Whether the items might be used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women or children.

CRITERION FIVE

The national security of the UK and territories whose external relations are the UK's responsibility, as well as that of friendly and allied countries.

The Government will take into account:

a) the risk of the items undermining or damaging the UK's national security or those of other territories and countries as described above;

b) the risk of the items being used against UK forces or against those of other territories and countries as described above; and

c) the need to protect classified information and capabilities.

CRITERION SIX

The behaviour of the buyer country with regard to the international community, as regards in particular its attitude to terrorism and transnational organised crime, the nature of its alliances and respect for international law.

a) Having assessed the potential that the items could be used to commit or facilitate an act constituting an offence under international conventions or protocols to which the UK is a Party relating to terrorism or transnational organised crime, the Government will not grant a licence if it determines there is a clear risk that the items could be used to commit or facilitate such an act.

In making this assessment, the Government will also take account of the risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women or children; and

b) The Government will also take into account, inter alia, the record of the buyer country with regard to:

(i) its compliance with relevant international obligations, in particular on the non-use of force, including under international humanitarian law applicable to international and non-international conflicts;

(ii) its commitment to non-proliferation and other areas of arms control and disarmament, in particular the signature, ratification and implementation of relevant arms control and disarmament instruments referred to in Criterion One.

CRITERION SEVEN

The existence of a risk that the items will be diverted to an undesirable end-user or for an undesirable end-use.

In assessing the risk that the items might be diverted to an undesirable end-user or for an undesirable end-use, the Government will take into account:

a) the legitimate defence and domestic security interests of the recipient country, including any involvement in United Nations or other humanitarian or peace-keeping activity;

b) the technical capability of the recipient country to use the items;

c) the capability of the recipient country to exert effective export controls;

d) the risk of re-export to undesirable destinations;

e) the risk of diversion to terrorist organisations, individual terrorists or to transnational organised crime;

f) the risk of reverse engineering or unintended technology transfer; and

g) the risk of an undesirable end-use either by the stated end-user or another party.

CRITERION EIGHT

The compatibility of the transfer with the technical and economic capacity of the recipient country, taking into account the desirability that states should achieve their legitimate needs of security and defence with the least diversion for armaments of human and economic resources.

The Government will take into account, in the light of information from relevant sources such as United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, IMF and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reports, whether the proposed transfer would seriously undermine the economy or seriously hamper the sustainable development of the recipient country.

The Government will consider in this context, amongst other factors, the recipient country's relative levels of military and social expenditure, taking into account also any bilateral or multilateral aid, and its public finances, balance of payments, external debt, economic and social development and any IMF or World Bank-sponsored economic reform programme.

OTHER FACTORS

In exceptional circumstances the government may decide not to grant a licence for reasons other than those set out in Criteria 1 to 8 where the items may have a significant negative impact on the UK's international relations.

Telecoms Diversification: Taskforce Recommendations

[HLWS438]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure, Julia Lopez MP:

I would like to update the House on a package of measures and policy interventions we are announcing today to progress the Government's 5G Diversification Strategy and the recommendations of the Telecoms Supply Chain Diversification Taskforce.

Following a 5G Diversification Taskforce recommendation, the Government has worked closely with industry to confirm a date by which 2G and 3G networks will be switched off. The Government can now confirm that the mobile network operators do not intend to offer 2G and 3G mobile networks past 2033 at the latest. The Government welcomes that some individual operators will switch off their networks, particularly their 3G networks, earlier than this date, and will announce their own plans about when and how they intend to do this. The Government welcomes the responsible switching off of these networks, and will continue to work with network operators to ensure a smooth transition that meets the needs of business users and consumers, including vulnerable groups.

The Government is also announcing, together with UK mobile network operators, a joint ambition for 35% of the UK's mobile network traffic to be carried over open and interoperable Radio Access Network (RAN) architectures by 2030. The RAN is the part of the network that communicates directly with our devices, typically visible in the radio masts we see across the UK. Most networks today are characterised by closed 'black boxes' in which all of the components are highly integrated and provided by a single, highly-scaled vendor. 'Opening' the RAN seeks to disaggregate these components and functions, lowering barriers to entry and promoting innovation. The Government welcomes the steps taken by operators and suppliers to position the UK as a leader in the development of open and interoperable RAN technology and is pleased to commit £250 million of investment to support and accelerate this programme of work.

As part of this work to promote interoperable RAN, the Government will be providing just over £36 million of

investment to fund projects that span key technology challenges to Open RAN adoption as part of the Future RAN Competition (FRANC). This investment will also support industry, academia and local authorities across the UK to realise the benefits of high speed networks and create new commercial opportunities. Finally, the Government is investing a further £15 million in the SmartRAN Open Networks Interoperability Centre (SONIC Labs) to expand it into a fully-fledged interoperability testing facility that will break down barriers and support industry in developing interoperable solutions. This investment will enable the Lab to expand its programme of interoperability testing and international engagement. These projects will be subject to final grant funding agreement.

The interventions demonstrate the Government's commitment to delivering its Diversification Strategy and building lasting and sustainable supply for the infrastructure that underpins our entire digital economy. The Government will continue to update the House as this work progresses. Full details of the announcement will be published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) today.

UK Export Finance: Ukraine

[HLWS440]

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

The UK enjoys a strong relationship with Ukraine and is committed to supporting its security and economic prosperity. UK Export Finance (UKEF) has recently committed most of its market risk appetite for Ukraine to support a programme led by UK suppliers to upgrade the country's naval capability. To ensure that UKEF can continue to support UK exporters assist Ukraine with improvements to its national infrastructure, and in-line with wider HMG objectives, the Government has concluded that it is in the national interest to increase UKEF's market risk appetite for Ukraine to £3.5 billion and has instructed UKEF to make appropriate arrangements. This will leave around £1.2bn available for UKEF to support further priority projects, supporting skilled UK jobs and enabling additional UK exports to Ukraine.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 8 December 2021

Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to tackle the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. [HL4392]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan through the UN, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Red Cross on the ground, who are continuing to ensure vital aid reaches those who need it most. Between April and November, we disbursed over £70 million for life-saving humanitarian support, including for emergency food, health, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, and mine action. We are doubling our humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan this year, taking this up to £286 million. On 31 October the Prime Minister announced the allocation of £50 million of UK aid to trusted partners to provide emergency humanitarian aid within Afghanistan and minimise the humanitarian catastrophe over the winter months. We are developing firm plans for the allocation of the remainder of the £286 million and will make further announcements in due course.

Apprentices

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require employers to spend two-thirds of the funding for apprenticeships on under-25 year olds starting their careers. [HL4585]

Baroness Barran: It is a central principle of the apprenticeship programme that people can access apprenticeships throughout their lifetimes to help them upskill and re-train, as well as start out in their careers. Employers take the decisions about who they recruit as an apprentice, and which type and level of apprenticeship they offer.

To set an employer a requirement to spend two-thirds of funding for apprenticeships on those aged under 25 would restrict employers' recruitment choice and reduce opportunities for older employees to retrain or progress.

We recognise the value of apprenticeships in helping young people starting out in their careers, and we are delivering a range of measures to support them and employers. To promote apprenticeships to students and parents our Apprentice Support and Knowledge is working with 56 schools to raise awareness and demonstrate the range of opportunities. We are also creating clearer progression routes for young people completing T Levels and traineeships so that more can move into an apprenticeship, with their training being

accelerated to reflect their prior learning and qualifications.

To encourage employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities to young people we offer them, and training providers, an additional £1,000 so they can deliver effective support to each 16-18 year old apprentice they take on. We also make it more attractive for the smallest employers across the country to employ an apprentice by paying 100% of their training and assessment costs. Alongside this we are encouraging all employers to create new apprenticeship opportunities through the £3,000 employer incentive for hiring any new apprentices. This incentive payment has been extended until the end of January 2022, and has so far supported over 127,000 apprentice starts, of which 77% were aged 16 to 24.

Asylum

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office on 16 April (175879), whether they now intend to publish the internal review looking into the assessment of asylum claims on the grounds of (1) religion, and (2) sexuality. [HL4366]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has a proud record of providing protection to individuals fleeing persecution based on their religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity and are committed to delivering an asylum system that is responsive to all forms of persecution.

The review into the way asylum claims on the basis of religious and LGBT+ grounds are assessed has been completed. The Home Office do not have any plans to publish the findings of this internal review.

Asylum: Children

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children are currently waiting for a decision on their asylum application and have waited for over six months. [HL4363]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release, which can be found on go.uk. Data on the number of people awaiting a decision on an asylum application are published in table ASY_D03 of the 'asylum and resettlement detailed datasets', which can be found attached. Age breakdowns are not available in the published data.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Annex - Asylum and resettlement detailed datasets [asylum-applications-awaiting-decision-datasets-sep-2021 (1).xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-24/HL4363>

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether issuing priority removal notices and evidence notices to those under the age of 18 at the time of their arrival in the UK is compliant with (1) the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, (2) the Children Act 1989, and (3) the Children Act 2004. [HL4365]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As part of our obligations under the public sector equality duty, an equality impact assessment has been completed in respect of the measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill concerning priority removal notices and evidence notices, this includes a consideration of possible impacts on children.

Bangladesh: Political Prisoners

*Asked by **Lord Hussain***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Bangladesh about the release of political prisoners, particularly the former Prime Minister of that country. [HL4369]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I [Lord Ahmad] visited Bangladesh from 15 November to 17 November and met with the Government of Bangladesh, civil society actors and other key figures. During the visit I reiterated the UK's commitment to supporting human rights and democratic values.

We will continue to stress to the Government of Bangladesh, both in public and in private, the importance of respect for human rights and the rule of law. We expect those in detention, including Khaleda Zia, to be treated in accordance with Bangladesh's international commitments on human rights. We regularly engage with the Government of Bangladesh on the treatment of those in detention and on the integrity and independence of the judicial process.

British Nationality: British Indian Ocean Territory

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to allow descendants of the natives of the Chagos Archipelago to have the right to register as full British citizens. [HL4376]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Nationality and Borders Bill will introduce measures which will allow children of British Overseas Territories Citizen (BOTC) mothers, who were born before 1983; and the children of BOTC unmarried fathers who were born before 2006, to register as BOTCs.

Children of Chagossian mothers who left the Chagos Islands before 1969 would also be able to benefit from this change.

These changes to British nationality law will also allow these groups to acquire British citizenship more easily.

Burundi: Refugees

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the announcement made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 27 October that 60,000 refugees are voluntarily returning home to Burundi this year, what steps they will take to support (1) the UN, and (2) the refugees' return, and (3) integration in that country. [HL4546]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government welcomes the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in conjunction with governments in the neighbouring region, to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to Burundi. Working with its development partners, the Government of Burundi launched the 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan, which aims to support the safe and dignified return home of some 143,000 Burundian refugees in the sub-region and beyond, and to promote their sustainable reintegration. We continue to urge the Government of Burundi to ensure that the needs and rights of refugees, other displaced people and host communities are recognized and factored into socio-economic planning, as this is vital for underpinning sustainable returns and reintegration. The UK Government is supporting these efforts, including through funding to the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, and bilaterally for the reintegration and other humanitarian initiatives to support the refugee population. The UK has provided a total of £17 million of humanitarian support to Burundi between July 2017 and November 2021.

Children: Day Care

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the 30 hours funded childcare policy. [HL4410]

Baroness Barran: 30 hours free childcare is available to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, helping them with the cost of childcare and supporting parents back into work, or to work more hours if they wish to. To be eligible, parents have to earn the equivalent of at least 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage (for parents aged over 23, this is equivalent to just over £7,400 per year), and under £100,000 per year. The government currently has no plans to extend this scheme.

In addition to the 30 hours free childcare scheme, all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as some disadvantaged 2 year olds, in England are eligible for 15 hours free childcare. This provides them with high-quality early education and helping prepare them for school.

The government also offers Tax-Free Childcare, which contributes 20% towards childcare costs, and can save eligible working parents up to £2,000 for children aged 0-11, or up to £4,000 for disabled children aged 0-16.

For working parents on a low income, Universal Credit can reimburse up to 85% of childcare costs, up to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for 2 or more children.

Children: Social Services

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vulnerable children are in (1) council, or (2) social care, facilities in England. [HL4381]

Baroness Barran: The department collects data on the number of children looked after in local authority care in England. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide appropriate accommodation for all children that are looked after. This data is collected on the annual SSD903 'children looked after by local authorities in England' statistical return, and the latest figures relate to the collection year ending 31 March 2021.

These figures on the number of children looked after by their placement type were published on the 18 November 2021 in Table A5 of the annual statistical release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>. This is the first release of data covering the time period of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Climate Change Convention: Egypt

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with (1) other European states, and (2) the government of Egypt, to ensure that delegates to the COP27 climate change conference are able to travel to Egypt by low-carbon routes such as (a) rail, and (b) ferry. [HL4355]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Egypt, as COP27 Presidency, will put in place logistics arrangements for the COP27 conference in Sharm el Sheikh. However, as the current COP Presidency, we will work closely with Egypt over the coming year and will share our experience of organising a carbon-neutral COP, including transport planning.

In addition, we will work closely with all Parties, including European ones, throughout the UK's COP Presidency and, where appropriate, we will work with international partners to help to ensure that access for delegates to COP27 is through low or zero carbon travel.

Coal: Finance

Asked by **Lord Wigley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they (1) allocated, and (2) spent, in the financial years

(a) 2018–19, (b) 2019–20; and (c) 2020–21, on the maintenance of coal tips in England. [HL4176]

Lord Callanan: There are over 6,000 disused colliery tips in Great Britain, 2,460 of these are in Wales. Most of the colliery tips are now vegetated either through planned restoration or natural self-seeding. The Coal Authority currently owns 40 of the disused colliery tip sites in Great Britain (8 in England) and the spend profile for those tips is below:

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Allocated overall tips budget	385k	365k	365k
Actual overall tips spend	399k	345k	297k (covid affected)
English tips actual spend	13k	15k	15k

Source: *The Coal Authority*

Constitutions: Northern Ireland

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the UK. [HL4382]

Lord Caine: The Government is resolutely committed to the Union and will take every opportunity to promote Northern Ireland's integral place within it as we have said many times, while always upholding the consent principle we will never be neutral on Northern Ireland's position within our United Kingdom.

During this centenary year for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Government has proudly celebrated the contribution of Northern Ireland's people, culture, traditions and enterprise to our Union and the world.

The record settlement for Northern Ireland in the Spending Review demonstrated the clear benefits of the Union, with £15 billion per year in funding alongside investment through the New Deal, City and Growth Deals and the New Decade, New Approach financial package.

Together, this investment will deliver greater prosperity and stronger public services for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland. All of this underlines the enormous benefit Northern Ireland gains from being part of the fifth largest economy in the world.

The Government will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the benefits of levelling up are felt across the United Kingdom, and to make Northern Ireland an even better place to live, work and invest within it.

Contact Tracing: Travel Requirements

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to update, and (2) to simplify, the (a) design,

and (b) requirements, of the passenger locator forms required for international travellers arriving in England. [HL4386]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Passenger Locator Form has constantly evolved since its introduction in June 2020 to align with the requirements of the policies on international travel health requirements implemented by the Government and the Devolved Administrations.

It forms a vital part of the UK's pandemic response, helping to ensure safe and secure international travel and enabling health departments across the four nations to have robust trace and compliance assurance processes.

The Home Office, working in collaboration with departments across Whitehall and the Devolved Administrations, are in the process of reviewing the content of the form to simplify and improve usability of the system.

Further updates will be released on a continuing rolling basis as they are developed, streamlining the system, and adding new capabilities as international travel volumes continue to increase.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) number, and (2) value, of loans made under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to companies formed within 14 days before the application for the loans. [HL4401]

Lord Callanan: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) is a delegated scheme and lending decisions were made by the accredited lenders.

Destination Management Organisations: Reviews

Asked by Lord Taylor of Holbeach

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Nick de Bois The de Bois Review: an independent review of Destination Management Organisations in England, published on 14 September; and what steps they intend to take to implement its recommendations. [HL4408]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Destination Management Organisations have provided vital business support to local tourism organisations during this crisis, and will play a key role in helping our tourism industry recover.

We have long been aware of the arguments in favour of carrying out an independent review of how tourism is structured, organised and funded at a local level in England.

We welcome the report's publication, and thank Nick de Bois for his work. We will now take time to consider its recommendations and respond to them.

The Spending Review confirmed the DCMS settlement and the Department is currently deciding how to allocate it. The Government encourages DMOs to share information with VisitEngland and DCMS.

Domestic Abuse

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner Safety before Status, published on 20 October. [HL4377]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As per section 16 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Government has 56 days beginning with the day on which the report is published to respond to recommendations by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

The Government is carefully considering the recommendations in the 'Safety Before Status' report and will publish a response in due course.

Fishing Catches: France

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in resolving the dispute over licences for French fishermen operating in UK waters. [HL4371]

Lord Benyon: The Government has continued to work at pace with the European Commission as well as with the French authorities, with regular meetings held to make progress on licensing issues.

735 French vessels have been licenced to fish in UK waters since 31 December 2020, with 104 licences of those vessels also licensed to fish in the UK's 6-12nm zone.

Fly-tipping

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the maximum penalty for fly tipping; and when this figure last was reviewed. [HL4374]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The maximum penalty for fly-tipping is 12 months' imprisonment and an unlimited fine if convicted at a Magistrates' Court, or five years' imprisonment and an unlimited fine if convicted at Crown Court. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 was amended in 2015 to remove maximum limits on fines for fly-tipping.

Free School Meals: Migrants

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Benyon on 17 November (HL Deb, col 282), what plans they have to make arrangements for the long-term provision of free school meals to children in families with no recourse to public funds; and when they intend to publish any such plans. [HL4430]

Baroness Barran: The department has temporarily extended free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds in light of the current unique circumstances many families face at this time.

We are currently working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds.

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what review they are undertaking, if any, into the long-term provision of free school meals to children in families with no recourse to public funds; and when the outcome of any such review will be announced. [HL4604]

Baroness Barran: We are working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the extension of eligibility will continue with the current income threshold until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

Once the review is complete, we will update our guidance accordingly. Our current guidance regarding the extension can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>.

Gambling: Children

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to stop children aged 11 to 16 from becoming gambling addicts. [HL4380]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: All gambling operators providing facilities to British customers must comply with the conditions of their Gambling Commission licences, including measures to protect children and vulnerable people. It is an offence to allow children to participate in most forms of commercial gambling and there are strict requirements to verify age. All operators advertising in the UK must also abide by the advertising codes issued by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) in which a wide range of provisions are designed to protect children. CAP has consulted on tightening these rules further.

As part of the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum in England, young people are taught about the risks relating to gambling, including the accumulation of debt. To support teachers to deliver these topics safely and with confidence, the Department for Education has also developed a series of training modules, one of which has a specific section on gambling. Other curriculum subjects, such as citizenship, mathematics and computing, can also help develop young people's financial literacy and highlight the risks associated with gambling.

As part of its broad scope, the Gambling Act Review is looking at the effectiveness of existing measures to ensure the protection of young and vulnerable people from the risks associated with all types of gambling. We are considering the evidence carefully and will publish a white paper outlining conclusions and next steps in due course.

Immigration

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations, if any, they are having with religious groups about potential legislation on immigration. [HL4293]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government's New Plan for Immigration is delivering the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades. An essential element of the Plan is the Nationality and Borders Bill.

A public consultation on the Plan was held earlier this year, with a wide variety of stakeholders from different sections of our society taking part. The Government published its response to the consultation in July, and this can be found on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration>.

The Government regularly engages with individuals and groups with an interest in migration, including religious groups, as we take forward the Bill and deliver the New Plan for Immigration.

Immigration Controls: Biometrics

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce delays following the introduction of biometric border checks in May 2022 on (1) passengers in vehicles using ports, and (2) the Eurotunnel, to travel to the EU. [HL4387]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office work closely across government and with our international partners, especially at the juxtaposed controls we operate together with France, to reduce delays for people traveling to or from the UK and to ensure Border Security is maintained.

Decisions on the requirements to enter the EU's Schengen Zone are for our international partners to make, rather than the UK Government.

Iran: Nuclear Power

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel in advance of new talks, announced for 29 November, between the UK, China, France, Germany, Russia and Iran, on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including the prospect of the possible return of the United States to the JCPOA. [[HL4434](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to have regular discussions with a range of regional and international partners, including Israel, on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's nuclear escalation. We are clear that our priority is to see the US return to the deal, and Iran return to compliance with its commitments.

Most recently, on 29 November the Foreign Secretary hosted Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, to formalise a new plan for the UK - Israel bilateral relationship over the next decade. Iran was discussed, with the Foreign Secretary updating on the UK's efforts to restore the JCPOA through talks that restarted in Vienna on 29 November.

Libya: Politics and Government

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of disagreements between Libya's political factions over the legal framework adopted by the House of Representatives to allow for presidential and parliamentary elections to take place on 24 December, what assessment they have made of (1) the current political situation in Libya, and (2) the impact the recent resignation of the UN Special Envoy for Libya on international efforts to support the electoral process in that country. [[HL4433](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Free, fair and inclusive Parliamentary and Presidential elections on 24 December 2021, including women and youth's full, equal and meaningful participation, is one of the top priorities for the UK in Libya. They are captured in UK-drafted UN Security Council Resolution 2570, and in the communiqués agreed by the Berlin II Conference on 24 June and Paris Conference on 12 November. The UK is committed to supporting the UN facilitated, Libyan-led and owned political process. The UK is working with international and Libyan partners - including UN Special Envoy Ján Kubiš, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and the United Nations Secretary General - to pursue these priorities, restoring Libya's sovereignty and putting the country on a path to sustained peace, security and prosperity.

Myanmar: Sanctions

*Asked by **Baroness Cox***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 9 March (HL13390), what further steps they will take to ensure the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar are respected. [[HL4362](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar and their call for democracy. To this end the UK is working to ensure a strong and coordinated international response. As well as sanctions, the UK has secured strong statements through the G7 and UN Security Council. Most recently we secured a UN Security Council Press Statement on 10 November urging the military to end violence, protect civilians and ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. We worked to secure G7 Statements and a UN General Assembly Resolution on preventing the flow of arms to Myanmar and continue to work with partners to put pressure on those selling arms to the military. We are engaging with pro-democracy voices, including the NUG who the Minister for Asia met on 4 November. We are bolstering support to human rights monitoring and evidence gathering, including providing £500,000 to the UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, to ensure that there is a spotlight on human rights violations by the military. The UK has provided humanitarian assistance to over 500,000 people since the coup. Our humanitarian assistance includes water and sanitation, nutrition and lifesaving food. Our work on livelihoods, financial inclusion and food security continues to focus on reaching the most vulnerable and in the first half of 2021 has reached over 3 million households. The UK is supporting diverse civil society and pro-democracy voices, including women's rights organisations, LGBT+ groups and youth, to enable them to contribute to peacebuilding and to build a common vision for the future. We will continue to work closely with partners, particularly in ASEAN, to seek a resolution to the crisis in Myanmar.

Nigeria: Churches

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of warnings by bandits to Nigerians to close their churches or risk attacks; whether they have raised this with the government of Nigeria; and if so, what response they received. [[HL4525](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is concerned by increasing insecurity in Nigeria, including recent reports of criminal groups warning churches to close. The Government condemns all attacks on places of worship. We regularly raise rising insecurity and the importance of protecting civilians of all ethnicities and religions with both the Federal Government and State Governments in Nigeria. The British High Commission in Abuja has recently discussed these issues with the State

Governors of Benue, Katsina, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara State. On 1 November, the Minister for Africa raised insecurity in Nigeria with Foreign Minister Onyeama in a bilateral meeting at the COP26 summit in Glasgow. The Prime Minister also discussed insecurity with President Buhari in the margins of the Global Education Summit in July.

We continue to support inter-faith peacebuilding organisations to promote social cohesion and identify solutions to escalating violence across multiple states in Nigeria. The underlying drivers of violence are complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and economically-motivated criminality. We will continue to urge and support the Nigerian Government to take action to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

Prisoners: Racial Discrimination

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) what proportion, of prisoners' complaints about (a) racism, or (b) racial discrimination, were upheld in each of the last 10 years by ethnicity. [HL4358]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: All prisons are required to comply with the Prisoner complaints policy framework. This framework sets out requirements and information on providing a fair and effective system for dealing with prisoner complaints, including by ensuring procedural justice and taking a problem-solving approach for both adult prisoners and young people.

Separate to the Complaints procedure, a prisoner can submit a Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) if they feel they have been discriminated against any of the protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The DIRF process has been renewed to be launched in early 2022. As part of the updated process, and following a pilot in 2021, data will be collated regionally and nationally.

Until then, to confirm the number of racial complaints made by prisoners and which were upheld, a search of each prison's complaints log would be required. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Scientists: Migrant Workers

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to publicise the Global Talent Visa programme to potential applicants, particularly to scientists; and how they plan to measure their progress towards securing the UK's status as a Science and Tech Superpower by 2030, as promised in Global Britain in a competitive age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published on 16 March. [HL4435]

Lord True: The Office for Talent, with other government departments, is developing the GREAT campaign to attract those working in science and technology and inspire them to live and work in the United Kingdom. This will include highlighting the Global Talent visa route. The Home Office works hard to ensure the UK's immigration rules are clear and accessible and our visa system is easy to navigate for those who want to come to the UK.

The Prime Minister has put his science and technology superpower ambitions at the heart of government business by setting up the new National Science & Technology Council (NSTC). The new Office for Science & Technology Strategy in the Cabinet Office will inform and deliver the NSTC's vision - this includes monitoring the impact of its decisions on the UK's status as a science and technology superpower. The Government Office for Science's Technology and Science Insights team will provide independent and objective analysis to support this work.

Special Educational Needs: Pupil Exclusions

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have been informally excluded in the last academic year. [HL4547]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the National Autistic Society School Report 2021, published on 9 November; in particular, the findings about informal exclusions; and what steps they intend to take in response to ensure that schools do not practice such exclusions. [HL4548]

Baroness Barran: The department does not hold figures on the number of pupils who have been informally excluded from school. Informal exclusions are unlawful and therefore there is no mechanism for recording them.

The government is considering the National Autistic Society School Report 2021, which provides helpful insights into this practice. Further information on this report can be found at: https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/school-report-2021?dm_i=YA3,7MFOP,63DHO,V1NPQ,1&mc_cid=cd260af2f9&mc_eid=b460e5a1f.

The department makes clear in the 'Statutory Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions' guidance that 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions, such as sending pupils home 'to cool off', are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any suspension of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be in line with the relevant legislation and be recorded as a suspension.

The department will shortly be consulting on the 'Behaviour in Schools' guidance and the 'Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions' guidance. These will equip

headteachers to create calm, orderly, safe and supportive school environments where exclusions are only ever used lawfully and as a last resort.

Television Licences: Older People

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they are taking to overturn the BBC removal of free TV licences for those over 75 years old. [HL4378]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Government remains deeply disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the licence fee concession for people over the age of 75 to only those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for people over the age of 75 and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

The Digital Economy Act 2017 provides that the future of the concession is the responsibility of the BBC, not of the Government. This reform was subject to public discussion and debated extensively during the passage of the Act through Parliament. The BBC must ensure that it supports those affected by its decision, and it must look at how it uses its substantial licence fee income to support older people.

Unexplained Wealth Orders

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Unexplained Wealth Orders were issued each year under the Criminal Finances Act 2017; and in each case, (1) what was the value of the wealth, (2) what subsequent prosecutions took place, and (3) what were the outcomes of any such prosecutions. [HL4397]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Unexplained wealth orders (UWOs) and accompanying interim freezing orders have been used in four investigations to date. Two of those investigations have concluded, two are ongoing. On 8 April 2020 the High Court discharged UWOs sought in a single investigation, permission to appeal was refused. On 2 October 2020, the High Court approved a settlement for the recovery of property with a combined value of £9,802,828, subsequent to a UWO investigation. Prosecutions do not succeed UWO application, which are a civil process. Enforcement authorities with the powers to seek UWOs are operationally independent.

Universities

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) universities, (2) university students, and (3) vice-chancellors or their equivalents, there were in (a) 1991, and (b) 2020. [HL4367]

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total aggregate remuneration of vice-chancellors or their equivalents in (1) 1991, and (2) 2020. [HL4368]

Baroness Barran: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data on students and staff at higher education (HE) providers in the UK. Latest statistics refer to the academic year 2019/20.

Data on the number of student enrolments at HE providers in the academic year 2019/20 are available in Table 1 of HESA's HE Student Data pages: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-1>. This includes students registered at universities, university colleges and specialised HE providers but excludes those registered at further education (FE) colleges. 107 providers held full University status in England as of November 2021 and 1,836,205 students at undergraduate and postgraduate level were registered with them in the academic year 2019/20. Each had one head of provider (Vice-Chancellor or equivalent).

Equivalent statistics for the academic year 1991/92 were compiled by the Universities Central Council on Admissions. Volume 1 of the 1991/92 students and staff publication from the Universities' Statistical Record [1] shows that there were 346,587 undergraduate and postgraduate students registered at 34 universities in the academic year 1991/92. This count excludes students registered at FE colleges and former polytechnics.

Data on the total remuneration of each head of provider in the academic year 2019/20 are available in Table 11 of HESA's HE Finance Data pages: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/table-11>. In 2019/20, the total remuneration (before salary sacrifice) of the heads of 105[2] providers that held University Title in England as of November 2021 was £30,243,000. Data for the academic year 1991/92 is not available.

[1] The USR publication is not readily available online but is available to users registered with the UK Data Service: <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>.

[2] Excluding University of Buckingham and Regent's University London, which are not available.

Utilities: Energy Supply

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the number of suppliers selling (1) gas, and (2) electricity, to (a) households, and (b) businesses. [HL4313]

Lord Callanan: The Government believes competition is the best driver of value and innovation in the energy market, giving households and businesses the best deals.

Together with Ofgem, the Government is considering what reforms are needed to improve competition and resilience in the energy retail market. In considering these

reforms, the Government will take account of the lessons learned from the current market.

The Government is also working with the energy industry to put it on a more stable footing in the longer-term. This includes continuing to build a robust domestic renewable energy sector so that Government is less exposed to global volatility in natural gas supply and demand.

Veterinary Medicine: Farms

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the present number of farm veterinary job vacancies; and what steps they plan to take (1) to increase the number of farm vets, and (2) to encourage a new generation to enter the profession. [HL4436]

Lord Benyon: The Department is aware of challenges for veterinary businesses recruiting across all sectors of the profession, including farm animal vets. We have not specifically estimated the number of vacancies in the farm veterinary sector. The opening of new veterinary schools in the UK means that the numbers of veterinarians being trained here continues to grow. We are working with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the British Veterinary Association and other stakeholders to support their work to encourage recruitment and retention in the profession. We are giving careful consideration to the RCVS's proposals, which aim to increase opportunities for veterinary nurses and other allied professionals as part of a vet-led team, creating a more robust and flexible workforce, and to foster a professional environment that is inclusive and attractive to those wishing to pursue a veterinary career.

Windrush Compensation Scheme

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to withdraw the responsibility for the Windrush Compensation Scheme from the Home Office and give the responsibility to an independent body. [HL4412]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Moving the operation of the Scheme from the Home Office would risk significantly delaying payments to people.

Since the changes we made to the Scheme in December, the amount of compensation paid has risen from less than £3 million to over £31.6 million, with a further £5.6 million having been offered, and there is no cap on the amount of compensation we will pay out.

The compensation scheme continues to be subject to robust internal scrutiny and regular scrutiny from external stakeholders.

Youth Custody: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by **Lord Bradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) what proportion, of incidents of the use of force in the children's custodial estate were recorded in each of the last 10 years by the child's ethnicity. [HL4357]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Data on the use of force on children in the youth custodial estate is included in the aggregated annually published "Youth Justice Statistics" report which form part of the Youth justice statistics series.

Table 8.6 in the supplementary tables of the 2019 to 2020 edition, published this January, gives data on Incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) sorted by ethnicity age and gender for years ending March between 2015 and 2020. The same table in the 2017 to 2018 edition covers the period from 2012 to 2018. The 2020 to 2021 edition is due to be published on 27 January 2022 and will include data for the year ending March 2021.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table [HL4357 - Lord Bradley - UoF in the youth estate by ethnicity - Data.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-24/HL4357>

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Asylum Seekers: Right to Work Policy.....1	Scientists: Migrant Workers 12
Export Control Regime.....1	Special Educational Needs: Pupil Exclusions ... 12
Telecoms Diversification: Taskforce Recommendations5	Television Licences: Older People 13
UK Export Finance: Ukraine.....5	Unexplained Wealth Orders 13
Written Answers.....6	Universities..... 13
Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation6	Utilities: Energy Supply 13
Apprentices.....6	Veterinary Medicine: Farms 14
Asylum6	Windrush Compensation Scheme..... 14
Asylum: Children6	Youth Custody: Ethnic Groups..... 14
Bangladesh: Political Prisoners7	
British Nationality: British Indian Ocean Territory7	
Burundi: Refugees.....7	
Children: Day Care.....7	
Children: Social Services8	
Climate Change Convention: Egypt.....8	
Coal: Finance.....8	
Constitutions: Northern Ireland.....8	
Contact Tracing: Travel Requirements.....8	
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme 9	
Destination Management Organisations: Reviews9	
Domestic Abuse9	
Fishing Catches: France9	
Fly-tipping.....9	
Free School Meals: Migrants.....10	
Gambling: Children.....10	
Immigration10	
Immigration Controls: Biometrics.....10	
Iran: Nuclear Power.....11	
Libya: Politics and Government11	
Myanmar: Sanctions.....11	
Nigeria: Churches.....11	
Prisoners: Racial Discrimination.....12	