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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, 13 December 2021

Counter Fraud Funding

[HLWS459]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: My honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (David Rutley MP) has made the following Written Statement:

Fraud is stealing from honest taxpayers. It is right we bring the collective weight of government to bear on this growing challenge and I am determined to take further decisive action.

Across government, 16,000 people, including counter fraud experts, are currently working to tackle fraud. The world's first Government Counter Fraud Function works to identify new and emerging fraud risks and to support departments to improve capability to access and use data and analytics to tackle these risks.

My Department has worked hard to drive out fraud. Officials prevented more than £1.9bn of fraud during the first year of the pandemic through strengthening our checks and disrupting the operations of Serious and Organised Crime Groups.

However, it is clear that we need to go further, both in terms of eradicating fraud from our current cases and designing fraud out of the system.

At Spending Review (SR) 2021, DWP secured £103m for fraud and error activity to continue funding key fraud and error detection and prevention work originally agreed in Spring Budget 2021. This first phase of funding enables DWP to secure the completion of our current transformation programme which will enhance our ability to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Today, I can announce additional funding of £510m over the next three years. This second phase of funding, which will deliver significant savings over the SR period, will enable us to drive down the level of Fraud in Universal Credit (UC) and collect more debt, through:

a. A targeted review of UC claims to allow us to systematically review stock UC cases to uncover fraud and error and remove it from the system.

b. A Debt Enforcement Function to allow us to target hard to collect debt.

This funding also includes provision for a Fraud Prevention Fund, which will allow us to explore and test innovative approaches to designing out fraud and error. This investment represents a further important step towards our long-term vision, dramatically reducing the level of fraud and error in the UC stock and more effective collection of debt while continuing to provide effective counter fraud operations on a larger scale.

Director of Labour Market Enforcement's Strategies 2020-21 and 2021-22

[HLWS458]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Rachel Maclean) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Alongside my hon Friend the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets (Paul Scully), I am today publishing the Labour Market Enforcement Strategies for 2020-21 and 2021-22, submitted by the previous Director of Labour Market Enforcement, Matthew Taylor. The Strategies will be available on GOV.UK

The Director of Labour Market Enforcement's role was created by the Immigration Act 2016 to bring better focus and strategic co-ordination to the enforcement of labour market legislation by the three enforcement bodies which are responsible for state enforcement of specific employment rights:

- The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS);
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs National Minimum and Living Wage enforcement team (HMRC NMW/NLW team); and
- The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

Under Section 2 of The Act, The Director of Labour Market Enforcement is required by the Immigration Act 2016 to prepare an annual labour market enforcement strategy, which assesses the scale and nature of non-compliance in the labour market and sets priorities for future enforcement by the three enforcement bodies and the allocation of resources needed to deliver those priorities.

Before his term ended, Matthew Taylor submitted these strategies ahead of the statutory deadlines. It was important to take the time to work with the Director and the enforcement bodies to ensure the strategies were making the right recommendations in the face of the challenges to the labour market presented by the pandemic. We are now working closely with the enforcement bodies as they implement the recommendations alongside their day-to-day enforcement activities.

In previous years, we have published a government response to the strategies setting out the approach we will take to the recommendations. For the latest strategies, we have instead worked closely with the Director and their office and the enforcement bodies to agree the recommendations ahead of publication of the strategies.

I thank Matthew Taylor for his contribution over the 18 months he spent in the role. I am looking forward to working with the new Director, Margaret Beels, who took up the role in November 2021. Margaret brings with her

extensive industry experience, having been Chair of Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) since 2011, where she led on work to tackle and prevent modern slavery and labour exploitation – and which she was honoured with an OBE for in 2020.

As we continue to support workers and root out exploitation by rogue employers, Margaret's experience will be invaluable, and I look forward to working with her in helping to build an economy that works for all.

Duchy of Lancaster Estate 2020-21

[HLWS455]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I have today laid before Parliament, pursuant to Section 86 of the Climate Change Act 2008, the "State of the Estate in 2020-21". This report describes the progress made on the efficiency and sustainability of the central government estate and, where relevant, records the progress that the Government has made since the previous year. The report is published on an annual basis.

Human Rights Sanctions Designations: Myanmar

[HLWS456]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On International Human Rights Day, 10 December, the UK announced a further tranche of sanctions in response to the military coup in Myanmar under the Myanmar Sanctions Regulations 2021. Asset freezes have been imposed on four Myanmar entities responsible for manufacturing or procuring arms and equipment and providing support and finance to the Myanmar military, which has continued to undermine democracy and violate the fundamental rights of the civilian population. The UK is committed to preventing the flow of arms to Myanmar and will continue to use sanctions and diplomatic pressure to this end.

In parallel, the UK imposed an asset freeze and travel ban on one individual under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020 for serious human rights abuses in Pakistan. The designation of a former Lashkar-e-Jhangvi commander who facilitated the 2017 bombing of the Lal Shahbaz Qalandar shrine, which killed at least 70 people sends a strong message that the UK will use all tools at our disposal to defend Freedom of Religion and Belief.

The UK announced the designations during the US-hosted Summit for Democracy, as part of our commitment to continue to use our targeted sanctions to defend human rights as well as counter serious corruption globally.

The full list of designations is below:

Under the Myanmar Sanctions Regulations 2021

Myanmar

- 1) The Quarter Master General's Office
- 2) The Directorate for Defence Industries, a state-owned enterprise
- 3) The Department for Defence Procurement.
- 4) The Myanmar War Veterans Organisation, a quasi-reserve force for the Myanmar military

Under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020

Pakistan

- 1) Furqan Bangalzai; a former commander in the terror organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

Transport for London Funding Settlement: Interim Extension

[HLWS457]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I am updating the House on an interim extension of the current Transport for London funding settlement that was due to expire on 11 December 2021 by one week. This has been agreed by the Mayor of London.

On 08 December, the Department for Transport received a letter from the Mayor of London that provided further information on how Transport for London and the Mayor will raise new income of between £0.5bn and £1bn in line with the commitment agreed under the June 2021 emergency settlement. This response was already three weeks past the original deadline of 12 November. Government requires further clarification on these proposals and the Mayor of London has been asked to provide more detailed information by 15 December. Should sufficient information be received, work on an extended further settlement will continue, to support the capital and its transport network. We have thus far supported London with over £4bn funding and will make sure services are protected whilst work on the next settlement is underway.

Support to Transport for London has always been on the condition that Transport for London reaches financial sustainability as soon as possible and with a target date of April 2023. The condition on identifying new or increased income sources is integral to Transport for London achieving that objective. An extension of the existing funding settlement will provide Transport for London with support until 17 December 2021 by rolling-over the provisions of the existing settlement, providing continued support to Transport for London and certainty to Londoners while we work with Transport for London on their funding needs.

The Government is committed to supporting London and the transport network on which it depends, whilst balancing that with supporting the national transport network. I will update the House on the details of the next financial settlement after the close of this extension period.

Written Answers

Monday, 13 December 2021

Afghanistan: Politics and Government

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the state of governance in Afghanistan; and what is their assessment of the international implications of this governance. [HL4456]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Afghanistan needs inclusive politics that reflects the country's diversity and represents all its communities, including women. Under the previous government, women held over a quarter of the seats in Afghanistan's parliament. We are deeply concerned about human rights in Afghanistan, including violence and discrimination towards religious minorities, and the rights of women and girls.

We have made inclusivity and human rights central to our contact with the Taliban to date, including the visit to Kabul on 5 October by the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan Transition, Sir Simon Gass. The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan on its path to a more peaceful future. We will continue to work with international partners to call for freedom of religion, and the rights of women and girls to be respected. For international acceptance, the Taliban must ensure safe passage for those who wish to leave the country, respect the rights of women and girls and prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a place where terrorism flourishes. Alongside human rights, we have prioritised the importance of good governance to help reduce the impact of terrorism, migration and corruption, as well as supporting regional stability.

Ambulance Services: South West

Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that ambulance services in the south-west of England are working at full capacity; and what steps they are taking in that region (1) to increase (a) ambulances, and (b) crews, and (2) to reduce waiting times for ambulances arriving at hospitals. [HL4429]

Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that the South Western Ambulance Service (SWAS) is at its highest state of escalation primarily due to increased 999 activity, handover delays at emergency departments and the impact of COVID-19. To increase the number of ambulances and crews, SWAS is recruiting an additional 80 whole time equivalent 999 call answering staff and 50 paramedics. To reduce waiting times for ambulances arriving at hospitals, SWAS continues to work with acute hospitals and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve patient handover times and reduce delays.

Armed Forces: Deployment

Asked by **Lord Tunncliffe**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel are currently deployed in the UK; and of these, what sectors they are deployed in. [HL4519]

Baroness Goldie: As of 10 December, 1,022 military personnel were deployed in the UK. They were deployed across the following sectors: Health, Energy, Security, Transport, and local community support.

Armed Forces: Injuries

Asked by **Lord Coaker**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel have been injured by challenger tanks in each year from 2016 to 2021; and what injuries were sustained. [HL4469]

Baroness Goldie: From 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021, two UK Armed Forces personnel died and 80 were injured as a result of incidents relating to a Challenger armoured vehicle. The incidents identified include the Challenger battle tank as well as the Challenger Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle (CRARRV).

Table 1: UK armed forces personnel injured in incidents relating to a Challenger Armoured Vehicle, by financial year

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021

| <i>Injury Type</i> | <i>Count</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 2016-17 | 18 |
| 2017-18 | 21 |
| 2018-19 | 10 |
| 2019-20 | 15 |
| 2020-21 | 16 |

Source: Defence Statistics Health

Table 2: UK armed forces injured in incidents relating to a challenger armoured vehicle

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021

| <i>Injury Type</i> | <i>Number</i> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Superficial Injury (e.g. bruise) | 8 |
| Crush | 12 |
| Cut / Laceration | 12 |
| Fracture | 10 |
| Pain | 10 |
| Muscle Spasm / Muscle Strain | 6 |
| Other ¹ | 22 |

Source: Defence Statistics Health

¹ In line with JSP 200, this category combines injuries where the number was fewer than three in order to protect individual identities.

Note the numbers in this response include incidents where an injury occurred e.g. due to a person slipping or falling off the tank or performing maintenance of the tank.

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel have been injured by warrior vehicles in each year from 2016 to 2021; and what injuries were sustained. [HL4470]

Baroness Goldie: From 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021, 110 UK Armed Forces personnel were injured as a result of an incident relating to a Warrior armoured vehicle.

Table 1: UK armed forces personnel injured in incidents relating to a Warrior Armoured Vehicle, by financial year

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021

| <i>Injury Type</i> | <i>Count</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 2016-17 | 20 |
| 2017-18 | 23 |
| 2018-19 | 23 |
| 2019-20 | 30 |
| 2020-21 | 14 |

Source: Defence Statistics Health

Table 2: UK armed forces personnel injured in incidents involving a Warrior Armoured Vehicle, by injury type

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021

| <i>Injury Type</i> | <i>Number</i> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Superficial Injury (e.g. bruise) | 15 |
| Crush | 10 |
| Cut / Laceration | 14 |
| Fracture | 10 |
| Pain | 19 |
| Muscle Spasm / Muscle Strain | 9 |
| Other ¹ | 20 |
| Not Specified | 13 |

Source: Defence Statistics Health

¹ In line with JSP 200, this category combines injuries where the number was fewer than three in order to protect individual identities.

Note the numbers in this response include incidents where an injury occurred e.g. due to a person slipping or falling off the tank or performing maintenance of the tank.

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel have been injured during testing of Boxer armoured personnel carriers. [HL4471]

Baroness Goldie: Since placement of the contract for the Boxer Mechanised Infantry Vehicle in late 2019 there have been no recorded reportable injuries of UK Armed Forces personnel, including during the initial static trials exercises.

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel have been injured during testing of Challenger 3. [HL4472]

Baroness Goldie: Since placement of the contract for the programme in March 2021 there have been no recorded reportable injuries of UK Armed Forces personnel in relation to Challenger 3.

Armed Forces: Redundancy

Asked by Lord Tunncliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many armed forces personnel have received a (1) forced, and (2) voluntary, redundancy package in each year from 2016 to 2021. [HL4518]

Baroness Goldie: There has not been a programme of 'forced' or compulsory redundancy since the UK Armed Forces redundancy programme of 2011-15. The redundancies in all four tranches of that programme were compulsory and the vast majority of Service personnel who were made redundant through it had left Service by March 2016. Another eight personnel left their Service on redundancy terms between April 2016 and December 2017.

A small number, under ten, have been made redundant since December 2017. These were in respect of personnel whose posts or organisations had been restructured and meant as a result of their terms and conditions of service, and after exhausting all other options, that compensatory redundancy was the only alternative.

Army: Deployment

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to remarks made by Baroness Goldie on 25 November (HL Deb, col 1057), how many regional hubs for army deployment and training are being created; where they are being created; and when they will be operational. [HL4467]

Baroness Goldie: Land Regional Hubs will be established as part of the wider Defence Global Hub concept that will support the delivery of regional Military Strategic Objectives. The Army will capitalise on our pre-existing network of overseas bases in Oman, Kenya,

Brunei, Belize and Germany, integrating with and augmenting the existing global network for Defence.

Army: Equipment

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to remarks made by Baroness Goldie on 25 November (HL Deb, col 1057), what electromagnetic capabilities are being developed for use by the army; and when they will be operational. [HL4468]

Baroness Goldie: The Army is working with the capability sponsors in Strategic Command to develop a modern range of capabilities, which will allow all ground-based forces to safely operate within and exploit the electromagnetic spectrum. The capabilities under development fall into three categories: the first category will enhance our ability to understand our adversaries' information and capabilities. The second will improve our ability to counter electronic threats to the deployed force, whilst the third will enhance our ability to deliver electronic attack against adversarial targets.

These capabilities will contribute a critical part of delivery of the Integrated Force Structure ready by 2030 as outlined in Future Soldier.

Botswana: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of comments by President Masisi of Botswana on 2 December that (1) the Omicron variant of COVID-19 may have been brought into Botswana by European diplomats, (2) that travel bans on Botswana are "unacceptable, inhumane and demeaning", and (3) that no one is safe until everyone has access to vaccines. [HL4685]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government acted quickly to impose travel restrictions, including on travellers from Botswana, when the Omicron variant first appeared. This was to protect the progress made in the UK while we work to better understand the challenges of the new variant. We recognise the frustrations in the many countries affected and the Minister for Africa spoke to her counterpart in Botswana on 26 November to discuss and explain the restrictions. UK scientists are working closely with colleagues around the world to tackle COVID-19 and will keep the travel restrictions under review.

The UK is committed to ensuring that people in the poorest countries receive vaccines. We were a leader in setting up the international COVAX facility, to provide access to vaccines for both self-financing countries and up to 92 low and middle income countries eligible for subsidised vaccine doses. As a self-financing participant in COVAX, Botswana has received 700,000 COVID vaccine doses to date.

Boxer Vehicles

Asked by Lord Tunncliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what development issues have been found during the testing of Boxer armoured personnel carriers. [HL4516]

Baroness Goldie: Since the placement of contract for the Boxer Mechanised Infantry Vehicle in late 2019 the project has been in a period of design finalisation which is nearing conclusion. No development issues have been identified to date, including during verification and validation trials.

Carbon Emissions

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the level of worldwide carbon emissions in 2021; and what estimate they have made of projected carbon emissions in (1) 2022, (2) 2023, (3) 2024, and (4) 2025. [HL4454]

Lord Callanan: Various sources suggest a rebound in emissions in 2021, along with the economic recovery after the pandemic, to just below 2019 levels.

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Gap report 2021 estimated total global emissions of 58.1Gt CO₂ for 2019 (the latest year available for all greenhouse gases). Fossil fuel CO₂ made up 37.9Gt, but fell 5.4% to 36Gt CO₂ in 2020. The International Energy Agency (IEA) and Global Carbon Project suggest a rebound in 2021 with an increase on 2020 levels of 4.8-4.9% in CO₂.

Various projections from UNEP, IEA, BloombergNEF and others suggest plateauing or slowly growing emissions beyond 2021 if we don't increase global action. This underscores the need to urgently increase both ambition and action to deliver the commitments made at Glasgow, and go further to continue closing the gap to 1.5°C.

The Glasgow Climate Pact, combined with increased ambition across adaptation, finance and mitigation means that 1.5°C remains in sight, but only with concerted and immediate global efforts.

The pact will speed up the pace of climate action this decade, with all countries agreeing to revisit their emissions targets in 2022, as well as developed countries agreeing to double support for action on adapting to climate change by 2025.

Challenger Tanks

Asked by Lord Tunncliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what development issues have been found during the testing of Challenger 3. [HL4517]

Baroness Goldie: The Challenger 3 programme is in the early stages of system design and development. No development issues have been identified to date.

Children: Day Care

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to enable disadvantaged children to benefit from early education and childcare; and what plans they have, if any, to extend the 30 hours per week entitlement to all children aged three to four. [HL4636]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to providing children with the best start in life and supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable children by investing in high quality early education and local services.

The department has invested £180 million on recovery programmes to raise quality in early education, including improving early language, training early years staff to support the very youngest children, and supporting parents with home learning.

We have also announced £300 million to transform services for parents, babies, carers, and children in half of local authorities in England. This is a significant investment that will have wide reach across the country and improve outcomes for thousands of babies, children, carers and families. As part of this £300 million, we have announced a further £82 million to create a network of family hubs in 75 areas.

30 hours free childcare is available to working parents of three- and four-year-olds, helping them with the cost of childcare and supporting parents back into work or to work more hours. To be eligible, parents must earn the equivalent of at least 16 hours a week at national minimum or 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.

Additionally in England, all three- and four-year-olds, and some disadvantaged two-year-olds, are eligible for 15 hours free childcare. This provides them with high-quality early education, helping prepare them for school.

The early years pupil premium gives providers additional funding (up to £302 per eligible child per year) for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds if the child receives the universal 15 hours entitlement and they meet the eligibility criteria. Early years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children so that local authorities can provide the appropriate funding.

China: Detainees

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China regarding reports that 1,100 North Korean escapees are currently detained in China; when they last

made representations to the government of China regarding its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention; and what response they have received to any such representations. [HL4449]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of disturbing reports of North Korean escapees detained in China. The UK actively promotes the implementation of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. We continue to emphasise directly to China that the authorities should not be detaining North Korean refugees with the intention of returning them to North Korea and to abide by the principle of non-refoulement.

China: Guided Weapons

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the (1) development, and (2) testing, of hypersonic missile technology by the government of China. [HL4506]

Baroness Goldie: China is investing in new capabilities, including hypersonic weapons. We continue to monitor global developments in advanced missile and other technologies which may pose a threat to the UK. Insights into potential future threat capabilities and technologies informed the development of the Integrated Review.

Coastal Areas and Rivers: Sewage

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many, and (2) which, measures they intend to take to reduce sewage discharges into rivers and coastal waters in the current price review. [HL4487]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Water companies set out the measures that are to be taken as part of a price review period in their business plans. For 2020-2025, water companies have committed £3.1 billion to a programme of improvements to monitoring and management of sewer overflows, including £1.9 billion of investment in the Thames Tideway Tunnel. This will deliver over 800 improvement schemes in response to Event Duration Monitoring insights and implementing additional monitoring to cover 100% of the network by the end of 2023.

Companies have also already re-opened their business plans as part of our efforts to build back greener from the pandemic. In July 2021, Ofwat approved a draft package of over £2.7 billion and as part of this new package of investment, companies committed an additional £144 million to help eliminate the harm caused by Storm Overflows and to trial the creation of two bathing rivers.

However, the Government has been clear that the current number of sewage discharges is unacceptable and that there is more to do. We have made tackling this a

priority and are the first Government to take concerted action to tackle this historic infrastructure issue.

In July, the Government published a new draft set of strategic priorities for the water industry's financial regulator, Ofwat. In this publication, the Government set out its expectation that water companies must take steps to "significantly reduce the frequency and volume of sewage discharges from storm overflows."

The Environment Act then placed this direction on a statutory footing, setting a duty for water companies to achieve a progressive reduction in the adverse impacts of discharges from Storm Overflows. Defra intends to set out the level of ambition expected by this in due course.

Precisely which measures will be achieved by Water and Sewerage Companies in the next price review period will be a case for the Environment Agency and Water Companies to agree in the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) and will be reflected in water company business plans, but we have been clear that increased ambition is needed, and this will be laid out early in the new year.

Community Relations

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask Her Majesty's Government which ministers sit on the Safe and Integrated Communities Inter-Ministerial Group; and how many times has the Group met in the last 12 months. [HL4550]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government is committed to ensuring that our communities are both safe and well integrated. This is at the heart of our mission to level up communities across the whole of the UK. The specific inter-ministerial group last met in 2019. Ministers and officials continue to meet regularly, driving forward vital work across Government – and in local places – to create socially and economically stronger, more confident and integrated communities.

Copyright: Publications

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of an international copyright exhaustion regime on the UK's book exports; and what plans they have, if any, to publish this assessment. [HL4475]

Lord Callanan: The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. The potential impact of an international exhaustion regime on the UK's book exports is likely to form part of the overall assessment, alongside the potential effect on other sectors of the economy. The Government will provide an update on this consultation in due course.

Copyright: Writers

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of an international copyright exhaustion regime on author incomes; and what plans they have, if any, to publish this assessment. [HL4476]

Lord Callanan: The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. The potential impact of an international exhaustion regime on author incomes is likely to form part of the overall assessment, alongside the potential effect on other sectors of the economy. The Government will provide an update on this consultation in due course.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of the UK's vaccines they intend to donate to developing countries; and through what mechanism they will make such donations. [HL4674]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Prime Minister has committed the UK to donating 100 million COVID-19 vaccines by mid-2022. At the G20 last month, he set out plans to deliver the first 70 million. All donations will go to developing countries, and at least 80% will be donated through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC).

Egypt: Christianity

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the freedom for Christians, including missionaries, to practise their religion in Egypt. [HL4495]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government of Egypt has stated its commitment to protecting the rights of minorities and freedom of worship. We have been encouraged by the positive steps the Government of Egypt has taken in recent years, including President Sisi's public commitments, to uphold the rights of minorities and freedom of worship. There has also been a number of protections for freedom of religion enshrined in Egypt's constitution and the Middle East's largest cathedral was opened in Egypt in 2019. The Prime Minister and President Sisi have discussed the importance of protecting freedom of religion and belief, most recently during their meeting in Glasgow on 1 November.

Electronic Funds Transfer: Fraud

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of how many Direct Debits are set up

fraudulently each year through the Automated Direct Debit Instruction Service (AUDDIS); what assessment they have made of whether AUDDIS offers sufficient security against the establishment of fraudulent Direct Debits; and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of any sanctions in place for AUDDIS originators found to be responsible for repeated fraud attempts. [[HL4466](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Bacs Direct Debit scheme is operated by Pay.UK, a private sector payment system operator. Bacs has been recognised and designated by HM Treasury and is subject to the regulatory oversight of the Bank of England and the Payment Systems Regulator respectively. Refund requests under the Direct Debit Guarantee, including where fraud is suspected, are made on a small proportion of all direct debits collected. In order to receive Direct Debit payments, businesses and other organisations must be ‘sponsored’ by a Payment Service Provider that participates in Bacs (usually their bank). Businesses undergo stringent checks to ensure their identity and that they understand their responsibilities and obligations when using the Direct Debit scheme. Pay.UK also has a range of sanctions available to them that can be used against businesses that do not comply with the Bacs rules, ultimately including removing them from the service altogether if necessary.

Energy: Meters

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many households are yet to receive smart meters; and when they anticipate the smart meter roll out will be completed. [[HL4536](#)]

Lord Callanan: The smart meter rollout is making good progress, with 26.4 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain by end September 2021, including 24.8 million smart meters in domestic premises. Nearly half (47%) of meters in households are smart meters.

The Government has confirmed that a new four-year policy framework with fixed minimum annual installation targets for energy suppliers will commence on 1 January 2022 to drive the consistent, long-term investment needed to deliver the rollout.

Ferries: Isles of Scilly

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 22 November (HL3917), whether they will place in the Library of the House a copy of the Options Assessment Report produced by the Council of the Isles of Scilly regarding passenger and freight vehicles. [[HL4453](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Council of the Isles of Scilly scheme is a larger transport scheme (over £20m) and so is subject to further business case requirements, as

set out in the Levelling Up Fund Technical Note. Officials from the Department for Transport have been in contact with the Council of the Isles of Scilly to discuss further business case requirements which will involve development of the business case over the coming months. It would not be appropriate for the Department to publish specific elements of this bid at this time due to the ongoing development of the Council of the Isles of Scilly business case, as disclosure could prejudice the commercial interests of any party.

Floods: Plastics

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the damage done by single use plastics in terms of causing flooding; and what steps they intend to take to reduce such damage. [[HL4488](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Wet wipes are a significant contributor to sewer blockages - which can in turn contribute to flooding. Defra has recently launched a call for evidence to better understand the impact of wet wipes in sewers and is exploring options such as a ban on wipes containing plastic, a mandatory standard and labelling for all wipes. More information can be found at: [Call for evidence on commonly littered and problematic plastic items - Defra - Citizen Space](#). More broadly, litter of all types can make flooding worse, and Defra's proposed measures to reduce the use of single-use plastics, as well as broader measures to control litter and illegal waste will help mitigate this issue.

Gaza: Medical Equipment

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that medical equipment intended for the care of cancer patients in Gaza is being held in Egypt; and what steps they are taking to secure the release to Gaza of any such medical equipment. [[HL4480](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to monitor the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza. We urge access into and out of Gaza, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, for humanitarian actors, reconstruction materials and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes. We continue to urge the Egyptian authorities to show maximum flexibility in maintaining access through the Rafah crossing. The critically ill in Gaza should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

Government Departments: Staff

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many staff are directly supporting intergovernmental relations; in which departments they are based; and in which

locations in each part of the UK they are based. [HL4509]

Lord Greenhalgh: Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) is a cross-government priority, involving officials in all Government Departments. There is a dedicated team in the Cabinet Office, based across the UK, focusing on IGR specifically and supporting the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in his role as Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

Guided Weapons

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have either (1) alone, or (2) with allies, to create a hypersonic missile technology programme. [HL4505]

Baroness Goldie: The UK regularly considers the balance of investment choices across multiple defence capabilities, including investments in Hypersonic and CounterHypersonic missiles.

Hypersonic flight (generally accepted as speeds greater than Mach 5) presents technical challenges, and we work as necessary with suitable international partners to develop hypersonic capabilities. This includes the US, through the Next Generation Capability Cooperation agreement, and the MoD is actively exploring Hypersonic opportunities through AUKUS.

Health Services: Foreign Nationals

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Public Policy Research Towards True Universal Care: Reforming the NHS Charging System, published on 23 November; and what plans they have to set up an independent body to (1) receive complaints about the charging system, and (2) review decisions by providers. [HL4411]

Lord Kamall: The Department has reviewed the report and has no plans to set up an independent body to receive complaints or review decisions on charging by providers. It is the legal duty of providers of relevant NHS services to make and recover charges from overseas visitors and to do so fairly and consistently.

Immunotherapy

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many newly-diagnosed patients with (1) primary or (2) secondary immunodeficiency in the UK, who fit the eligibility criteria for immunoglobulin use, have been refused access to immunoglobulin this year. [HL4565]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not held centrally. However, the clinical assessment of individual

patients will determine the most appropriate pathway to meet their needs.

Immunotherapy: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contingency planning the NHS made to ensure continuity of supply for immunoglobulin for patients at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4607]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether supplies of immunoglobulin are sufficient to meet current demand; and what steps they are taking to ensure that all patients can be maintained on the therapy they need. [HL4608]

Lord Kamall: At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement's national commissioning criteria for the use of therapeutic immunoglobulin provided expert guidance for the management of patients on immunoglobulin treatment. There is a demand management plan available for use as a contingency to address any instance of constrained supply.

At present, supplies of immunoglobulin are available for patients who require it. An updated demand management plan is currently being developed with updated commissioning criteria to ensure immunoglobulin remains accessible.

Immunotherapy: Shortages

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients in the last year have (1) been taken off therapy, (2) had to change immunoglobulin product, (3) been advised of treatment holidays, or (4) received reduced doses, because of a shortage of immunoglobulin. [HL4563]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not held centrally, as such decisions are made by expert clinicians locally.

Immunotherapy: Standards

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the NHS is monitoring (1) the health of patients who (a) have been denied access to immunoglobulin therapy or (b) are on sub-optimal care in relation to immunoglobulin therapy, and (2) the additional cost of patients (a) not having immunoglobulin treatment or (b) being on sub-optimal treatment. [HL4564]

Lord Kamall: Clinicians are responsible for the ongoing monitoring and assessment of patients who receive sub-optimal immunoglobulin therapy and those who have not received immunoglobulin therapy through

existing mechanisms to review patients, such as annual reviews and outpatient face-to-face or virtual appointments.

Sub-regional immunoglobulin assessment panels provide oversight and scrutiny for all patients receiving immunoglobulin therapy. For all disorders where immunoglobulin is used as treatment, treatment decisions are based on NHS England and NHS Improvement's clinical commissioning criteria for the use of therapeutic immunoglobulin. For patients with secondary antibody deficiency, consensus recommendations from experts in the United Kingdom and Europe and draft European Summary of Product Characteristics for immunoglobulin provide additional evidence to support temporary suspension, reduction in dose or withdrawal of immunoglobulin in selected patients. NHS England and NHS Improvement are unable to quantify the additional cost of patients not receiving immunoglobulin treatment and who may be receiving an alternative treatment such as rituximab or plasma exchange.

Intellectual Property: Reform

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 1 November (HL3196), when they will make an announcement regarding the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. [HL4477]

Lord Callanan: The Government is currently assessing the options for the UK's future exhaustion regime and will provide an update on this consultation in due course.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last had discussions with the government of Israel regarding (1) violence by settlers in the West Bank, and (2) the action of Israel's military forces in (a) protecting civilians, and (b) removing illegal settlement outposts; and what were the results of such discussions. [HL4482]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 19 October. We condemn any incidence of violence in the settlements. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised UK opposition to settlement expansion with the Government of Israel on 9 November.

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel regarding the (1) arrest, and (2) beating, of two Palestinians who had complained of settler violence against them, as reported by the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories on 25 November. [HL4557]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel. We welcome the Israeli authorities' discussion of how to address this issue, and urge Israel to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We also 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.

Kuwait: British Airways

Asked by Lord Wallace of Saltaire

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish a full list of the passengers on board British Airways Flight 149, which departed London on 1 August 1990. [HL4523]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: All of the records which the FCDO identified in its holdings relating to events surrounding the landing of Flight BA149 in Kuwait in August 1990 were released by The National Archives on 23 November subject to any legal exemptions. Further information about the FCDO's record release programme is available at www.gov.uk/archive-records.

Land Drainage

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will bring forward regulations under Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. [HL4486]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is currently undertaking a review of the case for implementing Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The review will report in 2022.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of unsold vocational driving test appointments in the last month. [HL4452]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The table below shows the numbers of available slots for vocational testing (Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) & Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV)).

| | Available slots | Booked slots | % Available |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| w/c 01.11.21 | 394 | 2,461 | 14% |
| w/c 08.11.21 | 321 | 2,617 | 11% |
| w/c 15.11.21 | 299 | 2,621 | 10% |
| w/c 22.11.21 | 226 | 2,595 | 8% |

Lord Chancellor

Asked by Lord Wallace of Saltaire

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to replace the role of the Lord Chancellor in the instance of absence and incapacity of the Sovereign with the Lord Speaker in the next revision of the Cabinet Manual. [HL4522]

Lord True: The Government has no plans to make changes with respect to the roles outlined in Section 2 of the Regency Act.

Military Aid

Asked by Lord Tunnickliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel are currently deployed in (1) the food industry, (2) the energy sector, and (3) as HGV drivers. [HL4520]

Baroness Goldie: As of the 10 December, 137 personnel were deployed to drive HGVs in support to the energy sector for the distribution of fuel. There were no personnel deployed to the food industry, nor elsewhere in support as HGV drivers.

Military Aid: NHS

Asked by Lord Tunnickliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK armed forces personnel are currently deployed in the NHS. [HL4521]

Baroness Goldie: As of 10 December, 808 military personnel were deployed to assist the NHS in England, Wales, and Scotland.

Military Bases: Aviation

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the security implications of allowing private flights to operate from Royal Air Force bases; and in what circumstances such flights are permitted. [HL4655]

Baroness Goldie: It is Ministry of Defence policy to allow civil aviation to use defence facilities, wherever appropriate. Military aerodromes operate a policy of 'Prior Permission Required' for visiting aircraft. This enables station guard forces to undertake routine security checks and issue passes and permits in the same manner as any other visitor to the Stations. Where it is deemed appropriate by security personnel, visiting aircrew and passengers can be escorted by Station personnel throughout their visit to the establishment.

Mortgages and Rents: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional support for those unable to pay their (1) rent, or (2) mortgage, due to COVID-19. [HL4514]

Lord Greenhalgh: According to the Household Resilience Study (Wave 3, Apr-May 2021), three quarters (76%) of private renters found it easy to afford their rent, and the vast majority (93%) are up to date with their payments. However, we understand that affordability may be an issue for some and that they may require additional support.

The Government has put in place an unprecedented £407 billion financial package to support businesses and families through the pandemic and this includes support for renters to sustain tenancies and to afford their housing costs during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Individuals who are unable to afford their rental payments may be eligible for a range of support through the Universal Credit system. We invested nearly £1 billion in raising Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of local rents in April 2020, a change that has benefited 1.5 million households, and maintained them at this increased cash level for 2021/22.

For those who need it most, support is available through Discretionary Housing Payments, as well as £65 million in funding to help renters in arrears, which is in addition to the £310 million already available to councils through the Homelessness Prevention Grant. Vulnerable households are also able to access the £500 million Household Support Fund, of which £421 million will go to help people in England to cover the cost of essentials over the winter.

During the pandemic, the Government worked with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to oversee an unprecedented package of forbearance for homeowners, including the option for mortgage customers to access a mortgage holiday of up to six months as well as a ban on bailiff enforcement of evictions. In total, 2.9 million payment holidays were provided to mortgage borrowers. FCA guidance outlines that firms should continue to provide tailored support for customers experiencing ongoing financial difficulty as a result of Covid-19.

The Government will continue to support mortgage borrowers by offering Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans to homeowners in receipt of an income-related benefit, and helping people avoid repossession through protection under the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

Nationality and Borders Bill

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to have discussions with (1) the Jesuit Refugee Service, (2) the Helen Bamber Foundation, (3) Refugee Action, (4) Care4Calais, and (5) other NGOs, before proceeding further with the Nationality and Borders Bill. [HL4481]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Nationality and Borders Bill is part of the Government's New Plan for Immigration, which will deliver the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades.

A public consultation on the Plan was held earlier this year. 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 a number of NGOs as we develop and implement policies. We will continue to engage with individuals and groups as we take forward the Bill and deliver the New Plan for Immigration.

Neusoft: University of Liverpool

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the partnership between the University of Liverpool's Department of Computer Science and the Chinese company NeuSoft; and whether any research projects involving NeuSoft have received funding from UK Research and Innovation in the last five years. [HL4592]

Lord Callanan: The Government supports decisions on international research collaborations through the Trusted Research campaign. Additionally, BEIS is establishing a Research Collaboration Advice Team which will work directly with institutions to help embed best practice.

Research partnerships must remain within the limits of the law and the government reserves the right to intervene where they are not in the national interest or breach domestic or international law.

UKRI has not directly funded any research projects involving Neusoft in the past 5 years.

Neusoft: UWE Bristol

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the partnership between the University of the West of England Bristol and the Chinese company NeuSoft, given the latter's work on a facial recognition surveillance system. [HL4524]

Baroness Barran: As autonomous bodies, decisions regarding partnerships lie with individual higher education providers. We encourage the sector to collaborate with international partners and universities must be security minded in their approach in order to safeguard our core values. University due diligence processes should consider reputational, ethical and security risks.

At the request of my right hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, Universities UK, on behalf of the sector and with government support, published guidelines in October 2020 to help universities tackle security risks related to international collaboration.

We continuously strengthen protective measures and expect universities to do the same.

Newcastle University: IVF

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Kamall on 2 November (HL3362) and 1 December (HL4059), what steps the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority have taken in response to the publication by Newcastle University Press Office on 15 December 2016 of the names and picture of a couple considering using the mitochondrial donation technique. [HL4697]

Lord Kamall: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) did not take any steps in response to the publication by Newcastle University Press Office on the 15 December 2016. Patients are entitled to release their own medical and identifying information to the media if they wish to do so. The HFEA would not prevent individuals from discussing their own medical conditions or treatments.

NHS: Crimes of Violence

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the increase in violent behaviour towards NHS workers in South West England; and what steps they are taking to counter this violence. [HL4643]

Lord Kamall: Violence and abuse against health and care staff is unacceptable. There is no data available on violence and abuse against National Health Service staff in the South West of England. Nationally, 14.5% of staff responding to the NHS staff survey in 2020 said they had experienced at least one incidence of violence in the previous 12 months.

The NHS Violence Reduction Programme aims to protect the workforce against deliberate violence and aggression and ensure offenders are punished quickly and effectively. This includes body camera trials for ambulance trusts, the introduction of Violence Prevention and Reduction Standards, improved training for staff to deal with violence and prompt mental health support for

those who are the victims of violence. The Government is currently legislating to double maximum sentences for attacks on emergency workers, which includes those working in the NHS, to two years through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021.

Nuclear Power Stations: Construction

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether (1) retail, and (2) industrial energy, consumers will contribute via a Regulated Asset Base model to the building of a new nuclear power station in the UK; and if so, how this will be calculated. [HL4473]

Lord Callanan: The Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill will require all GB-licensed suppliers to make contributions to a revenue collection counterparty under a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model. We expect that suppliers' contributions will be calculated based on their expected share of the energy market.

The Government will consult on draft regulations implementing the detailed requirements of RAB revenue arrangements before they are introduced.

Occupied Territories: Demolition

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the data published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs showing that in the first nine months of 2021 compared to the equivalent period in 2020 (1) 21 per cent more structures were demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities, and (2) 28 per cent more people were displaced, in the West Bank; and what assessment they have made of the EU's call for Israel to halt the demolition of Palestinian homes in occupied territory. [HL4581]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions, confiscations and forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defense on 19 October. We regularly call on Israel to halt such counterproductive activity and instead urgently commit to creating a better environment for a just and lasting peace.

Pharmacy

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government who is responsible for monitoring the provision of community pharmacy contractual services in England. [HL4561]

Lord Kamall: The arrangements for the provision of pharmaceutical services in England are governed by the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical and Local

Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013. NHS England and NHS Improvement's regional teams have responsibility for monitoring the provision of nationally commissioned essential and advanced services. Arrangements for monitoring locally commissioned services may be set out in local contracts or service level agreements.

Pharmacy: Closures

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government which pharmacies in England reported that they were closed for (1) all, or (2) part, of their contracted opening hours on dates between 1 January to 31 October; and what steps they have taken to safeguard patient access to pharmacy services during any closure periods. [HL4562]

Lord Kamall: This information is not held centrally. In March 2020, the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 were amended to allow the flexible provision of pharmaceutical services during the pandemic in circumstances beyond the control of a community pharmacy. If a pharmacy cannot open due to unavailability of a responsible pharmacist or enough staff to open safely, they must immediately inform the NHS regional team or, if a pharmacy needs to temporarily reduce its opening hours, a 24 hours notification is required. This provision is in place until 31 January 2022. The information related to these notifications is held locally by NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams. All community pharmacies should have a business continuity plan in place in case of emergencies to minimise disruption to the provision of NHS pharmaceutical services.

Pre-school Education: Pay

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to increase the salaries of early years teachers to match salaries for primary school teachers. [HL4634]

Baroness Barran: The earliest years are the most crucial stage of child development. The department is committed to supporting the sector to develop a workforce with the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to deliver high quality early education and childcare.

The majority of the early years workforce are employed in private, voluntary and independent organisations and those employers are responsible for recruiting sufficient staff, in line with the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The department is investing additional funding for the early years entitlements over the next three years, worth £160 million in the 2022-23 financial year, £180 million in 2023-24 and £170 million in 2024-25, compared to the

current year. This is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflects cost pressures as well as anticipated changes in the number of eligible children.

Pre-school Education: Recruitment

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to raise the profile, and (2) to improve the perceived status of, early years teaching jobs. [HL4633]

Baroness Barran: The department understands that the earliest years are the most crucial stage of child development. Early education supports children's social and emotional development and lays the foundation for lifelong learning.

The department is grateful for the contribution that all early years' providers and childcare staff make in their work every day, both to the early education of children and to support the economy.

We are committed to supporting the sector to develop a workforce with the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to deliver high quality early education and childcare, and to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why the department has recently announced an additional £153 million in programmes to support workforce development, including increasing the number of places available for early years initial teacher training. We are also developing new early years training routes, including a new National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership and support for new apprenticeship routes for careers in the early years.

Pre-school Education: Training

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to develop, and (2) to retain, a workforce of highly qualified early years teachers, including by furthering access to continuous professional development. [HL4635]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to supporting the sector to develop a workforce with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience to deliver high quality early education and childcare. We are investing £20 million in a high quality, evidence-based professional development programme for practitioners in targeted disadvantaged areas, and a further £10 million to fund a second phase of the programme.

In June 2021, the department announced a further £153 million for training for early years staff to support the learning and development of the very youngest children and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of our recovery strategy, we will be expanding the number of training places to increase the supply of qualified graduates to the sector.

The department is also developing new early years training routes. Employer trailblazer groups have developed level 2 and 3 apprenticeships. In August 2021, we launched a level 5 apprenticeship. From April 2021, free level 3 early years qualifications became available through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Railway Stations: Toton

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to serve the train station at Toton with passenger trains. [HL4461]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There is currently no rail station at Toton. As set out in the Integrated Rail Plan, we will accelerate transport improvements at Toton, provision of a new station for local/regional services, with delivery subject to significant private sector investment – on a 50:50 match-funded basis.

Railways: Freight

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the proposed Ely area capacity enhancement project will make adequate provision for any increase in demand for freight train paths from East Coast ports to (1) the Midlands, and (2) the North of England. [HL4458]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The proposed Ely Area Capacity Enhancement programme is part of a wider route strategy to unlock additional freight paths to serve East Coast ports. It would provide capacity for long-term growth which would be realised in stages, as this programme and wider route investment is delivered. In the short-term Network Rail has temporarily increased the number of freight paths available from the Port of Felixstowe.

Railways: Lincoln

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of the Integrated Rail Plan for Lincoln. [HL4460]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: By improving regional connectivity, the Integrated Rail Plan will unify labour markets, so that people can access a much wider range of jobs; bring businesses closer together; and improve access to key international gateways and markets so they become even more attractive locations for business investment. Lincoln will benefit from the upgrades to the East Coast Main Line proposed in the IRP, which will help deliver faster and more reliable journeys to London. Passengers from Lincoln will also benefit from faster services to Birmingham, accessed through interchange to HS2 at Nottingham.

Railways: Newark

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide grade separation of the railway at Newark. [HL4459]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We will ask Network Rail to take forward interventions on the East Coast Main Line to deliver improved journeys to Leeds and the North East. As set out in the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, this will consider upgrades to allow higher speeds, including up to 140mph on some sections, and measures to tackle bottlenecks such as the flat crossing at Newark which limits speed and capacity.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many refugees from Afghanistan have been accepted into the UK for each of the past six months. [HL4507]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release', which can be found on gov.uk. Data on the initial decisions made on asylum applications are published in table ASY_D02 of the 'asylum and resettlement detailed datasets' which can be found in the attached Annex. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data cover up to the end of September 2021. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

The data show in the 6 months from April to September 2021, 246 Afghans (including dependants) were offered protection in the form of asylum, alternative forms of leave, or resettlement in the UK. Of these, 199 were granted asylum, 26 resettlement, and 37 were granted alternative forms of leave (such as humanitarian protection, discretionary leave).

Please note these statistics do not include the resettlement of those under the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or similar Afghan schemes for locally engaged civilians, or those brought to the UK as part of Operation Pitting.

The UK evacuated around 15,000 individuals to the UK from Kabul during Operation Pitting. This is in addition to circa 2000 arrivals under ARAP between the end of June 2021 and when the evacuation began on 14 August.

Data on the ACRS and other schemes will be included in future statistical releases.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Annex - Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release [Annex A - asylum-applications-datasets-sep-2021 (3).xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-29/HL4507>

Registration of Overseas Entities Bill (Draft)

Asked by Lord Haworth

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will introduce the Registration of Overseas Entities Bill to Parliament. [HL4478]

Lord Callanan: As set out in my Written Ministerial Statement made on 2nd November 2021, the Government remains committed to establishing a new beneficial ownership register of overseas entities that own UK property. This register will help combat money laundering and achieve greater transparency in the UK property market. We will legislate when parliamentary time allows.

Research: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of findings of research connections between Chinese organisations responsible for committing genocide against the Uyghur people and UK universities; and what steps they are taking to address such findings. [HL4446]

Lord Callanan: The UK's research sector is independent, and free to make decisions on research collaborations within the limits of the law. Her Majesty's Government supports the sector to make informed decisions on international research collaboration through published advice and is currently recruiting a team of field advisors to work directly with institutions.

We continue to work closely with the sector to provide advice, promote best practice, and to respond to specific inquiries. While we encourage international collaboration, we do not support research work that enables abuses of human rights.

Ronapreve

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government when Ronapreve will be available for (1) immunocompromised patients unlikely to mount a vaccine response, and (2) patients at higher risk of poorer COVID-19 outcomes prior to hospitalisation. [HL4766]

Lord Kamall: On 20 August 2021, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved Ronapreve (casirivimab and imdevimab) as the first monoclonal antibody combination product indicated for use in the prevention and treatment of acute COVID-19 infection. A new NHS interim clinical policy will provide access for the most vulnerable non-hospitalised patients in the community with early-stage disease from 16 December, including the immunocompromised and

those patients at higher risk of poorer COVID-19 outcomes.

The current supply of Ronapreve is limited globally, therefore the clinical policy prioritises the most vulnerable patients for whom this treatment will provide the most benefit, supported by clinical evidence.

Sizewell C Power Station: Costs

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) lowest, and (2) highest, expected cost of power per kWh from Sizewell C, based on the assumptions in their impact assessment. [\[HL4474\]](#)

Lord Callanan: The Impact Assessment published alongside the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill sets out the illustrative costs of building and financing a generic new nuclear power plant using a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model.

Negotiations on the Sizewell C project are ongoing. These will determine its overall cost and value for money. No decisions have yet been made, but discussions to date have been constructive.

Slavery

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they have taken to implement the four steps to address modern day slavery, as announced by the then-Foreign Secretary in a statement to the House of Commons on 12 January; and what assessment they have made of their effects. [\[HL4447\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is committed to tackling the issue of Uyghur forced labour in supply chains. The ambitious range of measures we announced in January will help ensure that no UK organisation is complicit through their supply chains in the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang.

We are making good progress in implementing these measures. Our guidance to businesses has been updated; Ministers and officials have engaged with UK businesses and trade bodies; the review of export controls is underway; and we will introduce financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many statements have been made under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in each of the last three years; and what percentage of all companies falling within the purview of that section have been identified. [\[HL4448\]](#)

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report

annually on steps taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

In March 2021, the Government launched the modern slavery statement registry to radically enhance transparency by bringing together modern slavery statements on a single platform. So far, over 6,740 modern slavery statements covering over 22,400 organisations have been submitted to the registry on a voluntary basis.

In 2019, the Home Office contracted the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) to undertake an audit of compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The high-level findings of this audit were published on 17 September 2020 in the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's annual report (available on gov.uk).

To improve the quality of reporting and compliance even further, the Government has committed to introduce a package of measures to strengthen section 54. This includes the introduction of financial penalties for non-compliance and a requirement for organisations to publish their statements on the Government's modern slavery statement registry which will enable Government to monitor and drive compliance with the legislation.

Businesses' response so far is demonstrating the registry's positive impact by providing greater visibility of the steps organisations are taking to prevent modern slavery in their global supply chains and empowering investors, consumers and civil society to scrutinise the action organisations are taking to prevent modern slavery.

Social Prescribing

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Kamall on 22 November (HL Deb, col 586), what steps they are taking to integrate social prescribing into the core undergraduate curriculum within medical schools. [\[HL4465\]](#)

Lord Kamall: Each medical school in England sets its own undergraduate curriculum, which must meet the standards of the General Medical Council (GMC). Individual curricula may not identify specific conditions for doctors to be aware of, but the GMC would expect that, in fulfilling their standards, newly qualified doctors are able to identify, treat and manage any care needs, including where they might benefit from social prescribing.

The Department has supported the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) to deliver its strategy to use social prescribing to connect people in local communities. With NHS England and NHS Improvement, the NASP has supported the Social Prescribing Student Champion Programme to deliver more than 750 teaching sessions across all United Kingdom medical schools and organise over 30 regional, national and international student conferences on social prescribing. In addition, the NASP has funded 22 studentships across England,

enabling medical students to organise conferences, teaching sessions and contribute to research relating to social prescribing.

Social Services: Fees and Charges

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they will take to ensure that pensioners' homes will not be sold to fund social care costs. [HL4383]

Lord Kamall: The new £86,000 cap, in combination with the new higher capital limits, will mean that more people will be able to preserve more of their assets if they need care. The value of a person's home is taken into consideration when determining how much they should pay for social care when they enter residential care and where a spouse or other eligible adult is no longer living in their home.

No-one will be forced to sell their home to pay for their care in their lifetime. Where people do need to access housing wealth to pay for care, individuals are able to take out a deferred agreement so that payments can be deducted from their estate after their care journey has ended.

Suicide: Children

Asked by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they provide to the NHS on contacting (1) a parent, (2) a family member, or (3) a carer, in cases of young people under the age of 18 who are considered to be a suicide risk by (a) the NHS, or (b) another health professional. [HL4405]

Lord Kamall: The Department has developed an online only information sharing and suicide prevention consensus statement with input from leading mental health organisations, which aims to improve information and support for families and carers who are concerned about someone who may be at risk of suicide and to better support those who have been bereaved by suicide.

Through its contract with the Department, the Zero Suicide Alliance has developed *SHARE: Consent, confidentiality & information Sharing in mental healthcare & suicide prevention* on using the consensus statement for information sharing and suicide prevention and how to engage with patients when discussing confidentiality and consent to share information where this may help to prevent suicide. A copy is attached.

Practitioners should also refer to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's quality standard *Suicide prevention*, which includes a section on involving family, carers or friends. A copy is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

SHARE: Consent, confidentiality & information Shar [20211120 HL4405 Baroness Smith of Basildon zero-suicide-alliance-share.pdf]

Suicide prevention [20211130 HL4405 Baroness Smith of Basildon suicide-prevention-pdf-75545729771461.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-24/HL4405>

Asked by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what NHS guidance exists for parents of children who are at risk of suicide. [HL4406]

Lord Kamall: No specific guidance has been issued. However, the National Health Service has published a number of online only resources for parents on mental health issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic including advice for parents, guardians and carers on how to support a child or young person if they are concerned about their mental health or that they may have an eating disorder.

The NHS has also established 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines and parents can access other online resources and support through schools, colleges, charities and the voluntary sector.

Suicide: Mental Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued for health professionals regarding patients who are at risk of suicide. [HL4402]

Lord Kamall: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published guidance for the National Health Service, social care, local authorities, emergency services, the criminal justice system and other services to identify those most at risk. Copies of *Preventing suicide in community and custodial settings* and a quality standard *Suicide prevention* are attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Preventing suicide in community and custodial sett [20211130 HL4402 Baroness Smith of Basildon Preventing suicide in community and custodial settings.pdf]

Suicide prevention [20211130 HL4402 Baroness Smith of Basildon suicide-prevention-pdf-75545729771461.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-24/HL4402>

Asked by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what immediate NHS provision is available to those at risk of suicide. [HL4403]

Lord Kamall: There is no defined pathway for those deemed at risk of suicide, as provision should be determined locally, based on a clinical assessment of the person's individual situation and needs. However, we are expanding a number of other pathways to support people deemed at risk of suicide, including making 24 hours a day, seven days a week community-based mental health

crisis response services available across England, with intensive home treatment available as an alternative to an acute inpatient admission. We are increasing alternative forms of provision, such as sanctuaries, safe havens, and crisis cafés, for those in crisis where appropriate and ensuring acute hospitals have a mental health liaison service in accident and emergency departments and inpatient wards.

We have committed that every integrated care system in the country will receive funding from £57 million identified for suicide prevention and bereavement services by 2023/24. This investment will allow integrated care systems to deliver multi-agency plans for suicide prevention activities, initiatives to improve care for those who self-harm and bereavement support.

Taxation: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government which tax changes proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget Statement on 27 October will not apply to Northern Ireland. [HL4510]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Tax changes announced at Autumn Budget that do not apply to Northern Ireland are: All business rates measures, which apply only to England. The freezing of carbon price support rates from 2023-4, which applies only to Great Britain. The rate of Air Passenger Duty on direct long-haul flights from Northern Ireland, as that rate setting power has been devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

T-levels

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the fifth annual T level Action Plan. [HL4661]

Baroness Barran: The department expects to publish the fifth annual T Level Action Plan before the end of this year.

T-levels: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the (1) capital, and (2) revenue, expenditure on T levels in each of the last five years. [HL4660]

Baroness Barran: The department has made available £268 million capital funding for the first three waves of T Level delivery, starting in September 2020, 2021 and 2022. This funding is being used to ensure that young people taking T Levels have access to industry standard equipment and high-quality facilities to gain the skills and knowledge that employers demand.

As set out in the table below, we have also allocated up to £207.6 million to help the sector build capacity and prepare for the delivery of T Levels and from 2020/21 academic year, and allocated up to £3.2 million in industrial placement funding. In addition, T Levels include more teaching hours than general 16-19 study programmes. Therefore, four larger bands have been added to the 16-19 funding bands to ensure schools, colleges and other training providers with T Level students are paid at a higher rate.

| Funding stream | Academic Years | | | | | Totals to date |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | |
| Capacity and delivering funding | £0 | £57.4m | £53.6m | £52.2m | £44.4m | £207.6m |
| Industry placement funding | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0.5m | £2.7m | £3.2m |

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to offer tailored support for travel businesses whose recovery will be affected by new COVID-19 restrictions. [HL4513]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: We have worked closely with the travel sector throughout the pandemic to help find ways to enable people to travel safely, while protecting public health.

England had relaxed the rules on our international travel programme and established a simpler system that separates countries into a red list and rest of world. However, eleven African countries are now on the red list, and all international arrivals must take a PCR test on or before day 2 and self-isolate until receipt of a negative result. These are temporary and precautionary measures to slow the spread of the Omicron variant – and to help protect the fantastic progress we have made through our vaccination programme to date.

Across the world countries are taking similar measures to identify and isolate cases amongst travellers from countries where omicron appears to be circulating.

We will review these measures in three weeks, at which point we will have a much greater understanding of the impact on vaccine effectiveness.

Where applicable, travel businesses can continue to apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme through their local authority, which is open until March 2022. Throughout the pandemic, over £2 billion of discretionary business grant funding was provided to local authorities via the ARG to support businesses in their local area. Local authorities determine how much funding to provide to businesses and exactly which businesses to target.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many countries have committed to acquiring the Type 26 frigate; how many frigates each country ordered; whether the expected level of acquisitions has led to a drop in the unit price; and whether this will affect the in-service dates of ships planned for the Royal Navy. [HL4666]

Baroness Goldie: Two nations have committed to building frigates based on the Type 26 design; Australia and Canada. Both nations will design and build their own variants of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship at their national shipyards in Adelaide and Halifax respectively.

We do not comment on unit pricing for reasons of commercial sensitivity. There will be no impact on in-service dates for the Royal Navy Type 26 frigates.

UK Endorsement Board

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 22 November (HL3771), what assessment they have made of (1) the UK Endorsement Board's objectives for its endorsement activities, (2) the risk of the Board being subject to regulatory capture, (3) conflicts of interest among the legal advisers to the Board, and (4) the process for appointments to the Board. [HL4457]

Lord Callanan: The UK Endorsement Board's (UKEB) objectives for its endorsement activities are set out in the International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The UKEB Terms of Reference further elaborate on how my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State expects it to undertake those activities. The UKEB is obliged to report annually to the Secretary of State on the discharge of its delegated functions. This report is laid before Parliament.

Ensuring the independence of the UKEB was a key priority when it was established. Oversight of UKEB's governance and due process is provided by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) but its technical decision-making is independent of the FRC.

UKEB Board members are required to complete a Register of Interests, available on the UKEB website.

The Chair of the UKEB is to be appointed by the Secretary of State, following a fair and open recruitment process led by the BEIS Public Appointments, in line with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code for Public Appointments. The appointment of Board members also follows the process set out in the code, with appointments

made by the Chair of the UKEB with the approval of the Secretary of State.

UK Research and Innovation: University of Birmingham

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the granting of UK Research and Innovation money to an academic at the University of Birmingham researching the impact of UK parliamentarians' remarks on international relations with China. [HL4445]

Lord Callanan: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funds research across a range of social disciplines including the economic, political and social sciences.

The Government is bound by the Haldane principle in the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act which says that: "decisions on individual research proposals are best taken following an evaluation of the quality and likely impact of the proposals (such as a peer review process)." The Government stands by the Haldane Principle and recognises that decisions about individual projects are best left to experts in the field. As such, Government does not have a role in deciding the awarding of grants to specific research activities.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government which countries the 27 migrants who drowned in the English Channel on 24 November were from. [HL4508]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This tragic incident, in which at least 27 people lost their lives, occurred in French waters. Whilst the UK assisted in the immediate search and rescue operation and has offered support to the French authorities in their follow up operation, it remains a French-led criminal investigation. As such, it would be inappropriate for us to comment further except to refer the Noble Lord to the information which the French authorities have already put into the public domain.

Welwyn North Station

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce stops at Welwyn North station in order to increase capacity on the East Coast Main Line. [HL4462]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We currently have no plans to reduce calls at Welwyn North.

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