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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Kamall</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Lord Offord of Garvel</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
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<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Lord Wolfson of Tredegar</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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## Written Statements

Monday, 24 January 2022

### Active Travel England

[HLWS540]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Trudy Harrison) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to inform the House that the Department for Transport is to create a new Executive Agency, Active Travel England, with its headquarters in York. This builds on the Government's commitment to level up the country and locate more Civil Service roles outside of London and the South East, as well as its commitment to boosting cycling and walking.

This Government is investing a record amount in active travel to help deliver our priorities for a healthy, safe and carbon-neutral transport system. Active Travel England will work to ensure that this, and wider transport investment, is well spent, and will help raise the standard of cycling and walking infrastructure.

Active Travel England will manage the national active travel budget, awarding funding for projects which meet the new national standards set out in 2020. It will inspect finished schemes and ask for funds to be returned for any which have not been completed as promised, or which have not started or finished by the stipulated times.

ATE will also begin to inspect, and publish reports on, highway authorities for their performance on active travel and identify particularly dangerous failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians.

In these regards, the commissioner and inspectorate will perform a similar role to Ofsted from the 1990s onwards in raising standards and challenging failure.

As well as approving and inspecting schemes, ATE will help local authorities, training staff and spreading good practice in design, implementation and public engagement. It will be a statutory consultee on major planning applications to ensure that the largest new developments properly cater for pedestrians and cyclists.

ATE's establishment follows the Government's unprecedented commitment of £2bn for cycling and walking over this parliament and comes in the wake of our ambitious "Gear Change" strategy to transform active travel.

The agency will become fully operational later in 2022.

I am also pleased to confirm the appointment of Chris Boardman MBE as the first Active Travel Commissioner for England. He will take the helm on an interim basis to spearhead the establishment of Active Travel England.

This underlines this Government's ongoing commitment to boosting cycling and walking and to building back greener from the pandemic.

### NHS Covid Pass: Children Aged 12-15

[HLWS542]

**Lord Kamall:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid) has made the following written statement:

As part of our commitment to reducing the cases of hospitalisation and serious illness due to COVID-19, the Government accepted the JCVI's recommendation on the 29th November that all young people aged 12-15 years old should be offered a second dose of COVID-19 vaccination a minimum of 12 weeks after their first.

To ensure that 12-15 year olds were able to demonstrate their COVID Status for international travel prior to the Christmas holidays, on the 13th December the Government launched the NHS COVID Pass letter service for children who are double vaccinated.

From 3rd February, the Government will ensure that all children aged 12 and over will also be able to get a digital NHS COVID Pass for international travel to support our efforts to open up travel. The digital NHS COVID Pass will provide a record of COVID-19 vaccinations received and will show evidence of having recovered from COVID-19 up to 180 days following a positive NHS PCR test. The steps that the Government has taken ensures that families are not prohibited from travelling where countries require children over the age of 12 to be able to digitally demonstrate their vaccination status or proof of prior infection.

The COVID Pass will be available via the [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) website for those aged 12 and over and via the NHS App for those aged 13 and over. To request an NHS COVID Pass, the child will first need to register for an NHS login, which will require them to verify their identity using their passport.

The Government has also sought to ensure that this solution can be used by children in both Wales and the Isle of Man. In Wales, 12-15 year olds will be able to generate a digital pass via [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk). In the Isle of Man, they will be able to use both [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) and the NHS App. Further information will be available shortly from the Department of Health for Citizens in Northern Ireland. Paper youth passes are already available for citizens in Scotland and further information on the digital solution will follow in due course.

### Draft Air Navigation (Amendment) Order 2022

[HLWS541]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport (Robert Courts) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I have today published the draft Air Navigation (Amendment) Order 2022 and an accompanying Explanatory Memorandum. This draft instrument amends the Air Navigation Order 2016 (S.I. 2016/765) ("the Air Navigation Order") to update references to Regulation

(EC) No 216/2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation, which has been repealed and replaced.

The Air Navigation Order implements the UK's obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation and regulates aspects of aviation safety. It provides regulatory and enforcement powers for the Civil Aviation Authority needed in respect of retained aviation safety legislation. In a number of places, the Air Navigation Order cites provisions of the "Basic Regulation", which is defined in Schedule 1 of the Air Navigation Order as *Regulation (EC) No 216/2008*. However, *Regulation (EC) No 216/2008* was repealed and replaced by *Regulation (EU) 2018/1139*, which has been retained in UK domestic law.

Therefore, the Air Navigation Order currently contains outdated references to repealed legislation, which need to be amended. The draft instrument published today will ensure that the Air Navigation Order is able to operate as intended, by accurately citing the correct retained legislation.

This instrument is an Order in Council and will follow the negative (annulment) procedure. Paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 requires a draft of this instrument to be published at least 28 days before it is laid. This is because the Air Navigation Order was originally made under powers that included the European Communities Act 1972. The draft instrument and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum can be found on gov.uk.

## High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill

[HLWS539]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Transport (Andrew Stephenson), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

Today the Government will introduce the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill - a key part of Building Back Better after the Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill and accompanying Environmental Statement, the Government is also publishing:

- the Government's response to the second Design Refinement Consultation; and
- an update on the Strategic Outline Business Case.

The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) set out the Government's commitment to invest in rail infrastructure across the North and Midlands. Delivering the Western Leg of HS2 is a vital part of this commitment. This includes plans for the Crewe Hub and Crewe Northern Connection, allowing HS2 trains to call at Crewe and Manchester and enhancing connectivity to north-west England, Wales, and Scotland.

This next stage of HS2 from Crewe to Manchester will increase passenger capacity, improve connectivity, and reduce journey times. It is integral to delivering on the Government's commitment to level-up the country. HS2

will join up the North, Midlands, and London by effectively halving the journey times between the centres of the UK's three largest cities. The scheme will contribute towards sustainable growth in towns, cities, and regions across the country, spreading prosperity and opportunity more widely. It will act as a catalyst for job creation, the development of new homes and ultimately, the regeneration of major cities and towns along the HS2 route.

HS2 will help provide a cleaner and greener form of transport, offering significantly lower carbon emissions per passenger kilometre than long distance car journeys or domestic air travel. HS2 has the potential to deliver world-class low-carbon transport to bring our biggest cities closer together, spread opportunity and support the UK's transition to a 'net zero' economy.

The Bill includes the powers necessary to construct and operate the HS2 route between Crewe and Manchester. It is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which describes the railway, alternatives considered, the environmental effects that are likely to arise from its construction and operation, and the measures proposed to avoid or reduce the negative effects. It has been informed by the consultation on the working draft Environmental Statement held in Autumn 2018 as well as through engagement with stakeholders. An Equalities Impact Assessment is also being published.

The Government's response to the Western Leg Design Refinement Consultation is an important part of introducing this Bill. The October 2020 consultation set out four technical refinements to the Western Leg of Phase 2b: a new Crewe Northern Connection to support the vision for a Crewe Hub; changes to the rolling stock depot at Crewe; expansions to both Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport High Speed stations; and a new train depot at Annandale in Dumfries and Galloway. Having considered the feedback from all the respondents, the Government has decided to confirm these four changes.

The update on the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) sets out the clear, strategic case for the HS2 Crewe-Manchester scheme, together with up-to-date cost range for the programme of between £15bn and £22bn (2019 prices). This SOBC contains the first cost estimate that has been produced specifically for the scheme between Crewe and Manchester. As the project progresses in design maturity, the cost estimate will be further refined and will inform the Full Business Case, which will be presented to Parliament in due course.

Copies of the Government's response to the second Design Refinement Consultation will be placed in the libraries of both Houses and are also publicly accessible online through the gov.uk website.

## Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

[HLWS538]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safe and Legal

Migration (Kevin Foster) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is undertaking a review into the impact of the ending of free movement on the social care sector. Whilst the MAC are not publishing their full report until the end of April 2022, they felt they had sufficient evidence with which to make a recommendation in their Annual Report to add care workers to the Health and Care visa and the Shortage Occupation List. Their recommendation was made in the context of increased demand for adult social services, increasing vacancies and issues with staff retention. They have re-asserted their position of the underlying cause of recruitment and retention problems being mainly due to pay, terms and conditions, and lack of progression in the sector. This is now coupled with pay in other competing sectors (such as catering, retail and cleaning) catching up to the adult social care sector, due to the rise in the National Living Wage.

In light of the clear evidence which the MAC have presented and the important role the sector is playing in face of the exceptional situation during the pandemic, the Government announced on 24<sup>th</sup> December we were agreeing to their recommendation. As recommended by the Migration Advisory Committee, the salary threshold will be in line with the rest of the Shortage Occupation List – with a reduced minimum salary threshold of £20,480 in place (compared with a general threshold of £25,600 for non-shortage occupations) and applicants will need to meet all of the other requirements, such as having a job offer from an approved Home Office sponsor and meeting English language requirements.

Taken together with the wider package of support measures for the adult social care workforce announced since September – including the £462.5m to help local authorities and care providers retain and recruit staff over winter, on top of the £500m for workforce training, qualifications and well-being announced as part of the Health and Social Care Levy, they will help us ensure sustainability and success for our long-term vision for this sector.

As the MAC does not believe immigration can solve all, or even most, of the problems associated with social care recruitment, but can help to alleviate difficulties in the short term, we are therefore creating an initial 12-month application window whereby workers can apply for visas in this occupation. During this time, successful applicants will have all the same rights, benefits and obligations as other Health & Care visa holders – including the right to bring dependents and to settle permanently in the UK. This decision will be reviewed by Government later this year to determine the success of this change in relation to wider changes in the sector to attract and retain staff, the position with regard to the

impact of the pandemic and whether it remains appropriate for this occupation to remain on the Shortage Occupation List.

This does not signal a departure from the RQF 3 threshold and the Points-Based System more broadly, which the MAC agrees strike the right balance between access to international talent and resident labour. Employers must continue to invest in training, opportunities and wages for the resident workforce to ensure the UK's hard-working care workers get the type of rewarding packages they deserve and which are common in other sectors.

## Supporting Terminally ill Claimants

[HLWS543]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** My honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Chloe Smith MP) has made the following Written Statement:

Today the Department for Work and Pensions is introducing an amendment to the Universal Credit (UC) Regulations 2013 and the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Regulations 2013 to exempt people who are terminally ill from the requirement to accept a claimant commitment to be eligible for benefits.

A claimant commitment sets out what an individual agrees to do in return for benefit, including any work search requirements and a duty to report any changes in their circumstances. Anyone claiming benefits under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness would already be exempt from work search requirements. However, there is currently no blanket exemption for terminally ill claimants from the requirement to accept a claimant commitment more generally. This means that the requirement to accept a claimant commitment can only be waived on a case by case basis.

To streamline the process and provide certainty to those approaching the end of their lives, the Statutory Instrument laid on the 24 January will therefore create a specific exemption from claimant commitments for terminally ill people.

The Regulations will apply in Great Britain and will come into force on 15 February 2022. The Northern Ireland Assembly intend to mirror the regulations and are in the process of putting this into place.

We are committed to ensuring the benefit system supports people nearing the end of their lives. Further to the changes we are making today, we will be bringing forward regulations shortly to replace the current 6-month rule for determining eligibility for the Special Rules for Terminal Illness with a 12-month, end of life approach in Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance with changes to Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance being made when parliamentary time allows.

# Written Answers

Monday, 24 January 2022

## Aerospace Industry: Employment

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of the UK workforce engaged in the UK aerospace industry. [HL5247]

**Lord Callanan:** In 2020, the proportion of the UK workforce engaged in the UK aerospace industry was estimated to be 0.3%.

## Asylum: EU Countries

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which EU member states they are seeking to negotiate return and readmission agreements with for asylum and protection applicants. [HL5241]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We are seeking to negotiate return and readmission agreements with a range of international partners. We are not giving a running commentary on negotiations that the Government may or may not be having with individual countries.

Where we do not have broad returns agreements, we will seek returns on a case-by-case basis; an established process that we will continue to follow.

We are determined to send a clear signal that it is unacceptable for individuals to travel through multiple safe countries to claim asylum in the UK. Those who fear persecution should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – this is the fastest route to safety.

## Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact an ETA system for local journeys across the border on the island of Ireland would have on (1) tourism, (2) trade supply lines in Northern Ireland, and (3) the daily lives of people living in the border region. [HL5258]

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received concerning the proposed ETA system for local journeys to Northern Ireland across the land border on the island of Ireland. [HL5259]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Common Travel Area (CTA) supports the long-standing principle of movement for British and Irish citizens between the UK, Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man and Ireland.

As now, the UK will not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from within the CTA, with no immigration controls whatsoever on the Ireland-Northern Ireland land border.

Individuals (except British and Irish citizens) arriving in the UK, including those crossing the land border into Northern Ireland, have always been required to meet the requirements of the UK's immigration framework. This framework will change with the introduction of ETAs, and, as visa nationals have always needed a visa for the UK, broadly non-visa national visitors will, in future, require an ETA to travel into the UK across the land border, just as they will when entering the UK from anywhere else.

Once granted, an ETA will be valid for multiple journeys over an extended period, minimising the burden on those making frequent trips, including those across the Ireland-Northern Ireland border.

We continue to work with stakeholders as we develop plans to operationalise the ETA scheme, including stakeholders in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

## Breasts: Plastic Surgery

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to strengthen warnings on breast implants in light of reports of increasing numbers of cases of Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL). [HL5086]

**Lord Kamall:** For breast implants and other implantable materials, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is currently considering what information should be provided to the patient at the point of consent and on receipt of the implant. The new regulatory approach is not yet finalised but warnings, precautions or measures to be taken by the patient or a healthcare professional are being considered as is a caution that risk may emerge during use of an implantable device, including, where appropriate, on Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma. Further information about the outcome of the public consultation on the regulation of medical devices is expected to be published early this year.

## British National (Overseas): Visas

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the debate on 5 January (HL Deb, cols 596–7), what assessment they have made of the cost of citizenship registration fees for children; what steps they plan to take to address this; and what plans they have to extend the British National (Overseas) (BNO) visa scheme to those from Hong Kong aged 18–25 as long as one parent has BNO status. [HL5211]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office has acknowledged the High Court's judgment and is reviewing the fee in line with its duties under Section 55.

A Supreme Court hearing on Child Registration fees took place on 23 and 24 June 2021. We await the final judgment and the ongoing section 55 review before publishing results.

The BN(O) route is an unprecedented and generous offer reflecting the UK's historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(O) status at the point of Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997. However, we are sympathetic to the circumstances of those aged 18 to 25 who live in Hong Kong and are looking at whether more can be done to support them.

### British Nationality: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the proposed powers to be granted to the Secretary of State in clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill, to strip individuals with or entitled to dual nationality of their British citizenship, would apply to individuals (1) who were born in, or (2) whose mothers were born in, either (a) Northern Ireland, or (b) the Republic of Ireland, who are entitled under Irish law to Irish citizenship. [HL5210]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill relates solely to how a person is notified of a decision to deprive them of their British citizenship. There is no change to the reasons for which a person could be deprived of their British citizenship or to their right of appeal. The use of powers under section 40 must comply with the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Home Office will always consider an individual's rights under the Good Friday Agreement in any relevant deprivation decision.

### Buildings: Fire Prevention

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Greenhalgh on 5 January (HL Deb, col 567) that "an announcement will be happening very soon" regarding £3.5 billion being made available for replacing the cladding on buildings over 18 metres, when will (1) applications be invited, and (2) payments start to be processed. [HL5351]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** To make sure that every remaining dangerous high-rise building has the necessary cladding remediation to make it safe, we will open up the next phase of the Building Safety Fund early this year and focus relentlessly on making sure it is risk driven and delivered more quickly.

### Buses: Exhaust Emissions

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of diesel buses on respiratory illnesses such as (1) COVID-19, and (2) asthma; and what plans they have, if any, to ban diesel buses from (a) town, and (b) city, centres. [HL5349]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** There is clear evidence to show that exposure to air pollution can exacerbate the effects of respiratory illnesses including asthma. Older buses, particularly those without emission abatement technology fitted, can be a significant source of emissions in some areas. National level estimates indicate that in 2019 buses contributed on average 8% of roadside NOx concentrations. However, no Government analysis has been carried out on the specific impact of buses in towns and cities on respiratory health.

Most buses in the current fleet are diesel and they form a key component of a sustainable transport package in towns and cities, with newer diesel buses emitting significantly lower levels of pollution than older models. Clean Air Zones (CAZ) are being implemented by local authorities in a number of areas where roads are exceeding legal limits for nitrogen dioxide, and all of these Zones will charge older buses to enter. Local authorities implementing CAZs have carried out local analysis to understand the key sources of pollution on their roads in order to identify the appropriate solution. In these and other local authorities engaged with the NO2 Plan, Government is supporting the upgrading of bus fleets to newer, cleaner standards either via replacement vehicles or grants to support the retrofit of older diesel buses with technologies to reduce emissions from their tailpipe.

The Government is also committed to supporting the introduction of 4,000 zero emission buses and achieving an all zero emission bus fleet. As set out in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 £355 million of new funding has been made available for zero emission buses. The Government has also committed to setting an end date for the sale of new diesel buses, further incentivising the adoption of zero emission buses.

### Coronavirus: Contracts

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which members of the Government benefitted financially either (1) directly, or (2) indirectly, through a benefit to a close friend or family member, from the provision of goods and services in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5343]

**Lord Kamall:** The information requested is not held by the Department. Regulation 24 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 requires contracting authorities to take appropriate measures to effectively prevent, identify and remedy conflicts of interest arising in the conduct of

procurement procedures. The Department has robust rules and processes in place to ensure that conflicts of interest do not occur, including declaration from suppliers, publication of Ministerial interests and robust Departmental guidance.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce COVID-19 vaccine passports to help decrease transmission rates. [HL4316]

**Lord Kamall:** Mandatory vaccine or test based certification was introduced in certain non-essential settings across England from 15 December 2021. Visitors to specified settings are required to show evidence of their COVID-19 status. This can be obtained either through full vaccination, a recent negative test result or an exemption on the basis of medical reasons or clinical trial participation.

Vaccine or test certification reduces risks in affected settings in comparison with no intervention. However, it does not eliminate the possibility of infectious people attending or transmitting the virus in these settings so individuals should continue to exercise caution.

On 19 January 2022, in response to data which showed that COVID-19 cases are falling and the high levels of vaccination and booster uptake have helped to reduce the risk of severe disease and hospitalisations, the Government announced the end of mandatory certification to access certain settings. From 27 January, venues will no longer be legally required to check the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry.

The domestic NHS COVID Pass will remain available in the NHS App, should venues wish to continue to require proof of COVID-19 status as a condition of entry to reduce risk for attendees and staff. Organisations that operate places where large crowds gather should continue to use certification as a tool to assist the safety of their venues.

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether those who are immunocompromised can access a fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine; and what steps they are taking to improve clarity on how this information is being recorded. [HL5447]

**Lord Kamall:** The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that severely immunosuppressed individuals aged 12 years old and over who have completed their primary course of three doses should be offered a booster dose, with a minimum of three months between the third primary and booster dose. Those who have not yet received their third dose may receive this immediately, with a booster dose administered in three months, in line with clinical advice on optimal timing.

General practitioners (GPs) or hospital specialists will invite those with severe immunosuppression for their fourth dose when eligible. If an individual has received a letter from their GP or hospital specialist inviting them for their third dose, they may present this at a walk-in vaccination site.

For the severely immunosuppressed cohort, the third primary dose should be recorded as a booster vaccination in Point of Care Systems. A subsequent booster for severely immunosuppressed patients after a further 91 days will be recorded as a second booster dose. Point of Care Systems support the recording of multiple booster vaccinations. All doses appear in the individual's vaccination history and are recorded in the National Incident Management System and GP record. Information is recorded in this way due to the technology being immediately available and was clinically accurate in capturing the detail of the vaccine an individual had received. An assessment concluded that retrospectively updating records in the immediate term could risk creating a data quality issue.

### Cotton: China

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks made by Lord Grimstone of Boscobel on 21 October (HL Deb, col 252), what steps have they taken to (1) detect, or (2) require others to detect, the prevalence of Xinjiang Cotton in garments (a) manufactured in, or (b) imported into, the UK. [HL5264]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** HM Government have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. We advise all businesses with Xinjiang supply chain links to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support any violations or abuses.

We have committed to introduce financial penalties for non-compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act, which asks large businesses to report on how they are tackling forced labour in their operations and supply chains. More widely we are committed to ongoing discussions on cotton and trade related matters at the WTO and continue to update Overseas Business Risk guidance.

### Culture Recovery Fund

*Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations have benefited from the emergency funding increase to the Culture Recovery Fund. [HL5221]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** The near £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) has awarded around £1.5 billion to date, including funding for the DCMS-sponsored national cultural institutions. It has supported

around 5,000 individual organisations and sites across the country ranging from local museums to West End theatres, grassroots music venues to festivals, and organisations in the cultural and heritage supply-chains.

The CRF also supports freelancers by ensuring the venues and organisations which support and employ them have survived the pandemic.

The boosted Emergency Resource Support strand of the programme will give eligible applicants, at imminent risk of financial failure, a further opportunity to bid for support, protecting even more organisations so that they can continue to create jobs and contribute to the economy.

We are still in the assessment process for the relaunched strand, so it is not yet possible to list all the organisations which will benefit from the most recent funding increase.

*Asked by **Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of applications to the Culture Recovery Fund seeking an emergency grant were successful. [[HL5222](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will provide a breakdown of successful applicants to the Culture Recovery Fund seeking an emergency grant by (1) geographic location, and (2) size of organisation. [[HL5223](#)]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** The first round of the Emergency Resource Support strand of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) ran in Summer and Autumn 2021 and was delivered by Arts Council England, Historic England, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and the British Film Institute. The second round was launched in Winter 2021.

The first round of this funding supported 183 organisations, from a total of 259 full applications, giving a success rate of 70.66%. This excludes organisations which did not reach full application stage, and (for Arts Council England) applications ruled out for technical eligibility reasons. Further information on success rates will be published in due course, as set out below.

The CRF is delivered at arm's length from the government by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and Heritage England. Data for successful grant offers that have been published can be found on their websites.

We acknowledge that there is public interest in aggregated all-CRF geographical breakdowns for this important investment, as well as the organisation size breakdowns for successful applicants. For this reason, later this year DCMS will publish sets of aggregated and anonymised management data to demonstrate the geography and characteristics of the CRF applicants and awardees - to the extent that our data-set allows. This will also include further up-to-date information on success rates.

We will deposit a copy of this information in the Libraries of both Houses.

## Defibrillators

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of providing defibrillators in public places; and what steps they are taking to encourage this provision. [[HL5297](#)]

**Lord Kamall:** Improving bystander use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) was assessed as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. The Plan sets out that a national network of community first responders and AEDs could save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028. With growing public awareness and acceptance of AEDs, many community defibrillators have since been provided in public locations such as shopping centres, through national lottery funding, community fundraising schemes, workplace funding or by charities.

## Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Publications

*Asked by **Lord Marlesford***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the report "Guidance on Collaborative Procurement for Design and Construction to Support Building Safety" recently published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was not dated; which Government department is responsible for ensuring that all Government publications are dated; and what steps they are taking, if any, to ensure that dating practices are implemented throughout Whitehall. [[HL5328](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The publication date is automatically published when a department adds or publishes a page to [GOV.UK](#). The Guidance on Collaborative Procurement for Design and Construction to Support Building Safety report was published on 10 January. The PDF's have also been updated to include a date and will be refreshed on the website.

## Drinks and Food: Exports

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further steps they will take to (1) support, and (2) increase, exports of food and drink. [[HL5513](#)]

**Lord Benyon:** We want people at home and abroad to be lining up to buy British and are delivering on our commitment to drive export growth.

We have recently announced an export package to boost export capability and deliver on growing demand for our high-quality UK produce across the world. This includes an expansion of our agrifood attaché network and the establishment of an Export Council that brings industry and government together to increase exports.

The new attachés will broaden export opportunities for UK farmers and producers, break down technical barriers and support UK companies to capitalise on growing demand in global markets and deliver on the opportunities created by new trade agreements.

The UK wide Export Council will deliver a strategic approach to boosting exports through increased capability, strengthened market intelligence and an enhanced provision of tailored advice and support for companies of all sizes.

## Environment Protection and Nature Conservation

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether applications for the new Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery Scheme will take account of whether potential recipients are already in receipt of funding from existing DEFRA payment schemes or other environmental land management schemes. [HL5321]

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the criteria for applying for the Local Nature Recovery Scheme and the Landscape Recovery Scheme will be published. [HL5322]

**Lord Benyon:** As set out in our payment principles document published in June 2021, we aim to support the stacking of multiple public schemes and public and private finance so long as schemes are compatible, pay for different or additional outcomes and do not pay for the same action twice.

On 6 January 2022 we published further information on both Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery.

This included the broad themes that Local Nature Recovery will pay for and more detail on how it will work. This publication also confirmed that we will continue working with stakeholders to develop the detailed scheme rules for Local Nature Recovery. We will finalise and publish these as soon as possible to allow people to plan their participation in the scheme.

The publication also included initial information on the criteria for the first round of Landscape Recovery pilot projects. It confirmed that we will launch the application process shortly including publishing full guidance for applicants. This guidance will cover detailed information on how bids will be assessed and how the scheme will work for the selected projects. Projects will have 16 weeks to prepare their applications before the application window closes. Applications will then be assessed against our selection criteria and we will confirm the chosen first round pilot projects this summer.

## Fossil Fuels: Registration

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 7 December (HL4251), which data sets are confidential according to precise contractual obligations. [HL5217]

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 7 December (HL4251), whether the licences and contracts they have signed conform to international best practice regarding (1) confidentiality clauses, and (2) exceptions being allowed and written into contract under a range of pre-defined circumstances; and whether they can elaborate on what such allowed exceptions are in the case of the UK licenses. [HL5218]

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 7 December (HL4251), whether they have ever asked the relevant companies to release them from their confidentiality agreement; if so, (1) when they did so, and (2) what were the results; and if not, what plans they have to (a) do so now, and (b) publish the correspondence as proof. [HL5219]

**Lord Callanan:** The reference made to protecting commercial confidentiality in the previous reply was not specific to any contractual obligation but to the duty of care the Government is under to protect commercially sensitive information shared with it. This duty is recognised, for example, in section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## General Practitioners: Protective Clothing

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are addressing any (1) unavailability, and (2) rationing, of FFP3 masks used by GPs required for treating COVID patients in the community via home antiviral therapy. [HL5376]

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, with regard to the provision of FFP3 masks to GPs, whether they also provided fit-testing of such masks; whether fit-testing is required before the use of FFP3 masks by GPs; what guidance they have provided to GPs concerning arranging a fit-test; and what assessment they have made of the impact on the resources and capacity of hospitals to carry out fit-tests for GPs. [HL5377]

**Lord Kamall:** There are sufficient stocks of FFP3 masks which are available to general practitioners (GPs)

via the ordering portal, with limits set by size of practice. In general practice, type IIR or surgical face masks are usually worn for patient contact. Infection prevention and control measures allow for local risk assessments to determine that FFP3 masks should be worn in circumstances, such as undertaking aerosol generating procedures or if deemed necessary by the local risk assessment and if fit-testing has been carried out.

From 17 January 2022, practices requiring FFP3 masks where fit-testing has been organised, will be able to order these masks through the portal. It is a legal requirement for employers to ensure that staff are fit-tested before FFP3 face masks can be worn. Clinical commissioning groups and integrated care systems are being asked to identify regional or local fit testing capacity through Departmental networks to meet local demand.

### General Practitioners: Retirement

Asked by *Lord Watts*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many GPs retired in (1) 2019, (2) 2020, and (3) 2021. [HL5350]

**Lord Kamall:** The following table shows the number of general practitioners who have retired from the NHS Pension Scheme in each year since 2019.

<i>Scheme Year End</i>	<i>Number of retirements</i>
2019	1,144
2020	1,193
2021	1,331

Source: NHS Business Authority

### Gulf of Guinea: Piracy

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the Gulf of Guinea Declaration on the Suppression of Piracy; and what plans they have to support the International Labour Organisation to reduce the number of ships abandoned in ports across the world. [HL5238]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** We are committed to building maritime security capability in the region through the implementation of the Yaounde maritime security architecture. In 2021 the UK was co-chair of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, deployed HMS Trent to the region and supported the launch of the Gulf of Guinea – Maritime Collaboration Forum. Together, these initiatives are building the capacity of regional navies and industry to address maritime insecurities and prosecute incidents of maritime crime.

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) has provisions to protect seafarers in the case of abandonment. In July 2021 the Legal Committee of the International Maritime Organisation called for guidance

for Port State and Flag State authorities on how to deal with and prevent reoccurrence of abandonment cases. The UK is contributing to the development of those guidelines.

### Health and Social Services: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the level of absence amongst (1) NHS staff, and (2) carers, over the last month attributed to COVID-19. [HL5251]

**Lord Kamall:** In the month to 5 January 2022, the average daily number of staff absent from work in National Health Service hospital trusts for COVID-19 related reasons was 30,637. This compares to a peak of over 100,000 absences per day in April 2020 and over 50,000 absences per day in January 2021.

The Department does not hold data on the number of carers absent from work due to COVID-19 over the last month. The Department collects data on COVID-19 related absence among staff in care homes and domiciliary care, which is currently being collated and validated for future publication.

### Health and Social Services: Staff

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of staff shortages on the (1) NHS, and (2) care sector, in terms of treating patients and those in care. [HL5252]

**Lord Kamall:** No formal assessment has been made. Safe staffing levels remain the responsibility of local clinical and other leaders, supported by national guidance and regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

The monthly workforce statistics for October 2021 show that there over 1.2 million full time equivalent staff in the National Health Service. Since October 2020, there are 4,800 more doctors, over 10,900 more nurses and over 44,700 more NHS Health and Community Hospital Services staff in total. We are on schedule to deliver 50,000 more nurses by the end of this Parliament and we have funded an additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places each year for domestic students in England.

We have provided £462.5 million to local authorities and social care providers for recruitment and retention in the sector, expanded the Health and Care Visa to include care workers and we have launched the Made with Care recruitment campaign, running until March 2022.

### HMS Daring and HMS Dauntless

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when HMS Dauntless will return operationally to the Fleet. [HL5275]

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when HMS Daring will return operationally to the Fleet. [HL5276]

**Baroness Goldie:** HMS DAUNTLESS is in the test and commissioning phase of her Power Improvement Programme (PIP). All three new diesel generators have been run and initial load trials completed successfully. The next phase of the programme will see HMS DAUNTLESS undertake a rigorous harbour trials programme, before returning to sea later this year for sea trials.

HMS DARING is currently at the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead and will be the second Type 45 Destroyer to undergo PIP, with conversion work carried out during 2022.

### Hospitals: Construction

*Asked by Lord Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many new hospitals have been completed and brought into operation in England since 2010. [HL5246]

**Lord Kamall:** There have been 19 new hospitals brought into operation in England since 2010. This includes one hospital completed since Government's commitment in October 2020 to deliver 48 hospitals by 2030 and 18 completed prior to that announcement.

### India: International Assistance

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of India regarding the distribution of foreign aid donations, particularly in reference to the blocking of funds to religious charities. [HL5227]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware that some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have faced difficulties in India due to the application of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) by the Indian authorities, and that some have recently had applications to renew their foreign funding licenses rejected. We continue to support a wide range of local NGO partners in India, including through programmes, and officials have discussed issues facing NGOs directly with the Indian Government. On 8 January, the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs restored the FCRA license of the Missionaries of Charity, meaning the NGO will be able to receive and use foreign funding again. The British High Commission in New Delhi will continue to monitor developments.

We engage India on the full range of human rights issues, including freedom of religion or belief, working with Union and State Governments, and NGOs, to build capacity and promote human rights for all.

### Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the increasing number of injuries to Palestinians by Israeli settlers supported by Israeli forces. [HL5242]

**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 4 January. We welcome discussion by the Israeli authorities' on how to address this issue, and urge Israel to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the destruction of Palestinian olive trees and crops in the Occupied Territories by Israeli settlers. [HL5244]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We understand the particular significance of olive trees given their status as a national symbol and the sole source of income for many Palestinian farmers. We have repeatedly raised the issue of incidents of settler violence, including the destruction of olive trees, with the Israeli authorities. We continue to urge them to investigate thoroughly every instance to bring those responsible to justice and of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent reports that 2021 saw the highest number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces since 2014; and that demolitions by Israeli forces reached a five-year high, making nearly 900 Palestinians homeless. [HL5265]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population and urge restraint in the use of live fire. The UK also 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 Foreign Affairs on 9 December.

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of

Israel concerning the treatment of Palestinians and their property during night raids by Israeli forces. [HL5266]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent reports that the Israeli military has revised its open-fire policies for the West Bank. [HL5267]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our Embassy in Tel Aviv raises cases of alleged excessive use of force with the Israeli Defence Forces directly. We raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations.

### Jerusalem: Palestinians

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent reports that in December 2021 in East Jerusalem (1) 92 Palestinians lost their homes after 14 residential units were demolished by Israeli forces, and (2) 21 non-residential structures, including 18 commercial structures, were demolished. [HL5245]

**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 Foreign Affairs on 9 December.

### Kazakhstan: Politics and Government

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) (a) civil, and (b) political, unrest in Kazakhstan, and (2) the involvement of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation as peacekeepers. [HL5250]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government is deeply concerned by, and condemns, the violence and destruction of property in Kazakhstan in early January, particularly in the city of Almaty. The Government greatly regrets the loss of life and sends its condolences to families of the deceased. We have noted President Tokayev's speeches at the Collective Security Treaty

Organisation (CSTO) Summit on 10 January and to the Kazakh parliament on 11 January, where he described the events in Almaty and other cities across Kazakhstan as an attempted coup. We continue to engage directly with the Kazakh authorities to gain further insights into the chain of events.

We have been clear that any international forces should have a clear mission, be time limited and proportionate in any use of force. It is also important that Kazakhstan's sovereignty is respected. President Tokayev informed the Kazakh parliament on 11 January that a phased withdrawal of the CSTO peacekeeping contingent would begin shortly. All of the Russian peacekeeping contingent are now reported to have left Kazakhstan and other CSTO forces are returning to their home countries.

I spoke with the Kazakh Ambassador to the UK on 6 January, with Deputy Foreign Minister Alimbayev on 7 January and with President Tokayev's Special Representative, Erzhan Kazykhan, on 14 January. During these meetings, I underlined the importance of law enforcement responses being proportionate, that due process is followed in the judicial system, and that freedom of speech and expression are respected in line with Kazakhstan's international commitments.

### Listed Buildings: Energy

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what exemptions will be granted for listed accommodation unsuitable for updating to modern energy efficiency standards for (1) homes, and (2) rental properties, in England. [HL5272]

**Lord Callanan:** Privately rented listed buildings and those in conservation areas may apply for an exemption from the legal requirement for an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). In these cases, they would be out of scope of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations.

The Department [consulted](#) last year on whether to require an EPC for listed buildings and those in a conservation area. A Government Response will be published in due course.

### Livestock Industry

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the opportunities for livestock producers in the UK in 2022. [HL5136]

**Lord Benyon:** Leaving the EU has provided a huge opportunity for UK agriculture to boost domestic productivity and improve its competitiveness - developing the next generation of food and farming technology, adopting the latest techniques and investing in skills and equipment. As a government we will always champion our farmers and producers, supporting them to grow more of our great British food.

In November we opened the new Farming Investment Fund which will provide grants to farmers, foresters, and growers in England (including contractors to these sectors) so that they can invest in the equipment, technology and infrastructure that will help their businesses to prosper, while improving their productivity and enhancing the environment.

We will also work with the sector to boost exports, building on the UK's growing reputation for high-quality food and drink, with high standards of animal welfare, traceability and sustainability. The Government will add eight new agri-food and drink attachés in priority markets. As well as posts in China, USA, India, Canada and Mexico, the agri-food attachés will be covering growth markets in the Gulf, Africa, South America and the Asia-Pacific region. Existing attachés in China and the UAE have been pivotal in securing access for a greater range of products, driving export growth and building mutually supportive relationships with trading partners.

During the PM's visit to the US last year agreement was made regarding the small ruminant rule, which opens a valuable path for UK exports of lamb to the US. This achievement follows on from last year's commencement of UK beef exports to the US for the first time in over 20 years. The UK beef sector can now begin to reap the economic benefits of trade with the US – with industry estimating beef exports will be worth £66 million over the next five years. The Mexican market is now also open for British pork for the first time, which means a potential boost of £50m over the first five years of trade. British exporters can now tap into this brand-new market, which boasts high demand for high quality pork meat. Last year, over £597 million of British food and drink exports headed to Gulf Co-operation Council countries. Farmers and food producers could now benefit hugely from better market access to a region that imports virtually all its food and has high demand for top-quality British produce including lamb.

### Local Government: Video Conferencing

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what provision is currently in place for local councils to meet virtually. [HL5254]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Department has been considering the responses to the call for evidence on local authority remote meetings and the Government will respond shortly.

### Marriage

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper published on 14 March 2018, whether they can provide an update on their progress in exploring "the legal and practical challenges of limited reform relating to the law on marriage and religious weddings." [HL5231]

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** This is a difficult issue which requires careful consideration. The Law Commission are looking at aspects of the problem through their review of the law governing legal marriage ceremonies. This review will present options for reforms to modernise marriage law, including in relation to who can solemnise a marriage and ways of ensuring that fewer weddings conducted according to religious rites result in a marriage that the law does not recognise at all. The Government will consider the case for more comprehensive and enduring reform to marriage law once the Law Commission's recommendations have been received.

A separate Nuffield Foundation study, launched in September 2020 and due to report shortly, is investigating why marriage ceremonies occur outside of the legal framework for weddings in England and Wales, and the findings of this report will also be carefully considered. Any proposals affecting how religious groups are permitted to conduct marriages must be thoroughly assessed for their fairness.

### Ministers: Pay

*Asked by Lord Jopling*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 27 October 2021 (HL3353), why there are more unsalaried Ministers in the House of Lords, who are not in receipt of a parliamentary salary, compared to unsalaried Ministers in the House of Commons, who do receive a parliamentary salary; and how many unsalaried ministers are currently members of each House. [HL5492]

**Lord True:** The Ministerial and other Salaries Act (1975) sets limits on the numbers of salaries that can be paid and for individual offices. Within those statutory limits the organisation of the Executive is a matter for the Prime Minister and at his discretion.

There are currently fourteen unsalaried Ministers, of which eleven are Members of the House of Lords, and three are members of the House of Commons.

### Muhannad Misk

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent reports of the detention by Israeli forces of the Palestinian child Muhannad Misk in Hebron on 16 December 2021. [HL5243]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention and regularly raise this with the Israeli Ministry of Justice. We continue to stress

the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

### **Myanmar: Arms Trade**

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the massacre in Kayah State on 24 December, what plans they have to join the EU in backing an international arms embargo against Myanmar. [HL5228]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is a longstanding supporter of an arms embargo on Myanmar, and we have had a comprehensive embargo in place for many years. The UK helped secure an EU arms embargo on Myanmar following the 2017 Rohingya crisis. Since we left the EU, we have transitioned this into domestic law.

Following the February 2021 coup, we have intensified efforts to stem the international flow of weapons reaching Myanmar, and have encouraged other countries to join this action. On 5 May, the UK secured a G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting Communiqué that committed G7 members to continue to prevent the supply of arms and technical assistance to the military. On 18 June, the UK worked to secure an unprecedented UN General Assembly Resolution, signed up to by 119 countries, which committed to preventing the flow of arms to Myanmar. On 26 November, in coordination with partners, we released a further statement which committed to preventing the flow of arms, dual-use goods and technical assistance reaching the military. We also have extensive targeted sanctions on the military and its business interests, including on multiple institutions responsible for procuring weapons from abroad. The UK will continue to work with partners, including the EU, to exert pressure on those responsible.

### **Nigeria: Homicide**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that over 200 people have been killed by gunmen in North West Nigeria in the last week and that a further 10,000 people have been displaced from their homes, and (2) the reasons for these killings; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL5289]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are concerned by deteriorating security in North West Nigeria. Intercommunal violence and attacks by criminal groups are having a devastating impact on communities in this region, as well as in the Maradi region of Niger. The Minister for Africa discussed insecurity in Nigeria with Foreign Minister Onyeama in a bilateral meeting in November and she will hold further such discussions with the Nigerian Government during the upcoming Security and Defence Dialogue.

We condemn the recent attacks in Zamfara State in North West Nigeria. On 10 January, the Minister for Africa publicly expressed her concern about these horrific attacks and reiterated our commitment to working with the Government of Nigeria to support sustainable peace and security. We are working with our Nigerian partners to monitor the situation. Furthermore, we are supporting local peace-building efforts, including through our work with the Nigeria Governors' Forum. The UK Government is also supporting the International Organisation for Migration's work with the Governments of Niger and Nigeria to improve border management.

### **Northern Ireland Protocol**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in negotiations with the EU concerning the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL5256]

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take with the EU to ensure that enhanced mechanisms for (1) transparency, (2) engagement, and (3) consultation, concerning the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, are put in place and fully implemented. [HL5257]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Foreign Secretary saw Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič last week at Chevening (13-14 January) for her first face-to-face talks.

The meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere. They agreed that officials would meet next week in intensified talks and that the principals would meet again on 24 January.

### **Property: Management**

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to legislate for the regulation of property management companies. [HL5273]

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that private property management companies are charging tenants excessive (1) commission, and (2) charges, to cover their building insurance; and what steps they intend to take, if any, to curtail the practice. [HL5274]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and renters and making sure that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. This commitment includes raising professionalism and standards amongst managing agents, protecting consumers while defending the reputation of good agents from the actions of rogue operatives. We therefore welcome the ongoing work

being undertaken by the industry itself to raise professionalism and standards across the sector.

The Government is considering the recommendations in the report received from the working group on the regulation of property agents chaired by Lord Best. We welcome the work of the independent steering group on codes of practice for property agents, and we will continue to work with industry on improving best practice.

### Property: Ownership

Asked by **Lord Grocott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will establish a beneficial ownership register of overseas entities which own UK property, as envisaged in the draft Registration of Overseas Entities Bill. [HL5233]

**Lord Callanan:** As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### Public Health: Finance

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the public health grant allocations for 2022/23 will be announced. [HL5397]

**Lord Kamall:** Local authority Public Health Grant allocations for 2022/23 will be confirmed shortly.

### Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they are making to provide transport for those eligible under the Afghans Citizens Resettlement Scheme to come from Afghanistan to the UK. [HL5262]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Providing a means to leave Afghanistan for individuals eligible for HMG support remains a top priority.

Since the end of Op PITTING, we have brought around 1,500 Afghans to the UK from the region.

The Minister for the Armed Forces recently visited the region to identify what more we can do for those eligible both in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. We are working with a wide range of allies and partners and are exploring every avenue to help them reach safety.

### Regional Planning and Development

Asked by **Lord Young of Cookham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their Levelling Up White Paper. [HL5281]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Levelling up is a transformative agenda and the Department's priority is to produce a White Paper which matches our ambition, building on existing action we are already taking across Government and setting out a new policy regime that will drive change for years to come.

Work is progressing well and we plan to publish the White Paper soon.

### Research: Finance

Asked by **Lord Jones**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the value of UK Research and Development grants to UK industry in (1) 2010, (2) 2015, and (3) 2019. [HL5248]

**Lord Callanan:** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes estimates of flow of research and development (R&D) funds from government to other sectors. Table 9 of its annual publication on research and development (R&D) expenditure by the UK government shows that the aggregate destination of gross R&D expenditure (broader than grants) includes the following figures for private industry and public corporations:

£million	2010	2015	2019
Civil	576	895	1,149
Defence	1,359	1,286	893
Gross Total	1,935	2,181	2,042

Source: Research and Development Expenditure by the UK Government: 2019

The ONS also publishes figures for UK Business Enterprise R&D. Table 3 on sources of funds gives the following figures for businesses reporting funding from the UK Government:

£million	2010	2015	2019
UK Government	1,407	1,817	1,829

Source: Business Enterprise Research and Development, UK: 2020

Government support for business R&D also includes R&D tax credit schemes. HM Revenue and Customs publishes R&D Tax Credits Statistics and Table 2 gives the cost of support claimed for the R&D tax credit for all schemes by financial year on an accounting period basis:

<i>£million</i>	2010-11	2015-16	2019-20 (provisional)
Claims	1,110	3,975	7,445

*Source: Research and Development Tax Credits Statistics: September 2021*

## Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to accurately measure the impact of Respiratory Syncytial Virus hospitalisations on the NHS. [HL5260]

**Lord Kamall:** There is a national response and governance in place to manage surges in paediatric respiratory infections, including Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). This includes monitoring of relevant data on RSV prevalence and hospital activity and a coordinated approach with the devolved administrations.

Sentinel surveillance of RSV cases was established in May 2021 to expand sample testing and provide an early warning system. The surveillance data is being reviewed on a weekly basis by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England and NHS Improvement. Through the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Watch programme, the UKHSA undertakes surveillance of hospitalisations with confirmed RSV infection to sentinel National Health Service hospital trusts in England, including intensive care admissions.

A Paediatric Incident Cell has been established within NHS England and NHS Improvement to manage the RSV response and monitor pressures on local services with a national Critical Care Capacity Panel (CCCP). Weekly surveillance data, daily data on hospital activity, general and acute as well as paediatric intensive care bed occupancy, is being monitored as part of the CCCP and the Paediatric Incident Cell.

## Royal Prerogative

Asked by **Viscount Stansgate**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they define a prerogative power. [HL5457]

Asked by **Viscount Stansgate**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which, if any, prerogative powers have been restored using statute law; and on what occasions. [HL5458]

Asked by **Viscount Stansgate**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which, if any, prerogative powers have been removed using statute law; and on what occasions. [HL5459]

**Lord True:** The Royal Prerogative is the residual power inherent in the Sovereign, and which is now exercised mostly on the advice of Ministers. It may be

divided into the following broad categories: constitutional or personal prerogatives and prerogative executive powers.

The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill, which is currently going through your Lordship's House, will make the Royal Prerogative powers relating to the dissolution of Parliament and the calling of a new Parliament exercisable again, as if the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 had never been enacted. We have a sound legal basis for the position that prerogative powers can be revived, and there is no doubt on this question if this is made clear in statute. Clause 2 of the Bill makes the necessary express provision accordingly.

Parliament can and has legislated to modify, abolish, or supersede Royal Prerogative powers. It is rare that statutes abolish Royal Prerogative powers explicitly. It is, therefore, a matter of legal judgement whether a prerogative is abridged by implication.

## Slavery

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that HSBC invested in Xinjiang Tianye Ltd, a subsidiary of an entity sanctioned by the government of the United States of America for its involvement in crimes against Uyghurs in Xinjiang, what steps they are taking to extend section 54 (Transparency in supply chains etc.) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 so that it better governs the activities of financial services institutions. [HL5213]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK was the first country in the world to require businesses to report on the steps they have taken to tackle modern slavery. The landmark provision in section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires organisations, including financial institutions, with a turnover of £36m or more, to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

The prevalence of modern slavery and complexity of global supply chains means that it is highly unlikely that any sector or company is immune from the risks of modern slavery, including those in financial services. The Government encourages companies to monitor their supply chains with rigour to uncover and remedy any associations they may find with forced labour or other labour abuses.

The Government has already committed to take forward an ambitious package of changes to strengthen the Act's transparency legislation, including mandating the specific reporting topics that statements must cover and introducing financial penalties for organisations that fail to comply.

To further bolster our approach to modern slavery, on 24 March 2021, the Government announced a review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy. As part of the strategy review we will consider how to strengthen our approach to transparency in supply chains, including in relation to

financial institutions. A revised strategy will allow us to build on the considerable progress we have made to date, adapt our approach to the evolving nature of these terrible crimes, and continue our international leadership in tackling modern slavery.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the debate on 5 January (HL Deb, cols 596–7), what assessment they have made of proposals to address the effect that the public order disqualification threshold and time period of slavery and trafficking information notices will have on catching alleged perpetrators. [HL5214]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** It is a priority for this government to increase prosecutions of perpetrators of modern slavery and the measures included within the Nationality and Borders Bill are designed to support these aims.

Through the Public Order Disqualification, we want to ensure the protection from removal and provision of support are not afforded to serious criminals and those who pose a national security threat, in line with our international obligations. Each decision is discretionary and will be taken on a case by case basis. This will mean that we do not lose the ability to provide a recovery period and/or make a conclusive grounds decision when it is beneficial to support prosecutions.

The Slavery or Trafficking Information Notice under Clause 57 supports our aim to identify victims early and ensure they receive appropriate support, and therefore better able to assist with investigative and enforcement activities. All referrals will be appropriately considered regardless of when they are brought to make sure that those who need protection are afforded it.

We are clear, that across both these measures, First Responders should still always refer victims into the National Referral Mechanism in line with Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance, using the online form even where the individual has had a previous recovery period or has a criminal conviction. In operationalising these clauses we will ensure this is abundantly clear.

This Government's commitment to supporting victims is precisely why the Nationality and Borders Bill also makes clear that, where a public authority is pursuing an investigation or criminal proceedings, confirmed victims who are co-operating in this activity and need to remain in the UK in order to do so, will be granted a form of temporary leave to support this crucial endeavour. These measures build upon support and investment to strengthen the police response to modern slavery, including initiatives to help victims engage in the criminal justice system so more offenders can face justice.

*Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a Modern Slavery Risk Register to aid UK companies and individuals to avoid investment in

organisations abroad which are alleged to have facilitated modern slavery. [HL5215]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** At present there are no plans to introduce a Modern Slavery Risk Register. However, on 24 March 2021, the Government announced a review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy. The review will consider all aspects of the 2014 strategy and the Government's response, including our approach to supply chains.

In the meantime, to further enhance transparency, the Government launched an online GOV.UK registry for modern slavery statements. This service enables investors, consumers, NGOs and others to scrutinise the effectiveness of the actions being taken and monitor progress across sectors over time. Since launch, over 6,900 statements have been submitted covering over 23,000 organisations on a voluntary basis. In future, it will be mandatory for in scope organisations to submit their statement to the registry, as part of the planned changes to strengthen section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act.

## Smoking: Health Hazards

*Asked by Lord Howard of Rising*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relative harms caused by (1) smoking, and (2) vaping. [HL5362]

**Lord Kamall:** Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths – and it is estimated that two out of three lifelong smokers will die from smoking. In 2019/20, smoking was responsible for 448,030 hospital admissions, and roughly 64,000 deaths a year between 2017 and 2019.

Although vaping is not risk free, the evidence is increasingly clear that UK regulated e-cigarettes are significantly less harmful to health than smoking tobacco. E-cigarettes are an effective tool in helping smokers to quit, especially when combined with support from local Stop Smoking Services.

## South Western Railway: Timetables

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of notice given by South Western Railway on 12 January of substantial timetable changes coming into effect on 17 January. [HL5401]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** South Western Railway has responded to the Omicron variant which has seen a sharp increase in staff absenteeism and a sharp drop in passenger demand.

Rather than make weekly changes to the timetable, South Western Railway initiated a temporary timetable which commenced on Monday 17 January 2022. This will

give customers greater notice of the planned timetable over the coming weeks.

### **Sudan: Politics and Government**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the political and security situation in Sudan, following the resignation of Abdalla Hamdok as Prime Minister of the military-run interim government on 4 January. [HL5388]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Abdallah Hamdok's resignation as Prime Minister of Sudan reflects the wider political crisis over the future of Sudan's democratic transition following the 25 October 2021 coup. His resignation reinforces the urgent need for all Sudanese political actors to work together to deliver the civilian rule that millions of Sudanese continue to call for. The Troika (UK, Norway, US) and EU issued a statement on 4 January urging all sides to engage in dialogue to secure an end to the political crisis and we therefore welcome the UN's announcement that they will facilitate talks. The Sudan Quad (UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US) released a statement on 8 January urging the Sudanese to seize this opportunity. With our international partners, we will continue to urge all parties to work on the basis of the 2019 Constitutional Declaration to deliver the Sudanese people's demands for freedom, peace and justice. We recognise however, that despite the talks the Sudanese people continue to protest; it is essential they are able to do so without fear of violence.

The ongoing political crisis has also exacerbated an already fragile security situation in Darfur and other historically marginalised areas of Sudan, which will have serious humanitarian implications for the people of Sudan. The UK raised concern at the increase in violence and high levels of displacement in Darfur, along with the wider political crisis, at the UN Security Council on 12 January. British Embassy staff in Khartoum and FCDO officials will continue to engage with all Sudanese parties to encourage dialogue and help ensure that the progress made since the 2019 revolution is not lost.

### **Terrorism: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by **Lord Empey***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had with the government of Ireland regarding whether investigations should be undertaken into alleged crimes perpetrated by the Provisional Irish Republican Army before April 1998 at the meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on 2 December 2021; what decision the government of Ireland had made on this matter; and what assessment they have made of that decision. [HL5171]

**Lord Caine:** The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has raised with the Government of Ireland the

issue of investigations into Troubles-related offences that were committed in Ireland and will continue to do so.

### **Tobacco: Health Hazards**

*Asked by **Lord Howard of Rising***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relative harms caused by (1) combustible tobacco products, and (2) non-combustible tobacco products. [HL5437]

**Lord Kamall:** Combustible tobacco products, such as cigarettes and rolling tobacco, are responsible for 448,030 hospital admissions and approximately 64,000 deaths a year. Users of non-combustible tobacco products, such as traditional chewing tobacco, can be exposed to similar or even higher levels of cancer-causing chemicals.

As all tobacco products are harmful to health, it remains the Government's policy to support people to quit all forms of tobacco use. We encourage all tobacco users to quit through safer alternatives such as nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes and local stop smoking services.

### **Tonga: Volcanoes**

*Asked by **Lord Glenarthur***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide aid to the Kingdom of Tonga, following the volcanic eruption on 15 January; what is the timetable for delivering any such aid; and whether they have made any assessment of what aid is most needed. [HL5484]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK is deeply concerned by the appalling devastation caused by the volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga. While full details of the humanitarian impact are still unknown, it is estimated that up to 80,000 people will have been affected. HMG has been working with partners on options for support, helping to ensure a coordinated regional response.

On Friday 21 January, the UK sent supplies to support the humanitarian and disaster relief effort on Australia's HMAS Adelaide. 17 pallets are on board, including 90 family tents, 8 community tents and 6 wheel barrows. All of these items were requested by the Tongan government.

In addition, HMS Spey has now set sail for Tonga, loaded with additional items including fresh water and medical supplies.

The UK is also funding the deployment of crisis experts through the United Nations. They will support the Tongan authorities to coordinate the international response.

The UK-funded International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) has also released £345,000 to support Tonga. The UK has committed a £6 million contribution to the DREF through an annual £1.5 million donation 2020-2023.

## Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what pre-departure COVID tests are required by (1) persons travelling from the Republic of Ireland to the UK, and (2) persons travelling from the UK to the Republic of Ireland. [HL4716]

**Lord Kamall:** The Republic of Ireland is within the common travel area. People travelling to England from the Republic of Ireland who have not been outside the common travel area in the period 10 days before arrival in England are not required to take a pre-departure test.

As of 14 January 2022, the Irish Government's advice for travellers states that "With effect from Thursday 6 January 2022, passengers to Ireland with: An accepted proof of vaccination, or proof of recovery from COVID-19 in the prior 6 months do not have to show an additional pre-departure COVID-19 test result. Passengers without proof of vaccination, or proof of recovery from COVID-19 in the prior 6 months, must show evidence of a negative ('not detected') RT-PCR test result taken within 72 hours prior to arriving in Ireland".

## Type 23 Frigates: Decommissioning

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether HMS Monmouth has been decommissioned; and whether HMS Montrose will be decommissioned later this year. [HL5277]

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether HMS Argyll is due to be decommissioned in 2022. [HL5278]

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether HMS Lancaster is due to be decommissioned in 2024; and whether HMS Iron Duke is due to be decommissioned in 2025. [HL5279]

**Baroness Goldie:** I refer the noble Lord to the response given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin) in the House of Commons on 19 October 2021 to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (John Healey) to Question 58732.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Type 23 Frigates [58732 - Type 23 Frigates.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-01-10/HL5277>

## Type 31 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the first Type 31 Frigate will first enter naval service. [HL5280]

**Baroness Goldie:** I refer the noble Lord to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin), in the House of Commons on 5 March 2020 to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones) in response to Question 22373.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Type 31 Frigates Procurement [22373 - Type 31 Frigates.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-01-10/HL5280>

## Undocumented Migrants

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people living illegally in the UK; which nationality is the most represented among those illegal residents; and whether people overstaying their visas is the main way in which people become illegally resident. [HL5240]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** By its very nature, it is not possible to know the exact size of the illegal population and so we do not seek to make any official estimates on this. For the same reason, we cannot know the nationalities or routes to illegal status of the hidden population. The Home Office is, however, conducting analysis to better understand the nature of the illegal migrant population in the United Kingdom and how individuals move in to and out of it.

The vast majority of people leave the UK on time, in line with the expiry of their visa or leave to remain. However, those who have no right to remain in the UK and do not return home voluntarily should be in no doubt of our determination to remove them.

The Government's New Plan for Immigration will make it harder for people to enter and live in the UK illegally, whilst ensuring that those who do have the right to reside in the UK can do so.

## United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the £160 million that the UK has contributed to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund is being spent; and whether any of that money is able to assist NGOs in conflict areas. [HL5363]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK has supported the UN's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) since its inception in 2006. The PBF is an important tool in addressing conflict risks and investing in prevention, with the UN playing a important role through its access and peacebuilding expertise to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes across the globe.

Our contribution has helped the PBF to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in over 40 countries. Examples of PBF activities include reducing

conflict in parts of Lake Chad by 48% by resolving land disputes, preventing land from being destroyed and improving livelihoods; and making investments in infrastructure and small businesses for women and young people in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, contributing to a 50% reduction in inter-communal conflict. More information on PBF funded projects can be found at: <https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000>.

The PBF has funded civil society organisations (CSOs). In 2020, the Fund also approved \$30 million towards CSOs' initiatives and joint UN-civil society initiatives. In Burundi, for example, CSOs' initiatives facilitated the participation of youth in elections and fostered trust and collaboration among the youth wings of competing political parties.

### Universities

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage universities to make face-to-face teaching compulsory. [HL5269]

**Baroness Barran:** Face-to-face teaching is a vital part of getting a high-quality student experience. With the removal of the Plan B measures, there are no COVID restrictions that apply to higher education (HE) and providers should ensure that they are delivering the full programme of face-to-face teaching and learning that they were providing before the COVID-19 outbreak.

We know that in response to the COVID-19 outbreak HE providers delivered new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning and that some providers continue to use some of these approaches alongside in-person provision. However, online learning should only be offered to enhance the student experience, not to detract from it, and it should not be used as a cost-cutting measure. The Office for Students (OfS) will be monitoring to ensure this is the case, and that universities are being open about what students can expect.

The government expects all universities to continue to deliver excellent learning, in line with guidance from the OfS. On 29 October, my right hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, wrote to all English HE providers to make clear that we expect them to be offering a high quality face-to-face student experience. On 17 January, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote an open letter to students about face-to-face teaching, setting out what they can do if they feel they are not getting the teaching they signed up for. This letter can be found here: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/01/17/face-to-face-teaching-is-a-vital-part-of-getting-a-high-quality-student-experience-education-secretary-nadhim-zahawi-writes-to-students/>. In addition, the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education has been speaking with some university Vice Chancellors to ensure they are offering students the amount of in-person teaching they should expect.

If students have concerns, they should first raise them with their HE provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, students at HE providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

### West of England Line

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects on (1) the economy, and (2) connectivity, of South West England of South Western Railway's decision to cease providing through services from Exeter to London Waterloo, with trains splitting at Salisbury. [HL5400]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** South Western Railway advises that its temporary timetable, which commenced on Monday 17 January 2022, comfortably retains enough capacity to meet demand whilst ensuring that many services for key workers and schools have been retained.

The impact of the latest COVID variant has led to a sharp increase in staff absenteeism and a drop in passenger demand. Consequently, as part of the overall reductions in service, direct services between Exeter to London Waterloo will not be available during the temporary timetable period, as was the case in the same period last year.

South Western Railway has assured the Department that the timetable will be kept under constant review.

### Working Hours

*Asked by Baroness Quin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have concerning the proportion of employees working shifts of more than six hours who do not receive payment for the rest breaks to which they are entitled. [HL5255]

**Lord Callanan:** In Great Britain, working hours are governed by the Working Time Regulations, which set the maximum working hours and minimum rest breaks workers are entitled to. All workers are entitled to a minimum of 20 minutes' rest break if they work at least six hours, which may be paid or unpaid depending on the employment contract. Some workers such as shift workers may be entitled to 'compensatory rest' if they don't have the right to specific rest breaks.

Payment for rest breaks is a matter for individual contracts.

### Xinjiang: Overseas Companies

*Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update their business Risk Advisory regarding companies operating in Xinjiang to ensure UK companies and individuals are aware of the deteriorating situation in the region. [HL5216]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our overseas business risk guidance on Xinjiang was last updated on 16 August 2021 and is kept under constant review. The guidance makes clear the extensive evidence of human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang, and urges UK companies

to conduct appropriate due diligence and consider their corporate responsibilities when making investment decisions. We expect them to take appropriate action in response.

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