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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 16 March 2022

Criminal Legal Aid Proposals

[HLWS669]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (James Cartledge) has made the following Written Statement:

"The pandemic has been exceptionally challenging for our justice system. We owe our whole legal profession - solicitors, barristers, chartered institute executives, and judiciary - and court staff a debt of gratitude for keeping the wheels of justice turning over the last two years.

Thanks to their immense efforts, we are making progress in tackling the court backlog, and getting back to a more normal way of working - in the interests of victims, witnesses and the wider public.

As Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice, I am committed to making sure our world-class justice system is put on a stable footing for the future, for the benefit of victims, defendants and the whole of society, which is why I am today announcing the launch of the Government's response to the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (CLAIR) and the Means Test Review consultation for both criminal and civil legal aid.

I would like to thank Sir Christopher Bellamy for his thorough, invaluable report - along with his panel of experts, and everyone who contributed their views, as well as all of those who contributed to the Means Test Review.

These two consultations address the recommendations made by Sir Christopher Bellamy and his advisory panel and the Review of the Legal Aid Means Test launched in 2019. The Government's response to CLAIR reflects the whole system approach taken in that review.

My proposals include an uplift of almost all criminal legal aid fees for criminal defence practitioners by 15% as soon as possible. This would inject an additional £115m p.a. at steady state. A further £20m p.a. is being held for other proposals including:

- a reformed Litigators Graduated Fee Scheme which pays solicitors in the Crown Court;
- investment in work in the youth court; and
- grants for training contracts and for solicitor advocates to gain rights of audience in the Crown Court to support the sustainability and development of solicitors' practice.

These proposals bring the total investment to £135m p.a. at steady state, in line with Sir Christopher's recommendations.

With the Government's additional funding to support court recovery, this will take taxpayer funding of criminal legal aid to £1.2 billion p.a., the highest level in a decade.

And, in the short term, our proposed cash injection will give a 15% boost to fees for police station work,

Magistrates' court work, the work of advocates in the Crown Court, most of the work of litigators in the Crown Court, solicitors in very high cost cases, and some smaller schemes.

CLAIR made a number of recommendations non-fee recommendations about the future of criminal legal aid, and in line with these we are also making proposals including:

- to reform fee schemes, so they reflect the way our legal professions work including increased work outside of trials and new practice like pre-recorded evidence;
- to explore new ways of delivering remote legal advice in police stations;
- to work with the professions and regulators on how, together, we can promote greater diversity across the system - opening up a career in law to anyone with the talent to succeed, regardless of their background;
- to establish an Advisory Board bring together information and real experience from the front line to inform ministers' decision making on legal aid policy;
- to remove barriers to the work of members of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives who don't enter the profession through traditional routes; and,
- to support training contracts for criminal solicitors and grants for solicitors to train to represent clients in the Crown Courts and above as solicitor advocates.

Investment and reform will make the fee structures better reflect work done and will improve the efficiency of the criminal legal aid system by incentivising early engagement and resolution where appropriate.

They will reinforce a more sustainable market, with publicly funded criminal defence practice seen as a viable, long-term, career choice, attracting the brightest and best from all backgrounds - a pipeline for the judges of tomorrow.

The proposals will put criminal legal aid on a sustainable and stable footing for many years to come - underpinning an effective and robust justice system that will benefit victims of crime, and everyone in our society who relies on it.

On the Means Test Review, I am proposing a wide suite of changes to ensure continued access to justice. These include:

- increasing income and capital thresholds for legal aid eligibility, meaning that 3.5 million more people will be eligible for criminal legal aid in the magistrates' court and 2 million more people will be eligible for civil legal aid;
- removing the upper income threshold for legal aid at the Crown Court, meaning that all Crown Court defendants will be eligible for legal aid;
- excluding assets from the means test where they are the subject matter of the case, making it easier for domestic abuse victims to access legal aid; and
- removing the means test for three areas of civil legal aid: civil representation for under-18s, civil representation

for parents or those with parental responsibility facing the withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining treatment from their child, and legal help for inquests involving a potential breach of rights under the ECHR (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) or where there is likely to be a significant wider public interest in the individual being represented at the inquest.

These measures aim to improve the operation of the whole criminal defence market and the justice system. They are designed to make the criminal justice system more efficient – particularly around new technology - and to make the criminal defence market more sustainable. The consultations will run for 12 weeks, after which the Government will consider responses in detail and formulate our response."

Delivering the Environment Act

[HLWS671]

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

We are today launching our consultation on legally binding targets under the Environment Act to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. This includes a world leading target to halt the decline of nature by 2030. This is our compass, spurring action of the scale required to address biodiversity loss. We are also proposing targets for air quality, water, trees, marine protected areas, biodiversity, and waste reduction and resource efficiency.

This goes beyond the legal minimum required under the Act and will support the delivery of many of the government's priorities, including to reach net zero by 2050, build resilience against the impacts of a changing climate, and level up all corners of the country.

In order to meet these targets, we must move the emphasis away from bureaucratic EU processes that haven't done enough to moderate the pace of nature's decline, and instead put in place the governance regime that can deliver nature's recovery. That's why we are publishing a green paper today, setting out proposals to create a system which better reflects the latest science, has regard for our domestic species and habitats, and delivers nature recovery.

We have always said we will take a cautious and evidence-led approach to any reform. This green paper is the next step in setting out our ideas and gathering views to inform our approach.

Our protected sites and nutrient pollution

As set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan, England's protected sites are a vitally important part of this government's ambitious commitments on the environment, including delivering the target to halt species decline by 2030. Nutrient pollution is a particular problem for our freshwater habitats and estuaries. Increased levels of nutrients (especially nitrogen and

phosphorus) can ultimately damage protected sites and the wildlife that live there.

Many of our most internationally important water bodies are designated as protected sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under the Habitats Regulations, competent authorities, such as local planning authorities and the Environment Agency, must assess the environmental impact of planning applications or local plans. As a result of these regulations and European case law, Natural England has advised that in areas where protected sites are in 'unfavourable condition' due to nutrient pollution, Local Planning Authorities can only approve a project if they are certain it will have no negative effect on the protected site.

Following further work to understand the sources of site deterioration, Natural England has today issued updated advice and support to the 32 Local Planning Authorities currently affected by nutrient pollution, as well as 42 new LPAs. So far this approach has too often been complex, time-consuming and costly to apply, and government is clear that action is needed to make sure that we both deliver the homes communities need and address pollution at source.

Firstly, to help all Local Planning Authorities affected to navigate this requirement, Natural England have published a "nutrient calculator" to enable development to take place in a sustainable way. The Government is offering £100,000 to each affected catchment to support cross-Local Authority work to meet Natural England requirements and enable development to continue.

These solutions are pragmatic short-term steps but do not amount to a permanent solution that will improve water quality and allow sustainable development to proceed, and so we are going further. The government already has highly ambitious plans to reduce nutrient pollution from both agriculture and sewerage works and has further plans for the future. We have also secured a series of pledges from water companies to provide new funding for nature-based 'strategic solutions' to tackle nutrient pollution. We welcome the new and proactive investment from Severn Trent Water, United Utilities, South West Water and Yorkshire Water in collectively investing an additional £24.5m in reducing nutrient pollution affecting these sites, including nature based solutions. We will work with the wider industry to deliver further action, as far as possible.

Finally, we will explore legislation to further strengthen requirements to reduce nutrients at source enabling more sustainable development. This will provide greater certainty for Local Authorities.

Healthcare Professional Regulators' Emergency Registers

[HLWS672]

Lord Kamall: My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar) has made the following Written Statement:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the National Health Service and social care providers, the Government enabled some healthcare professional regulators to establish temporary emergency registers. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) maintain emergency registers using powers conferred to them under the Coronavirus Act (CVA) 2020; the General Medical Council (GMC) and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) maintain emergency registers using existing powers. The circumstances to justify the continuation of these emergency registers are reducing as the impact of the pandemic reduces. I am today announcing our intention that the emergency registers will close on 30 September 2022. This will provide those healthcare professionals who are practising on the basis of emergency registration six months in which to take up full registration if they so wish. Prior to the closure of the emergency registers the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will notify the regulators that the emergency conditions no longer apply, and the registers will close.

Context

The NMC and the HCPC currently maintain emergency registers using powers conferred to them under the Coronavirus Act (CVA) 2020. Under section 89 of the CVA, the Act will automatically expire two years after coming into force. This means that, following expiry, the NMC and HCPC will no longer be able to add new registrants to their emergency registers, but those already registered will remain so until the register is subsequently closed. The GMC and the GPhC currently maintain emergency registers using powers they held prior to the pandemic.

The powers to set up emergency registers, both under the CVA s.2 and in the GMC and GPhC legislation, can only be exercised where the Secretary of State declares a state of emergency to exist.

To manage the closure of the emergency registers and mitigate any impact on the NHS workforce we are providing regulators, registrants and employers with six months' notice of the closure of the registers, in order to facilitate transfers between emergency and permanent registers. At the end of this notice period the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will notify the regulators that the circumstance required for emergency registration no longer apply. Once this notification is the emergency registers will close and those professionals on the emergency register will be unable to continue to practice.

HS2 Six-monthly Report to Parliament: March 2022

[HLWS670]

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

Review of High Speed Two (HS2) including programme update, local community impact and engagement, environment, benefits, and programme governance.

Overview

This is my fourth update to Parliament on High Speed Two (HS2). I can confirm that the project remains within budget and schedule in delivering Phase One (London-West Midlands) and Phase 2a (West Midlands-Crewe), we have hit major construction milestones, made substantial progress on key procurements, and made significant progress to take HS2 further North. Work is also already underway to implement the proposals set out in the Government's [Integrated Rail Plan \(IRP\) for the North and Midlands](#), for example with the recent introduction of a Bill into Parliament to build HS2 between Crewe and Manchester.

Key achievements in this reporting period (September 2021 to January 2022) are:

- HS2 is now supporting over 22,000 jobs.
- [Introduction of a Bill into Parliament](#) to secure the powers to construct and maintain HS2 between Crewe and Manchester. This will increase capacity, bolster connectivity, and reduce travel times from the North West to London and Birmingham and will be critical to generating transformational economic change in the North West.
- The Government has published its [Integrated Rail Plan \(IRP\) for the North and Midlands](#).
- [Award of the £2bn contract](#) (under budget) for the delivery and maintenance of HS2 trains for Phases One and 2a. The state-of-the-art train fleet, capable of speeds of up to 225 miles per hour, will be designed and built by a Hitachi/Alstom Joint Venture based in the North East and Midlands.
- Launch of the first Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) in the Midlands, the third on the programme. The two other TBMs in the Chilterns are making good progress and have now driven a combined distance of approximately 3.5 miles.
- [Public commitment](#) to power HS2 trains with zero carbon energy from day one (supporting the goal of making HS2 net zero from 2035) and publication of HS2 Ltd's [Environmental Sustainability Progress Report](#) in January 2022.
- The five years of compulsory purchase powers on Phase One provided by the Phase One Act ended on 23 February 2022 with all planned notices served by the deadline set by Parliament.
- Release of the Invitation to Tender for the Phase 2a Design and Delivery Partner (DDP). The DDP will act as a strategic partner for HS2 Ltd to drive efficient design and construction in extending the railway to Crewe.
- A decision has been taken to support greater integration between the HS2 and Network Rail stations at Euston. This has potential to deliver construction efficiencies, along with significant passenger and place-making benefits at Euston and the surrounding area.
- I am delighted to confirm that we are expanding Sir Jon Thompson's role, an existing non-executive

director on the HS2 Ltd Board, to become Deputy Chair. Sir Jon will chair meetings of the Board until a permanent Chair is in post.

This report primarily uses data provided by HS2 Ltd to the HS2 Ministerial Task Force for Phases One and 2a and covers the period between September 2021 and January 2022 inclusive. Unless stated, all figures are presented in 2019 prices.

Programme update

Schedule

1. On Phase One (London to West Midlands), the forecast for initial services from Old Oak Common to Birmingham remains within the Delivery into Service (DiS) range of 2029 to 2033. The revised schedule agreed last year has held to date with local delays being largely mitigated.

2. Over the reporting period, good progress has been made on closing out the majority of enabling works, with the remaining work due to be completed by early next year. Good progress has also been made on tunnelling activities. Additionally, HS2 Ltd has advanced its earthworks. Maintaining construction progress depends on the detailed design and consents needed to support a further very significant increase in civil works on earthworks and structures in 2022.

3. The main areas of schedule focus remain in the southern section of the line-of-route and tunnels leading into Old Oak Common Station from outer London, which form the critical path for initial services. Any delays in these sectors could delay the whole project. Other key watch areas include Bromford Tunnel, Birmingham Curzon Street Station and the route into Birmingham where the urban environment generates significant logistical challenges.

4. Phase 2a remains on track to be delivered between 2030 and 2034. Land possessions have commenced and enabling works started in early 2022.

5. As confirmed in the update on the Phase 2b Western Leg (Crewe to Manchester) [Strategic Outline Business Case \(SOBC\)](#) in January 2022, the Department has set a schedule range of 2035 to 2041 for the opening of the Phase 2b Western Leg.

Affordability

6. HS2 remains within budget. The overall budget for Phase One remains £44.6bn. This is composed of the target cost of £40.3bn and additional Government-retained contingency of £4.3bn. The target cost includes contingency delegated to HS2 Ltd of £5.6bn for managing risk and uncertainties.

7. To date, out of the Phase One target cost of £40.3bn, £14.9bn has been spent, with an additional £0.8bn for land and property provisions. £12.7bn has been contracted and has not been spent, with the remaining amount not yet under contract.

8. HS2 Ltd has drawn £1.3bn of its £5.6bn delegated contingency, meaning £4.3bn remains. Contingency

drawn to date reflects an increase of £0.5bn since my last update (from £0.8bn to £1.3bn).

9. HS2 Ltd's is reporting £1.7bn of potential future cost pressures that are currently presenting across the programme. This reflects an increase in potential further cost pressures of £0.4bn since my last update (from £1.3bn to £1.7bn).

10. Since my last report, the aggregate increase in actual and potential additional costs is therefore £0.9bn (£0.5bn from increase in contingency drawdown plus £0.4bn from potential further cost pressures). Whilst these pressures are manageable within the target cost given the remaining contingency, I am nonetheless concerned at the rate of their increase. I expect HS2 Ltd to maintain its focus on delivery to the target cost.

11. Should these or other cost pressures materialise, HS2 Ltd will continue to draw from the contingency it holds, of which £4.3bn remains (as outlined above). Out of the £1.7bn of net potential pressures currently being reported by HS2 Ltd in its January 2022 data, over and above the contingency drawn down so far, the key pressures are:

- An estimate of £0.8bn (increase of £0.2bn from my last update) for potential additional Main Works Civils costs stemming from additional design costs and slower than expected progress in some areas.
- A pressure of £0.4bn on the cost estimate for the HS2 Euston station. The move to a smaller, less complex 10-platform single-stage delivery strategy at Euston, as confirmed in my previous report, is now the basis for ongoing design work and other activities. The Department anticipates that this will assist in addressing the cost pressure at Euston, as the updated station design is developed over the coming months. This work will also consider and address the appropriate level of contingency that should be held to managing risks that are likely to arise during the construction of an asset of this complexity. The Department will provide further updates as this work progresses over the course of the next 18 months.
- A pressure of £0.2bn against HS2 Ltd's budget for changes to Network Rail infrastructure at Euston and Old Oak Common that are required to facilitate the new HS2 stations.
- There is a further £0.3bn of net cost pressures presenting on other parts of the programme. This is the aggregate total of smaller potential cost pressures.

12. Over £0.8bn in savings and efficiencies from across the programme (increase of £0.5bn from my last update) have been identified against HS2 Ltd's budget, principally from awarding the rolling stock contract under budget, contracting a common supplier for lifts and escalators, and savings in the acquisition of land and property. These have partly offset gross cost pressures. HS2 Ltd continues to focus on realising further efficiencies and opportunities to reduce the costs of Phase One.

13. On COVID-19 costs, HS2 Ltd's assessment of the likely financial impact of the pandemic on delivering

Phase One remains estimated within the range of £0.4bn to £0.7bn. Formal claims will be subject to Government scrutiny and will require formal approval from Her Majesty's Treasury before funds from Government-retained contingency can be allocated.

14. For Phase 2a, the overall cost range is £5.2bn to £7.2bn. We intend to set a target cost alongside publication of the Full Business Case next year.

15. As confirmed in the update on the Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester) [SOBC](#), the estimated cost range for the Crewe-Manchester scheme is £15bn to £22bn. It is project delivery best practice to set a range and to narrow this down over time.

16. Lastly, the Department and HS2 Ltd are currently working to assess and mitigate the impact of global inflationary pressure on materials and labour supply on the programme where short-term increases are being seen. This is likely caused in part by the recovery of global construction demand following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delivery

17. On Phase One, delivery continues to build momentum at 340 sites. Tunnel drives are underway at two sites. In the Chilterns, Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) 'Florence' and 'Cecilia' have been making good progress and have currently tunnelled a combined distance of approximately 3.5 miles. In December 2021, we saw the launch of 'Dorothy' (the first TBM in the Midlands) which will preserve the Long Itchington Wood in Warwickshire. The tunnelling team will operate the machine for around five months as it excavates the first bore of the one-mile tunnel. This will be the first HS2 tunnel to be completed on the project, with the machine set to break through its first bore at the south portal later this spring when it will return to the start to begin the second parallel tunnel.

18. At Old Oak Common Station, significant progress has been made in constructing the 750,000 metres-cubed box structure that will facilitate the six subterranean high-speed line platforms, as well as the works required to facilitate the start of tunnel boring to Euston in the east and Northolt in the west. Work is underway with the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation, the London Mayor and the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities to bring forward proposals for the regeneration of the area around the station.

19. In the West Midlands, stage one of the two-stage design and build contract for Birmingham Curzon Street Station will conclude shortly subject to agreement of an affordable target price. A solution for co-construction of the West Midlands Metro tram extension whilst delivering the station has been agreed with Transport for the West Midlands so that benefits of both projects can be brought to Birmingham as soon as practicable.

20. In September 2021, HS2 Ltd launched the process to appoint a design and build contractor to complete Interchange Station in Solihull. Contract award remains on schedule for summer 2022. Central and local government are also working with the private sector to

bring forward proposals to release land for development. This would enable approximately 350 acres of land to support the Arden Cross Masterplan, creating a space for innovation, business, learning and living, providing up to 27,000 new jobs and 3,000 new homes and is backed by conditional Government funding of £50m.

21. A decision has been taken to proceed with greater integration between the HS2 and Network Rail stations at Euston. The Department and Network Rail are developing the business case for the redevelopment of the Network Rail station concourse at Euston in parallel with the HS2 build, which will support greater integration between the HS2 and Network Rail stations. HS2 Ltd and Network Rail, with support from The Euston Partnership, are working together to develop a cost-effective design that provides integration between the HS2 station and the redevelopment of the Network Rail station and delivers value for money for the taxpayer. This integrated approach has potential to deliver construction efficiencies, along with significant passenger and place-making benefits at Euston.

22. I am delighted to confirm that we reached a [major milestone](#) on the procurement of HS2 trains. In December, an Alstom/Hitachi Joint Venture was awarded the £2bn HS2 rolling stock contract for Phases One and 2a and is expected to support around 2,500 jobs across the UK. This contract includes the design and build of 54 new high-speed trains and an initial 12-year maintenance period. The trains will be manufactured in Newton Aycliffe, Derby and Crewe and then maintained at the new depot in Washwood Heath, Birmingham. The second-placed bidder, Siemens, continues to challenge the procurement decision legally but has not sought to impede the award and delivery of the rolling stock contract.

23. HS2 Ltd continues tendering for Phase One and 2a rail systems packages (including track, catenary, mechanical and electrical fitout, power, control and communications). Over the coming months, HS2 Ltd will request bidders to submit their final price and I anticipate that we will begin awarding these packages in early 2023. In the next six months, HS2 Ltd will further develop their approach to integration of these rail systems packages. This will include testing operational processes and systems, development of its leadership capability and standing up of interim governance arrangements.

24. On Phase 2a (West Midlands to Crewe), HS2 Ltd has invited tenders for a Design and Delivery Partner (DDP) in January 2022. Additionally, the start of procurement for the Main Works Civils Framework is expected to commence later this year which will provide the construction capacity to be managed by the DDP. Early environmental works and early civils works have also begun.

Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands

25. The Government has published its [Integrated Rail Plan \(IRP\) for the North and Midlands](#). It sets a £96bn strategy of rail construction and upgrades for the North and Midlands to be delivered over the next 30 years.

Work is also already underway to implement the proposals set out in the IRP.

26. For example, £249 million was invested to further electrify the Midland Main Line between Kettering and Market Harborough with work started at Christmas 2021. The HS2 Phase 2b Crewe-Manchester scheme sits at the core of the IRP, bringing high-speed rail to Manchester and providing vital infrastructure necessary to deliver the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) scheme. On 24 January 2022, the Government introduced the [High Speed Rail \(Crewe – Manchester\) Bill](#) to secure the powers to construct and maintain the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg. Once approved, the railway will be critical to generating transformational economic change in the North West of England. Once the Crewe to Manchester section of HS2 opens, the railway will reduce travel times from 2 hours 5 minutes to around 1 hour 10 minutes from London to Manchester. The introduction of the Bill into Parliament was accompanied by an [Environmental Statement](#) and an [update on the 2017 SOBC](#).

27. The IRP also confirmed the Government's intention to take forward HS2 East, a new high-speed line between West Midlands and to East Midlands Parkway, enabling HS2 to serve Nottingham and Derby city centres. In conjunction with plans for the electrification of the Midland Main Line, this will also allow HS2 trains to continue direct to Chesterfield and Sheffield. Following a pause to design work on the HS2 Eastern Leg as a result of the Oakervee Review, the Department and HS2 Ltd are considering how best to take forward this new West to East Midlands high-speed line working closely with Network Rail. The IRP provides £100m to look at the most effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds, including understanding the most optimal solution for Leeds station capacity and starting work on the new West Yorkshire Mass Transit System.

Local community impact and engagement

28. As HS2 Minister, I expect affected communities to be at the heart of our plans for this project. I am therefore pleased that HS2 Ltd's refreshed community engagement strategy ('[Respecting People, Respecting Places](#)') has this vision at its core and sets out HS2 Ltd's renewed commitments to the communities impacted by the programme.

29. One of the ways that the HS2 project counterbalances some of its negative impacts on places is through the Community and Environment Fund and the Business and Local Economy Fund. These funds have now supported 192 projects through £11.1m of grant funding along the line-of-route and play a crucial role in ensuring a positive legacy for communities most affected by construction.

30. HS2 Ltd has also recently launched several initiatives to continue actively engaging communities affected by HS2. For example, '[In your area](#)' is an interactive map which informs people of HS2 works in their area. Furthermore, independent Construction Inspectors continue to support the assurance of the delivery of works. Where problems do arise, the

Construction Commissioner provides a means of escalation and independent consideration. I am pleased to report that the existing [Construction Commissioner](#), Sir Mark Worthington OBE, has been reappointed for a further three years. Additionally, I am currently recruiting a replacement for the outgoing [Residents' Commissioner](#), Deborah Fazan.

31. Targeted protester activity continues to have some impact on Phase One delivery. However, following successful removal of the unlawful protester site at Small Dean near Wendover in October and November 2021, protest impact on Phase One has now been reduced significantly. HS2 Ltd estimates that ongoing protester activity, including the removal of encampments and protest-related delays to the programme, has cost just under £122m, an increase of £42m since my last report. HS2 Ltd continues to work with its supply chain, local police forces and wider Government to minimise the impact of unlawful protester activity.

Land and Property

32. I am pleased to announce that the five years of compulsory purchase powers on Phase One provided by the Phase One Act ended on 23 February 2022 with the serving of all planned notices by the deadline set by Parliament. While work to complete the land acquisition and, crucially, settle compensation for affected property owners will continue, this is an important milestone for the programme.

33. Significant progress has also been made to implement the proposals set out in my [2020 Land and Property Review](#): three-quarters of the proposals have now been implemented. The response to our recent public Land and Property [consultation](#) was also published in February 2022.

Environment

34. In January, HS2 Ltd published its '[Environmental Sustainability Vision](#)' which reaffirmed its commitment to provide low carbon rail travel for a cleaner, greener future.

35. I was delighted to confirm, as part of that Vision, that HS2 trains will use [zero carbon energy](#) from day one of operation. This will support HS2 Ltd's target to achieve net zero in construction and operation from 2035. The commitment is a key part of the new HS2 '[Net Zero Carbon Plan](#)' which sets out a suite of ambitious new targets to reduce the carbon footprint of the programme.

36. The Vision confirmed that HS2 Ltd will seek to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity for replaceable habitats on the Phase 2b Crewe-Manchester scheme. I also intend to explore going beyond the existing no-net-loss of biodiversity target for Phase One and Phase 2a, to secure biodiversity gains where this is cost-effective and possible within existing funding limits.

37. Lastly, HS2 Ltd published its first '[Environmental Sustainability Progress Report](#)' in January. This provides a clear and up-to-date account of HS2's environmental impacts and the progress being made to mitigate any adverse effects.

Benefits

38. I am delighted to announce that HS2 is supporting over 22,000 jobs and to date over 2,400 UK-registered companies have delivered work on HS2. To date, there have been 1,674 jobs starts by people who were previously workless. The programme will create 2,000 apprenticeships, with 825 having been started since 2017.

39. In November 2021, HS2 Ltd's construction partner Balfour Beatty VINCI opened a new 'Skills Academy' in the West Midlands in partnership with South and City College of Birmingham.

40. As stated in the Government's 'Levelling Up White Paper', this year, the Government will publish a HS2 Local Growth Action Plan, setting out how it will work with places hosting Phase One and 2a stations to realise their local growth ambitions. The new railway will stimulate growth around HS2 stations and further afield, helping to level up the economies of the Midlands and North.

41. Promoting active travel along the HS2 route and at stations is also a key priority for me. To ensure that opportunities for lasting legacy improvements are realised, I have asked HS2 Ltd to explore the potential for the re-purposing of temporary construction routes, into new vehicle-free connections between rural communities that could connect other emerging local authority cycle proposals to provide a wider active travel network along the spine of HS2. This will not only benefit the environment, but also improve the health and wellbeing of residents and commuters. In addition, I have asked HS2 Ltd to upgrade active travel provisions at twelve locations across Phase One.

Programme Governance

42. An updated HS2 Ltd Framework Document and HS2 Development Agreement will be concluded shortly to continue effective governance between the Department and HS2 Ltd. Furthermore, we have relaunched the search for a new Chair with updated role criteria to appeal to a wider set of candidates. In parallel, we are expanding Sir Jon Thompson's role, an existing non-executive director on the HS2 Ltd Board, to become Deputy Chair. Sir Jon will chair meetings of the Board until a permanent Chair is in post.

43. Lastly, as committed to in my previous update, all recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report of 22 September 2021 have now been implemented.

Forward Look

44. On Phase One, over the next six months we will continue the ramp-up of construction work, launch the fourth TBM on the programme to start excavation of the London tunnels, and we will see HS2 Ltd award a contract for the construction of Interchange Station.

45. On Phase 2a, focus will be on progressing environmental and enabling work, early land acquisitions plus the procurement for the DDP and progressing the procurement for the Main Works Civils Framework.

46. On Phase 2b, following the introduction of the [High Speed Rail \(Crewe – Manchester\) Bill](#) into Parliament, the Environmental Statement Consultation is now underway, which will close on 31 March 2022. The priority for HS2 East is to develop the next stage of design work for the West to East Midlands high-speed line.

47. I will continue to engage closely with Parliament and will provide my next update in autumn 2022.

Financial Annex [1]

Forecast costs by Phase

Phase	Target cost	Total estimated costs range [2]
One	£40.3bn	£35bn to £45bn
2a	To be determined	£5bn to £7bn
2b Western Leg	To be determined	£15bn to £22bn[3]
HS2 East (West to East Midlands) [4]	To be determined	To be determined

[1] All figures in this report are presented in 2019 prices unless otherwise stated.

[2] Rounded to nearest billion.

[3] As confirmed in the update on the Phase 2b (Crewe-Manchester) Strategic Outline Business Case, published in January 2022.

[4] The Government confirmed in the IRP that a high-speed line between the West and East Midlands (known as HS2 East) will be taken forward, with HS2 trains continuing to Nottingham, and to Chesterfield/Sheffield (via Derby) on the upgraded conventional rail network.

Historic and forecast expenditure (including land & property)

Phase	Overall spend to date (£bn)	2021 to 2022 budget (£bn)	2021 to 2022 forecast (£bn)	Variance (£bn)
One[5]	15.7	5.0	5.0	0
2a	0.6	0.2	0.2	0
2b Western Leg	0.5	0.2	0.2	0
HS2 East (West Midlands to East Midlands) & East Midlands to Leeds[6]	0.6[6]	0.0	0.0	0
Total	17.4	5.4	5.4	0

[5] Spend to date stated above for Phase One includes a £0.8bn liability (provision) representing the Department's obligation to purchase land and property.

[6] The Government is proceeding with HS2 East (the new high-speed line between the West and East Midlands) and is providing £100m to look at the most

effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds, including understanding the most optimal solution for Leeds station capacity, and starting work on the new West Yorkshire Mass Transit System. As at the end of January 2022, £0.48bn (rounded in actual prices) had been spent developing the HS2 Eastern Leg to Leeds, including workforce. A substantial proportion of this has been spent on HS2 East (the West to East Midlands section of the HS2 Eastern Leg), which is proceeding as confirmed in the IRP. A further £0.15bn (rounded in actual prices) has been spent on land and property along the full HS2 Eastern Leg to Leeds, and again a substantial proportion of that land and property spend is along the section between the West and East Midlands. Any land or property not ultimately required for the railway will be resold, enabling us to recover costs.

Evolution of Phase One HS2 Ltd contingency drawdown over last 4 Parliamentary reports

	October 2020 Parliamentary Report	March 2021 Parliamentary Report	October 2021 Parliamentary Report	March 2022 Parliamentary Report
Total HS2 Ltd contingency drawdown and % used	£0.3bn (5%)	£0.4bn (7%)	£0.8bn (14%)	£1.3bn (23%)
Total HS2 Ltd contingency remaining	£5.3bn (95%)	£5.2bn (93%)	£4.8bn (86%)	£4.3bn (77%)

Evolution of Phase One Government-retained contingency drawdown over last 4 Parliamentary reports

	October 2020 Parliamentary Report	March 2021 Parliamentary Report	October 2021 Parliamentary Report	March 2022 Parliamentary Report
Total Government-retained contingency drawdown and % used	£0bn (0%)	£0bn (0%)	£0bn (0%)	£0bn (0%)[7]
Total Government-retained contingency remaining	£4.3bn (100%)	£4.3bn (100%)	£4.3bn (100%)	£4.3bn (100%)

[7] As with my October 2021 report, £0.015bn has been allocated to enable Old Oak Common to increase the number of trains it runs from three to six trains per hour but has not yet been drawn down from Government-retained contingency.

Hymenoplasty

[HLWS673]

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

On 23 December 2021, as part of the Vision for the Women's Health Strategy in England publication, the Government announced its intention to ban the hymenoplasty procedure in the United Kingdom at the earliest opportunity:

[Our Vision for the Women's Health Strategy for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

We are already working to ban virginity testing and introduced a Government amendment to the Health and Care Bill in November to do so. Banning hymenoplasty is another important milestone in the Government's ongoing mission to tackle violence against women and girls.

Hymenoplasty, a procedure which involves reconstructing the hymen, is a tool of honour-based abuse and, like virginity testing, is used to oppress vulnerable women and girls.

The Government's decision to ban hymenoplasty followed the recommendations of an Independent Expert Panel (the Panel), that was established to look at the clinical and ethical of banning the procedure. The Panel was made up of clinicians, ethicists, and subject matter experts and I would like to place on record my thanks to all members of the Panel for their input in this process.

The Panel made a suite of recommendations in their final report ([Expert panel on hymenoplasty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)) which we are accepting in full. This includes introducing legislation to create a criminal offence of hymenoplasty alongside the prohibition of virginity testing; ensuring there are no medical exemptions including for victims of rape; issuing guidance to support healthcare professionals to carry out risk assessments when hymenoplasty is requested; and providing adequate resources for community engagement.

Our work to ban the harmful practice of virginity testing and our commitment to banning the hymenoplasty procedure demonstrates that the safety of women and girls is at the forefront of this Government's agenda.

By banning both procedures this Government will ensure the United Kingdom is a safer place for women and girls.

Ministry of Defence Financial Update

[HLWS674]

Baroness Goldie: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence (Ben Wallace) has released the following written statement.

On Thursday 10th March 2022 I authorised the release of £393.8 million to discharge the debt owed by the Ministry of Defence-owned company, International Military Services Limited (IMS).

The debt resulted from contracts which were signed between IMS Ltd. and the pre-revolution Iranian government. Following the Iranian revolution, the contracts were not fulfilled, despite pre-payments made

by Iran to the UK. The UK courts and the International Court of Arbitration (ICC) subsequently confirmed that the debt was still owed to the Iranian government.

The payment of the debt reflects the UK Government's determination to meet that international obligation, while seeking to ensure that such funds can only be used in accordance with applicable sanctions, and domestic counter-terrorism and anti-money laundering legislation, for example to purchase humanitarian goods.

I have been a consistent campaigner on IMS settlement, including as Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Iran and securing a Westminster Hall debate in March 2014 in which I called to "honour the debt once and for all".

Visits Abroad: Correction

[[HLWS668](#)]

Baroness Goldie: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace) has made the following written statement.

Today I have made an online correction to Parliamentary Question 119445 answered on 10 February 2022.

Due to an administrative error incorrect data was reported in relation to my visit to the US in July 2021.

The total cost to the public purse of my overseas accommodation, meals, visas and other expenses excluding travel between 11 and 23 July 2021 was £6,687.68 and not as previously reported £1,766.68. This has now been corrected.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 16 March 2022

Belfast Agreement: Anniversaries

Asked by **Lord Rogan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement in 2023. [HL6818]

Lord Caine: Preparations are underway to mark this historic milestone appropriately and give it the recognition it deserves. Further details will be announced in due course.

This Government remains totally committed to the 1998 Agreement which has underpinned so much of the progress that we have seen in Northern Ireland for almost a quarter of a century.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the delivery of the UK's G7 pledge to donate 100 million surplus COVID-19 vaccine doses to COVAX by June 2022. [HL6626]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK announced on 11 June 2021 that we will donate 100 million surplus coronavirus vaccine doses to the world by June 2022, with 80% of these doses donated through COVAX.

The UK champions vaccine access for all countries through our support for COVAX. The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to COVAX, contributing £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC). Our early funding gave the COVAX AMC the purchase power to secure deals with manufacturers to supply internationally approved vaccines for up to 92 low and middle-income countries. So far, COVAX has helped deliver over 1.16 billion doses to 144 participants.

As of 4 March 2022, the UK has donated almost 36 million Covid-19 vaccine doses. 32.6 million doses have been delivered to countries in need, of which 26 million have been delivered via COVAX and 6.6 million doses donated directly. A further 3.3 million doses have been received by COVAX and will shortly be allocated and shipped in line with COVAX's fair allocation model. An additional 32.3 million doses have been committed to COVAX, to be delivered in the near future.

We have also announced £160 million to support the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation to continue its vital work to develop new, and improve existing, vaccines against COVID19 and other diseases with pandemic potential.

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support local organisations in countries delivering COVID-19 vaccines donated by the UK to ensure that they are distributed efficiently and effectively. [HL6627]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to help bring the acute phase of the pandemic to an end as quickly as possible. The UK has provided £548 million to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment and will share 100 million vaccine doses, with the majority of these being delivered through COVAX. This has helped COVAX deliver over 1 billion doses to 144 countries and territories worldwide.

All vaccine doses donated by the UK through COVAX use trusted international delivery partners like UNICEF to ensure they are distributed efficiently and effectively. For COVID-19 vaccines the UK has donated bilaterally, we receive assurances from these countries that they have the capacity to roll-out the doses in line with their national vaccination programmes.

Deposit Return Schemes: VAT

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that VAT laws would have on the rollout of a Deposit Return Scheme. [HL6616]

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include clarifications for drinks producers on the application of VAT on deposits in their response to the consultation on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme, which closed on 4 June 2021. [HL6618]

Baroness Penn: It is a fundamental principle of VAT that all amounts paid for the purchase of goods are subject to VAT, including amounts under drinks deposit return schemes (DRS). The Government is committed to making DRS work effectively and is exploring how the VAT regulations may be amended to support the schemes. HMRC will issue guidance on the application of VAT to deposit refunds in advance of the introduction of any scheme.

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce regulations to amend VAT law to accommodate the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme. [HL6617]

Baroness Penn: To ensure that new drinks deposit return schemes (DRS) being introduced across the UK operate effectively, the Government is exploring how VAT regulations may be amended to support the operation of new DRS and will continue to work closely with stakeholders.

Digital Markets Unit

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will introduce legislation to provide the Digital Markets Unit with statutory powers in the next parliamentary session. [HL6644]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Government consulted on our proposed approach to a new pro-competition regime, overseen by the Digital Markets Unit, last year. The consultation closed in October, and we are carefully considering the responses. We will set out the final design of the regime in our response shortly, and will introduce legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to support the establishment of a Digital Markets Unit within the Competition and Markets Authority, (2) to provide the necessary financial support for the recruitment of personnel to the new Digital Markets Unit, and (3) to ensure the new Digital Markets Unit has the necessary powers to intervene on a statutory basis. [HL6646]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Government established a new non-statutory Digital Markets Unit (DMU), housed within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), in April 2021 to begin to put into effect the pro-competition regime. We will legislate to put the Digital Markets Unit on a statutory footing as soon as parliamentary time allows.

At the recent Spending Review, the Government agreed to provide the CMA with an additional £20 million by 2024-25 to support the dedicated Digital Markets Unit and other CMA functions.

The DMU will have a range of powers to monitor and enforce the regime. The focus of the regime will be on resolving concerns through constructive engagement with firms, without the need for formal investigations. The DMU will need, however, robust powers to deter and tackle non-compliance. We set out our proposals for these powers in our 2021 consultation, and will publish our response to that consultation in due course.

Domestic Visits: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has travelled to Northern Ireland in each of the last 12 months; and how many of these visits included an overnight stay. [HL6687]

Lord Caine: Between February 2021 and February 2022, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland made the following visits to Northern Ireland:

February 2021: 3 trips

March 2021: 5 trips

April 2021: 5 trips

May 2021: 4 trips

June 2021: 4 trips

July 2021: 2 trips

August 2021: 1 trip

September 2021: 2 trips

October 2021: 2 trips

November 2021: 2 trips

December 2021: 2 trips

January 2022: 4 trips

February 2022: 2 trips

These include 22 overnight trips.

Eikone

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to investigate the affairs of Eikone Ltd, a company registered at Companies House with £100 trillion authorized share capital [HL6761]

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to investigate the affairs of "The Majestic Wonder Emporium of Mr Magorium's Directed at Islamic Bird Watching and Cricketing Endeavour for the Salvation of the Church and Torah on Sabbath Ltd", a company registered at Companies House on 25 August 2021. [HL6762]

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to investigate the affairs of App In The Air U.K. Ltd, a company registered at Companies House on 3 March 2022 with Mikhail Shelkov as the person with significant control. [HL6763]

Lord Callanan: We are unable to comment on individual cases.

The Registrar of Companies has no current powers to verify information properly delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 or other enactments.

However, following extensive consultation over 2020 and 2021, the Government published on 28 February 2022 a detailed White Paper (copy attached) setting out far-reaching reforms to Companies House which will mean that:

- Anyone setting up, running, owning or controlling a company in the UK will need to verify their identity with Companies House;
- The Registrar will have new powers to challenge information that appears dubious, and will be

empowered to inform security agencies of potential wrongdoing; and

- Company agents from overseas will no longer be able to create companies in the UK on behalf of foreign criminals or secretive oligarchs.

It is the Government's intention to bring forward appropriate legislation early in the next session of this Parliament.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Corp Transparency & Register Reform White Paper [corporate-transparency-white-paper.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-03-08/HL6761>

Gambling: Internet

Asked by Viscount Astor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusions of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report Review of unlicensed online gambling in the UK, published on 3 February 2021; in particular, the conclusion that unlicensed gambling has grown to a turnover of £1.4 billion with 460,000 users. [HL6586]

Asked by Viscount Astor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in conjunction with the Gambling Commission to prevent unlicensed online gambling. [HL6587]

Asked by Viscount Astor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have that problem gamblers are betting with illegal operators. [HL6589]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Government is reviewing the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it remains fit for the digital age. As part of its broad scope, the review called for evidence on the size of the black market for gambling in Great Britain and the ease with which consumers could access illegal gambling websites. The report by PwC on unlicensed gambling will be considered as part of the review.

The Gambling Commission assesses information gathered from multiple sources and works closely with partner agencies to prevent access to illegal websites by consumers in Great Britain. If the Commission decides to take action against an illegal operator, it will initially issue a Cease and Desist letter. If this action does not prove successful, it will use disruption techniques, which includes using its relationships with web-hosting companies to suspend or IP-block consumers in Great Britain from accessing websites, contacting payment providers to remove payment services, and liaising with social media sites to prevent websites appearing on search engines or being hosted. The Commission will also use some of the additional income that it is receiving from its

recent fees uplift to increase its ability to tackle illegal gambling.

The Commission is aware that some illegal websites are targeted at people who experience significant harms from their gambling and self-excluded gamblers. The Commission is particularly focused on identifying and disrupting these illegal operators.

Health: Recreation Spaces

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of (1) green spaces, and (2) gardening, to (a) mental, (b) physical, and (c) social, health. [HL6568]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enable more people to benefit from the (1) mental, (2) physical, and (3) social, health benefits of (a) green spaces, and (b) gardening. [HL6569]

Lord Kamall: In 2020, Public Health England published *Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020*, which examined the health effects access to green space, including gardening. The report found evidence that exposure to greenspaces can promote and protect good health, aid in recovery from illness and help with managing poor physical and mental health, including social impacts such as loneliness and community interaction. A copy of the review is attached.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is supporting the preparation of a national cross-Government framework of green infrastructure standards, to ensure new developments include accessible green spaces and areas with little or no green space can be improved for the benefit of local communities. Good quality green infrastructure plays an important role in addressing issues of social inequality and environmental decline in urban and rural locations, whilst also leading to better places to live.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is leading a cross-Government project on tackling mental ill-health through green social prescribing with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement, Natural England, Sport England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The project is taking place between April 2021 to April 2023 at seven sites in England. It will test ideas for embedding green social prescribing such as gardening and walking into communities, in order to improve mental health outcomes including social health; reduce health inequalities; reduce demand on the health and social care system; and develop best practice in making green social activities more resilient and accessible.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Improving access to greenspace A new review
 [Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-03-02/HL6568>

Hyde Park: Road Traffic

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the removal of COVID-19 restrictions in England, what plans the Royal Parks have to reopen the South Carriage Drive in Hyde Park to vehicular traffic. [HL6655]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Royal Parks charity manages Hyde Park on behalf of HM Government, and is responsible for decision-making about operational matters.

This is an operational matter for The Royal Parks. We understand, however, that South Carriage Drive has been closed since March 2020 as part of a trial to reduce through traffic in Hyde Park. Whilst the original trial was focused on weekend restrictions, the road has also been closed for safety reasons on weekdays during this period due to the introduction of a temporary cycle path, immediately outside the park, by Transport for London.

We understand that The Royal Parks is currently assessing evidence of the trial on the weekend restrictions, and plans to make an announcement about the closure later this year.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 February (HL6050), what judicial body they consider would be able to make decision about allegations of the crime of apartheid in respect of Occupied Palestinian Territory. [HL6629]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The issue of jurisdiction over the crime of apartheid is a matter for an appropriate international judicial body. The government believes that the use of the apartheid terminology hardens positions on both sides. We encourage direct engagement between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Our priority remains support for a two-state solution.

Liesl Cook

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many appointments were held by Liesl Cook at the point they were appointed an Official Receiver; how many complaints had been received about Liesl Cook at the time of appointment; and what were the outcomes of any such complaints. [HL6764]

Lord Callanan: Liesl Cook was appointed as trustee, receiver and manager, or liquidator in approximately 2,495 cases on her appointment as Official Receiver on 29

July 2013. The Insolvency Service does not retain any data relating to complaints made prior to 29 July 2013.

Mental Health Services: Females

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many women aged (1) 18 to 24, and (2) 25 years or older, have accessed primary care mental health services, in each of the last 10 years. [HL6867]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Musicians: EU Countries

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 21 February (HL Deb col 2), what options they are considering for own account operators regarding musicians touring the EU. [HL6643]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government is continuing to support the touring sector to adapt to new arrangements with the EU. Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), UK hauliers can undertake up to two additional laden journeys within the EU after a laden international journey from the UK, with a maximum of one cabotage movement outside Ireland. In its recent consultation, which closed on 18 February 2022, the Department sought views on possible measures to help this specific sector to adapt to the rules under the TCA.

'Own-account' operators (those carrying their own goods rather than using vehicles for hire-and-reward) are not exempt from the provisions in the TCA, as all vehicles carrying goods internationally for a commercial purpose – including own account operators – are subject to the market access provisions of the TCA, including rules on cabotage and cross-trade.

The TCA agreement has been concluded and there is no intention to reopen negotiations at this time. The Department for Transport continues to assess what, if anything, can be done regarding international market access for own account operators at this time.

North Wales Coast Line: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with train service providers regarding the reduction in the number of through trains from London Euston to Holyhead from seven per day prior to the COVID-19 pandemic to one per day at present; and when they expect to re-establish a full through-train service on this line. [HL6778]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Avanti West Coast currently serves Holyhead with two trains per day from

London Euston which is set to increase to four trains per day in May 2022. We continue to work closely with operators in their development of attractive timetables that are reliable, deliver excellent performance for passengers, and offer good value for money. All timetables remain under review as demand returns.

Nuclear Fusion: Research

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with those in charge of laboratories in Oxford who are working on the generation of electricity from nuclear fusion; and what resources they are making available to accelerate this research and its practical application. [HL6780]

Lord Callanan: The Government works closely with the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), the UK's fusion research organisation based in Oxfordshire. UKAEA is widely recognised as a global leader in fusion R&D and is critical to the delivery of the UK's Fusion Strategy, which was published last year. Since 2017 the Government has committed around £500m towards new UKAEA research programmes and facilities and will continue to support fusion research over the new Spending Review period with £708m allocated to UKAEA within the Government's £39.8bn R&D budget for 2022-2025. This will help to keep the UK in pole position to commercialise fusion energy, which would be low-carbon, sustainable and secure.

Broadcasting Programmes: Young People

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to support the creation of programmes for young people since they stated that "the availability of new, engaging and relevant content for young audiences is of great societal importance", in their Contestable Fund Pilot: Supporting Young Audiences and Audio Content, published on 19 October 2018. [HL6592]

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to improve plurality of funding routes for culturally specific UK children's content. [HL6593]

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to level up TV production now that the Young Audience's Content Fund has ceased. [HL6594]

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government which of the factors that led to the creation of the Young Audience's Content Fund have changed to justify the ending of that fund. [HL6595]

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, (1) to renew, or (2) to replace, the Young Audience's Content Fund. [HL6596]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: HM Government is committed to ensuring that young listeners and viewers benefit from a system of public service broadcasting which remains relevant and which can continue to meet the needs of UK audiences in the future. That is why we are conducting a strategic review of public service broadcasting – drawing on the work of Ofcom, Select Committees in both Houses of Parliament, and the Government's own expert PSB Advisory Panel – to work out how best to achieve this in light of the challenges the sector is currently facing.

The three-year pilot Young Audiences Content Fund was designed to test a new way of financing public service TV content. A full evaluation of the pilot Fund will take place following its conclusion to determine its impact on the children's television industry and the provision and plurality of public service content for young audiences across the UK. The potential for further investment of public funding will be assessed against the Fund evaluation and alongside future public service broadcasting needs.

The Government is committed to the success of our world-leading TV production sector. UK-wide tax reliefs continue to play a vital role in driving production across children's, animation, and high-end television, supporting approximately £2.2 billion production spending in these sectors through tax reliefs in 2019 alone. The Government continues to act to support the industry in developing the physical infrastructure and skills pipelines it needs to sustain success - success which has seen 2021 being a record-setting year, with total high-end TV production spend reaching more than £4 billion.

Railways: Concessions

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with train operating companies to ensure they offer free travel for refugees from Ukraine for their initial journey from their point of entry to the UK. [HL6887]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport is considering what can be offered to Ukrainian refugees by way of free rail travel, along with other Government initiatives.

Recreation Spaces: Regional Planning and Development

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of (1) gardens, and (2) green

spaces, in achieving their Levelling Up ambitions. [HL6570]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Levelling Up White Paper is clear that green infrastructure is a key component to levelling up, as so many levelling up goals are connected to green places that local people can be proud of. People's lives are shaped by the social and physical fabric of their communities. The local mix of social and physical capital, which includes good quality green spaces, gives areas their unique character and vibrancy, and makes residents proud to live there.

A beautiful built environment, access to leisure and cultural amenities and safe neighbourhoods can also attract businesses to high streets, leading to increased footfall and private sector investment in communities. To make this a reality, communities must have strong civic institutions, assets and relationships that anchor local pride in place.

My department has set out in the National Planning Policy Framework that planning policies and decisions should take into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, which can include preserving residential gardens.

My department is delivering the £9 million Levelling Up Parks Fund which provides direct grants to deliver over 100 green spaces in the communities with the lowest access to green space.

The Government also announced in the Levelling Up White Paper that we will invest a further £30 million to refurbish at least 30 parks in England, with an emphasis on providing facilities for young families.

Further details on these funds will be announced in due course.

Refugees

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the response by Safe Passage, the Hummingbird Project, and Kent Refugee Action Network to their proposed new plan for immigration; and what provision they intend to make for the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers for (a) accommodation, (b) education, and (c) employment. [HL6337]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We note the joint report by the young people of Safe Passage, the Hummingbird Project and Kent Refugee Action Network, 'Safe routes from the perspective of young refugees – our response to the New Plan for Immigration', published on 25 June 2021.

As part of the New Plan for Immigration, there was an engagement and consultation process which ran from 24 March 2020 to 6 May 2021. During this time, the Home Office encouraged stakeholders and members of the public to share their views on its proposals via an online questionnaire.

The Home Office's response to the consultation was published in July 2021 and can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005042/CCS207_CCS0621755000-001_Consultation_Response_New_Plan_Immigration_Web_Accessible.pdf.

The New Plan for Immigration will deliver the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades. It includes plans to set up accommodation centres to provide basic accommodation for asylum-seekers who would otherwise be destitute. We will only accommodate people in the centres after an individual assessment shows it's suitable and safe for them. We also continue to seek opportunities to expand the number of areas participating in our dispersal area accommodation system.

Asylum seekers' children under 18 will continue to have access to full-time education and continuous support in line with our duty under section 55 of the Borders Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

In terms of employment, we will allow asylum seekers to work if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL).

Russia: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to sanction Russia by excluding them from the SWIFT international payments system. [HL6400]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following discussions between the UK and international partners, the EU announced on 2 March that 7 Russian banks would be removed from SWIFT on 12 March. UK pressure was instrumental to this decision. This measure on already sanctioned entities, in concert with the US and the EU, will ensure that these Russian banks will no longer be able to use SWIFT to transact with banks in any country, regardless of whether that country has imposed sanctions on Russia.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose sanctions to restrict the transfer of money in and out of Russia in the form of cryptocurrencies. [HL6581]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister has announced the largest and most severe package of economic sanctions Russia has ever seen. Acting in concert with our allies, our measures will deliver a devastating blow to Russia's economy and military for years to come. We will also introduce a further Economic Crime Bill to enact the full set of reforms to Companies House, as well as new measures on anti-money laundering; seizing cryptocurrencies; and tackling the abuse of corporate structures used to facilitate crime.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the time taken to sanction named Russian oligarchs. [HL6582]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The amendments to the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (the Sanctions Act) in the Economic Crime Bill, to streamline the current legislation, will ensure the Government can designate groups of individuals more quickly, and enable the UK to align rapidly with designations imposed by our allies. An urgent designation procedure will enable the Foreign Secretary to swiftly designate individuals, entities and categories of persons designated by the EU, US, Canada, Australia and others.

Russia: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to record details of Russian attacks in Ukraine on (1) civilians, (2) schools, and (3) hospitals; and what steps they will take to ensure that those responsible are prosecuted. [HL6567]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Ukraine has suffered horrific attacks, including missile and air strikes which have torn through apartment blocks. Innocent people including children have lost their lives. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is recording details of Russian attacks in Ukraine.

Russia's use of indiscriminate force against innocent civilians is clear for all to see. It must be investigated and those responsible held to account. The UK joined 44 partners on 3 March to launch an OSCE mission to investigate violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by Russia in Ukraine. The UK led efforts to expedite an ICC investigation into Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

Shipping: Registration

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to impose tighter restrictions and conditions on ships registering in the UK. [HL6742]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We have acted swiftly to hold Russia to account for its unprovoked invasion on Ukraine. The Secretary of State for Transport wrote to all UK ports on 28 February 2022 asking them not to provide access to any Russian flagged, registered, owned, controlled, chartered, or operated vessels.

Legislation has followed this and the UK Government made regulations – The Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2022 – on 1 March which place into law restrictions on Russian vessels. These measures include a prohibition on the registration of ships on the UK Ship Register where they are owned, controlled, chartered or operated by a designated person

or persons connected with Russia, or where they are a specified ship.

Small Businesses: Trade Agreements

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to benefit from the provisions on small businesses in free trade agreements. [HL6682]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: I refer the noble Lady to the answer I gave her on 3 February 2022, UIN: HL5511.

Social Media: Russia

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are monitoring how (1) Google, (2) Facebook, and (3) Twitter, have responded to reported demands by the government of Russia to withhold reports of Russia's armed actions in Ukraine. [HL6565]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: As the Secretary of State set out in her statement on 3 March, we have been engaging regularly with the major platforms, which have taken a number of positive steps in response to the situation.

The Counter Disinformation Unit in DCMS continues to work closely with platforms to flag specific pieces of disinformation and have them removed where they violate a platform's terms of service. Regular engagement with platforms is ongoing, and we are continuing to speak to them about safeguarding features and ways of better protecting civilians who are using their services. We will continue to work closely with them to encourage further action to support the Ukrainian people.

Technology: Companies

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure a level playing field is established by legislative and regulatory means to allow UK news publishers to negotiate for proper and fair payment by technology companies for the news content they generate. [HL6645]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Newspapers play an invaluable role in the fabric of our society and the Government is committed to considering all possible options in the interest of supporting the sustainability of the press. We understand concerns about the effect of the power and position of some online platforms when dealing with news publishers, as was identified by the Cairncross Review.

The Government set out its proposals for a new pro-competition regime for digital markets in a public consultation in July 2021. The regime will drive a more vibrant and innovative economy across the UK. In line

with codes proposed in the Cairncross Review, the regime's conduct requirements will improve competition and transparency and make an important contribution to the sustainability of the press. We have also sought advice from the Competition and Markets Authority and Ofcom on how the regime would govern the relationship between platforms and content producers including news publishers. No final decisions have been made.

A consultation response will be published in due course and we will legislate to put the regime on a statutory footing as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Telecommunications: Rural Areas

Asked by Lord Beith

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on vulnerable people in remote rural areas of the loss of telephone contact during power cuts; and what plans they have to review their policy of withdrawing telephone land lines from some rural properties given the experience during recent storms. [HL6591]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The telecoms industry is retiring the Public Switched Telephone Network as the old technology reaches the end of its serviceable life, with landlines being replaced by Voice over Internet Protocol services. The decision to upgrade the telephone network has been taken by the telecoms industry and not the Government. Ofcom, the independent telecoms regulator, has issued guidance on how telecoms companies can fulfil their regulatory obligation to ensure that their VoIP customers have access to the emergency services during a power outage. This guidance was prepared following consultation with Ofgem and the industry, looking at data on average power outages among other factors.

This guidance states that providers should have at least one solution available which enables access to emergency organisations for a minimum of one hour in the event of a power outage in the premises, and that the solution should be suitable for customers' needs and should be offered free of charge to those who are at risk because they are dependent on their landline. This might include relying on the mobile network, which has a high degree of power resilience, or using a battery back-up unit to provide power. Ofcom's full guidance is available on its website [here](#).

As part of our standard procedure for large incidents, DCMS is working with Ofcom and the telecoms sector to complete a Post-Incident Review on the response to Storm Arwen. Similarly, BEIS as the Lead Government Department for energy is undertaking its own review; both these reports will identify lessons and develop actions to improve responses for future events.

UN Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have not signed the UN Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships; what assessment they have made, if any, of the impact of this decision on the UK's maritime security; and what plans they have, if any, to reconsider this decision in the light of current geopolitical situation. [HL6741]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The 1986 United Nations Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships set international standards for the registration of vessels in a national registry, including references to the genuine link, ownership, management, registration, accountability and the role of the flag State. The Convention was negotiated at the UN Conference on Trade and Development and for the Convention to enter into force it requires 40 signatories whose combined tonnage exceeds 25% of the world total.

As of March 2020, only 15 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention and Her Majesty's Government sees little prospect of the Convention ever entering into force. Her Majesty's Government does not consider that this has impacted our maritime security because the intent of the Convention has largely been met by legislative means in the United Kingdom including, but not limited to, The Merchant Shipping Act 1995, Safe Manning Regulations 1992, Ship Registration Regulations 1993, Regulations to implement The Maritime Labour Convention 2006, and Official Log Book requirements 1981.

The Secretary of State for Transport also wrote to all UK ports on 28 Feb 2022 asking them not to provide access to any Russian flagged, registered, owned, controlled, chartered, or operated vessels. Legislation has followed this and Her Majesty's Government made specific Regulations to impose sanctions on ships with a strong Russian connection in light of the current geopolitical situation.

Unexplained Wealth Orders

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Unexplained Wealth Orders have been issued against a Javier Clemente Engonga Avomo who, according to Companies House records, is director of The United States of America Corporation Ltd, The United States of Africa Corporation Ltd and World Corporate Organization Ltd, which have authorised share capitals of £1.8 trillion, £500 billion and £900 billion respectively. [HL6576]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not comment on individual cases.

USA: Visits Abroad

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any (1) Ministers, (2) civil servants, or (3) special advisers, will be attending St Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States of America in March in an official capacity; and if so, what is the cost of any such attendance. [[HL6665](#)]

Lord Caine: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's visit has not yet concluded and it is not, therefore, possible to provide the information requested.

Weapons: Smuggling

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prevent the illicit flow of surplus arms from the war in Ukraine into the UK. [[HL6585](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK and our international partners condemn Russia's assault on Ukraine, which is an unprovoked, premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state, and a violation of international law.

This Government is committed to tackling the threat posed by trafficking and the misuse of illicit firearms. The UK has some of the toughest firearms controls in the world. To protect public safety, the Government keeps them under constant review to safeguard against abuse by criminals and terrorists.

The Government will monitor the situation in Ukraine, using intelligence to continuously assess the threat of surplus arms being trafficked into the UK.

To tackle the flow of illicit firearms being trafficked into the UK, Border Force and its partners ensure that we have the right intelligence, detection and enforcement capabilities at the border. Alongside this, the National Crime Agency and our international partners tackle the threat upstream by engaging with source and nexus countries.

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