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**Wednesday  
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Lord Benyon</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Harrington of Watford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<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 and Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Sharpe of Epsom</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Work and Pensions
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<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>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

Wednesday, 27 April 2022

## Energy Update

[HLWS764]

**Lord Callanan:** My Right Honourable friend the Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change (Greg Hands) has today made the following statement:

Today I will lay before Parliament a Departmental Minute describing a contingent liability arising from the issuance of letters of credit for the Energy Administrators acting in the Special Administration Regime for Bulb Energy Limited ('Bulb'). These letters of credit replace previous ones provided in January, announced within a Written Ministerial Statement on the 06 January, which has now expired.

It is normal practice when a Government Department proposes to undertake a contingent liability of £300,000 and above, for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Department concerned to present Parliament with a minute giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances.

I regret that, due to negotiations with the counterparties only concluding late and Parliamentary recess, I have not been able to follow the usual notification timelines to allow consideration of these issues in advance of issuing the letter of credit.

Bulb entered the Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime on 24 November 2021. Energy Administrators were appointed by court to achieve the statutory objective of continuing energy supplies at the lowest reasonable practicable cost until such time as it becomes unnecessary for the special administration to remain in force for that purpose.

My Department has agreed to provide a facility to the Energy Administrators, with letters of credit issued, with my approval, to guarantee such contract, code, licence, or other document obligations of the company consistent with the special administration's statutory objective. I will update the House if any letters of credit are drawn against.

The legal basis for a letter of credit is section 165 of the Energy Act 2004, as applied and modified by section 96 of the Energy Act 2011.

HM Treasury has approved the arrangements in principle.

## Forensic Information Databases Strategy Board Annual Report and Updated Governance Rules

[HLWS765]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce that I am today publishing the Annual Report of the Forensic Information Databases Strategy Board for 2020-21 and the updated Governance Rules. This report covers the National Fingerprints Database and the National DNA Database (NDNAD).

The Strategy Board Chair, DCC Ben Snuggs, has presented the Annual Report of the National DNA Database to the Home Secretary. Publication of the Report is a statutory requirement under section 63AB(7) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 as inserted by section 24 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Report shows the important contribution that the NDNAD and the National Fingerprint Databases (policing collections) make to supporting policing and solving crimes. I am grateful to the Strategy Board for their commitment to fulfilling their statutory functions.

Both the report and governance rules have been laid before the House and copies will be available from the Vote Office.

## Impact of the Ending of Freedom of Movement on the Adult Social Care Sector: Independent Review

[HLWS767]

**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:

Today, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published its independent review into the impact of the ending of freedom of movement on the adult social care sector. This report (CP 665) has been laid before both Houses today, and it will also be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

This review came about during the passage of the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020, when the Government committed to commission and publish an independent report into the impact of ending free movement on the adult social care sector.

In July 2021, the Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee – as experts in both the immigration system and wider labour market issues - to undertake this review. The MAC has been working closely with the social care expert advisory group, utilising its insight and experience, to produce this report.

The MAC made an interim recommendation, in its annual report published on 15 December 2021, to add care workers and home carers to the Shortage Occupation List as well as making them eligible for the Health and Care visa. On 24 December, the Government announced we were accepting this recommendation.

We laid revised Immigration rules on 24 January 2022, and these came into force on 15 February. We are already seeing many providers seeking to take advantage of the new rules, to become sponsors and to bring in much needed additional care workforce capacity.

I would like to thank Professor Brian Bell and the MAC for their continued work and to all those who have been involved for this report for their valuable contributions.

The Government will consider the report and its recommendations carefully before deciding what steps to take next.

## Plan for Protecting the Taxpayer

[HLWS768]

**Lord True:** My Rt Hon Friend the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency (the Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP) has today made the following statement:

The Efficiencies and Value for Money Committee, established at the request of the Prime Minister and chaired by the Chancellor, is meeting for the first time today.

At the Committee, the Chancellor will launch his Plan for Protecting the Taxpayer which will drive efficiency, effectiveness, and economy across government. This efficiency drive will ensure that government departments justify their projects with clear value for money and will challenge departments that are not delivering.

As part of this plan, the government is developing a new counter fraud body which will tackle economic crime across the public sector. The new authority will be funded with £25 million, as announced by the Chancellor in the Spring Statement. The authority will bolster the existing Government Counter Fraud Function, based in the Cabinet Office, to create the new Public Sector Authority (PSFA), which will jointly report to HM Treasury.

The new authority will be staffed by fraud experts and backed by cross-government data analytics tools. It will focus on increasing counter-fraud performance across the public sector. This data driven focus on countering fraud is in line with business best practice and will improve fraud prevention and the pursuit of fraudsters for both the opportunistic individual and organised economic crime.

The efficiency drive will also include reviews that scrutinise the work and effectiveness of public bodies, aiming to identify a minimum of 5% savings for each organisation, and doubling the NHS efficiencies target.

The full membership of the Efficiencies and Value for Money Committee - confirmed today - is the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP (Minister without Portfolio) and the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP (Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General). The Committee is chaired by the Chancellor and is deputy co-chaired by Simon Clarke (Chief Secretary to the Treasury) and myself (Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency, the Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP).

## Terrorism in Prisons Update

[HLWS766]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** My right honourable friend the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice has made the following written statement:

In accordance with section 36 of the Terrorism Act 2006, Jonathan Hall QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL), has prepared a report on Terrorism in Prisons which was laid before the House today.

Today, I am publishing our response to the IRTL's report, setting out how we are implementing the changes that he has recommended. This will also be published on GOV.UK.

I welcome the IRTL's review of terrorism in prisons, and thank him for carrying out such a detailed and thorough review. His findings present an invaluable opportunity for us to assess progress and further strengthen our approach in prisons, covering areas including; terrorist risk behaviour, Governor accountability, Separation Centres, joint working and legislation.

In his report, the IRTL acknowledges the significant improvements made to the Counter-Terrorism system since the horrific terrorist attacks in 2019/20 at Fishmongers' Hall, Streatham, Reading and in HMP Whitemoor. We have already strengthened the law through the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Act 2020 and the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021, putting an end to the automatic early release of terrorist offenders, and introducing tougher sentences for the most serious terrorist offences. We have also invested in our ambitious Step Up programme which provides a step change in our Counter-Terrorism capabilities through a raft of improvements including a joint intelligence hub to boost information sharing between security partners, a Counter Terrorism Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre to research, implement and evaluate rehabilitative interventions, and overhauling our Counter-Terrorism training offer to frontline staff.

These measures are critical to strengthening our approach to fighting terrorism in prisons, but we are determined to go further. That is why I have accepted 12 of the IRTL's recommendations, partially accepted another, and in some areas propose going beyond them.

We will invest an additional £1.2m over three years to create a new Separation Centre and High-Risk casework team. The specialised team will ensure that decisions to place prisoners in Separation Centres are taken in an effective and targeted way, in order to avoid the dissemination of poisonous ideology, prevent terrorist recruitment, and more generally protect the public.

We will also invest £6.1m over three years to create a new Close Supervision Centre unit with an extra ten cells, increasing our capacity by 20 percent. These will hold some of the most violent men in the prison system who pose a significant risk of harm to our staff and other prisoners.

We have collaborated widely in considering each of Jonathan Hall's recommendations, and I am grateful to the Home Secretary and partners across the criminal justice system for supporting this work. We honour the victims, families and communities that have been traumatised by terror by doing all we can to prevent future atrocities.'

# Written Answers

Wednesday, 27 April 2022

## Broadband

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of rural communities' access to reliable broadband on the fiscal wellbeing of businesses in those areas. [HL7988]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** Gigabit-capable networks can deliver the broadband services that businesses will rely on for decades to come, paving the way for new developments in commerce, trade and society and bringing benefits including improved productivity, jobs and economic growth.

The [2021 Evaluation of the Superfast Broadband Programme](#), which primarily delivered broadband upgrades to rural areas, found that the programme has increased the annual turnover of local businesses by £1.9 billion per year. The report also highlights that the most commonly reported impacts of improved connections amongst businesses were enhanced customer services (72 per cent), using internet connected devices (55 per cent), cloud-based computing (51 per cent) and promoting flexible working (50 per cent).

The final evaluation of our Superfast Programme will be completed in 2022/23 and will add to our understanding of the economic impact of fast and reliable broadband for businesses operating in rural areas.

## Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to meet charities supporting severely immunocompromised groups to discuss how they can be involved in (1) co-creating, and (2) disseminating, (a) communication, and (b) guidance, to people regarding how to safely manage their risk from COVID-19 beyond 1 April. [HL7365]

**Lord Kamall:** We have regular meetings with charities representing and supporting patients who are immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups. The Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, Dr Jenny Harries, is the clinical lead for programmes supporting these patients and has met with charities at stakeholder engagement sessions.

On 4 April 2022, updated online only guidance was issued for those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness if they become infected with COVID-19.

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Kamall on 15 March

(HL6546), which (1) charities, and (2) stakeholders, were consulted by the Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, Dr Jenny Harries, with regard to (a) immunocompromised patients, and (2) the Living with Covid strategy. [HL7561]

**Lord Kamall:** The Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency has consulted with the Cabinet Office Disabilities and Health Charities Communications Forum. Those in attendance included:

Age UK; Anthony Nolan; Blood Cancer UK; British Liver Trust; Business Disability Forum; Cancer Research UK; Carers UK; Diabetes UK; Epilepsy Action; Kidney Care UK; Macmillan Cancer Support; Mencap; MS Society; Parkinson's UK; Patients Association; Rare Autoimmune Rheumatic Disease Alliance; Rethink Mental Illness; Richmond Group; Scope; and Versus Arthritis.

We have also met with a coalition of approximately 20 charities representing individuals who are immunosuppressed or are at higher risk from serious illness should they contract COVID-19. This included: Kidney Care UK; MS Society; British Liver Trust; Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance; Bowel Cancer UK; The Rare Autoimmune Rheumatic Disease Alliance; National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society; Blood Cancer UK; Crohn's and Colitis UK; Muscular Dystrophy UK; Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation; Versus Arthritis; Age UK; Macmillan Cancer Support; Kidney Research UK; Scleroderma and Raynard's UK Lupus UK; Anthony Nolan; Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis; British Liver Trust; Cystic Fibrosis Trust; and Leukaemia Care.

## Counselling

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the NHS England budget for relationship counselling in the latest available year. [HL7863]

**Lord Kamall:** This information is not held in the format requested as NHS England and NHS Improvement's budgets are not allocated at the level of individual therapies. Individuals who are seen within Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services can expect to receive a course of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-recommended psychological therapy from an appropriately trained individual and to have their clinical outcomes monitored and reported. All National Health Service talking and psychological therapy services are expected to have capacity to offer couple therapy.

## Fish Farming: Animal Welfare

Asked by *Baroness Gale*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce mandatory pre-stun slaughter

for farmed fish in line with the protection afforded to terrestrial farmed animals. [HL7869]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing requires that farmed fish are spared avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations.

Following publication of the Post Implementation Review of the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 in January 2021, and as part of the Action Plan on Animal Welfare, we are currently considering a number of improvements that could be made to the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing.

We have also asked the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) to update its 2014 Opinion on the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing and look forward to receiving AWC's updated advice later this year.

### Gender Recognition: Hospital Wards

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy for providing in-patient accommodation for trans women in NHS hospital wards in England; and what steps they are taking to protect trans women in hospital from potential discrimination. [HL7846]

**Lord Kamall:** NHS England and NHS Improvement's current guidance concerning the placement of transgender people in hospital wards states that this should be done in accordance with their presentation, such as the way the person dresses and the pronouns they use. NHS England is reviewing this guidance and the Department will ensure that any revised guidance takes account of relevant equalities legislation.

### Imports: Israel

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they require businesses importing from Israel to specify that their products do not originate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [HL7831]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The existing United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement requires that goods originating in Israel are declared as such upon import into the United Kingdom.

Goods imported from illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are not entitled to benefits from preferential trade and we are committed to maintaining that approach.

### Ligustrum Delavayanum

*Asked by Baroness Fookes*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported problems faced by British horticultural firms unable to complete export

orders to the EU involving the use of topiary created from *Ligustrum delavayanum*. [HL7867]

*Asked by Baroness Fookes*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to speed up the consideration by the European Commission of a dossier which has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Agency on the safety of *Ligustrum delavayanum*. [HL7868]

**Lord Benyon:** The UK has not been listed for export of all of the genera of plants/trees covered by the EU High Risk Plants legislation (Regulation 2018/2019). This has meant that since 1 January 2021 these genera, which include *Ligustrum*, are subject to prohibitions pending individual risk assessments conducted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The UK made a case in February 2020 that a number of otherwise prohibited items, including the tree and shrub species regarded as High Risk Plants, should be recognized and exempt from such a prohibition through EU legislation, so as to allow imports to continue. This case was rejected by the Commission in late 2020.

The rejection of this request means that we are required to use the same process for seeking listing which is followed by all non-EU countries. The listing process involves submitting technical dossiers to EFSA for individual species within each of the prohibited genera. Defra has been working closely with trade associations and individual businesses on priorities for such dossiers, including certain *Ligustrum* species.

Once a dossier has been accepted by EFSA and their review commences, based on experience to date, it is likely to take in excess of 18 months for the EU commission to introduce new import conditions in legislation. There is no guarantee that the outcome of a review will be that trade can commence and only a small number of submissions made by third countries have resulted in new import conditions since the initiation of this process in 2019.

In June 2021, in an attempt to speed up the listing process, we sought agreement from the EU Commission for a more streamlined approach be applied to the assessment of dossiers submitted by the UK to EFSA. This request was rejected and EFSA confirmed that requests from the UK will need to follow the same process which applies to other non-EU countries.

Defra and Fera Science Ltd. have worked with the trade to develop a dossier for *Ligustrum delavayanum* and this was submitted to EFSA on 03/12/21. EFSA acknowledged receipt of the dossier in April 2022 but requested further information be provided. We believe the request for additional information goes beyond EFSA's own guidelines and their approach to applications from other countries and we are challenging their request on the basis of fairness and proportionality.

Unfortunately, now that the dossier is with EFSA we have no control over how long it will take them to consider it and we are therefore unable to give an

indication of when the EU commission will make a final decision on this application. However, we will continue to press them and to seek regular updates on progress.

### Local Housing Allowance

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the rising cost of living, what plans they have, if any, to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance. [HL7857]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines the maximum housing support for tenants in the private rented sector. The level of LHA rates is reviewed annually by the Secretary of State.

In 2020-21, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we invested almost £1 billion in the LHA which meant 1.5 million households received an average increase of £600 more than they would otherwise have received.

LHA rates have been maintained at their increased levels rather than reverting to previous rates which were much less generous.

Those who need further financial help with their housing costs can seek assistance via the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) scheme. DHPs can be paid to those in receipt of qualifying housing support who face a shortfall in meeting their rental housing costs.

These payments are entirely at the discretion of the local authority and since 2011 the Government has provided almost £1.5 billion to local authorities for households who need additional support with their housing costs.

### Marriage: Ceremonies

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Nuffield Foundation report, *When is a wedding not a marriage? Exploring non-legally binding ceremonies*, published on 8 March; and, in particular, of the conclusion that wedding law reform is achievable and long overdue. [HL7850]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** The Government notes the conclusion of the Nuffield Foundation's report. The Government remains committed to assessing the case for more comprehensive and enduring reform to marriage law once the Law Commission has completed its fundamental review of the law in this area. The final report will take into account the findings of the Nuffield Foundation and is due in July. The report will support the Government in understanding what types of ceremonies are taking place, why they are taking place and what the demand for them is, and who conducts them, in order to consider the implications of changing the law on marriage on all groups.

### Married People: Tax Allowances

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the uptake figures for Marriage Allowance in the latest available year. [HL7862]

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the expenditure on Marriage Allowance in (1) 2018–19, (2) 2019–20, and (3) 2020–21. [HL7905]

**Baroness Penn:** The most recent estimates for the expenditure and uptake of Marriage Allowance can be found in the Non-structural tax reliefs publication <sup>[1]</sup>, last updated in December 2021. The estimated expenditure for Marriage Allowance is £490 million in 2018-19, £540 million in 2019-20, and £560 million in 2020-21. The number of claimants was estimated at 2,020,000 in 2019-20. Estimates of the number of claimants are the latest available and reflect only successful claimants up to that point in time and not the anticipated full take up when all backdated claims have been made in future tax years (up to 4 years later).

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>

### Migrants and Refugees: Charities

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many voluntary refugee and migrant support centres have closed since March 2020; and what plans they have, if any, to support their reopening. [HL7204]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office does not hold information on voluntary refugee and migrant centres.

### Migrants: Ukraine

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide short-term accommodation for non-vulnerable Ukrainian adults who have been granted leave to remain but have no access to public funds. [HL6823]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government has ensured those fleeing Ukraine can find safety in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine. People applying under either of the schemes will have full and unrestricted access to benefits, healthcare, employment, and other support for up to three years.

The government has also announced a Ukraine Extension Scheme, under which Ukrainians already in the UK, along with their family members, can apply for three years' leave as well as full access to employment and public services.



This will ensure they have the same rights and entitlements as those coming here through either the Ukraine Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine route, including recourse to public funds.

### Mike Veale

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 7 April (HL Deb col 2185), what information they have sought from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland about a date for starting the misconduct hearing against Mike Veale. [[HL7878](#)]

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 7 April (HL Deb col 2185), whether the 100-day limit on starting a misconduct hearing against Mike Veale has expired; and, if so, when it expired. [[HL7879](#)]

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 7 April (HL Deb col 2185), whether the legally qualified chair of the misconduct hearing against Mike Veale has extended the time-limit on starting the proceedings; and, if so, (1) why, and (2) for how long. [[HL7880](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Independent Legally Qualified Chairs of police misconduct hearings have the discretion to extend the period of time in which the respective case is heard where they decide it is in the interests of justice to do so.

The misconduct hearing arising from the Independent Office for Police Conduct's investigation into alleged misconduct by former Chief Constable Mike Veale is a matter for the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (PCC). It is for the PCC to manage any actions arising from it.

### Police: Misconduct

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many inquiries into allegations of police misconduct have been conducted in the last 12 months; and how many such investigations are under way now. [[HL7881](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office does not currently hold misconduct data concerning the last 12 months, however we are currently developing a new stand-alone publication on police misconduct statistics. An initial statistical publication is due to be published in May 2022 and will include high level analysis of allegations of police misconduct recorded under the reformed disciplinary system and subsequent outcomes in the financial year 2020/21. A further

publication containing 2021/2022 data is scheduled for later in the year. Exact publication dates will be preannounced in the Home Office Statistical release calendar.

Police Misconduct data from previous years can be found in the Police Workforce Statistics, which are available on gov.uk.

### Questions for Written Answer

*Asked by Lord Jopling*

To ask the Leader of the House when she last drew the attention of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries to the fact that several Departments have not answered Questions for Written Answer within ten working days; in particular (1) the Department of Health and Social Care, (2) the Home Office, and (3) the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. [[HL7966](#)]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** As Leader of the House, I take my responsibility to ensure all Ministers provide full, timely and accurate responses to Questions for Written Answers (QWAs) very seriously.

I regularly remind Front Bench colleagues of their obligation to the House as stipulated in the Companion and of the importance of answering QWAs within the 10 day target. This has been raised regularly at Front Bench meetings and I have previously written to colleagues on the issue.

My office works closely with all departments across Government to ensure prompt responses to all QWAs. This is a process that has been followed with the Department of Health and Social Care, the Home Office, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

### Refugees

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the (1) Welsh Government, and (2) Scottish Government, regarding the wishes of those administrations to welcome refugees into their countries. [[HL6713](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK Government is working closely with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to promote and deliver the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Ministers and officials have been in direct contact with both the Scottish and Welsh Governments on this issue.

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the (1) Welsh Government, and (2) Scottish Government, regarding the wishes of those administrations to welcome refugees into their countries. [[HL6904](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** This question can be best answered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and should therefore be directed to that Department.

The UK Government is working closely with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to promote and deliver the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. We have received a number of representations from them as part of this engagement.

### Refugees: Ukraine

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to impose a limit on the number of refugees arriving in the UK from Ukraine due to Russia's invasion of that country; and what support they plan to provide to any such refugees. [HL6442]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government has set no limit on the number of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion who can come to the UK.

In response to the invasion, the Government has set up the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

There is no limit to the number of individuals who can come to the UK via the Ukraine Family Scheme, provided they are eligible, and no limit to the number of Ukrainians who can come to the UK having secured a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have in place to support refugees from Ukraine entering the UK; and what contingency arrangements they have in the event that there are a higher number of refugees arriving from that country than anticipated. [HL7639]

**Lord Harrington of Watford:** Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide wrap around care and support for beneficiaries arriving from the Ukraine. To assist in the support and integration LAs are being given £10500 per annum to ensure that this care is provided and this will go towards associated costs of schools and primary care needs. Separate to this is an offer of £350 per household to assist in the interim period whilst beneficiaries find work and housing to facilitate their new lives in the UK.

There is no limit on the number of Ukrainian people who the UK will accept under its current schemes. The Home Office is keeping its humanitarian response under regular review.

### Schools: Playing Fields

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 15 September

2020 (HL7666), how many school playing fields were sold in the years (1) 2020, and (2) 2021. [HL7931]

**Baroness Barran:** The number of school playing fields disposed of in 2020, either by way of sale or grant of a long lease was 21. The number of playing fields disposed of in 2021, either by way of sale or grant of a long lease was 14.

Further disposals that meet specific criteria can be made under a General Consent Order (GCO). GCOs can be used for transactions that represent no net loss of playing field land to the school estate or where the loss is temporary. Disposals made under a GCO are not published by the department and are not included in the figures above.

In instances of schools wishing to sell playing fields, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, requires applicants to demonstrate a sporting and/or playing benefit as part of any mitigation measures, and that any loss has been minimised both in quantum and quality of the land disposed of. No open school has been allowed to sell all its playing fields.

The Secretary of State for Education is keen to protect school playing fields. Schools are only able to sell or otherwise dispose of playing fields when they can demonstrate to the Secretary of State that they have explored all possible alternatives to the disposal, and that the disposal does not adversely impact upon the school's curriculum.

The department periodically updates a playing field disposal list, accessible here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-land-decisions-about-disposals>.

The next update to this will be in May 2022. The list was last updated in July 2021. The department is currently collating data for this update.

### Trade Agreements: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether goods can be imported into Northern Ireland via Tariff Rate Quota Schemes under the trade deals which the UK has agreed with other countries since 1 January 2021. [HL7420]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** Traders importing into Northern Ireland can access UK TRQs by moving goods to Great Britain and clearing customs, then moving to Northern Ireland under the UK Trader Scheme, provided the goods moved meet wider requirements to be not "at risk," as outlined on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-declare-goods-you-bring-into-northern-ireland-not-at-risk-of-moving-to-the-eu>.

At present, EU regulation 2020/2170, passed unilaterally by the EU in December 2020, significantly limits the terms on which NI traders can access quotas under the UK's new trade agreements directly.

The UK put forward proposals to address this issue in our Command Paper of July 2021 and is continuing to press for solutions in negotiations with the EU on the Protocol.

### Visas: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide special visas to people in war zones who have strong technology skills. [HL7662]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office's response to people fleeing war zones is to bring into place humanitarian schemes which are more simple to administer and assist as many people in need as possible. These include the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Schemes and our resettlement programmes such as the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. People who enter the UK under these schemes have full work rights and it is therefore unnecessary to only support those with specific skills.

Outside of these schemes we have a broad range of safe and legal routes which cater to those with specific tech skills including our Skilled Worker, Global Talent, Innovator and the new High Potential Individual and Scale-up routes which are open to all nationalities, including those who are refugees.

A pilot in partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) to explore how we might support highly skilled displaced people to access a Skilled Worker visa to the UK is already underway.

### Visas: Ukraine

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to waive visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals for up to three years. [HL6561]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government keeps its approach on visas and biometrics under review, informed by the latest security advice.

We are aware of cases where individuals who could pose a national security threat have attempted to enter the UK during crisis situations and checks which are part of the visa process have enabled us to identify these individuals as potential threats. Similarly checks undertaken as part of the visa application process can help safeguard vulnerable applicants such as those aged under 18.

The Government therefore has no plans to waive visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals.

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Home Office are keeping up with visa applications from those fleeing Ukraine. [HL6751]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We are committed to ensuring our operational teams have the resources they need to run an efficient and effective system. We actively monitor workflows to ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet demand, including from pressures relating to Ukraine.

The Home Office has surged capacity to European countries including Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Moldova, Poland and Romania. This work has increased the total capacity of UKVI who can offer over 13,000 appointments to visa applicants across the region.

The Home Office has made it easier to make applications to the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, as Ukrainians with valid passports no longer need to go to a Visa Application Centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK.

### Visas: Yemen

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many visa applications were made by Yemeni citizens to visit the UK in the past two years; how many were approved; how many were rejected; and how many were rejected but subsequently approved after appeal. [HL7253]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visa applications and outcomes by nationality in the Immigration Statistics Quarterly release, which can be found on gov.uk.

Data on the number of Visitor visa applications from Yemeni nationals, and data on Visitor visa grants and refusals to Yemeni nationals are published on the attached document.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to calendar year 2021.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the summary tables of the attached. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on entry clearance visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the Research and statistics calendar, which can also be found on gov.uk.

The Home Office do not publish statistics on the number of grants after appeal. However, these statistics are kept under constant review in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, taking account of user needs.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Visa Summary [visas-summary-dec-2021-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-03-23/HL7253>

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