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Tuesday
24 May 2022

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Harrington of Watford	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Kamall	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 24 May 2022

Angiolini Inquiry: Contingent Liability for Indemnification

[HLWS49]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I today lay before the House of Commons a Departmental Minute giving notice of a contingent liability for the issuing of an indemnity with respect to the work of the Angiolini Inquiry.

The proposed indemnity will cover Dame Elish Angiolini as Chair of the Angiolini Inquiry, current and former members of the Angiolini Inquiry and any individual engaged at any time to aid the Inquiry, against any legal costs, personal civil liability, actions, or damages related to the execution of their duties, or for any act done or omission made in good faith in the execution of their duties, including in relation to any Inquiry report/s or other published document/s.

This indemnity applies only to acts done or omissions made honestly and in good faith during the course of the Inquiry, from its establishment on 31 January 2022 until the final reports are published by the Home Secretary and all of the closure work of the Inquiry is concluded. The indemnity excludes personal criminal liability, negligence or reckless acts.

The indemnity is subject to the proviso that any liability which is to any extent met by insurers on the beneficiary of this indemnity, or for which reimbursement is made to any extent by such insurers, shall in that event and to that extent no longer be the subject of the indemnity and (if previously met or reimbursed by the Government) shall to that extent be refunded by the beneficiary to the Government.

Her Majesty's Treasury has approved the contingent liability in principle. The National Audit Office has been consulted on the proposal.

UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions

[HLWS50]

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

Decarbonising maritime is essential to achieve net zero emissions across the UK economy by 2050, as domestic shipping alone produces more greenhouse gases than buses, coaches and rail combined. Urgent action is needed today – the average lifespan of vessels means that greener ships must start being deployed by 2025 to achieve a zero-emission fleet by 2050. It's vital that every sector plays its part to remain in line with the Paris Agreement.

This transition of the shipping industry to zero emissions, as well as fulfilling our objectives to combat climate change, will also improve air quality in and around our ports and coastal communities.

Earlier this year the National Shipbuilding Strategy announced £206 million to establish in my Department a UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions, or UK SHORE. This is a world-leading initiative showcasing our climate leadership and commitment to decarbonising maritime.

Today, I am kick-starting this ambitious programme, launching a package of initiatives including:

- The first round of the multi-year Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which opens today for applications. Building on the success of the first CMDC, to fund feasibility studies and pre-deployment trials in innovative clean maritime solutions, enabling full-scale technology demonstrations.
- Feasibility studies exploring green shipping corridors, as part of the multi-year CMDC, placing the UK at the centre of emerging clean maritime routes. These will align with our ambition to drive the transition to zero-emission shipping at the IMO, implementing the commitments in the Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors, announced at COP26.
- Exploring initiatives on green shipbuilding skills this year in partnership with the Department for Education and their UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce, working closely with the National Shipbuilding Office. Future programmes will be targeted at upskilling our workforce, making sure we are ready as a shipbuilding and maritime nation for net zero shipping.
- Working with the Devolved Administrations to support the greening of intra-UK ferry routes via a Zero Emission Ferries programme. This will build domestic green corridors, tackling climate change and levelling up of the UK's island communities.
- Confirmation that this year we will set out plans for a Centre for Smart Shipping (CSmart), a commitment in the Maritime 2050 Strategy. Providing a coordinating function in new and emerging technologies, CSmart will build on the UK's strength in smart shipping systems and enable Innovation Hubs to support regional clusters of expertise across the UK.
- Grant schemes for early research projects delivered by our world leading universities, in partnership with the UKRI Supergen programme and marine industrial stakeholders. This initiative will build on the excellence of UK academia, exploring new ideas to create a pipeline of future technology solutions to decarbonise the maritime sector.

This is the first of a series of packages launched as part of the implementation of UK SHORE. Initiatives will be delivered in parallel with the maritime commitments in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan. We will continue to build momentum towards the publication in 2023 of a refreshed Clean Maritime Plan. This will bring together our commitments,

setting out a plan of action towards Net Zero for the UK domestic maritime sector.

The transition to zero emission shipping is a unique opportunity to radically reboot our marine manufacturing and gear up productivity, building on our competitive edge in clean maritime solutions. Delivered in partnership with the National Shipbuilding Office and the Department for International Trade, UK SHORE initiatives will energise UK shipyards and their supply chains as we recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It will drive innovation investment and revitalise maritime infrastructure. The implementation of UK SHORE is expected to support thousands of jobs across our communities, as programme implementation gathers pace.

Wider Implementation of Licensed Standing Areas in Football Stadiums: “Minded To” Decision

[HLWS51]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Nigel Huddleston MP:

On 1 January 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) successfully launched the ‘Early Adopter Programme’ for [Licensed Standing in Seated Areas](#) at football stadia, with the full backing of Parliament and key footballing stakeholders. This represented a significant step towards fulfilling the Government’s manifesto commitment ‘to work with fans and clubs towards introducing licensed standing in seated areas at football grounds’.

In a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, made on 8 November 2021, I confirmed that the ‘Early Adopter Programme’ was intended to enable the Government to evaluate how successful licensed standing areas could be as a strategy to manage persistent standing. The Early Adopter Programme was implemented during the second half of the 2021/22 football season and has been subject to a formal independent evaluation. The evaluation has included a series of match-day visits to observe supporter behaviour and the implementation of safety management practices as well as interviews with a range of staff involved in managing safety at each club such as SGSA inspectors, section supervisors responsible for the licensed standing areas, supporter liaison officers and representatives from both the local police and Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

On 23 April 2022, the SGSA published the ‘Interim Report’ by CFE Research, which we are delighted has confirmed that researchers have ‘not witnessed anything during match observations in 2022 or gathered any evidence to date that contradicts [the previous research finding that] installing barriers or rails in areas of

persistent standing in seated accommodation continues to have a positive impact on spectator safety, particularly in mitigating the risk of a progressive crowd collapse by limiting forwards and backwards movement’.

I am pleased to note that the Interim Report has identified a number of further positive impacts of installing barriers or rails, which are also consistent with the findings of the 2019-20 study, [The Safe Management of Persistent Standing in Seated Areas at Football Stadia](#) published by the SGSA in June 2021. These include: celebrations are more orderly with no opportunity for forwards and backwards movement; egress is more uniform because barriers limit spectators’ ability to climb over seats to exit more quickly; it is easier to identify pockets of overcrowding in these areas; and barriers offer stability for people moving up and down aisles and gangways.

The Interim Report also noted that operating licensed standing areas has the additional benefit of removing ‘the need for safety teams to make spectators sit down, reducing potential conflict between staff and spectators’ while also enhancing the match-day experience of spectators and customer service by enabling clubs to respond to spectators’ seating preferences. In addition, it has concluded that there is no evidence to date that the introduction of licensed standing areas has led to an increase in persistent standing elsewhere in the stadia.

Alongside the SGSA, we have carefully considered the findings of the Interim Report, and with this robust evidence in hand, I am ‘minded to’ change the existing all-seater policy to allow all clubs currently subject to this requirement to introduce licensed standing areas for the start of the 2022/23 season, provided they have met certain strict criteria, which are available [online](#). The SGSA has also produced Supplementary Guidance (SG01) providing further information about the standards/requirements that must be met. This guidance is available [online](#). Other areas of the grounds will continue to remain ‘all-seated’.

It is important to note that I have not taken the final decision at this stage, and any change to the existing all-seater policy will remain contingent upon the CFE Research Final Evaluation Report confirming the findings of the Interim Report, which note that licensed standing areas provide for an equivalent (if not improved) level of spectator safety. We will also ensure that key stakeholders continue to have sufficient opportunity to provide any additional observations/feedback not already captured.

The Government’s approach has been driven by safety considerations throughout and this will continue to be our priority. We are not complacent about spectator safety, nor are we complacent about the safety policies that have served spectators well for many years. We will continue to work closely with the SGSA, football clubs, the football governing bodies and local authorities to ensure that spectator safety remains paramount.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 24 May 2022

Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. [HL65]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Afghanistan continues to face a serious and worsening humanitarian crisis. It is affecting over half of the population, with 19.7 million facing acute food insecurity. This is now one of the world's most severe food security crisis. 93% of households are reporting they do not have enough to eat. People continue turning to drastic measures to feed their families with 63% of households resorting to crisis coping strategies. Over 6 million people have been internally displaced and millions of children are out of school. The combination of food and other household prices rising and the reduction in economic opportunities in Afghanistan will lead to a significant increase in poverty rates in Afghanistan.

On 11 January 2022, the UN launched an appeal for \$4.4 billion for 2022, the largest humanitarian appeal on record, reflecting the magnitude of the humanitarian challenge ahead. The UK was at the forefront in responding to this. On 30 March, the Foreign Secretary announced the UK pledge of £286 million for 2022/2023, the second highest commitment to the Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan to date. This commitment reflects the UK's enduring commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

Alcoholic Drinks: Addictions

Asked by *Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the exclusion of (1) alcohol, and (2) other addictions, from the protections of the Equality Act 2010 has had on (a) discrimination, and (b) stigmatisation, of people with a history of alcohol dependence. [HL361]

Asked by *Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce (1) stigma, and (2) discrimination, of people with alcohol dependence. [HL362]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: While the Government recognises the personal challenges faced by people with addictions or dependencies such as alcohol, we subscribe to the view of successive Governments since the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, that it is not appropriate to give such conditions protected status under discrimination law. Alcohol addiction or dependency therefore remains specifically excluded from the Act's

definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010.

Addiction and dependency can however sometimes cause a disability – for example lung or kidney failure – or be the result of a disability, for example a mental health condition. Where the addiction arises due to medically prescribed drugs or other medical treatment – for example an individual who has an addiction to painkillers because they are prescribed following an accident or surgery – protection may also be available under the Act. We believe that this offers the right balance between protecting individuals on the one hand and employers and service providers on the other.

There is a strong programme of work underway to address alcohol-related health harms and disparities, including an ambitious programme to establish specialist Alcohol Care Teams in hospitals and support children of alcohol dependent parents. The focus of the newly established Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is on improving the nation's health and levelling up health disparities. This includes tackling alcohol-related health harms.

Apprentices

Asked by *Lord Allen of Kensington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reduction in (1) the percentage of apprentices under the age of 19, and (2) the number of entry level apprenticeships; and what plans they have to reverse this trend. [HL2]

Baroness Barran: The government wants more young people to benefit from apprenticeships that offer high-quality training and opportunities for progression.

There have been 56,200 apprenticeship starts by people under 19 so far in the 2021/22 academic year, compared to 38,800 in the 2020/21 academic year, and 58,100 in the 2019/20 academic year. The proportion of apprenticeship starts in the under 19 age group have recovered, following the decrease seen this time last year, with under 19-year-olds now accounting for 27.6% of total starts.

Employers have developed 647 apprenticeship standards, 140 of which are at Level 2, which is equivalent to GCSE level, and 210 of which are at Level 3, which is equivalent to A level. The department continues to welcome the development of high-quality apprenticeship standards by employers at all levels. There have been 55,300 apprenticeship starts at Level 2 so far in the 2021/22 academic year, compared to 41,500 in the 2020/21 academic year, and 65,000 in the 2019/20 academic year. Starts at this level equate to 27.1% of total starts.

There have been 88,100 apprenticeship starts at Level 3 so far in the 2021/22 academic year compared to 69,100 in the 2020/21 academic year and 87,600 in the 2019/20 academic year. Starts at this level equate to 43.2% of total starts.

Starts at both Levels 2 and 3 still account for 70% of all apprenticeships. Further breakdowns on apprenticeship starts by age and level are published each month and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-may-2022>.

The department is continuing to improve the apprenticeship system for employers. We are making apprenticeship training even more flexible, so that employers across all sectors can access apprenticeships. We are also helping employers choose more flexible training models like flexi-job, front-loaded, and accelerated apprenticeships.

The department has a range of work underway to ensure that young people can access apprenticeships more easily. This includes working on new ways to connect young people in schools and colleges with employers and providers much earlier in their final year, when they are considering their options. It also includes working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to identify and promote standards most suitable for those starting their careers. We are also working with employers and providers to highlight the benefits of hiring young apprentices, and increase their use of our free recruitment tools so that vacancies are accessible through our 'find an apprenticeship' service.

Additionally, the department is exploring options with the Office for Students to allocate up to £8 million from the strategic priorities grant to accelerate the growth of degree apprenticeships. Degree apprenticeships offer a high-quality alternative to traditional university study. They have a key role to play in ensuring that young people are doing courses that give them the skills and knowledge to move into high-value employment that benefits them and the economy.

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to devolve funding and responsibility for apprenticeships for 16–19-year-olds to Metro Mayors. [HL3]

Baroness Barran: The department's reforms have created an employer-led apprenticeship system. Employers across England are now empowered to design the apprenticeship standards which meet their skills needs and to choose the apprenticeship training they need from a range of high-quality providers.

In doing so, both employers who pay the apprenticeship levy and those who do not can directly access government funding for apprenticeships. As such, local employers are in control of an apprenticeship system which enables them to address local skills needs. As a result, the department currently has no plans to devolve any funding or responsibility for apprenticeships to mayors or other local partners.

The department has worked closely with employers and mayoral combined authorities to help them better address local skills needs through apprenticeships. We have

improved the apprenticeship levy transfer system, so it is easier for large employers to transfer their unused funds to smaller employers, building on the work of the West Midlands combined authority.

In September 2021, the department introduced a new online service to enable large employers to pledge funds available for transfer, allowing a much wider range of businesses to browse and apply for available funds. Employers using the service can choose to pledge funds for a specific geographic area. To date, employers including Amazon UK, DPD, and HomeServe have pledged to transfer almost £9 million.

The government is increasing overall apprenticeship funding to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year. This funding will support apprenticeships in employers of all sizes, including small employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy and for whom the government will continue to pay 95% of training costs.

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to begin the review of the apprenticeship programme announced in the Spring Statement; and when they expect to publish a call for evidence. [HL4]

Baroness Penn: The government's ambition is to encourage greater levels of private sector investment in employee training, both for apprentices and for employees more generally.

At the Spring Statement, the Chancellor announced that he would consider whether further intervention is needed to encourage employers to offer the high-quality training the UK needs. This will include examining whether the current tax system – including the operation of the Apprenticeship Levy – is doing enough to incentivise businesses to invest in the right kinds of training.

The Chancellor will update the House further in the Autumn.

Apprentices: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the apprenticeship levy to include more qualifications. [HL112]

Baroness Barran: The apprenticeship levy is an important part of the department's reforms, supporting employers of all sizes to invest in high-quality apprenticeship training.

Employers can already choose from over 640 high-quality employer-designed apprenticeship standards, at all levels and in all sectors of the economy, to meet their skills needs. Employers can hire apprentices at any age and at any stage in their career, whether that's a new recruit, or an existing employee being retrained or upskilled. Apprenticeships are designed to support an apprentice to achieve occupational competence. They may include a mandatory qualification, such as a degree or professional accreditation.

The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education continues to work with employers to develop new apprenticeship standards to support businesses to build the workforce of the future.

We are also supporting employers to make greater use of their levy funds by helping them to choose more flexible training models, and making it easier for levy-paying employers to transfer funds to support apprenticeships in their supply chains or to meet local or sectorial skills needs.

Employers can continue to benefit from a range of other high-quality government funded skills programmes, including Skills Bootcamps and traineeships, to recruit new talent or train current staff.

The department currently has no plans to broaden the scope of what apprenticeship levy funds can be spent on.

Army

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether their plan to reduce the army troop size to 72,500 by the year 2025 still remains, as set out in their Defence in a Competitive Age command paper, published on 22 March 2021 and updated on 30 July 2021. [HL43]

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to maintaining, rather than reducing, army size targets since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. [HL44]

Baroness Goldie: There are currently no plans to reverse the decision to reduce the number of regular Army personnel to 73,000. The Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper made clear that we must focus on Defence capability rather than troop numbers in response to changing threats and priorities. The British Army will be more integrated and active, with a whole force of over 100,000 regulars and reservists, to address current and future threats.

We are continuing to monitor the situation globally, including in Ukraine, and, in line with planning and delivery mechanisms developed following the Integrated Review, we will continue to review our capabilities and readiness levels accordingly.

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many refugees and others are accommodated at the Napier barracks. [HL95]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: On 11 May there were 314 residents at Napier Barracks, all of whom are asylum seekers. Napier Barracks does not accommodate refugees. The numbers change daily in line with arrivals

and dispersals and the current maximum occupancy is 328.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the removal of asylum seekers to Rwanda will begin under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. [HL101]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The first group of people whose claims we believe are inadmissible in the UK, and who may be relocated to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development partnership, are receiving notices of intent. Relocations to Rwanda will begin as soon as practical.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial provision they have made for the asylum related costs of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, for the first year of its operation. [HL102]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Funding has been agreed as part of the Home Office settlement with HMT.

Payments will depend on the outcomes delivered, including the number of people relocated.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers they estimate will be sent to Rwanda as Relocated Individuals under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, during the first year of its operation. [HL103]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The number of individuals that will be relocated to Rwanda during the first year of operation of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership is uncapped. The number of individuals relocated is expected to be in the thousands, and there is scope to increase this if required.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of UK courts in determining the (1) treatment, and (2) applications of asylum seekers, who make their application in the United Kingdom but are relocated to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. [HL104]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Those who are relocated to Rwanda will have had their asylum application declared inadmissible to the UK system and therefore it will not be substantively considered by the UK. Anyone who it is proposed to relocate will have a chance to raise reasons why they should not be removed, seek legal advice and raise a legal challenge in the UK system before they are relocated.

Once an individual is relocated, Rwanda will process their asylum claim under the Rwandan jurisdiction and will take responsibility for supporting them.

As set out in paragraph 15 of the MoU governing the Migration and Economic Development Partnership, an independent Monitoring Committee will monitor the entire relocation process and compliance with assurances in the MoU, including the processing of asylum claims and provision of support in Rwanda.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to paragraph 5.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, what criteria they will apply to the screening of asylum seekers; and which categories of individuals will not be sent to Rwanda at that stage. [HL105]

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to paragraph 8.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, what the criteria is for the accommodation of asylum seekers in terms of (1) health, (2) security, and (3) the wellbeing of the Relocated Individuals; and how the quality of such accommodation will be monitored. [HL106]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Memorandum of Understanding makes provision for an initial screening of asylum seekers before relocation to Rwanda which includes a screening of an individual's identity, security checks, initial asylum screening and processing.

An individualised assessment of each individual's circumstances will be undertaken prior to any decision to relocate them to Rwanda. We would not relocate someone where it would be unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

There will be agreed monitoring arrangements in place by an independent Monitoring Committee, and this will include monitoring of reception conditions and accommodation.

*Asked by **The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they will use to determine whether someone arriving in the UK, outside of the authorised channels, is eligible for being relocated to Rwanda. [HL38]

*Asked by **The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether families will be split up through the new Asylum Partnership Arrangement with Rwanda; and if not, what evidence they have that the policy will not lead to increased trafficking of women and children. [HL40]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Other than unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, anyone arriving

in the UK whose claim is inadmissible and who has undertaken a dangerous journey to the UK on or after 1 January 2022 may be considered for relocation to Rwanda.

Everyone considered for relocation will be screened and have access to legal advice. Decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis and nobody will be removed if it is unsafe or inappropriate for them.

We comply fully with the UK's legal obligations, including under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. For those with family links in the UK, who want to be considered for entry to the UK, they should seek to do so via legal and safe routes. Nobody should put their lives into the hands of criminal people smuggling gangs by making dangerous and irregular journeys.

*Asked by **The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether (1) women, (2) girls, and (3) LGBT+ people, who are relocated to Rwanda will be afforded the same safety as in the UK. [HL39]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Rwanda is a safe and secure country with respect for the rule of law. We have carried out a robust report that demonstrates our commitment to fully evaluating whether Rwanda would be suitable for each potentially eligible person to be relocated.

We would only ever work with countries that we know are safe and will treat asylum seekers in accordance with relevant international human rights laws. Furthermore, Rwanda's constitution includes a broad prohibition on discrimination.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what empirical evidence they collected prior to the announcement of the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership on 14 April to support their goal of "breaking the business model of people smuggling gangs"; what evidence they have that human traffickers will be deterred and their illegal activities reduced, not just in the UK context, but globally; and what advice they have sought from other countries who have tried this outsourcing approach to refugees; in particular, the government of Israel. [HL82]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Migration and Economic Development Partnership intends to deter dangerous journeys and illegal entry to the UK, break the business model of people smugglers and protect the lives of those they endanger.

It is anticipated that by reducing the likelihood of individuals who have travelled through safe third countries remaining in the UK as a refugee, those inclined to make these journeys are more likely to be deterred and choose instead to remain in the safe country they are in.

Average Earnings

Asked by **Lord Field of Birkenhead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the value of the lowest earnings decile, as a percentage of average earnings, of (1) male, and (2) female, workers in each year since 2020. [HL141]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the noble Lord's Parliamentary Question of 11 May is below and attached.

Dear Lord Field,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what is the value of the lowest earnings decile, as a percentage of average earnings, of (1) male, and (2) female, workers in each year since 2020 (HL141).

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) [1], carried out in April each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. ASHE is based on a 1% sample of employee jobs taken from HM Revenue and Customs' Pay As You Earn (PAYE) records. [2]

Table 1 shows the median gross weekly earnings for all, male, and female employees in the United Kingdom for 2020 and 2021 (the latest period for which ASHE estimates are available). [3] As with any survey, estimates from ASHE are subject to a margin of uncertainty. [4]

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Median gross weekly earnings (£) for all, male, and female employees [5] in the United Kingdom, April 2020, April 2021

2020					
	10th Percentile		50th Percentile Proportion (Median)		
	£	*	£	*	(%)
All Employees	156.8	*	479.1	*	32.7
Male	230.9	*	568.4	*	40.6
Female	123.6	*	400.1	*	30.9
2021					
	10th Percentile		50th Percentile Proportion (Median)		
	£	*	£	*	(%)
All Employees	171.0	*	504.4	*	33.9
Male	251.3	*	594.1	*	42.3
Female	138.4	*	420.1	*	32.9

Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

(1)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2021>.

(2) Consequently, individuals with more than one job may appear in the sample more than once.

(3) These estimates can be found at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/allemployeeashtable1>.

(4) The coefficient of variation (CV) indicates the quality of an estimate; the smaller the CV, the higher the quality. The true value is likely to lie within +/- twice the CV. For example, for an estimate of £200 with a CV of 5%, we would expect the true population average to be within the range £180 to £220. This is given by £200+/- ({2*0.05}*200). The star system below is used in the table to indicate the degree of uncertainty.

Key	Coefficient of variation (CV) %	Statistical robustness
*	CV	Estimates are considered precise
**	CV > 5 and	Estimates are considered reasonably precise
***	CV > 10 and	Estimates are considered acceptable
x	CV > 20	Estimates are considered unreliable for practical purposes

(5) Employee jobs are defined as those held by employees and not the self-employed.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKSA Letter [UKSA_Response_to_PQHL141 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-11/HL141>

Bus Services: Fares

Asked by **Lord Bradshaw**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support significant reductions in bus fares in locations where (1) elasticities of demand are likely to be high, and (2) costs to government are low, to help restore patronage to buses and support wider reductions in traffic congestion. [HL132]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Evidence suggests that where people's travel is more discretionary or where people have alternative travel options, passenger demand tends to be more price sensitive. Some operators run fares promotions to benefit from these elasticities at off peak times or when there is more spare capacity on buses. The Government has piloted initiatives to reduce fares in

places such as in Cornwall, to help us understand how cutting prices effects patronage.

The Government has also provided over £2.5 billion in new funding to support improvements to bus services and are on track to meet the commitment of £3 billion new funding invested in buses in this parliament. This includes £1.1 billion in new funding for bus transformation deals to deliver London-style fares, infrastructure, and service improvements.

In addition, the Government spends over £200m every year through the Bus Service Operators Grant to keep fares down and maintain an extensive local transport network. A further £42m is provided annually through this grant directly to Local Transport Authorities to subsidise socially necessary bus services.

Bus Services: Rural Areas

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the provision of rural bus services in England. [HL151]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Local authorities have published Bus Service Improvement Plans, as the National Bus Strategy asked, which provide an assessment of existing services in their area, including detail of current provision of rural bus services. These plans were subject to a detailed assessment and thirty-one counties, city regions and unitary authorities have subsequently been selected to receive a share of funding to level up their local bus services, drawing on the £1.2 billion announced at last year's Spending Review, as part of the £3 billion we have promised for buses over this Parliament. The successful areas were prioritised based on criteria, which took rural considerations into account, in line with the National Bus Strategy and the supplementary guidance published in May 2021. Rural areas in receipt of indicative funding include Norfolk, Derbyshire, Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.

The National Bus Strategy encourages consideration of demand responsive transport for areas where demand is more dispersed, and the distances involved make it more challenging to offer services meeting residents' diverse needs. We awarded funding to 17 pilot projects through the £20 million Rural Mobility Fund to trial innovative, demand responsive services. The schemes provide real-world experience and data to develop our understanding of introducing such services in rural areas.

Central African Republic: Democracy

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have recently made, if any, to international partners regarding the ways in which the international community can support democracy in the Central African Republic in view of their upcoming local elections in September. [HL212]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: It is important that local elections in Central African Republic (CAR), which have not been held since 1988, are credible and inclusive. We have regular conversations with international partners on a range of issues in CAR including elections. In May, British diplomats met members of the international community including the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA), and discussed local elections. The UK contributes approximately £40 million annually to MINUSCA, which continues to provide security across the country. MINUSCA also plays a role in election security.

The UK has a strong record of providing electoral support in CAR. During national elections in 2020-21, our £500,000 contribution to UNDP's elections fund supported procurement of critical election materials and greater participation of women and marginalised groups.

Channel Crossing: Bus Services

Asked by Lord Faulkner of Worcester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many coaches have entered the UK from the European Union so far in 2022; and how many had arrived by the same period in 2019. [HL52]

Asked by Lord Faulkner of Worcester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the percentage change in the number of coach parties arriving at Channel ports compared to the number of visitors arriving by air, in each year since 2015. [HL53]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport does not hold data on the number of coach parties or coaches entering the UK from the European Union, either for 2022 or for previous years.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Gender and Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the allocation of funds to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund where (1) gender equality is the main objective of the project or programme, (2) gender equality is a significant but not the main objective of the project or programme, and (3) where gender equality is not targeted. [HL13]

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the allocation of funds to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's (CSSF) Gender and Human Rights programme; and what proportion is that amount as a percentage of the total CSSF budget. [HL14]

Lord True: Progressing gender equality, through the protection and promotion of the rights and inclusion of women and girls and addressing gender-specific impacts

of conflict, is a fundamental driver of all CSSF programming. Women, peace and security is one of the four Fund-level outcomes, each of which shapes the nature of CSSF programming. This means work on gender is addressed not just by the Gender, Peace and Security Portfolio but the Fund as a whole.

From April 2022 all CSSF projects will be assessed using a new Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Marker, replacing the existing Gender Equality Policy Marker, which has been in use since 2016. This will drive standards for GESI across CSSF and promote learning and adaptation, while also ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

In 2020 (the latest available year for ODA reporting), 6% of ODA funded CSSF programmes (£36 m) had gender as a main objective, while 65% (£348m) of programmes had a significant gender component.

Spend by portfolio for FY22/23 will be announced, as usual, when the Written Ministerial Statement to accompany the Annual Report is laid before Parliament, later in the year. This ensures that Ministers retain sufficient in-year flexibility to pivot funding in delivery of the most pressing national security objectives.

Cryptocurrencies

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to lay regulations that (1) define what a stable coin is, and (2) require particular (a) forms, and (b) levels, of collateral for such coins. [HL282]

Baroness Penn: The legislation to bring stablecoins, where used as a means of payment, within the regulatory perimeter is expected to be part of the forthcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill announced in the Queen's Speech on 10 May. The Bill will be introduced later in the session when parliamentary time allows.

As set out in the Government's response document, with respect to stablecoins used as a means of payment, the government proposes that regulation should capture all stablecoins that reference fiat currencies, including a single currency stablecoin or stablecoin based on a basket of currencies.

The financial services regulators will be required to consult on rules associated with this legislation in due course, including on assets or funds backing the stablecoin where relevant.

Defence: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their forecast for expenditure on defence in 2025 as a percentage of GDP. [HL24]

Baroness Goldie: The UK remains committed to exceeding 2% of its GDP on Defence under the terms of its existing settlement. It would not be appropriate to

speculate on spending beyond the current Parliament and which will be subject to a further Spending Review.

Driving: Mobile Phones

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they hold, or what estimates they have made, of the numbers of drivers (1) arrested for motoring offences, or (2) who are involved in (a) collisions, (b) serious collisions, or (c) fatal collisions, who were using hands-free mobile phone devices at the time of the offence or collision. [HL22]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The information requested is not available.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on arrests for notifiable offences on Gov.uk. Motoring offences are non-notifiable unless they involve death by dangerous driving, these would be recorded under violence against the person offences, more detailed breakdowns are not held centrally. Furthermore, information on whether a hands-free device was involved, is not collected.

The Home Office also publishes data on Fixed Penalty Notices and other outcomes for motoring offences, by broader offence group. However, data is not held centrally on whether a hands-free device was involved or if a collision occurred. The most recent data can be found on Gov.uk.

The Department for Transport publish data on road casualties, which can be found on Gov.uk. This data provide information on the severity of the accident however they do not include information on whether a hands-free device was involved.

East Africa: Droughts

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the East and Horn of Africa in preparing for future droughts by (1) building more resilient systems, and (2) ending exacerbating factors such as conflict. [HL10]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 to support communities affected by drought plus flooding and conflict the UK has provided £72.25 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. For example, in Kenya to respond to the ongoing drought, 26,000 children will receive life-saving food assistance thanks to the UK's support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar urgent aid.

The UK also played a critical role in convening the recent 'UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable' which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate

levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus to the drought and importantly it mobilised roughly US\$400 million in new funding.

Countries across the Horn of Africa will also be impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine due to the increase in the costs of food commodities and fuel on global markets. We are exploring how we can help lessen the impact of rising food prices caused by the war in Ukraine on vulnerable communities in East Africa. This includes assessing alternate markets for procurement of food supplies and working with UN partners to promote effective prioritisation so assistance reaches the most needy.

Our response to the drought builds on long-established resilience building programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Programme, which has provided 600,000 people in drought prone areas with regular financial assistance. In Ethiopia, the UK funded Productive Safety Net Programme has benefitted some 8 million people via financial welfare provision and community public works projects. In Somalia the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the drought in the East and Horn of Africa; and what steps they are taking to increase humanitarian assistance for the region. [HL7]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: East Africa is experiencing one of its most severe droughts in history with more than 15 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, according to the UN, assessed to be acutely food insecure. Needs are particularly grave in Somalia where an estimated 81,000 people are now experiencing catastrophic famine-like conditions. A fourth consecutive - and unprecedented - season of failed rains is pushing millions of people to the brink and is contributing to growing water scarcity, alarming rates of malnutrition and huge numbers of livestock deaths.

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The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

East Africa: Food

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the rising global food prices caused by the war in Ukraine do not exacerbate food insecurity in the East and Horn of Africa. [HL8]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 to support communities affected by drought plus flooding and conflict the UK has provided £72.25 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. For example, in Kenya to respond to the ongoing drought, 26,000 children will receive life-saving food assistance thanks to the UK's support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar urgent aid.

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The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current state of the truce between armed groups within Tigray and the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia; and what steps they plan to take, if any, to increase pressure on the government of Eritrea to withdraw its forces from Ethiopia. [HL183]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We welcome the truce between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and their commitment to scale-up the delivery of life-saving aid to Tigray. It is imperative that access is facilitated without delay. The UK is committed to working with the Government of Ethiopia and authorities in Afar and Tigray to expand aid deliveries to areas affected by the conflict and to promote long-term peace and security. We encourage the TPLF to engage constructively with the Government of Ethiopia for the good of civilians across the region. A return to conflict would have devastating impacts.

Troops from Eritrea have caused significant suffering in Tigray and they have committed abuses which may constitute war crimes. Eritrean troops should withdraw fully from Ethiopia. The UK's Ambassador in Asmara has underlined this point to the Government of Eritrea.

Food Banks: Advisory Services

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have plans to provide grants to those food banks that are providing advice services to persons needing their help. [HL75]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation or funding.

Food Poverty

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Trussell Trust on 27 April that over 2 million people in the UK relied on food parcels in 2021/22 in order to prevent hunger and malnutrition; and whether they are developing policies to meet both short-term and long-term food needs. [HL74]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No such assessment has been made.

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation. There is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage at a constituency or national level.

Food Supply

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on international food markets; and what steps they intend to take to ameliorate that impact. [HL11]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is leading to further steep price rises in commodity markets, exacerbating the already deeply worrying deterioration in global food security. Even before the war, almost 1 billion people in 92 countries did not have enough food to eat on any given day, and 55 countries were already in acute hunger crises, emergency or famine conditions.

We know from the last crisis that the most immediate way to contain prices is to keep trade flowing. The UK has led a statement at the WTO, supported by nearly 60 countries, including a commitment by signatories to keep their food and agricultural markets open, predictable and transparent. We have announced a package of emergency humanitarian assistance to address critical rising food insecurity in the Horn of Africa and in Yemen and have pledged £286 million to meet needs in Afghanistan. Over the next 3 years, we will direct £3 billion to the most vulnerable countries and people to help them recover from crises. With our G7 allies, we support Germany's proposal for a Global Alliance on Food Security, to help scale up a rapid, needs-based coordinated response in a way that avoids a fragmented global response.

Forests: Conservation

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to tackle global deforestation. [HL91]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK continues to take a leading role in working with global partners to halt and reverse forest loss. At COP26, the UK

led the way in securing an agreement from over 140 world leaders, representing over 90% of the world's forests, to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 under the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. This was backed by almost £14 billion of public and private funding, including \$1.5 billion to protect the forests of the Congo Basin, an area of critical importance to global efforts to address climate change.

In February 2021, the UK and Indonesia established the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, bringing together major producer and consumer countries of agricultural commodities to protect forests while promoting development and trade. At COP26, 28 governments including Indonesia, Colombia, Brazil, Ghana, the EU, UK and USA launched the FACT Roadmap, committing to advance sustainable production and trade, and outlining actions to incentivise sustainability, support smallholder farmers, improve transparency of supply chains and drive innovation.

The UK has introduced ambitious due diligence legislation through the Environment Act to help tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. This new law is one part of a wider package of measures to improve the sustainability of our supply chains and will contribute to global efforts to protect forests and other ecosystems. It will make it illegal for larger businesses operating in the UK to use key forest risk commodities produced on land illegally occupied or used.

We have also doubled our international climate finance to £11.6 billion, of which at least £3 billion will be spent on nature, including solutions that protect, restore and sustainably manage forests. FCDO, BEIS and Defra share the forests portfolio which aims to specifically reduce emissions from deforestation and land use change and help forest communities adapt to climate change through sustainable farming and land use practices.

High Speed 2 Line: Euston Station

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement by HS2 that spoil and materials for the construction of Euston station will be moved by road, what assessment they have made of how this complies with their response to the Select Committee on the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill (Session 2016-17, Cm Paper 9396) and their "overarching commitment to continue to seek to maximise, as far as reasonably practicable, the amount of material that can be moved by rail". [HL23]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: No decisions have been made in relation to the removal of spoil and material from Euston by rail.

As reported in the October 2021 HS2 6-monthly report to Parliament, in response to a recommendation from the Oakervee Review about looking into the efficiency of the

Euston station, the move to a smaller, simpler 10-platform station design at Euston has been confirmed.

Following the move to the more affordable 10 platform station design, the original plans for the removal of a proportion of construction spoil by rail are no longer possible. In response, HS2 Ltd has been working, in close liaison with colleagues from Network Rail, to consider alternative options for how to remove spoil from the construction of HS2's Euston station and how it can minimise impacts. The outcomes of this work will be reported to the Euston Partnership Board, which has been established to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders at Euston, for consideration. HS2 Ltd will continue to use reasonable endeavours to maximise the use of material by rail and reduce the effect on local communities.

Hikvision: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) reports that the government of the USA is considering imposing sanctions on the Chinese company Hikvision, and (2) whether restrictions on Hikvision imposed by that government have any effect on that company's operations in the UK. [HL6]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: US sanctions are a matter for the US Government, and it remains our position not to speculate about future sanctions or their potential impact. We continue to make clear our deep concerns about the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang, including the use of mass surveillance and the technology used to facilitate it.

Horn of Africa: Droughts

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government who represented the UK at the Horn of Africa Drought Conference on 26 April; and what financial pledge they made at the Conference on behalf of the UK. [HL12]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK's Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford MP, represented the UK at the Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable on 26 April, and announced a £25 million package of support for Somalia. Senior officials also attended the event including the UK's Envoy for the Red Sea and Horn of Africa as well as the UK's Development Director for Somalia.

The UK also played a critical role in convening the recent 'UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable' which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus to the drought and importantly it mobilised roughly US\$400 million in new funding.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide humanitarian assistance to the 5.7 million children in the Horn of Africa who are expected to suffer acute malnourishment by June this year as a result of the ongoing drought. [HL9]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 to support communities affected by drought plus flooding and conflict the UK has provided £72.25 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. For example, in Kenya to respond to the ongoing drought, 26,000 children will receive life-saving food assistance thanks to the UK's support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar urgent aid.

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The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

Housing: Building Alterations*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to subject conversions and repairs on existing buildings to zero-rated VAT in-line with the VAT regime for new builds. [HL97]

Baroness Penn: The Government currently maintains a zero-rate of VAT on the construction of new build residential properties. This is to incentivise their construction and provide a lower burden of tax for purchasers of new homes.

Renovation and conversion costs are also eligible for the 5 per cent reduced rate of VAT, providing conditions are met. This includes conversions of buildings from one residential use to another, conversions from commercial to residential use, and the renovation of properties that have been empty for two years or more prior to the renovation work.

Expanding these reliefs to include all conversions and repairs would cost approximately £3.75 billion per year and would require reductions in spending or increasing taxes elsewhere. While all taxes are kept under review, the Government has no plans to review the VAT treatment of conversions and repairs on existing buildings at this time.

Infosys: Contracts*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which public sector contracts have been awarded to Infosys in the last five years for which figures are available; and what was the cost to the taxpayer of each of those contracts. [HL255]

Baroness Penn: HM Treasury does not hold contractual data for other departments, but it can confirm that it has not awarded any contracts to Infosys in that timeframe.

Italy: Russia*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Italy about reports that, despite agreed sanctions, 13 major Italian companies are still trading with Russia. [HL76]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not aware of evidence that Italian companies are trading with Russia in breach of sanctions. If anyone has such evidence, they should share it without delay with the Italian authorities, who are committed to strictly enforcing sanctions. We continue to work closely with Italy, including through the G7, as we coordinate international sanctions in response to Putin's illegal invasion. We understand that the Italian Government has already frozen over 900 million euros worth of Russian assets subject to sanctions.

Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to replace the fuel duty with a levy that charges motorists based on the miles they drive. [HL280]

Baroness Penn: The government has committed to ensuring that motoring tax revenues keep pace with the changes brought about by the switch to electric vehicles, whilst keeping the transition affordable for consumers.

All taxes are kept under review.

Natural Gas: Continental Shelf

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to encourage, and (2) to secure, investment in UK Continental Shelf gas fields (a) to expand production, and (b) to strengthen security of energy supply. [HL89]

Lord Callanan: On 14 March, my rt. hon. Friend the Prime Minister hosted a roundtable of leaders in the UK's offshore oil and gas industry to discuss domestic energy security, increasing investment in the North Sea oil and gas industry and boosting supply of domestic gas.

The North Sea Transition Authority plans to launch another licensing round in the autumn, taking into account the forthcoming climate compatibility checkpoint.

Nature Conservation

Asked by The Earl of Leicester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in setting up the Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership announced at COP26; and what the membership of the Partnership will be. [HL81]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: I am pleased to confirm that the first meeting of the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership (the Partnership) was held on 4 May 2022.

The Partnership will advance UK Administrations' shared commitment to work together to progress the evidence base on blue carbon habitats in the UK, and our shared interest in protecting and restoring blue carbon habitats as a nature-based solution. Therefore, the membership includes representatives of the UK Government and all Devolved Administrations.

North Korea: Nuclear Weapons

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister has spoken to the incoming President of South Korea, President Yoon Suk-yeol; and whether (1) he, or (2) any other member, of the government has discussed with the President the threat of a new North Korean nuclear weapons doctrine. [HL86]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister spoke to President-elect Yoon on 14 March to congratulate him on his election win. They briefly discussed a number of topics, including the DPRK. Minister Milling attended President Yoon's inauguration as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy. She met with

President Yoon on 9 May and reaffirmed the UK's concerns about DPRK destabilising activity and our commitment to peace in the Korean peninsula.

The UK works closely with our partners to urge North Korea to return to dialogue and take credible steps towards denuclearisation in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

PPE Medpro

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Cabinet Office received any declaration of interests by Baroness Mone or Doug Barrowman regarding their links to PPE Medpro during the COVID-19 PPE procurement process. [HL197]

Lord True: It would not be appropriate for the Government to comment further while the National Crime Agency investigation is ongoing.

Prison Sentences

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar on 4 April (HL7159) which said there would be greater ministerial scrutiny of the moves of indeterminate sentence prisoners to open conditions", whether this policy has already been put into effect and, if so, from what date; if the policy has not been put into effect, on what date it will come into force; which minister will be charged with undertaking the scrutiny referred to; what criteria will determine which cases are considered; against what criteria they will assess the case for a move to open conditions, and if these will differ from the criteria currently applied by officials; and what documentation the minister will receive and consider in order to reach a decision in the cases they consider personally. [HL88]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Following a decision by the Deputy Prime Minister last year, there will now be greater scrutiny of Parole Board recommendations on open prison moves. The test for considering a recommendation for open conditions for Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISPs) will change, and I will write to the noble Lord in due course to provide an update.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public and it remains the case that the independent Parole Board will grant those serving indeterminate sentences release only once they have demonstrated they will no longer pose a significant risk to the public.

Productivity: Rural Areas

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to close the 18 per cent productivity gap in rural areas. [HL98]

Lord Benyon: Latest statistics show rural areas in England contributed over £260 billion to our economy in 2019. There are over half a million businesses registered in rural areas.

There are many successful rural businesses, providing high levels of employment, and vital supply chains. However, we know that productivity in some rural areas has fallen behind other parts of the country.

We are determined to help rural areas fulfil their full economic potential. The Government is committed to helping rural communities and businesses as we level up every region and nation of the UK, boosting productivity and spreading opportunity. We have announced over £2.6 billion through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Defra will set out later this year its plans to replace EU funding for LEADER and the growth programme elements of the Rural Development Programme for England and is working closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to make sure there are synergies with UKSPF, while reflecting rural needs.

We are already providing funding to put in place the infrastructure that rural areas need to boost their potential. We are investing £5 billion so hard-to-reach areas can get gigabit speeds and have already upgraded 600,000 premises. The Government-led £1 billion Shared Rural Network will also roll out fast and reliable 4G coverage to 95 per cent of UK landmass.

Public Expenditure: Wales

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the Welsh Government concerning the financial settlement for 2022–23 in meeting the statutory responsibilities of that government to provide public services in Wales. [HL117]

Baroness Penn: Spending Review 2021 set the largest annual block grants, in real terms, of any spending review settlement since the devolution Acts in 1998. The Welsh Government is receiving an average of £2.5bn per year through the Barnett formula on top of £15.9bn annual baseline, enabling further investment across Wales in areas such as schools, housing, transport, health and social care. This also means the Welsh Government's funding per person is around 20% higher than equivalent UK Government funding in England.

It is for the Welsh Government to allocate their funding in devolved areas as they see fit. The Welsh Government will take their own decisions on managing and investing available resources, reflecting their priorities and local circumstances, and they are accountable to the Senedd for these decisions.

The Welsh Government and HM Treasury maintain a regular dialogue throughout the year giving the Welsh Government opportunity to discuss any issues related to the financial settlement for 2022–23.

Queen's Guards: Uniforms

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to fulfil their commitment to switch to faux fur for the ceremonial caps worn by the Queen's Guard now that a suitable faux fur is available. [HL78]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lady to the answer my Hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin) gave to Question 121824 on 21 February 2022 in the House of Commons.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Queens Guards: Uniforms [UIN 121824 (1).docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-10/HL78>

Refugees: Finance

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many refugee centres have stopped the £35 weekly allowance to refugees; for what duration; and what were the reasons for this. [HL93]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Neither the Home Office, nor its accommodation providers, have stopped paying Asylum Support to those who are entitled to it.

Road Traffic Offences: Mobile Phones

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the evidence to support their decision to reject the Commons Transport Select Committee's recommendation to explore options for extending the ban on driving while using a mobile phone to include the use of hands-free devices, as made in its report, Road safety: driving while using a mobile phone (12th Report, Session 2019–21, HC Paper 237). [HL21]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government's response to the Transport Select Committee's recommendation to explore options for banning hands-free use of mobile phones while driving was based on our view that this was a longer-term project with links to automation. The Government's more immediate priority at that time, as stated in the response, was to review the offence of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving with a view to making it more comprehensive. We tightened up the law in March 2022.

Rural Areas: Economic Situation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the APPG for Rural

Business and Rural Powerhouse Levelling Up the Rural Economy: An Inquiry into rural productivity, published on 27 April. [HL100]

Lord Benyon: We welcome this report which highlights some of the key challenges for rural areas.

We are providing funding to put in place the infrastructure that rural areas need. We are investing £5 billion so hard-to-reach areas can get gigabit speeds. Over 67% of UK premises can now access gigabit-capable broadband. The Government-led £1 billion Shared Rural Network will also roll out fast and reliable 4G coverage to 95 per cent of UK landmass.

We are committed to levelling up rural areas, with over £2.6 billion committed nationwide via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spread opportunity.

The Government has made a clear commitment to rural proofing. We will publish the second annual Rural Proofing report following our Levelling Up White Paper which will set out the Government's approach to levelling up in rural areas and targeted approaches where needed to develop rural infrastructure services.

Samuel Abuwe Ajieka

Asked by Baroness Stern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Cameroon about the death in custody of journalist Samuel Abuwe Ajieka, in August 2019. [HL107]

Asked by Baroness Stern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Cameroon to protect journalists at risk of (1) persecution, (2) arbitrary detention, (3) kidnapping, and (4) abuse, for reporting on the continuing conflict in the Anglophone regions; and what steps they will take to provide support for media freedom in that country. [HL108]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Reports of human rights abuses and violations in Cameroon by both armed separatists and the security forces are disturbing, including against activists and journalists. We continue to regularly raise specific human rights concerns with the Government of Cameroon. We have consistently called for an end to arbitrary detentions and media infringements. Journalists should be protected and have the right to report freely without fear of violence. We also continue to urge the Cameroonian Government to remain engaged with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Finally, we are working with international partners, including France and the United States, to raise the North-West and South-West crisis in multilateral fora. At the UN Human Rights Council in September 2021, the UK called for an end to violence and impartial investigations to hold the perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account.

Slavery

Asked by Baroness Greengross

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation they had, if any, with survivors of modern slavery prior to the (1) design, and (2) implementation, of the Recovery Needs Assessment, published on 8 November 2021. [HL59]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is committed to delivering tailored, needs-based support to assist victims of modern slavery in their recovery.

The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) was introduced on 27 September 2019. Throughout the design and implementation of the Recovery Needs Assessment we engaged with our primary support provider, The Salvation Army, and our network of specialist support providers who work closely with victims on a daily basis.

We are committed to embedding survivor voice in our policy development. In 2020 we undertook work engaging with survivors directly, to better understand their recovery needs and their experiences of the National Referral Mechanism.

We are engaging with survivors, as well as the broader sector, on a new government strategy to tackle modern slavery, alongside ongoing work to improve the victim journey through the RNA process.

Social Media: Children

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address the gap in UK child labour and performance regulation which leaves child influencers without protection. [HL109]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to keeping children safe and protected online. We are continuing to explore this issue more broadly across government to identify steps to address it and we will consider the Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport Committee's report carefully.

Soil

Asked by The Earl of Caithness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 24 March (HL6855), when the stakeholder engagement on the outline of the Soil Health Action Plan for England (SHAPE) will start; who will be consulted; and how long the consultation will last. [HL37]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are currently developing the stakeholder engagement plan for the Soil Health Action Plan for England and will confirm timelines in due course.

Solar Power: Batteries

Asked by *Lord Lee of Trafford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the reduction in VAT on solar batteries, what plans they have to rectify the current shortage of such batteries. [HL80]

Lord Callanan: The Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, published in July 2021 by government, jointly with Ofgem, outlines how the Government will deliver the flexibility technologies needed for a net zero system, including actions for removing barriers to the deployment of storage.

Solar Power: Feed-in Tariffs

Asked by *Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the current Feed-In Tariffs paid by energy companies for electricity generated from domestic solar panels; when were these tariffs last revised; and whether they have a policy to raise these in line with current energy costs. [HL36]

Lord Callanan: A breakdown of the current Feed in Tariffs (FIT) for domestic solar can be found on Ofgem's website (copy attached).

The FIT tariff rates are adjusted annually, in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and there are no current plans to adjust this policy.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

FIT Rates RPI Update 22-23 [FIT Rates RPI Update 22-23 - Final.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-10/HL36>

South Sudan: Peace Negotiations

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on 26 April that "conflict and horrendous sexual violence in South Sudan risks undermining commendable recent progress and leadership implementing the 2018 Peace Agreement", what assessment they have made of the stability of the peace in process in South Sudan. [HL16]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement remains the best prospect to a lasting end to conflict in South Sudan. Full implementation is needed to address the instability and humanitarian crisis that affect millions of South Sudanese. However progress is slow. The international community has needed to maintain pressure for the Parties to deliver their commitments.

Recent incidents of violence have put the progress that has been made since 2018 at risk. We have made our concerns clear in Juba and at the UN Security Council. Renewed public commitment by the Parties to the Peace Agreement and progress on unifying the armed forces are welcome. Given the slow pace of implementation and continued incidents of violence we have made clear that South Sudan's leaders must continue to deliver progress. We also urge the region, as guarantors of the Peace Agreement, to use their influence with the Parties to deliver progress.

Statutory Sick Pay

Asked by *Lord Allen of Kensington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the number of people unable to claim statutory sick pay from their employer because their earnings are below the lower earnings level; of these, what proportion are (1) male and (2) female; and what plans, if any, they have to remove the lower earnings limit. [HL1]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As set out in the 2019 "Health is Everyone's Business" consultation, it is estimated that there are around 2 million employees who earn below the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) and are therefore ineligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Of those, approximately 30% are male and 70% are female.

SSP reform, including extending SSP eligibility to those earning below the LEL, was part of the "Health is Everyone's Business" consultation in 2019. In the response to the consultation published in 2021, Government stated the pandemic was not the right time to introduce changes to the rate of SSP or its eligibility criteria as this would have placed an immediate and direct cost on employers at a time where many were struggling.

As we learn to live with Covid-19, the Government is continuing to take a broader look at the role of SSP and is keeping the system under review.

Tanzania: Ethnic Groups

Asked by *Lord Wigley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Tanzania concerning the forced eviction of the Maasai people from their ancestral lands. [HL115]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is aware of the complex issue involving the alleged eviction of Maasai communities in Loliondo and Ngorongoro in northern Tanzania, and the Tanzanian Government's voluntary relocation scheme. Whilst recognising that this issue is an internal Tanzanian matter, the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam has met the Government of Tanzania and other stakeholders locally, including Maasai community leaders and civil society representatives, to better understand the challenges posed to all parties by the current situation. We understand that many people have

expressed concerns on this issue. We will continue to encourage all stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Tenancy Deposit Schemes

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include the lifetime deposit scheme in the Renters' Reform Bill. [HL179]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government's approach to 'lifetime deposits' will be set out in the Private Rented Sector White Paper which will be published shortly.

Ukraine: Military Aid

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government to provide a summary of the military assistance being provided to Ukraine. [HL45]

Baroness Goldie: We are working constantly with the Ukrainian Government to supply defensive military equipment. We have sent over 6,900 anti-tank missiles, including NLAW and Javelin, Air Defence systems including Starstreak anti-air missiles, 1,360 anti-structure munitions and 4.5 tonnes of plastic explosives. We have also sent over 200,000 pieces of non-lethal aid including helmets, body armour, range finders and medical equipment to help sustain the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The UK has confirmed substantial funding for military operations and aid to Ukraine. This includes the Prime Minister's 3 May announcement of funding for electronic warfare equipment, a counter battery radar system, GPS jamming equipment and thousands of night vision devices.

Asked by Lord Coaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether it remains their policy to only provide defensive military assistance to Ukraine. [HL46]

Baroness Goldie: The UK intends to continue to provide military aid to Ukraine so that it can defend itself against Russian aggression. This will include forms of lethal and non-lethal equipment; weapons have been provided to the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the understanding that they will be used in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Universal Credit

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the fall in the real value of Universal Credit over the life of this parliament. [HL56]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The requested estimate is not available as all the data required to undertake such a calculation is not yet available.

Visas: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications for refugee status visas they have received from citizens of Ukraine; how many of these have been granted; and how many applicants have arrived in the UK so far. [HL116]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Statistical information regarding the number of Ukrainian nationals applying for UK visas is regularly released by UKVI. Information on the number of visas granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme which were launched in response to Russia's invasion of can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage, or below.

Total Ukraine Scheme visa applications received: 128,100

Data is as of 17 May 2022 and comprised of:

- Ukraine Family Scheme: 43,700
- Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: 84,400

Total Ukraine Scheme visas issued to people: 107,400

Data is as of 17 May 2022 and comprised of:

- Ukraine Family Scheme visas: 38,700
- Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visas: 68,700

Warm Home Discount Scheme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the Warm Home Discount Scheme to help families with higher than average bills due to disabilities. [HL110]

Lord Callanan: Introducing non-means-tested benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA), into the eligibility criteria would mean that many households on lower incomes and in deeper fuel poverty would be disadvantaged.

Around 62% of PIP and DLA recipients also receive one of the qualifying means-tested benefits and so would be considered low-income under the Core Group 2 criteria. Those households with high energy costs would be eligible for a rebate. Recipients of AA, a pension-age benefit, who claim Pension Credit Guarantee Credit will, in most cases, qualify for a rebate through Core Group 1.

Water: Conservation

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether joint working is taking place between the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Department and HM Treasury to explore bespoke funding pots to enable the roll-out of water saving technologies. [HL222]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are collaborating with BEIS to produce a joint water efficiency label to enable the roll-out of water saving technologies. Water companies are already funding water saving measures for their customers and we continue to work towards delivering our 2021 Written Ministerial Statement on reducing demand for water.

Young People: Cost of Living

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support young people already affected by the cost of living crisis; and what steps they are taking to ensure that a university education does not become increasingly unaffordable for future generations of young people. [HL85]

Baroness Barran: We are freezing maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. By the 2024/25 academic year, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years, meaning reduced debt for students in real terms.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1% this academic year, and we have announced that they will increase by a further 2.3% next year. We are also reforming student loans so new borrowers starting from the 2023/24 academic year onwards will not, under the new terms, be required to repay more than they have borrowed when adjusted for inflation.

The department has secured up to £75 million to deliver a National Scholarship Scheme which will support high achieving disadvantaged students to reach their full potential whilst studying in higher education. This scholarship aims to address the ongoing financial barriers that can restrict high achieving, disadvantaged students from achieving their full academic potential whilst studying in higher education and is in addition to the significant sector interventions already in place.

From 2025, we will revolutionise post-18 education by rolling out the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE). The LLE will help fund both modules and full years of study, in colleges or universities, at a higher technical and degree level. People will be able to upskill and reskill

throughout their lives, at the pace that is right for them. Our consultation on the LLE concluded on the 6 May.

In our guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on funding for the 2021/22 financial year we made clear that the OfS should protect the £256 million allocation for the student premiums to support disadvantaged students and those that need additional help. The 2022/23 financial year guidance to the OfS confirms universities will continue to be able to support students in hardship through the student premium. Ministers' Strategic Priorities Grant guidance letter to the OfS asks that the OfS looks to protect the student premium in cash terms for 2022/23.

Alongside this, the government is also making available discretionary funding of £144 million to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes, including students, to support those ineligible for council tax. The government recognises many households will need support to deal with rising energy costs, and has therefore announced a package of support to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year. This includes a £200 discount on energy bills this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain, which will be paid back automatically over the next five years.

Youth Mobility Scheme: India

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the government of India, regarding the introduction of the Youth Mobility Scheme between that country and the UK. [HL64]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Her Majesty's Government maintains regular dialogue with the Government of India on the introduction of the Youth Mobility Scheme (branded the India Young Professionals Scheme), a joint commitment included in the Migration and Mobility Partnership agreement signed between the UK and India on 4 May 2021. In addition, the agreement established an official channel for dialogue on all matters concerning implementation of the partnership agreement, the Joint Working Group.

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