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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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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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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
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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

Thursday, 26 May 2022

BBC Mid-term Review and Framework Agreement

[HLWS67]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Nadine Dorries MP:

The Government has today published the Terms of Reference for the BBC Mid-Term Review, setting out our plans to review the governance and regulation of the BBC at the midway point of the Royal Charter. This will build on changes to the Framework Agreement with the BBC which the Government has also published today, which add new BBC reform commitments to the agreement across a range of areas.

This is the first time a Government review of the BBC has happened mid-way through the BBC Charter, the 10-year agreement which forms the constitutional basis of the BBC.

The review will, in line with the parameters set out in the Charter, examine the effectiveness of the BBC's governance and the framework by which Ofcom holds the BBC to account in a range of areas. This includes impartiality, accountability and transparency, handling of complaints, and how the BBC represents the breadth of the audience it was established to serve. It will also look at how the BBC and Ofcom assess the market impact and public value of the BBC and how that relates to its role in the UK media landscape.

The review will be undertaken at pace by officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on the basis of targeted engagement with a number of relevant stakeholders. We will seek to complete the review at pace, within 12 months. The Government looks forward to working collaboratively with the BBC, Ofcom and the Devolved Administrations throughout the course of the review.

Alongside the commencement of the Mid-Term Review, the Government is also publishing a set of changes to the Framework Agreement with the BBC. The BBC has agreed a binding legal commitment to a number of ambitious reform proposals. The changes update the existing agreement to ensure it accurately reflects the BBC's plans to deliver the Corporation's Mission and Public Purposes for the remainder of the Charter period. Changes include BBC workforce accessibility targets, increasing the proportion of BBC spend outside of London, and delivering impartiality and editorial standards reform as recommended by the Serota Review. The amendments also require the BBC to report on its progress in its Annual Report and Accounts, supporting

Parliament and the public to hold the BBC to account on delivery.

Alongside this, I have also issued a direction to the BBC requiring them to promote equality of opportunity for people from low socio-economic backgrounds. This aims to ensure the BBC becomes more accessible, and supports the career development and progression of people from low socio-economic backgrounds. Progress against these commitments will be considered as part of the Mid-Term Review where possible.

Child Citizenship Registration Fees

[HLWS61]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration (Kevin Foster) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am laying before the House an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) Regulations 2018, which includes changes in respect of applications made by children seeking to register as British Citizens.

Since 2018, the Home Office has charged a fee of £1,012 to those under the age of 18 who are seeking to register as British citizens under the provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981 (BNA). This fee has been set in line with Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which details the factors the Home Secretary may take into account when setting fees. These include the costs of processing an application, the benefits that are likely to accrue to any person in connection with the application, and the costs of exercising wider immigration and nationality functions.

In keeping with the requirements of this legislative framework, the department has pursued an approach over the last decade of progressively increasing the role fees play in funding the borders and migration system. This self-funding model serves to ensure those who benefit from the system contribute to its effective operation and maintenance, while reducing reliance on taxpayer funding. This in turn helps to ensure the system is able to support the Home Office's priority outcomes, including enabling the legitimate movement of people and goods to support economic prosperity, and tackling illegal migration, removing those with no right to be here and protecting the vulnerable.

However, as Section 71 of the Immigration Act 2014 makes clear, this does not limit the Secretary of State's duty under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act (BCIA) 2009 to make arrangements to ensure immigration and nationality functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. On 18 February 2021, the Court of Appeal, following a case brought by the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC), found that the Secretary of State had breached that duty in setting the fee in Regulations in 2017 and 2018. The Home Secretary

accepted the Court's findings and committed to reviewing the fee in line with her duties under Section 55 of the BCIA 2009.

On 2 February 22 the Supreme Court handed down its judgment on an appeal made by PRCBC in relation to the status of the 2017 and 2018 Regulations that set the fee charged to children to register as British citizens, which held that the regulations were not "ultra vires" and the principles that underpin our fees system had been lawfully applied. Following the Supreme Court's judgment, the Home Secretary was able to conclude her review of the fee and has decided, as a result, to introduce changes in relation to child citizenship fees in order to better facilitate access to citizenship for children who may face difficulties in paying the fee. The changes are the introduction of a fee waiver for child citizenship applications on the basis of affordability, and a fee exception for children who are looked after by a Local Authority. In parallel, the Home Secretary has also decided to maintain the £1,012 fee at its current level, reflecting the substantial number of applications that the department does receive under the current fees regime and the critical role income from these applications plays in supporting the sustainable funding of a borders and migration system that is critical to delivery of the Home Office's key objectives.

By introducing the affordability based waiver, our aim is to ensure the fee does not serve as a significant practical barrier to the acquisition of British citizenship for children who are eligible to apply, where the unaffordability of that fee can be demonstrated. This recognises the particular value British citizenship can have for children who have been born in or spent a substantial part of their lives in the UK, particularly those intangible benefits in terms of the sense of identity and belonging which develop during an individual's formative years, and the impact this can have on their wider wellbeing. At the same time, it reflects our belief that a waiver offers the most effective means of facilitating applications from children for whom affordability of the fee does represent a practical barrier, while balancing against the wider financial impact on the department, relative to other options. In addition, the specific fee exception that is being introduced will serve to relieve an administrative and financial burden from Local Authorities, while enabling the department to work more proactively with them to register children who are eligible and where it is in their best interests.

Further details on how to apply for the waiver and exception will be set out in published guidance, with applications open from 16 June. I hope colleagues will join me in welcoming these changes, which I believe represent a positive step in responding to the concerns raised by members of this House as well as other stakeholders in relation to children's access to British citizenship.

Child Protection

[HLWS64]

Baroness Barran: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Education (Nadhim Zahawi) has made the following statement:

Today, the independent National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) published its National Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.

The murders of Arthur and Star shocked the nation. It is incomprehensible that anyone could harm a child in this way.

I want to thank Annie Hudson, the chair of the Panel, and her team for their hard work and commitment in setting out the learning from these horrific incidents. Arthur and Star's extended families did as much as they could to protect them. Being involved in this process and reflecting on what happened must have been incredibly difficult. I want to thank the children's families for their contributions to today's Review and the insights they have provided whilst grieving for their huge loss. I am also grateful to professionals across Bradford and Solihull for their engagement with the Review. It is only through these open and honest conversations that we can truly learn from what has happened. No Government can legislate for evil, but the Panel's recommendations look to address the problems that they have seen across child protection services, and to make such terrible incidents as rare as possible.

The National Review pays tribute to the many professionals across our country who carry out effective child protection every day, whilst recognising that the child protection system needs to be strengthened. To this end, the Panel has made local recommendations for safeguarding partners in Solihull and Bradford as well as eight national recommendations to strengthen delivery of child protection services. I am committed, with colleagues across this House, to acting on these recommendations. No time can be wasted in learning from these tragedies, and I assure the House that we will do all we can to deliver significant improvements to child protection services.

We have already taken strong action in both Solihull and Bradford to drive up the quality of services. In Solihull, I commissioned a Joint Targeted Area Inspection, served an Improvement Notice, provided additional funding, and deployed an expert Improvement Adviser. Alongside this, the Local Authority has established an Improvement Board to drive progress and ensure multi-agency working between the police, health and the local authority to keep local children as safe as possible.

In Bradford, we are establishing a new Children's Services Trust. Evidence shows trusts can turn around failing services, delivering the care that every child deserves. This approach has worked well elsewhere, notably in Sunderland which improved from Inadequate to Outstanding in three years. Today I am delighted to announce the appointment of Eileen Milner as the Chair of the new Trust. Eileen is an experienced leader with a strong track record and will be working alongside our Commissioner in Bradford, Steve Walker, and the council, to improve these critical services for children and families in Bradford as quickly as possible.

My department's broader investment in local authority intervention and improvement is already paying off: 53% of authorities are now rated good or outstanding, up from 36% five years ago. 42% more children in need are now living in local authorities which are rated Good or Outstanding than in 2017.

Yet system change on a national scale is needed. On Monday, we announced the publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, led by Josh MacAlister. The recommendations align with those outlined in the Independent Review into Children's Social Care and look to address the problems that they have seen across Child Protection services and make such terrible incidents as rare as possible. As the Panel's National Review states, data and information sharing are essential to keeping children safe, and sadly weaknesses in information sharing hindered professionals' understanding of what was happening to Arthur and Star. This is why we will take action to drive forward the Independent Review of Children's Social Care three data and digital priority areas, ensuring local government and partners are in the driving seat of reform. Following the review's recommendation for a data and technology taskforce, we will introduce a new Digital and Data Solutions Fund to help local authorities improve delivery for children and families through technology. More detail will follow later this year on joining up data from across the public sector so that we can increase transparency – both between safeguarding partners and the wider public.

My Ministerial colleagues and I are fully committed to improving the national coordination of child protection. Today we have written to all safeguarding partners to emphasise the important messages contained in the National Review and put out a call to action to take forward these important recommendations. Together with my colleagues across Whitehall, we will also form a new Child Protection Ministerial group, to ensure that safeguarding is championed at the very highest levels. We are also developing further our offer of support to safeguarding partners and will clarify roles and responsibilities through guidance.

This is challenging and complex work and I am sure colleagues across the House will agree with me that the vast majority of those working in child protection go to work each day to try to make things better. No one deserves to be the subject of abuse and harassment, let alone such conscientious, committed and capable

professionals doing all they can to protect children from harm.

I will consider the recommendations from the Panel's National Review and those from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and respond in full before the end of this year when we will publish a bold implementation strategy incorporating the recommendations. I am committed to driving forward progress with those across all safeguarding agencies to protect children, and with colleagues across Parliament as well as those with lived experience of the care system, to deliver reform.

I know that people in Solihull, Bradford and far beyond are deeply troubled by the findings of these Reviews. I want to assure people across the country that this Government will not shirk our duty of keeping children safe, that the lines written in these Reviews will be poured over, and steps will be taken to make sure lessons are learned so that we do not find ourselves here again.

Disclosure Review and Guidelines

[HLWS70]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: My Right Honourable Friend the Attorney General for England and Wales (Suella Braverman QC MP) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I should like to provide details of the Annual Disclosure Review 2021/22 and the corresponding amendments to the Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines.

Following the significant changes to the Disclosure Guidelines, which came into effect January 1st 2021, I committed to undertake an annual review of the Guidelines, which has now concluded, and alterations to the Guidelines premised upon the review's findings have been made.

The vast majority of the Disclosure Guidelines remain as they were when they came into effect on 1st January 2021. The changes have focused on four primary areas:

1) Third Party Material Access – The provisions for accessing third party material are now expressed in a staged manner to aid with their application by busy investigators, disclosure officers and prosecutors. The principles are also strengthened in-line with the dicta of the Court of Appeal in *R v Bater-James & Anors* [2020] EWCA Crim 780. Investigators and prosecutors are also now explicitly required to keep written records of the reasons for making third party material requests, and to balance such requests with the privacy rights of those affected.

2) Material Presumed to Meet the Test for Disclosure – This section of the guidelines has been subject to limited restructuring in order to clarify that material contained in a crime report need only be provided once, via the provision of the crime report, and need not be duplicated where it appears elsewhere. Important clarifications to the practicality of providing large video files, especially body worn videos, have also been made to aid investigators.

3) Defence Engagement – Throughout the Guidelines, guidance as to how and when the defence should provide information to the prosecution has been clarified and where appropriate made more definitive.

4) Redaction Annex – A new annex has been added clarifying how investigators should meet their data protection obligations when providing material to the CPS for the purposes of a charging decision.

The Government is keen to ensure that victims get efficient and effective justice, and that investigations and prosecutions are not impacted by undue or needless burdens being placed on the police. These changes will assist to enhance the efficiency of disclosure and offer clear, rigorous and practical guidance to support this end.

I will place a copy of the updated Disclosure Guidelines in the Libraries of both Houses so that they are accessible to members.

Fraud and Error National Statistics

[HLWS71]

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

The statistics for Fraud and Error in the Benefit System for the financial year ending 2022, were published Thursday 26 May 2022, at 9.30am.

The figures published today confirm the overall rate of fraud and error in 2021/22 was 4.0%, or £8.6bn. This includes a rate of fraudulent overpayments at 3.0% (£6.5bn) and a rate of claimant error at 0.7% (£1.5bn), both of which represent a small but not statistically significant increase. We successfully reduced official error, which has dropped to 0.3% (£0.7bn). This outcome largely reflects the ongoing situation of Covid where some unscrupulous people, including sophisticated organised crime groups, exploited easements we had made to prioritise payments to those who needed help.

We have always been clear that it would take time to root out this fraud. As we said last summer, our expectation for these fraud and error results was that they would be broadly similar to last year as the caseload still contained many cases from the early days of the pandemic. This is still the case. Overall though, we have successfully contained fraud in UC at a time when fraud in society has been increasing, but there is more to do.

That is why we are taking action. Last week, we published our ambitious plan – ‘Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System’ – to prevent, deter and detect fraudsters and protect taxpayers’ money.

The plan sets out how we will deploy 1,400 more staff in our counter-fraud teams, establish a new 2,000-strong team dedicated to reviewing existing Universal Credit claims and develop an enhanced data analytics package to prevent and detect fraud. These initiatives are possible thanks to a 3-year additional investment of £613m, which we estimate will stop £2.1bn of loss in fraud and error

over the next three years. The plan also sets out our intention to bring forward new powers, when Parliamentary time allows, to investigate potential fraud and punish fraudsters.

Today’s release also includes data on the State Pension. The overpayment rate for State Pension was 0.1%, the total underpayment rate was 0.5%. This includes very small value uprating errors, the vast majority being 1 or 2 pence a week. These small errors are the result of an historical issue first identified several decades ago and which has now been recorded in these statistics for the first time. Additionally, a small number of State Pension errors have also been identified relating to incorrect National Insurance records which are administered by HMRC. DWP is supporting HMRC’s investigations into whether these are isolated cases. We will provide a further update when we have more information.

Intergovernmental Relations Quarterly Report

[HLWS66]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Rt Hon Michael Gove MP), has today made the following written statement:

Today, the UK Government published the report of our engagement with the devolved administrations in quarter one of 2022 on GOV.UK.

The report covers a period where we have seen unprecedented events, and gives an insight into the extensive engagement between the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive between 1 January and 31 March 2022. During this reporting period the administrations collaborated on a number of areas, not least the domestic response to the Russia and Ukraine crisis, including the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ resettlement scheme, and continuing work on Covid-19 recovery.

The report is part of the UK Government’s ongoing commitment to transparency of intergovernmental relations to Parliament and the public. The UK Government will continue with publications to demonstrate transparency in intergovernmental relations throughout 2022 and beyond.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Business Plans

[HLWS59]

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

I am proud to announce the publication of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency’s (MCA) business plan for 2022-23. The MCA does vital work to save lives at sea, regulate ship standards and protect the marine environment. The Agency will be playing its part in

encouraging and enabling the industry to move towards zero carbon emissions from shipping and to prepare the way to regulate the safety of autonomous shipping.

The business plan sets out how the Agency will:

- 1) build on its success as one of the world's best performing flag and coastal states, with a modern and progressive approach to how it regulates;
- 2) promote the unlocking of sustainable growth in the maritime economy through support for the new Shipping Concierge Service; and
- 3) continue the provision of its high-quality search and rescue capability, as well as the survey and inspection of ships.

At the international level, the MCA will work alongside other Government departments to represent the UK's interests at the International Maritime Organization.

The work of the MCA will contribute to the success of the Department for Transport's Maritime 2050 strategy and its Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

The business plan will be available on GOV.UK and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

MPs and Peers: Correspondence

[HLWS56]

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

The Government attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence, and recognises that the right of parliamentarians to take up issues with those in government underlines our accountability as ministers.

I am today publishing a report on the performance of departments and agencies based on substantive replies to correspondence received from Members of Parliament and Peers in 2021. While individual departments and agencies are accountable for their own performance, the Cabinet Office is publishing this data to improve transparency and highlight where the government has effectively handled correspondence.

The footnotes to the table provide general background information on how the figures have been compiled or affected by departmental restructuring. We have also now added in a mandatory 20 working day response percentage to enable a more accurate comparison across government.

A copy of this report will be deposited in the libraries of both Houses in Parliament.

National Tutoring Programme

[HLWS68]

Baroness Barran: My Honourable Friend the Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker) has made the following statement:

This update presents the latest performance data for the [National Tutoring Programme](#) the Government has published today.

On 31 March, I announced almost 1.2 million courses had been started by pupils through the Programme since its inception in November 2020. I am now pleased to advise the House our [latest estimates](#) show that, up to 8 May, 1.5 million courses have now started. This represents solid progress towards the Government's ambitious target of delivering up to 6 million courses by the end of the academic year 2023/24. 900,000 of the 1.2 million courses started this year are being delivered through the "School-Led" option by schools using grant funding directly allocated to them.

On 31 March, we also announced from the next academic year we would allocate all funding for tutoring directly to schools. Procurement is currently underway for three new contracts to support schools to engage well-trained, high-quality tutors. The delivery partner(s) who will be selected through three open, competitive exercises will be responsible for quality assurance, offering training and recruiting, and deploying Academic Mentors. The procurement closed on 23 May. We will communicate full details of next year's programme to schools in June and we will announce the successful applicant(s) in mid-July, so that delivery can commence at speed from the start of September. I will update the House on the successful applications in a future Written Ministerial Statement.

Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Programme

[HLWS65]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Hon Friend the Minister for Exports (Mike Freer MP) has today made the following statement:

The Prime Minister has today made three new appointments to his Trade Envoy programme. The appointments are:

The Rt. Hon. Member for Basingstoke (Maria Miller MP) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Canada.

The Rt. Hon. Member for Maldon (John Whittingdale MP) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Republic of Korea.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Hutton of Furness (John Hutton) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey.

The new appointments will extend the total number of Trade Envoys to 40 parliamentarians, covering 80 markets. The role as a Prime Minister's Trade Envoy is unpaid and voluntary with cross-party membership from both Houses. The broad role supports the UK's ambitious trade and investment agenda by championing Global Britain and promoting the UK as a destination of choice for inward investment. They also support the UK's economic recovery through the levelling up agenda, by

helping business take advantage of the opportunities arising in export markets.

Pubs Code and Pubs Code Adjudicator

[HLWS63]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

As part of the second statutory review of the Pubs Code and the Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will today publish a 12-week long invitation to stakeholders with an interest or experience of the operation of the Pubs Code and the performance of the PCA to provide their views and evidence on these matters.

The great British pub lies at the heart of our communities and, as well as providing accessible jobs and prosperity, acts as a hub within local communities and provides space for people to connect and socialise.

There are a range of different types of operating models for pubs and in 2016 legislation came into force in England and Wales to tackle concerns specific to one type of the operating model: the tied pub model in which the tenant agrees to buy beer and other products from their landlord in return for lower rent and other benefits. The Pubs Code etc. Regulations 2016, applying to England and Wales, ensure the fair and lawful treatment of tied pub tenants of large pub-owning businesses. The Pubs Code also provides the tied pub tenant with certain rights, including the right, in certain circumstances, to require the landlord to offer a change to their commercial contract from a tied tenancy, to a free-of-tie tenancy.

The role of the PCA is to investigate and enforce compliance with the Code, provide advice, consult on and issue guidance, and arbitrate disputes in respect of compliance with the Pubs Code. The PCA is appointed by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Secretary of State is required by the legislation to review periodically the operation of the Pubs Code and the performance of the PCA. The first such review, covering the period from when the Pubs Code and the Pubs Code Adjudicator first began to operate in 2016 until 31 March 2019, was completed with the publication of the Secretary of State's report in November 2020, a copy of which was laid before Parliament. This second review covers the 3-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

The invitation to submit comments and evidence can be accessed through the Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pubs-code-and-pubs-code-adjudicator-invitation-for-views-on-the-second-statutory-review-2019-to-2022> and stakeholders have until 17 August 2022 to respond. A report on the findings of the review will be published as soon as

practicable and laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State.

The Terms of Reference for the second statutory review of the Pubs Code and the PCA have today been placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2021

[HLWS57]

Baroness Goldie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a report into the condition of the Reserves and delivery of the Future Reserves 2020 programme compiled by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations External Scrutiny Team and a copy of my response to the report. I am most grateful to the Team for their work and I look forward to receiving their future reports. Defence is considering a number of ideas about the possible further development of the Reserve Forces and the EST's reports can provide useful information as this consideration continues.

Rugby League World Cup 2021: Contingent Liability

[HLWS62]

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:

I wish to inform the House that, on 26 May 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport laid a departmental Minute recording the government's commitment to underwrite the Rugby League World Cup (rescheduled from 2021 to 15 October - 19 November 2022).

As set out in the Minute, this underwrite would cover up to £10 million, with £4 million ringfenced for increased costs due to Covid-19, and £6 million ringfenced for lost ticketing income due to Covid-19. The Minute also sets out a number of scenarios in which the underwrite can be called upon. The national governing body, the Rugby Football League will be responsible for any other additional costs that exceed the event budget.

When bidding to secure this event in 2016, DCMS agreed to fund £15 million towards the tournament and a further £10 million towards legacy projects to help grow the game at grassroots level. A further £5.6 million was granted from the Sport Survival Package when the tournament had to be postponed due to the pandemic. This underwrite will ensure that we can look forward to hosting a World Cup as planned. It will also support delivery of an event that will drive economic growth in the region and deliver significant benefits against the

government's sporting and wider ambitions, including the Levelling Up agenda.

The government underwrite, therefore, creates a contingent liability for the department in relation to this event of up to £10 million.

A copy of the departmental minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Sale of Chelsea FC

[HLWS69]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Nadine Dorries MP:

I wish to inform the House that on 24 May the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) issued a licence to Chelsea Football Club to allow the sale of Chelsea FC PLC. This will allow ownership to be transferred away from Roman Abramovich, a Designated Person under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The Club will be free from previous operating restrictions imposed by sanctions from the point the new ownership takes effect, and we expect this to take place in a matter of days.

Roman Abramovich was added to the list of individuals sanctioned by the UK Government on 10 March. This listing was made as part of wider government policy to encourage Russia to cease actions destabilising Ukraine or undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine.

The UK asset freeze prohibits anyone subject to UK jurisdiction from dealing with assets which are owned or controlled by Roman Abramovich and forbids persons from making funds or other assets available (directly or indirectly) to him. In time, this would have paralysed Chelsea FC. Without further action from the Government, the Club could not have finished the season and would likely have gone into administration.

The Government recognises the importance of the Club to the Premier League, the football pyramid and the fans. That is why we issued a licence to allow football-related activities to continue on the same day Roman Abramovich was sanctioned. Our actions have deprived Mr Abramovich of any benefit from owning the club while allowing the Men's and Women's team to complete their remaining fixtures for the season.

However, this was not a long-term solution and the Government has always been clear that the Club should be sold before the end of the football season to secure its long-term future. Of course, this was conditional on our assurance that there could be no benefit to any sanctioned individual.

Chelsea FC identified their preferred owner, and after agreeing the conditions of the sale, they applied for a licence to transfer ownership. The Government has assessed the evidence the Club has provided to support

their application and we are satisfied that our conditions have been met and the integrity of the sanctions regime is maintained. OFSI has now issued a licence to enable a sale on that basis. We have worked in coordination with international partners to ensure that relevant licences from other jurisdictions have also been issued.

Now that the Government has issued the licence, we expect the ownership transfer to take place in the coming days subject to Roman Abramovich agreeing to the sale himself. The net proceeds from the sale will be transferred from the buyers to a frozen UK bank account belonging to Fordstam, the holding company owned by Mr Abramovich, which sold the Club. Any onward transfer of money will require further approval from the Government.

Roman Abramovich has made a number of public statements regarding his intention to transfer the proceeds to the victims of the war in Ukraine. We have agreed a Deed of Undertaking in which he commits the proceeds to a charity in a jurisdiction agreed by the Government for the purposes of helping victims of the war in Ukraine. Any future movement of the sale revenue will be assessed in line with sanctions obligations and the position outlined in the Deed. It will be up to the Government to decide whether to license any movement of funds from the frozen account.

A quick sale which respects the integrity of the sanctions regime has always been in the best interests of the Government, the club and the wider football community. This licence will secure the future of this important cultural asset and deliver for the fans while ensuring Roman Abramovich will not benefit.

Strategic Framework for Aviation

[HLWS60]

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

The Government has today published 'Flightpath to the Future' – a strategic framework for the future of aviation, focusing on the next ten years.

This strategic framework highlights Government's continued commitment to the sustainable growth of the aviation sector, recognising the vital importance of aviation to the UK. From supporting economic growth, to creating jobs across the UK, aviation adds huge value to our nation. It also has an essential role to play in the personal value it provides to individuals and businesses, providing connections all around the world.

The aviation sector has faced unprecedented challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, and recovery is an essential part of our plan for the future. In March the UK became the first major economy in the world to remove all Covid-19 related travel measures and restrictions for all passengers entering the UK. This is a really important milestone and marks a turning point for aviation in our journey back to pre-pandemic normality.

The publication of Flightpath to the Future recognises the importance of looking ahead for aviation. It takes into account the importance of supporting sector recovery, whilst also recognising the range of opportunities and challenges facing aviation over the medium term. From making the most of Brexit and trade opportunities, to embracing new technologies, and decarbonising the sector, the next ten years will play a defining role in the future of UK aviation.

Flightpath to the Future sets out the Government's key priorities, including a 10-point plan for delivery. The 10-point plan focuses on how we can achieve our ambition of creating a modern, innovative and efficient sector that is fit for the future. The Government is committed to working closely with the aviation sector to build back better and greener than ever before, with an ambition of retaining our position as one of the strongest aviation sectors in the world.

An essential aspect of this will be close engagement between the Government and the sector, building on positive engagement that has been fundamental during the pandemic. Alongside publishing the Flightpath to the Future, the Government is therefore also launching an Aviation Council, focused on supporting the implementation of the commitments established through this strategic framework. The Council will be jointly chaired by the Minister for Aviation and an industry representative, and will include representatives from across the whole sector, a range of Government departments and the Devolved Administrations.

Our 10-point plan for the future of UK aviation covers the following areas:

Enhancing global impact for sustainable recovery

1. Recover, learn lessons from the pandemic and sustainably grow the sector.
2. Enhance the UK's global aviation impact and leadership.
3. Support growth in airport capacity where it is justified, ensuring that capacity is used in a way that delivers for the UK.

Embracing innovation for a sustainable future

4. Put the sector on course to achieve Jet Zero by 2050.
5. Capture the potential of new technology and its uses.

Realising benefits for the UK

6. Unlock local benefits and level up.
7. Unleash the potential of the next generation of aviation professionals.
8. Make the UK the best place in the world for General Aviation.

Delivering for users

9. Improve the consumer experience.

10. Retain our world leading record on security and safety with a world leading regulator.

Implementing the 10-point plan will play an important role in meeting Government and sector ambitions for the future of aviation. The Government recognises that the sector is currently in the early stages of recovery, and there are a number of challenges ahead. We will work hand in hand with the whole aviation sector to implement the commitments set out in the Flightpath and ensure a bright future for UK aviation.

We have a real opportunity to not only see passenger demand return, and the sector to flourish again, but also to modernise and create a greener, more sustainable sector for the future. A sector that leads the way internationally on key issues be that learning lessons from the pandemic, delivering Jet Zero, or embracing the opportunities presented by aviation innovation. The UK will continue to have one of the strongest aviation sectors internationally, including always putting consumers first, and having the safest and most secure sector in the world.

I have deposited copies of Flightpath to the Future in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Union Connectivity Review: Update

[HLWS58]

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

The UK Government is grateful to Sir Peter Hendy for his Union Connectivity Review. We are considering his recommendations carefully, and have been working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive and key stakeholders, to identify the solutions that work best for the people of the UK. We expect to publish the UK Government's response later this year.

Several of the Union Connectivity Review recommendations concern ongoing projects, which may be impacted by the Union Connectivity Review response. The A1 Morpeth to Ellingham scheme is one such case, as it relates to Sir Peter's recommendation for a multimodal study of the East Coast Corridor to identify the best opportunities for improvement. We therefore propose to consider how best to align the future progression of the scheme with our consideration of this recommendation and the outcome of any study that may be proposed.

Written Answers

Thursday, 26 May 2022

Africa: Food Supply

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, with international partners to prevent an increase in acute food insecurity in Africa as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. [HL209]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Even before the conflict in Ukraine, 273 million people needed humanitarian assistance globally and 43 million people were one step from famine. Russia's invasion is further accelerating this trend through its impact on food, fuel, and fertiliser prices. The UK is stepping up to respond. We have announced a package of emergency humanitarian assistance to address rising food insecurity in Africa, and provided £72.25 million for crises in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. At the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings in April, the UK and our partners secured the largest ever financial commitment from the World Bank of \$170 billion over the next 15 months to support countries impacted by the Russian invasion. We are also calling for all countries to keep food trade flowing; we know from the last global food crisis that this is the best way to keep prices down.

Agriculture: Pollution Control

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards offering 100 per cent coverage for the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme across all farms in England. [HL190]

Lord Benyon: The expansion of Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) to 100% coverage of England was agreed in March 2021 to provide advice and support for farmers and land managers to take action for water, air and flood management priorities. Over the past 12 months CSF has expanded to cover priority areas of England (86% coverage) including the recruitment of new Natural England farm advisers, with plans in place to extend CSF coverage to 100% of England by April 2023.

Agriculture: Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the acreage of permanent pasture ploughed up as a result of the Renewable Heat Initiative in England. [HL189]

Lord Callanan: The Government has not undertaken an assessment and does not hold this information.

Asylum: Detainees

Asked by *Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers were detained on (1) 30 April, and (2) the same day in each of the previous three months. [HL133]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release', which can be found on Gov.uk. The number of people in detention at the end of each year is broken down by asylum and non-asylum in table Det_01, of the 'Detention summary tables', which can also be found attached. The latest data goes up to the end of December 2021. Data for January to March 2022 will be published on the 26 May 2022.

Asylum-related cases refer to those where there has been an asylum claim at some stage prior or during detention. This will include asylum seekers whose asylum claims have been refused, and who have exhausted any rights of appeal, those returned under third country provisions, as well as those granted asylum/protection, but detained for other reasons (such as criminality).

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Det_01 [detention-summary-dec-2021-tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-11/HL133>

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of paragraph 9.1.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Rwanda for an asylum partnership arrangement signed in Kigali on 13 April, what equivalent standard applies in Rwanda for the Home Office requirement that interpreters are members of the Institute of Translating and Interpreting, The Chartered Institute of Linguists, or if with a company, then the latter is a member of the Association of Translation Companies. [HL230]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of paragraph 9.1.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Rwanda for an asylum partnership arrangement, what is Rwandan law and practice for the provision of independent legal assistance of asylum seekers; and what assessment they have made of the capacity of the legal profession within Rwanda to take on the additional work relating to the partnership. [HL231]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of paragraph 9.1.3 of the Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Rwanda for an asylum partnership arrangement, what assessment they have made of the capacity of Rwanda to expand its appeals process. [HL232]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of paragraph 11 of the Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Rwanda for an asylum partnership arrangement, under what circumstances they could make a request to the government of Rwanda to make a Relocated Individual available for return to the UK. [HL233]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government of Rwanda will process asylum claims in line with its obligations under the Refugee Convention and Rwandan law, both in terms of the provision of translators where needed and access to legal assistance. While Rwanda will accept responsibility for the relocated individuals and processing them under their asylum process, the UK is providing funding to support asylum processing and wider support costs. This includes safe and clean accommodation, food, healthcare and amenities. They will have full access to translators and will be able to access legal support to appeal decisions in Rwanda's courts. The independent Monitoring Committee will monitor the entire relocation process from the beginning including the initial screening to relocation and settlement in Rwanda.

Should the United Kingdom be legally obliged to facilitate a relocated individual's return, the Memorandum of Understanding provides that Rwanda will take all reasonable steps in accordance with international human rights standards to facilitate this.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government how members of the Monitoring Committee for the Migration and Economic Partnership Understanding with Rwanda will be appointed; how their independence will be assured; and what consultation will be undertaken for their appointment. [HL234]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As set out in paragraph 15 of the Memorandum of Understanding (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. More details on this will be set out in due course.

CAFCASS and Probation Service*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of current workload of staff in (1) the Probation Service; and (2) the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. [HL207]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: (1) As of March 2022, 96% of Probation staff (Probation Officers and Probation Service Officers) hold less than 50 cases, with an average caseload of 34 (rounded down to nearest full number). The average caseload for the 4% who hold over 50 cases is 59. The Probation Service is committed to providing a quality service in order to achieve its mission of protecting the public, supporting victims and reducing reoffending. We recruited a total of 1,007 trainees (against a target of 1000) in 2020/21 and 1,522 trainee probation officers (against a target of 1,500) in 2021/2022. Further recruitment is planned in 2022/23. This will ensure that the Service has the resources it needs.

(2) The number of open active children's cases within Cafcass was 34,834 in May 2022. This has reduced from 38,178 in April 2021, but still represents an increase of 15.1% on pre-pandemic levels. Officials at the Ministry of Justice are in regular contact with Cafcass management to ensure it has the resources it needs to manage staff workloads. For 2022/23, the Ministry of Justice has provided Cafcass with a budget increase of £8.4m from its 2021/22 starting position. All public law work continues to be allocated in Cafcass in the usual way and within established timescales.

Cash Dispensing*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the withdrawal of ATMs ahead of the proposed powers in the Financial Services and Markets Bill coming into effect. [HL359]

Baroness Penn: The Government recognises that cash remains an important part of daily life for millions of people across the UK, and remains committed to legislating to protect access to cash.

LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) has commitments to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs and is held to account against these commitments by the Payment Systems Regulator. LINK has committed to protect free-to-use ATMs more than one kilometre away from the next nearest free ATM or Post Office, and free access to cash on high streets (where there is a cluster of five or more retailers) that do not have a free-to-use ATM or a Post Office counter within one kilometre. Furthermore, LINK operates a scheme to enable communities with poor access to cash to request an ATM.

The Government intends to introduce legislation on cash access as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill when Parliamentary time allows. The Government recently published a summary of responses to the Access to Cash consultation, setting out the government's planned approach to legislating for access to cash.

China: Pacific Ocean Islands

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Australia to ensure an integrated response to the growing influence of the People's Republic of China in the South Pacific. [HL195]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in the Integrated Review (March 2021), the UK is committed to and strategically focussed on the Indo-Pacific region. The UK's close partnership with Australia is an important part of this Indo-Pacific focus. As champions of freedom and democracy, the UK and Australia work together to defend our values, in line with the UK's commitment to build a 'network of liberty'. The Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary visited Australia in January 2022 for talks to strengthen economic, diplomatic and security ties. UK officials also regularly meet their Australian counterparts to discuss a wide range of topics, including supporting the development needs of countries in the Pacific.

China: Papua New Guinea

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the People's Republic of China's involvement in Papua New Guinea. [HL194]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in the Integrated Review (March 2021), the UK is committed to and strategically focussed on the Indo-Pacific region. The UK and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have shared priorities including protecting the environment, security, stability, economic development and tackling climate change. Following PNG's request for assistance, the UK sent an Emergency Medical Team in October 2021, which provided clinical care support to PNG's healthcare workers.

China: Solomon Islands

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the security pact between the People's Republic of China and the Solomon Islands. [HL193]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As set out in the Integrated Review (March 2021), the UK is committed to and strategically focussed on the Indo-Pacific region. As a longstanding partner and friend, the UK works to support peace and prosperity for the people of Solomon Islands

and across the Pacific region. Our recent deployment of a UK Emergency Medical Team demonstrates our commitment to Solomon Islands.

Dormant Assets Scheme

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide more capital via the Dormant Assets Act 2022. [HL354]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Dormant Assets Act 2022 delivers on Her Majesty's Government's commitment to expand the scheme. Over time, this will unlock an estimated £880 million for good causes across the UK.

Her Majesty's Government will launch a public consultation this summer on the social and/or environmental focus of the English portion. This is an opportunity to consider how future funds can be distributed in England.

The Act provides the power to expand the scheme without the need for primary legislation. This will enable Her Majesty's Government to respond more rapidly to opportunities to broaden the pool of eligible assets as they arise, alongside experience of managing dormant assets which will build over time.

Education: International Cooperation

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to improve global access to education. [HL367]

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to form partnerships to support the delivery of global education programmes. [HL369]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The new International Development Strategy and the 2021 Girls' Education Action Plan set out the FCDO's approach to achieving our global targets of 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age ten, by 2026. This includes using our diplomatic network to scale up efforts to get girls into school and learning; maximising the effectiveness and accountability of international education funds; and delivering high-quality bilateral education programmes. In 2021, as G7 President and hosts of the Global Education Summit and COP26, we led the world in prioritising girls' education in the global Covid recovery.

This year we launched the Girls' Education Skills Partnership with the private sector to provide one million adolescent girls and young women with skills and training. We will use the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda in June to encourage more countries to sign the Heads of State declaration on education finance. We are working closely with partners

ahead of the UN Secretary General's Transforming Education Summit in September to galvanise action for those most in need. We are building a new Coalition on Learning with like-minded partners to prioritise foundational learning for all as part of Covid recovery, and beyond.

*Asked by **The Earl of Dundee***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential of online learning platforms to improve global access to education; and which platforms they consider most appropriate for international use. [HL368]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Online learning platforms can certainly support children's learning. There are a wide variety of platforms available, and the best one for any context will depend on the availability of infrastructure and, importantly, student, teacher, and content readiness in each country.

Well-informed use of education technology (EdTech) has the potential to transform education systems for the most marginalised. Its use was particularly important during the Covid pandemic, when children and their teachers were forced to move to online education. However, EdTech is not a silver bullet and many interventions, particularly those focused on buying new hardware, have failed because of poor support to teachers and children beyond the hardware or weak fit with the specific context. More robust research is needed on impact, cost-effectiveness, and the equity implications of EdTech. Together with the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the FCDO supports the EdTech Hub with £22 million of UK aid for research to help decision-makers take evidence-based decisions on EdTech. UK research has already helped over 85 million learners.

Energy Company Obligation

*Asked by **Lord Oates***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of including all energy-saving technologies that reduce the cost of heating or hot water into the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). [HL221]

Lord Callanan: The targets for the current iteration of ECO, ECO4, are based on the Home Heating and Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) powers set out in the Electricity Act 1989, Section 41B, and Gas Act 1986, Section 33BD. This allows Government to set a target for the promotion of measures for reducing the cost to individuals of heating their homes. Therefore, measures which do not result in space heating savings are not within scope.

ECO4 is focused on installing energy-efficiency and heating measures in lower income and otherwise vulnerable households across Great Britain. The scheme will run from 2022 to 2026 and is valued at £1 billion a

year. This is predicted to help an extra 450,000 families with green measures that reduce the cost of heating such as insulation.

Exports: Agricultural Products

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the National Farmers Union Growing our agri-food exports to 2030 and beyond, published on 27 April, what plans they have to increase the number of agri-food experts in British embassies located in target markets for future free trade agreements. [HL167]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Department for International Trade has staff in more than 100 markets across the world who are helping British businesses in the agriculture, food, and drink sector to trade with the world.

HM Government additionally has a dedicated agricultural attaché in the United Arab Emirates, which is a member of the Gulf Co-operation Council, with whom we aim to begin negotiations for a free trade agreement soon. We aim to have a total of ten agricultural attachés in growth markets across North and South America, Africa and Asia by the end of 2022.

Immunosuppression: Health Services

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of UK care standards for immunocompromised patients; what assessment they have made of these in comparison to international standards; and what assessment they have made of the failure to provide pre-exposure prophylactic treatments to eligible patients. [HL216]

Lord Kamall: The United Kingdom has made treatments available to reduce the risk of hospitalisation and death for patients whose immune system means they are at the highest risk from Covid-19. Eligible patients who test positive for Covid-19 will be contacted by a clinician from a Covid Medicines Delivery Unit to discuss treatment suitability. The clinically eligible cohorts have been determined by an independent expert group commissioned by the Department and included in a clinical policy agreed by the UK Chief Medical Officers.

The Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce engages with other nations to share learning on the use, deployment and evaluation of therapeutics and antivirals. This includes monitoring whether and how other countries are using pre-exposure prophylactic treatments which may inform our policy on its use.

The Department is currently evaluating prophylaxis through the efficacy of the drug Evusheld. Before a decision is made to introduce a prophylactic treatment, it must be clinically cost effective and demonstrate sufficient efficacy against Omicron and new variants. However, no specific assessment has been made of the failure to provide such treatments. The Therapeutics

Clinical Review Panel provides advice on the most appropriate patient cohorts for new Covid-19 therapies, including preventative treatments. Final clinical policies and eligibility would be proposed by the National Health Service and agreed by the UK Chief Medical Officers.

Islamic State

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government who represented the UK government at the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Marrakesh on Wednesday 11 May; and what conclusions the meeting reached with regard to Coalition action against ISIS in Africa, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. [HL208]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Ambassador to Morocco, Simon Martin, represented the UK government at the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh Ministerial meeting in Marrakesh on Wednesday 11 May. I [Lord Ahmad, Minister for South Asia and Central Asia, North Africa, the United Nations and the Commonwealth] was unable to attend. The conclusions regarding Coalition action against Daesh in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Africa are available in the Ministerial Communique. This is available at <https://theglobalcoalition.org/en/communique-global-coalition-morocco/>.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following recent local council elections, what assessment they have made of the (1) advantages, and (2) disadvantages, of changing to a proportional system. [HL206]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government was elected on a manifesto which included a commitment to continue to support use of the First Past the Post voting system. The Government believes the First Past the Post system is a robust and secure way of electing mayors and local councillors in England and provides for direct local accountability. It ensures a clear link between elected representatives and their electors in a manner that other voting systems may not.

Mental Illness: Community Care

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support seriously mentally ill people so that they avoid going to prison. [HL180]

Lord Kamall: Liaison and Diversion services operate at police stations and criminal courts in England to identify and assess people with vulnerabilities, such as substance misuse and mental ill-health, to refer them to services and, where appropriate, away from the justice system. Liaison and Diversion services have covered 100% of the population of England since April 2020.

The Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have developed a new protocol to increase the use of community sentence treatment requirements in courts to reduce reoffending. The use of short-term custodial sentences may address the health and social issues of the offender. We have provided £12 million to establish 21 programme sites for mental health treatment requirements.

Pacific Ocean Islands: British Overseas Territories

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the UK's naval capability in supporting British Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories in the South Pacific. [HL196]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is committed to defending the British Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories, in line with our constitutional responsibilities. The Pitcairn Islands are the sole UK Overseas Territory in the Pacific. The Ministry of Defence maintains high-readiness maritime, land and air assets to deter and respond to threats globally, including the appropriate naval capability to support the British Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories. HMS Spey recently visited Pitcairn Island where it delivered Covid-19 vaccines and patrolled the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body how much has been spent to date on the proposed decant of the House of Lords to the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre during the Restoration and Renewal works. [HL296]

Lord Best: From the creation of the Sponsor Body in April 2020 and the Delivery Authority in May 2020 to the end of March 2022, £10.9 million was spent on developing the plans for the proposed decant of the House of Lords to the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre, including design team and project management fees, business case work and surveys.

This figure does not include costs - which cannot be reliably disaggregated - on work outside of the core House of Lords decant project.

Police: Pepper Spray and Stun Guns

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what circumstances police officers are permitted to be in

possession of (1) PAVA spray, and (2) TASER, when they are off duty. [HL202]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Decisions around the equipping of officers are operational matters for Chief Constables.

Prison Officers

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent levels of (1) retention, and (2) cumulative experience, of prison officers. [HL204]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: HMPPS does not have a standard definition of 'retention rates' however we do publish information on leaving rates which can be used as a proxy. The leaving rate is the number of staff who have left the department in the previous 12 months divided by the average number of people in post over the same period of time. Figures for leaving rates to 31 December 2021 are available in published workforce statistics here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2021>.

Figures for leaving rates by grade can be found in the table 11 of the Excel tables accompanying the publication.

The cumulative length of service, in years, held by all Band 3-5 Prison Officer as at 31st December 2021 is 240,501 years, based on a headcount of 23,123 staff or 22,156 Full Time Equivalent. Band 3-5 Officers includes Band 3-4/Prison Officers (incl specialists), Band 4/Supervising Officers, and Band 5/Custodial Managers.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL204_table [HL204 Leaving Rates .xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-12/HL204>

Prisons: Education

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what comparative assessment they have made of the levels of pay for education staff (1) working in prisons, and (2) not working in prisons. [HL205]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Education within the prison setting in England is contracted out and teacher pay, therefore, is a matter for the contract suppliers. There is no requirement in the contracts to agree such matters with the Ministry of Justice.

Providers of contracted services play an important role in the prison estate and we continue to monitor the delivery of Prisoner Education Services to raise prisoners' levels of numeracy, literacy, skills and qualifications with the aim of helping them secure jobs or apprenticeships on their release.

Sequestration of Assets: Russia

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the amount of Russian foreign exchange reserves that are held frozen in the UK. [HL265]

Baroness Penn: The Russian government is unable to access any of their foreign exchange reserves held in the UK due to the measures the UK government have put in place that prevent UK persons from providing financial services for the purposes of foreign exchange and asset management to the Russian Ministry of Finance or Russia's Central Bank.

No formal assessment has been made of the quantum of Russian foreign exchange reserves.

Shireen Abu Akleh

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel and the Palestinian authorities on the need for a full, independent, transparent and accountable investigation into the killing of the Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on 11 May. [HL210]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 11 May, the Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East [Amanda Milling] publicly expressed her sadness upon hearing news of the tragic death of veteran Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and called for a thorough investigation. The Foreign Secretary also made this clear in a statement on 12 May. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv have reiterated the importance of an investigation with the Israeli authorities. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

Sri Lanka: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current political and security situation in Sri Lanka following the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on 10 May. [HL213]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are closely monitoring the political, economic and security situation in Sri Lanka. We encourage a peaceful, democratic, and inclusive approach to resolving the current political and economic challenges. We call on all parties to explore constructive and democratic ways of resolving the current situation.

The UK Government strongly condemns the violence against peaceful protesters in Sri Lanka. Lord Ahmad, called for accountability for those responsible and for the right to protest peacefully to be protected. Fundamental

rights including the right to peaceful protest, must be protected as part of a democratic resolution to current economic & political challenges.

SS Richard Montgomery

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the dangers posed by the explosives on board the wreck of SS Richard Montgomery; whether shortening the masts of the vessel will ensure the level of safety required on a busy waterway; and what assessment they have made as to whether complete removal of the explosives is (1) necessary, and (2) feasible. [HL223]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Managing the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery is a priority for the Department. The wreck is under 24-hour surveillance, and we actively monitor its condition through annual surveys. The results are assessed by an expert group and, following their recommendation, we are progressing a project to investigate removal of the vessel's masts. We will continue to assess the condition of the wreck and consider expert advice in future to ensure any potential risks are minimised.

Supply Chains

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a cross-industry and government-backed task force to assess the resilience of the UK's supply chains. [HL283]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Supply chain resilience is a priority for HM Government. In October, the Prime Minister appointed Sir Dave Lewis to advise on supply chains and identify both immediate improvements and any necessary long-term changes. We are working to secure the supply chains of the future already, including for critical minerals, by working with like-minded nations around the world.

Industry involvement is crucial to enhancing our understanding and the visibility of critical supply chains, and in working to take action to strengthen their resilience. We regularly engage with businesses to better understand vulnerabilities, risks, business impacts and the adaptation measures being taken to improve the resilience of supply chains.

Tuvalu: Climate Change

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to the government of Tuvalu to counter the effects of climate change on those islands. [HL377]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Tuvalu, and other Pacific Island Countries, are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As hosts of COP26, the UK brought together tens of thousands of delegates from 196 countries plus the EU to agree The Glasgow Climate Pact. Keeping global temperature rises below 1.5°C is essential for low lying atoll nations, such as Tuvalu, to cope with the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels.

Most UK aid in the Pacific is delivered through multilateral institutions such as the Green Climate Fund, which currently has two projects under implementation that assist Tuvalu to counter the effects of climate change. The Tuvaluan Coastal Adaptation Project aims to protect Tuvalu from the impact of rising sea levels and increasing cyclone events. The second Green Climate Fund project aims to enhance the climate information services in five Pacific countries, including Tuvalu, and support increased climate-resilient sustainable development.

The UK has also provided £1.2 million in co-funding to the Pacific to establish the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Hub. By supporting the planning and achievement of climate targets in NDCs, the Hub is contributing to sustainable and resilient development and the transition to a net-zero emissions development pathway in the Pacific.

Ukraine: Exports

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to create a safe sea channel for (1) agricultural, and (2) other exports, from Ukraine to the outside world, using such military force as may be necessary. [HL201]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Russia's war against Ukraine is making food insecurity an issue for people everywhere, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable. Russia's blockage of Ukrainian ports and destruction of civilian infrastructure has further exacerbated the dysfunctionality of in global agricultural supply chains and food systems. President Zelensky has called on the international community to take immediate steps to end the Russian blockade and has been followed by repeated calls from the World Food Programme for Russia to allow the re-opening of the ports at Odesa and allow food to flow freely. The UK is working with Ukraine and international partners to find ways, whether by sea or overland, to re-start the export of grain from Ukraine and to the countries that desperately need it. The focus of this effort is on agricultural exports, though it is possible the establishment of a corridor would allow other products to reach global markets. In addition, the UK led a statement on food security at the WTO, supported by nearly 60 countries, committing signatories to keeping their food and agricultural markets open, predictable and transparent by not imposing unjustified trade restrictive measures on agricultural and agri-food products.

Water: Conservation

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of water efficiency measures in helping achieve the government's net zero aims. [HL220]

Lord Callanan: As outlined in the Energy-related Products Policy Framework, the Government estimates 0.9 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent could be saved over Carbon Budget 5 through consumer behaviour change encouraged by a mandatory water label on taps and non-electric showers.

Defra has already committed to mandatory water labelling on taps and non-electric showers, among other products, and is working closely with BEIS officials to explore the inclusion of energy efficiency information on the labels in order to best support consumers to make energy- and money-saving purchases.

The Government will continue to explore the feasibility of other efficiency measures for these products.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Energy-related Products Policy Framework [energy-related-products-policy-framework.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-12/HL220>

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