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Monday
6 June 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

Monday, 6 June 2022

A1 in Northumberland: Development Consent Order

[HLWS75]

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

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State to make this Written Ministerial Statement. This statement confirms that it has been necessary to extend the deadline for a decision for the A1 in Northumberland – Morpeth to Ellingham Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008. The extension is in light of the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 26 May 2022 regarding the Union Connectivity Review [HCWS62](#).

The proposed development comprises the widening of approximately 12.8 miles stretch of the A1 between Morpeth to Ellingham with approximately 9 miles online widening and approximately 3.8 miles of new offline highway. The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority's report on 5 October 2021 and the original deadline for a decision was extended from 5 January 2022 to 5 June 2022 following a Written Ministerial Statement laid on 15 December 2021 to allow for further consideration of environmental matters.

The deadline for a new decision is 5 December 2022.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant development consent for the above application.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body: Chair Appointment

[HLWS73]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence People

and Veterans (Leo Docherty MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce that the Prime Minister has appointed Mr Julian Miller as the next Chair of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body. His appointment will commence on 17 June 2022 and run until 16 June 2025.

The appointment was conducted in accordance with the 2016 Governance Code on Public Appointments.

UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement: Publication of Report Pursuant to Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020

[HLWS74]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP) has today made the following statement:

The Government has, today, laid before Parliament a report on the Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement. The report is required under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020, prior to the agreement being laid before Parliament for formal scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG).

The Government has always been clear that we will not compromise on the UK's high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards in our trade negotiations. This report, which draws on independent advice from the Trade and Agriculture Commission[1], Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland, confirms the Government's view that the UK-Australia FTA is consistent with the maintenance of UK statutory protections in these areas.

This report is intended to inform and support scrutiny of the UK-Australia agreement prior to its ratification and entry into force. The text of the UK-Australia agreement was published on 16th December 2022 and will be formally laid before Parliament for scrutiny under the provisions of CRaG in due course.

[1] TAC advice published on 13th April 2022 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-australia-fta-advice-from-trade-and-agriculture-commission>.

Written Answers

Monday, 6 June 2022

Abortion

Asked by **Baroness Eaton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what periodic review of literature they conduct in respect of the latest scientific evidence on foetal viability. [HL247]

Lord Kamall: Officials regularly review new evidence on foetal viability. There is currently no clear consensus from the medical profession that the age of viability has reduced below 24 weeks.

Academies

Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many maintained schools were converted to academy status through sponsorship or other means from September 2010 to March 2022; and how many were converted in each academic year during that period. [HL329]

Baroness Barran: As of March 2022, there were 9,205 open converter and sponsored academies. The tables attached show the annual net growth in the number of these schools from 2011 to March 2022, as well as the total number of converter and sponsored academies as of January each year.

This information is derived from the annual School Census data available via School, Pupils, and their Characteristics. This can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/>.

Data from 2022 reflects those schools opened in January, February and March of this year and is derived from Get Information About Schools via this link: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL329_table1 [PQ HL329 table_showing_annual net growth in schools from 2011 to March 2022 table 1.pdf]

HL329_table2 [PQ HL329 table_showing_annual net growth in schools from 2011 to March 2022 table 2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL329>

Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total cost of converting maintained schools to academy status through sponsorship or other means from September 2010 to March 2022; and what was the average cost of converting each school to academy status during that period. [HL330]

Baroness Barran: As of March 2022, the department has spent £495 million through our academies pre-opening grants to support schools to become academies. Average costs will vary significantly by project. The department has a range of available grants with set tariffs that contribute towards the costs to support schools to convert.

From 2010, the converter pre-opening grant has been set at £25,000 per academy.

The level of funding for sponsored pre-opening grants has varied since 2010, when the academies programme began to expand. From 2010 to 2013, the average award for sponsored academies was determined on a case-by-case basis. To ensure greater consistency and drive efficiencies, set tariffs for sponsored academies were established in 2013. Sponsored academies are now eligible for grants ranging from £70,000 to £150,000 per academy.

Cost of Sponsored and Converter Academies from 2010 to March 2022

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Costs</i>
2010-11	£67m
2011-12	£67m
2012-13	£65m
2013-14	£59m
2014-15	£48m
2015-16	£26m
2016-17	£54m
2017-18	£38m
2018-19	£30m
2019-20	£16m
2020-21	£15m
2021-22	£10m
Total	£495m

Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many schools they expect to convert to academy status through sponsorship or other means between March 2022 and December 2030. [HL331]

Baroness Barran: The Schools White Paper sets out the department's intention that by 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school in a strong multi-academy trust, or with plans to join or form one. The best trusts in the system will work where they are needed most, levelling up standards, and transforming previously underperforming schools.

The policies set out in the White Paper will remove barriers that are preventing schools from benefiting from the support of a strong trust, whilst ensuring that all parts

of the system can play their part in building a single, coherent system.

Local authorities will be able to add new capacity to the system by establishing new strong trusts. Additionally, the department will ensure there are statutory protections for academies with a religious character, equivalent to those for maintained schools with a religious character. Appropriate financial support will be provided to Dioceses and other religious bodies to enable the growth and establishment of trusts.

Regional directors will engage local partners to determine the best way to develop a strong trust landscape that suits their area, investing up to £86 million over the next three years in building trust capacity, focused particularly on Education Investment Areas.

The department is keen to continue engaging with the sector on how best to achieve a fully trust-led system by 2030.

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the total cost of converting maintained schools to academy status through sponsorship or other means from March 2022 to December 2030; and what is their expectation of the average cost of converting each school to academy status. [HL332]

Baroness Barran: The average costs of converting maintained schools to academy status will vary significantly by project and based on the different approaches taken with partners, including whether the conversion is via the sponsored or converter route. The approach taken will depend on the circumstances of the school at the time.

The department has a range of existing grant regimes to support schools to convert in a variety of circumstances. For sponsored academy projects, pre-opening grant funding is available, supporting pre-opening costs such as staff recruitment, project management, legal advice, and any other school improvement interventions, helping to improve pupil outcomes. Funding values vary depending on the type of school, ranging from £70,000 to £150,000. Converter academies are eligible to apply for the £25,000 support grant, following approval of the conversion application.

Additionally, the department is investing up to £86 million over the next three years in building trust capacity, focused particularly in Education Investment Areas where pupil outcomes are weakest, and within these, Priority Education Investment Areas. The Trust Capacity Fund helps trusts take on underperforming schools for defined growth projects which have been approved by a regional director. Regional directors will engage local partners to determine the best way to develop a strong trust landscape that suits their area.

Being part of a strong trust can also unlock financial benefits. By centralising operational and administrative functions, schools within a multi-academy trust can save time and money. This can then be reinvested directly into

the areas which have the greatest impact on children's outcomes, including unlocking capacity to support weaker schools.

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Secretary of State for Education is able to require local authorities to develop local strategic plans to bring local authority maintained schools into the academy system. [HL333]

Baroness Barran: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, does not have the power to require local authorities to develop strategic plans to bring local authority-maintained schools into the academy system. The Schools Bill contains a power for local authorities to support schools in joining academy trusts by applying for academy orders on their behalf.

Advanced Research and Invention Agency

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in establishing the Advanced Research and Invention Agency; and when they expect it will start operating. [HL564]

Lord Callanan: We are in the process of recruiting the Advanced Research and Invention Agency's first CEO and Chair. These appointments will be announced in due course and we expect ARIA to be operational later this year.

Afghanistan and Yemen; Development Aid

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK financial aid is being diverted from (1) Afghanistan, and (2) Yemen, because of the conflict in Ukraine. [HL428]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: No UK financial aid is being diverted from Afghanistan or Yemen because of the conflict in Ukraine. We doubled our assistance for Afghanistan for 2021/2022 to £286 million. The full amount was disbursed for life-saving humanitarian support, including for emergency food, health, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, and de-mining. In Yemen, the UK has played a leading role in responding to the humanitarian crisis, committing over £1 billion in aid since the conflict began. We will spend at least £88 million in UK aid over the course of this financial year.

Agriculture: Environmental Impact Assessment

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications have been made under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) in each year since the enactment of the regulation; how many breaches of the

regulations have been identified and prosecuted; and what assessment has been made of the area of land where changes have been made to land use without permission. [HL188]

Lord Benyon: Screening applications received 2006–2021 = 3227.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Applications Received</i>
2006	133
2007	132
2008	101
2009	75
2010	87
2011	203
2012	271
2013	301
2014	324
2015	365
2016	347
2017	300
2018	193
2019	168
2020	116
2021	111

Screening applications rejected 2006–2021 = 251.

Screening applications withdrawn 2006–2021 = 77.

Screening application decisions issued 2006–2021 = 2899.

Consent applications received 2006–2021 = 13.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Consent Applications</i>
2009	1
2010	1
2011	1
2012	1
2013	1
2014	1
2015	1
2016	1
2017	1
2018	1
2019	1
2021	2

Breaches of the regulations 2006–2021 = 63.

During the period 2006–2021 in total there were 63 enforcement cases, covering over 362 hectares of land. Natural England (NE) has issued 17 restoration notices and accepted 32 voluntary enforcement undertakings to remediate and make good the environmental damage caused to over 270 hectares of land by breach of the Regulations. Warning letters highlighting technical or minor breaches, when serving civil sanctions would be disproportionate, were issued to offenders for breaches to raise awareness of the legislation and achieve future compliance.

Two prosecutions relating to breaches of the regulations have been successfully brought:

- Devon (June 2021) – relating to damage to Mesolithic and Neolithic historic environment features. The land manager was successfully prosecuted for failing to comply with a Stop Notice requiring the cessation of damaging works and was fined £7,500 and costs of £24,000.
- Cumbria (March 2014) - relating to damage to semi-natural lowland grassland. The landowner was successfully prosecuted for failing to comply with remediation notice to remove artificial drainage pipes and was fined £2,500 and costs of £10,000 plus £250 victim surcharge.

No assessment has been made, by NE, of the area of land where changes have been made to land use without permission.

Air Pollution: Urban Areas

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve air quality in British urban areas. [HL385]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Latest published figures (which go up to the year 2020) show that air pollution has reduced significantly across the UK since 2010. Air quality is a devolved policy. The UK Government and the devolved administrations work collaboratively and consult on actions needed to improve air quality across the UK.

In England, the Clean Air Strategy sets out our ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources. This includes setting two stretching targets for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) under the Environment Act 2021. Our dual-target approach will tackle the highest concentrations of PM2.5, usually found in urban areas, and ensure continuous improvement across the country. Our modelling shows that achieving these targets would significantly improve public health, resulting in 214,000 fewer cases of cardiovascular disease, 56,570 fewer strokes, 70,000 fewer cases of asthma and 23,000 fewer cases of lung cancer.

We have provided £880 million to help local authorities develop and implement local nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) reduction plans and to support those impacted by these plans. This government is also taking action across transport by supporting the switch to electric vehicles with £2.8 billion of investment, and £2 billion in funding for cycling and walking over this Parliament.

We also have recently awarded £11.6 million from Defra's annual Air Quality Grant Scheme to 41 local authorities in England for local projects to tackle air pollution. The scheme will reopen for applications later this year, building on more than £38 million investment so far since 2010.

Allergies: Education and Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve allergy awareness in (1) educational, and (2) health care, settings. [HL318]

Lord Kamall: In 2020, health education became statutory in schools. As part of the health and prevention topic, pupils are taught the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.

For 95% of allergy patients, their condition can be managed by primary or other non-specialist allergy services, such as with routine therapies and advice. The Royal College of General Practitioners have developed an online resource to support continuing professional development and revalidation, which aims to educate and improve awareness amongst general practitioners about the various presentations of allergic disease.

To raise awareness among patients, carers and healthcare professionals on the use of Adrenaline Auto-injectors (AAIs), the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency conducted a communications campaign to improve the safe and effective use of AAIs. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence promotes guidance on a range of allergies, including food allergy in those aged under 19 years old, anaphylaxis and drug allergy online and through newsletters and other media. While this guidance is not mandatory, health and care commissioners are expected to take them fully into account.

Allergies: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of allergy services by (1) region, and (2) integrated care system. [HL319]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made. Allergy services in England are currently commissioned through clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), considering the needs of the local population. A small number of specialist allergy services for patients with rare and complex conditions are commissioned by NHS England's specialised commissioning. Its service

specification states that centres should provide equity of access to best practice standards for diagnosis and management, based on current national and international guidelines.

Integrated care boards will be established on 1 July 2022 and will assume the commissioning functions of CCGs as well as some of NHS England's commissioning functions.

Allergy UK: Patients

Asked by Viscount Stansgate

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Allergy's UK's Patient Charter, published on 5 May; and what steps they will take to support it. [HL278]

Lord Kamall: Whilst no formal assessment has been made, we have noted the Charter's focus on quality standards of care, access to accurate information and equality.

Allergy services in England are commissioned through clinical commissioning groups to meet the needs of the local population. A small number of specialist allergy services for patients with rare and complex conditions are commissioned through NHS England and NHS Improvement's specialised commissioning. The service specification specifies that centres provide equity of access to best practice standards for diagnosis and management, based on current national and international guidelines.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to engage with stakeholders to understand the needs of people with allergies and how services could be improved. This includes patient and public voice membership in NHS England and NHS Improvement's clinical reference group which provides clinical advice and leadership on specialised immunology and allergy services.

Apprentices: Taxation

Asked by Lord Haskel

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to modify the Apprenticeship Levy scheme to address (1) dissatisfaction from participants, and (2) concerns about its effectiveness. [HL343]

Baroness Penn: The Apprenticeship Levy is a key part of the Government's reforms to the apprenticeship system. It enables employers to make a long-term and sustainable investment in high-quality apprenticeship training.

The Government recognises that employers have frustrations with the way that these Apprenticeship Levy funds can be spent within the apprenticeships system and is delivering a suite of improvements to address these. These include the improvements announced at Spending Review 2021, such as introducing an enhanced recruitment service for SMEs, supporting the use of

flexible training models, and introducing a return-on-investment tool to ensure employers can see the benefits that apprentices create in their business.

The Government's ambition is to encourage greater levels of private sector investment in employee training, both for apprentices and for employees more generally. Therefore, at Spring Statement 2022, 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.

While there will not be a formal review of the Apprenticeship Levy as part of this wider consideration on employer investment in training, the Government is committed to protecting the quality of apprenticeship training and further improving the system to respond to the concerns raised by employers.

Armed Forces: Civil Proceedings

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many legacy civil suits that the Ministry of Defence was subject to, relating to the Northern Ireland Troubles, are currently active before the courts; how many were concluded in the last three year period; what amounts were paid to applicants overall; and what were the legal costs to the Ministry for (1) its own fees, and (2) those of the litigants. [HL374]

Baroness Goldie: There are currently 575 legacy civil claims against the Ministry of Defence (MOD) relating to the Northern Ireland Troubles which are active before the court. 43 claims have concluded in the last three-year period of which 29 claims resulted in financial settlement by the MOD. A claim is recorded by the MOD as settled when both the damages to the claimant and associated legal costs have been agreed and paid. Total damages paid by the MOD in this period were £632,000. The total plaintiffs' legal costs paid were £586,861. MOD's own legal costs were £212,042.

The other 14 claims which concluded in the three-year period were discontinued or resolved by other means.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether asylum seekers removed to Rwanda as part of the UK–Rwanda Asylum Partnership Arrangement will receive vaccinations for (1) Hepatitis A, (2) Tetanus, and (3) Typhoid, prior to travelling to that country, in line with (a) advice, and (b) recommendations, from the (i) National Health Travel Network, and (ii) the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. [HL352]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Various vaccinations are routinely offered to individuals within our detention estate pending their transfer or returns overseas.

Upon relocation to Rwanda, individuals will be provided with the healthcare and other support needed to ensure their health, security and wellbeing. This includes vaccinations where appropriate.

Audit: Reform

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their draft Audit Reform Bill; and what the next steps will be. [HL518]

Lord Callanan: The Government's draft bill on audit, corporate governance and insolvency reform is expected to be published during the Third Session.

Belarus: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Redfern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest position of sanctions for Belarus. [HL315]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since 1 March we have launched a series of sanctions against Belarusian individuals and organisations in response to the role the country is playing in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including facilitating the invasion from within its borders. On 1 March four senior defence officials and two military enterprises were sanctioned with immediate effect under the UK's Russia sanctions regime. Individuals sanctioned will be unable to travel to the UK and any UK-based assets will be frozen.

These designations are in addition to the wide-ranging measures we have already imposed on Belarus under our Belarus sanctions regime, which include sanctions on President Lukashenko and 117 other individuals and entities as well as trade, financial and aviation sanctions. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have committed extending recent Russia sanctions to Belarus in due course. The Lukashenko regime will be made to feel the economic consequences for its support for Putin.

Blood: Contamination

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, since the inquiry into contaminated blood opened in July 2018, how many payments have been awarded to the families affected; and how many families have received payment. [HL373]

Lord Kamall: Since July 2018, the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) has provided 154,380 lump sum, regular and discretionary one-off payments to beneficiaries. The EIBSS does not hold information on whether individual beneficiaries are members of the same family.

Burglary: South West

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the conviction rate for burglaries in (1) Gloucestershire, (2) Somerset, (3) Devon, and (4) Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, over the next three years. [HL545]

Lord Stewart of Dirleton: Burglary is a terrible crime which can have a long-lasting impact on victims. The CPS is committed to bringing robust prosecutions against offenders who commit the offence of burglary and works with the police to ensure that the strongest possible evidence is put before the court. In 2020-21, the CPS prosecuted 8,703 cases of burglary with a conviction rate of 87.4%. CPS South West, which covers the above regions, had a conviction rate of 91.2%, which is above the national average.

Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ban private tourist diesel buses operating in the centres of heavily polluted (1) towns, and (2) cities. [HL383]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Government has no current plans to ban private tourist diesel buses from town centres.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that local authorities are co-operating on calculating the level of (1) fraud, and (2) error, in business support grants administered. [HL356]

Lord Callanan: BEIS continues to work closely with Local Authorities to minimise the risk of fraud and error, and to take action where this does occur. Local Authorities are required to undertake assurance activity for all COVID-19 Business Grant schemes, to ensure that the recipients were eligible to receive the funds and that funds were paid correctly. Where it is identified that an award of a grant was non-compliant, funding issued will be subject to recovery and all cases of fraud will be pursued. The Assurance and Debt Recovery Guidance can be found on the COVID-19 Business Grants page at Gov.UK.

Chelsea Football Club: Sales

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will issue a progress report on their role in the sale of Chelsea Football Club given that its licence to continue operating ends this month. [HL415]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Her Majesty's Government has always been clear that a quick sale of the club is in the best interests of the club, its fans and the wider football community.

Following extensive work, we are now satisfied that the full proceeds of the sale will not benefit Roman Abramovich or any other sanctioned individual and the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) has issued a licence to enable a sale.

Children: Social Services

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Action for Children Too little, too late: early help and early intervention spending in England, published on 28 February. [HL306]

Baroness Barran: The 'Too Little, Too Late' report recommends an increase in funding for a range of early intervention services. This year, the government announced a £500 million package to give families effective support earlier by creating a network of family hubs in half of the council areas in England and helping up to 300,000 more vulnerable families through the Support Families programme.

The report's other recommendations include a legal duty for early help and additional data collection on early help. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care has now set out its final recommendations, and we will consider those relevant to early help to inform any next steps.

Civil Servants: Redundancy

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the 91,000 civil service jobs that they intend to cut are based in the Home Office. [HL269]

Lord True: The Prime Minister has tasked the Chancellor, CDL, the Minister for Government Efficiency and the Cabinet Secretary to work together on producing a plan for returning the Civil Service workforce numbers to 2016 levels over the next three years. This work will be overseen by the Efficiency and Value for Money Cabinet Committee. Secretaries of State will lead the drive for reductions within their departments and the Civil Service organisations for which they have responsibility.

Climate Change

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of international efforts so far to deliver the Glasgow Climate Pact. [HL344]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Delivery of the Glasgow Climate Pact is the top priority for the UK

Presidency. Six months on from COP26, the UK and Egypt recently convened Ministers in Copenhagen to discuss progress and heard strong commitment to deliver. We reiterated the need for all countries to revisit and strengthen their NDCs as necessary, for donors to deliver on the \$100bn goal and the commitment to double adaptation finance by 2025, and for increased support for Loss and Damage.

Since COP26, and following the call in the Glasgow Climate Pact, 5 Parties have submitted Long-Term Strategies and 11 have submitted updates to NDC. A further eight National Adaptation Plans have been published, meaning 2 billion people are now covered by adaptation plans globally. We recently held the 5th Energy Transition Council Meeting where countries reinforced their commitment to implement tailored solutions to decarbonise the power sector more rapidly. Since COP26, 20 new signatories including Greece have joined the Zero Emission Vehicles Declaration, and four new countries have declared their support for the Agriculture Breakthrough.

We will continue to provide strong UK leadership and engagement over our Presidency year to make sure promises are kept and delivered to the highest standards, working with all parties and civil society partners to keep momentum high.

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that negotiations under the Glasgow Dialogues result in a financial facility for (1) loss, and (2) damage, relating to climate change. [HL345]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Glasgow Climate Pact succeeded in putting in place the Glasgow Dialogue to discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage, although it did not agree to the creation of a financial facility. The first dialogue will take place in June 2022, with further dialogues taking place every year to 2024, though these are not formal negotiations. The Glasgow Climate Pact also noted existing funding for climate, disaster reduction and response is relevant to loss and damage.

Companies: Audit

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to respond to the results of their consultation on Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance, which was published on 18 March 2021. [HL517]

Lord Callanan: The Government has now published its response to the consultation on 'Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance'. It is available on GOV.UK.

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the draft Audit Reform Bill will include measures set out in the

Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance white paper for stronger internal company controls, including certification by company directors, and requirements for companies to publish an Audit and Assurance Policy. [HL519]

Lord Callanan: The Government published its response to consultation on the *Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance* White Paper on 31 May.

The Government will strengthen directors' accountability for their company's internal controls by inviting the Financial Reporting Council to strengthen the UK Corporate Governance Code to provide for a directors' statement about the effectiveness of the company's internal controls, including the basis for that assessment.

The Government will also introduce a statutory requirement on large companies to publish an Audit and Assurance Policy.

Company Accounts

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL31), what assessment they have made of the judgment given in the Caparo V Dickman case; and whether their reply was based on that assessment. [HL473]

Lord Callanan: The Government did not make an assessment of the Caparo V Dickman case in providing the Written Answer on 20 May 2022 to Question HL31.

Company Accounts: Standards

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL27 and HL31), by what authority the UK Endorsement Board is endorsing accounting standards under its duties in secondary legislation without considering the primary legislative framework in which those standards sit; and when was such authority (1) given, and (2) by whom. [HL402]

Lord Callanan: Regulation 5 of the International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/685) gave the Secretary of State the responsibility to adopt international accounting standards, with a view to harmonising the financial information presented by companies preparing accounts required by section 403(1) of the Companies Act 2006. This responsibility was delegated to the UK Endorsement Board via the International Accounting Standards (Delegation of Functions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2021, which was approved by Parliament and came into force on 22 May 2021. The delegation also includes the requirement to abide by the basis for adoption of international accounting standards set-out in Regulation 7 of SI 2019/685.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL31), how any audited accounts described as a "starting point" can have been reliable for assessing whether a company is capable of being a going concern or not, if that "starting point" (1) contained material unrealised profits, and (2) excluded material realised losses. [HL403]

Lord Callanan: UK-adopted international accounting standards require the directors of a company, when preparing the accounts, to make an assessment of the company's ability to continue to operate as a going concern for at least 12 months from the balance sheet date. These standards also require disclosure where there are material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt upon the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Section 836 of the Companies Act 2006 requires that the calculation of distributable profits is determined by reference to the relevant accounts. Part 23 includes other criteria that must be assessed before the amount of distributable profits for the company can be determined. In taking a decision to pay a dividend, directors must also consider their duty under s172 of the Companies Act 2006 to promote the success of the company for the benefit of shareholders as a whole. Consideration of the success of the company may include an assessment of whether the company would, following the payment of the proposed dividend, be solvent and continue to be able to pay its debts as they fall due, in the context of the current and likely future position and needs of the company.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL31), how systemic such adjustments are if audited accounts are merely a "starting point"; and whether the result of companies having to do that has been subject to an impact assessment in terms of (1) burdens on business, and (2) the risk of hiding insolvency. [HL404]

Lord Callanan: Companies calculate their distributable profits under Part 23 of the Companies Act 2006, and as such, it is an individual decision at the company level as to whether to make a distribution.

An impact assessment on the Companies Act 2006 was published in January 2007 and is attached to this response.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Companies Act 2006 Regulatory IA [HL404 attachment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-23/HL404>

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL31), why s833A is relevant to that answer, given that s833A does not provide an example of adjustments to numbers in the audited accounts because s833A(7) uses different numbers valued in accordance with rules from the Prudential Regulatory Authority instead. [HL405]

Lord Callanan: As noted in the answer I gave to HL31, section 833A is an example of a factor that directors in certain insurance companies may need to consider when using their relevant accounts to determine their company's distributable profits. Section 833A works in tandem with other sections that reference the accounts, to create a dual test.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-pacific Partnership: Patents*Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on the rights of representation of UK patent attorneys before the Unified Patent Court. [HL350]

Asked by Lord Smith of Finsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK negotiators will seek to protect patent attorneys' rights of representation before the Unified Patent Court during accession negotiations to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). [HL351]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Government cannot comment on the sensitive detail of live negotiations; however, accession will only take place on terms beneficial to the UK. The UK has a world leading intellectual property regime and will not sign trade deals that compromise it. The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership sets clear and consistent rules for the intellectual property (IP) sector which will benefit UK businesses, attorneys, and consumers.

Coronavirus: Disease Control*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Kamall on 27 April (HL7561), what conclusions they have reached following meetings with groups representing the immunocompromised community on how they can be involved in (1) creating, and (2) disseminating, (a) communication, and (b) guidance, to people about how to safely manage their ongoing risk. [HL347]

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) communicate, and (2) consult, with (a) charities, and (b) patient organisations, as part of the COVID-19 enhanced protection programme (EPP); and what format this will take. [HL348]

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government who is responsible for leading the COVID-19 enhanced protection programme (EPP); and what is the process for (1) charities, and (2) patient organisations, to be designated as stakeholders for the programme. [HL349]

Lord Kamall: We regularly engage with charities and patient organisation representing and supporting immunocompromised and immunosuppressed people. Further to discussions with these groups, we are establishing an engagement forum for charities and patient organisations to discuss issues relating to the enhanced protection programme and to seek the views of these stakeholders in advance of any updates to guidance. We will continue to update these stakeholders on the enhanced protection programme through webinars, meetings and correspondence.

The enhanced protection programme is a tripartite scheme administered by the Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Dame Jenny Harries, the Chief Executive of the UKHSA, is the senior responsible owner for the programme. There is no formal process for designating patient organisations as stakeholders for the programme.

Coronavirus: Fixed Penalties

Asked by **Lord Strathcarron**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for infringements of the COVID-19 lockdown regulations; what was the (1) total, and (2) average, value of those fines; and what percentage of the fines have been paid. [HL353]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data on the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued under the COVID-19 regulations by police forces in England and Wales is not held centrally by the Home Office. These figures were collected by police forces and published monthly by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

The final tranche of figures relating to coronavirus breaches was published on 16 March 2022 and can be found here on the NPCC website at Update on Coronavirus FPNs issued by forces in England and Wales, and the payment of FPNs (npcc.police.uk).

The data includes the number of FPN letters issued by ACRO, FPNs paid, FPNs contested, and those not complied with, broken down by force area.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Fixed Penalty Notices [Fixed Penalty Notices - Covid 19.pdf - copy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-18/HL353>

Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of eligible patients have received doses of COVID-19 antiviral therapies within the 5-day guidelines set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). [HL308]

Lord Kamall: Since they were established in December 2021, COVID Medicines Delivery Units have provided antiviral or monoclonal antibody treatments to over 43,000 patients in England. Of these, over 20,100 patients have been treated with antivirals. The clinical access policies specify that the oral antivirals molnupiravir and nirmatrelvir+ritonavir must be administered within five days of the patient starting to experience symptoms. Over 95% of eligible non-hospitalised patients who have received an antiviral treatment to date were treated within five days from the onset of symptoms. However, the antiviral infusion remdesivir is suitable to be administered within seven days of the patient becoming symptomatic.

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the efficacy of existing COVID-19 antiviral treatments for eligible patients in reducing rates of hospitalisation and death. [HL309]

Lord Kamall: A range of treatment options are available to non-hospitalised patients at higher risk from COVID-19 to reduce severe disease, hospitalisation and death. These treatments are available through COVID Medicines Delivery Units and include the oral antivirals nirmatrelvir+ritonavir (Paxlovid), molnupiravir and the infusion antiviral remdesivir.

Evidence from clinical trials suggests these treatments can reduce the risk of hospitalisation. For molnupiravir, interim results found a 50% reduction in the relative risk of hospitalisation or death compared to placebo. However, updated results indicate molnupiravir reduces the relative risk of hospitalisation or death by 30% compared to placebo. Pfizer's final analysis on the clinical trials of nirmatrelvir+ritonavir showed an 88% reduction in hospitalisation or death compared to a placebo within five days of symptom onset. No assessment of how these treatments have impacted rates of hospitalisation since December has been made.

Both molnupiravir and nirmatrelvir+ritonavir are being trialled as part of the PANORAMIC national study. Results for molnupiravir are expected in summer 2022. Recruitment for the nirmatrelvir + ritonavir opened on 11 April 2022. The study will collect further data on how

these treatments work in a United Kingdom context where the majority of the population is vaccinated. It will also provide baseline information on how antivirals could be used for best clinical effect in combination with antibodies or other antiviral drugs as they become available. A 2021 trial showed that among non-hospitalised patients at high risk for COVID-19 progression, a three-day course of remdesivir had an acceptable safety profile and resulted in an 87% lower risk of hospitalisation or death than placebo.

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the psychological impact on immunocompromised individuals who are continuing to shield due to COVID-19. [HL310]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the economic impact on immunocompromised individuals who are continuing to shield due to COVID-19. [HL311]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made. People designated as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) were advised to shield between 22 March 2020 to 15 September 2021. However, shielding is not current policy. Individuals previously considered as CEV include but are not limited to those who are immunocompromised.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) recently conducted a survey of people previously considered to be CEV. In April 2022, the survey found that 46% were very or somewhat worried about the current effect of the pandemic on their life, with 25% reporting that the pandemic posed a major or significant risk to their mental health. The survey found that 29% were in paid employment, 7% reported they had lost income due to shielding or isolating and 20% worked from at home. Insights for those whose immune systems mean they continue to be at high risk from COVID-19 and who are continuing to shield will be included in a future ONS survey release in June 2022.

Cost of Living

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will meet with the International Monetary Fund to discuss cost of living matters (1) in the UK, and (2) across the world. [HL448]

Baroness Penn: HMG is in regular communication with international and domestic stakeholders, including the IMF, regarding the state of the UK and global economies. HMG and the IMF engage in regular formal macroeconomic surveillance of the UK economy through

Article IV consultations. The most recent Article IV mission to the UK took place in December 2021, with the results published in February 2022. The next formal consultation will be scheduled in due course.

The Chancellor made a statement in the House of Commons on 26th May providing £15bn to support families with the cost of living. Combined with already announced plans, support HMG has provided for cost of living pressures in the UK totals £37bn or 1.5% of GDP.

Most recently, the Chancellor attended the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings in Bonn on 19th-20th May, discussing the global challenge of inflation with other G7 members and international organisations, including the IMF. Global economic coordination will continue this year, including through further G7 and G20 meetings with the IMF in attendance.

The UK continues to play a leading role in supporting vulnerable countries, including through its commitments at the IMF where the UK has pledged SDR 5bn to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust; which provides zero interest loans to low-income countries in need.

Council of Europe: Education

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the education programmes provided by the Council of Europe, particularly those of the Ocean group; what Council of Europe education programmes they consider the most useful; and what plans, if any, they have to support their deployment internationally. [HL372]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made a formal assessment of education programmes provided by the Ocean group, the Department for Education actively participates in the Council of Europe education programme through its seat on the Council of Europe Education Steering Committee. The Government aims to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe and to foster respect for other people and for difference. A high-quality citizenship education provides a very effective pathway for schools to prepare pupils to play a full and active part in society. As with other areas of the curriculum, the Government does not prescribe how citizenship should be taught, but we expect schools to develop a curriculum that meets the need of their pupils, drawing on the expertise and support of subject associations and other organisations that produce and quality assure resources. This includes important content about human rights, the UK legal system and international law.

Deportation: Jamaica

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government, for each of the last four flights carrying deported Jamaican nationals, how many such individuals were on each flight. [HL271]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Jamaican nationals will be deported on the special charter flight to Jamaica on 18 May. [HL272]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how old each Jamaican national deported to Jamaica on each of the last four flights was when they first came to the UK. [HL273]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our priority will always be to keep our communities safe, and we make no apology for seeking to remove those with no right to remain in the UK and foreign criminals.

Since January 2019 we have removed 10,017 foreign criminals from the UK. Information on the number of Jamaican foreign national offenders returned from the UK is available from [Immigration statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) in table Ret_D03, which can be found attached.

A person's age upon arrival to the UK or their nationality are not exceptions to automatic deportation under the Borders Act 2007, but may be relevant factors, in addition to the strength of their social, cultural and family ties in the UK, in considering whether a human rights exception applies. All those deported will have been provided with the opportunity to raise claims, which are fully considered and determined prior to removal including, where applicable, via the Courts.

We do not routinely comment on individual cases.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Ret_D03 [returns-datasets-mar-2022 (1).xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-16/HL271>

East Africa: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide humanitarian aid to East Africa following reports of impending famine conditions in the region. [HL450]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Approximately 480,000 people in Ethiopia and Somalia are now experiencing famine-like conditions. The situation is extremely grave.

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 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. In Kenya the UK is providing 26,000 children with life-saving nutritional support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000

children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar 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 on the drought and 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 neediest.

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 assisting over 220 rural communities with sustainable support for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million people as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what amount of humanitarian aid was delivered to (1) Kenya, (2) Sudan, (3) Ethiopia, and (4) Somalia for the years (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021, and (d) 2022. [HL451]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK provided the following amounts of humanitarian aid:

- Financial year (FY) 2019/2020 - Kenya £36 million, Sudan £60 million, Ethiopia £77 million, Somalia £64 million;
- FY 2020/2021 - Kenya £31 million, Sudan £66 million, Ethiopia £102 million, Somalia £70 million;
- FY 2021/2022 - Kenya £15 million, Sudan £28 million, Ethiopia £80 million, Somalia £46 million; and

In addition, in FY 2020/2021, the UK provided £23 million to support desert locust response activities across the region.

Education: Software and Video Games

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the efficacy of interactive learning programmes, including computer games, using the Socratic dialogue. [HL370]

Baroness Barran: The Education Endowment Fund's (EEF) metacognition and self-regulation guidance report includes 'Socratic talk' as a common teaching strategy. This can be accessed here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/metacognition-and-self-regulation>.

The EEF's teaching and learning toolkit highlights that for metacognition and self-regulation, "Studies that use digital technology, for example, intelligent tutoring systems that scaffold learning show particularly high impacts on pupil outcomes." This is based on the EEF's digital technology evidence review (2019), which can be accessed here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/digital-technology-2019>.

The department does not actively support or mandate individual digital products as we believe that it is up to schools and colleges to decide what technology they need to meet their requirements. Meta-analysis from the EEF shows that digital technologies have the best possible impact when embedded in good pedagogy. This can be accessed here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>.

Education: South West

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding in the report by the University of Exeter Social Mobility in the South West, published on 28 April, that "the South-West has the worst educational outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the country, and low social mobility compared with other areas"; and what steps they are taking to address these problems. [HL297]

Baroness Barran: The department recognises that this is a very significant issue for the South West. The report acknowledges the work we are doing in the region, and we are committed to supporting this further.

The attached 'Table N5' of the latest published key stage 2 outcomes for 2019 provides the data on the disadvantage gap and shows that the gap has been narrowing up until the latest year where it saw a slight upturn.

A similar trend is seen at key stage 4 where the gap was generally narrowing until the latest 2020/21 data point. More information on key stage 4 is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised#dataBlock-8a6b42aa-6090-4799-a02e-f9ad86353d33-tables>.

The department also has a South West disadvantage strategy and plan, with numerous strands. The strands include:

- Working with sector networks and trust leaders to promote and improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Working with department policy colleagues to promote and support key developments in the region. For example, the national tutoring programme.
- Working with and learning from sector experts. For example, the Education Endowment Foundation on what works, basing our strategies on the latest evidence.
- Including disadvantage outcomes and gaps as part of our induction of the new regional advisory board members.

As outlined in the Schools White Paper, we want to build capacity in the parts of the country that need this most. This is why we have identified 55 Education Investment Areas, which include the third of local authorities where attainment is lowest and where we will offer substantial additional support to drive school improvement. Our Education Investment Areas include a number of areas in the South West.

In these areas we will be supporting schools not making necessary improvements by moving them into strong trusts, subject to our ongoing consultation. We will also be investing in trust capacity, extending the Connect the Classroom programme to improve schools' digital connectivity and offering the Levelling Up premium to eligible teachers in disadvantaged schools.

We will also make more intensive investment in a subset of Priority Education Investment Areas, where underperformance is particularly entrenched. These areas include our existing Opportunity Areas, including West Somerset. These areas will benefit from a share of around £40 million to address specific local needs, as well as advanced access to other department programmes.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL297_Table_KS2
[HL297_Table_Showing_KS2_Revised_tables_2019.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL297>

Educational Visits: EU Nationals

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reduction in the number of school groups visiting the UK from EU countries since the introduction of the requirement for every child in a group to have an individual visa. [HL366]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Schoolchildren who are EU, EEA and Swiss nationals do not require a visa to visit the UK.

Like other non-visa nationals visiting the UK they are expected to have a valid national passport.

Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage routes-to-market for new fire and electrical safety technologies. [HL416]

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage investment into technological solutions in the hazard prevention market. [HL417]

Lord Callanan: Placing new or innovative products on the market requires the same product safety requirements to be met as is required for existing products. Guidance is available for businesses to help set what is required so that they have a clear route for getting their products to market.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), acts as the prime channel through which Government incentivises business-led technology innovation. It funds innovation through the allocation of competitively awarded grants and funding is available to all businesses undertaking innovation, irrespective of the technology or sector in which they are working. The UKRI Gateway, available via UKRI's website, provides data on all funded research and innovation projects.

Innovate UK also helps to connect innovative businesses with the right partners and expertise to help them bring their ideas to market, and grow and scale their companies, through the Knowledge Transfer Network and Innovate UK EDGE.

Employment: Immunosuppression

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have given to Work Coaches for recommending employment requiring in-person attendance to immunocompromised individuals. [HL312]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all claimants to meet their individual circumstances. Claimants with a health condition or disability, including those who are immunocompromised, continue to have tailored commitments agreed based on their personal circumstances, including considering the impact of their health and wider situation.

Any work-related requirements are set in discussion with the claimant, tailored to their individual capability and circumstances, making them realistic and achievable. The guidance available to DWP staff outlines the easements which may be applied including that work search reflects the type and location of jobs which are appropriate to the individual.

Although DWP does not routinely provide guidance specifically on supporting people who are immunocompromised, we do ensure that staff are aware of the sources of information available to them relating to medical conditions that are associated with this. Staff are signposted to tools, guidance support and websites to effectively use resources from both internal and external sites, such as information directly from the NHS.

This ensures that staff can access the most up to date advice and can use this to inform how they support individual customers.

We empower our Work Coaches to use all available resources to best support each claimant, however they are not trained to provide comprehensive healthcare advice therefore while we do discuss the implications certain jobs may have on their health, we would not advise against jobs the claimant wishes to apply for.

Energy: Meters

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a deficit fund to remove £1,000 off the annual bills of struggling households on pre-payment meters. [HL327]

Lord Callanan: The energy price cap ensures 4.5 million prepayment meter customers pay a fair price for their energy. The Government announced a further £15 billion package of support to help with the cost of living on 26 May, on top of the £22 billion already announced this year. This means almost eight million most vulnerable households will get £1,200 of one-off support in total this year, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400.

The Ability to Pay principle set by Ofgem in the supply licence requires suppliers to provide appropriate support to households which are struggling to pay their energy bills by setting up repayment plans based on a customer's ability to pay, and by directing them to further support services.

Environment Protection: Policy

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask the Leader of the House what steps she is taking to facilitate parliamentary scrutiny of the draft Environmental Principles Statement. [HL258]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Section 18 of the Environment Act 2021 sets out the routes for parliamentary scrutiny of the draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement recently laid before Parliament by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This includes consideration by relevant Select Committees.

The Chief Whip will work with the Usual Channels to schedule any business resulting from these routes in the usual way during the scrutiny period.

EU Budget: Contributions

Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK's financial settlement with the EU is paid into the same budget as member state contributions; and whether the financial settlement is ringfenced for specific EU spending projects. [HL526]

Baroness Penn: Payments made by the UK to the EU for the financial settlement are specifically related to the Financial Provisions section of the Withdrawal Agreement. The amounts provided are in relation to outstanding financial commitments between the UK and the EU which arose out of the UK's participation in the EU budget as a Member State, broader aspects of its EU membership, and under the Transition Agreement.

Payments provided to the EU by the UK under Article 148 of the Withdrawal Agreement, the article summarising the yearly amount payable under Financial Settlement, are entered into the EU General Budget by the European Commission as 'Special Contributions and Refunds', under Chapter 6 6 of the Revenue of the EU Budget. Payments assigned to the General Budget are not specified for ringfenced expenditure.

Evusheld

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) in the Department of Health and Social Care on 20 April (151279), what level of efficacy against Omicron they would deem as "sufficient" in order to secure a supply of Evusheld. [HL313]

Lord Kamall: There is no pre-determined view of a 'sufficient' level of efficacy. The Department will seek expert clinical advice on the results of the UK Health Security Agency's testing to inform future decision making. RAPID C-19 will consider all data relating to the use of Evusheld as a pre-exposure prophylaxis treatment before providing advice to the Chief Medical Officer.

Farms: Inspections

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many extra inspections, prosecutions and convictions have been conducted under the Farming Rules for Water, and other matters, since the appointment of 50 extra Environment Agency Inspectors, comparing the period before and after their appointment. [HL187]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Recruiting 50 new Agricultural Regulatory Inspections Officers has

allowed the Environment Agency (EA) to significantly increase its inspections from around 300 per annum to 1805 in financial year 2021-22.

From April 2021 to date the EA has issued 3186 environmental improvement actions to farmers to bring them into compliance with regulations and prevent pollution. The EA has verified that 871 of these actions have been completed and it will continue to follow up the others to conclusion. Some actions on farms, such as building a new slurry store, take more time to complete due to raising finance, planning considerations and availability of contractors.

The new officers have not taken any prosecutions yet and have not applied any Civil Sanctions to Farming Rules for Water Offences. Except in cases of significant pollution, the EA starts the regulatory journey with advice, following up with more formal enforcement if that advice is not acted on.

Food Banks

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many food banks (1) are operating in England, and (2) were set up in each year since 2010; and what assessment they have made of the factors which led to food banks being established. [HL378]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No 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 national level.

Free School Meals

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that funding for free school meals is extended through to secondary school. [HL325]

Baroness Barran: All maintained schools and academies, including primary and secondary schools fund benefit-related free school meals (FSM) from their core funding which they receive through the schools block of the dedicated schools grant and is derived from the national funding formula.

For the 2022/23 academic year the department will allocate £470 of funding to local authorities for each of the pupils in their area eligible for FSM. Local authorities then distribute this money to schools through their local funding formula, which must include additional funding for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as those eligible for FSM.

It is then for schools to decide how to use their budget, including how much to allocate to pay for benefits-based FSM.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the eligibility for free school meals. [HL355]

Baroness Barran: The provision of free school meals (FSM) to children from out-of-work families or those on low incomes is of the utmost importance to this government. Under the benefits-related criteria, the department provides a free healthy meal to around 1.7 million children, ensuring they are well-nourished and can concentrate, learn and achieve in the classroom.

Under this government, eligibility for FSM has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century, including the introduction of universal infant FSM, and further education FSM.

The temporary extension of FSM eligibility to some groups with no recourse to public funds, that has been in place since 2020, was extended to all groups and made permanent, subject to income thresholds.

The department will continue to keep all free school meal eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

Further Education: Children in Care

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many looked after children (1) started, and (2) completed, A-Level courses in each of the last three years for which the data are available. [HL299]

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what data they collect on the average level of educational attainment for looked after children (1) at Key Stage 5, and (2) in post-16 education. [HL301]

Baroness Barran: The department does not hold information centrally on the types of qualifications looked-after children study and complete beyond key stage 4. The department does hold and publish information on pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 in the 2018/2019 academic year and reports on their destinations in the following academic year (2019/2020).

The figures show in the 2019/20 academic year, 5,450 children looked after were in a sustained education destination in the year following the end of key stage 4. Of these, 2,910 were in further education, 860 were in a school sixth form or sixth form college and 1,240 were in some other form of education. The full figures can be accessed here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/datatables/permalink/d583af1d-ad7d-4f1f-990b-2b27586d6c69>.

The department does not hold information on the educational attainment of looked after children beyond key stage 4.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Destinations of looked-after children [HL299 HL301 data looked after children destinations.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL299>

Future Combat Air System: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the planned procurement costs of the Tempest programme. [HL288]

Baroness Goldie: The 2021 Defence Command Paper said that we would invest over £2 billion in Future Combat Air System over the following four years. This includes funding for the Concept and Assessment Phase, which was launched in summer last year, with an initial investment of £250 million in a contract with Team Tempest industry partners to deliver it. The total ultimately invested thereafter will be contingent on decisions made towards the end of the Concept and Assessment Phase.

General Practitioners: Migrant Workers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to permit overseas-born trainee GPs to stay in Britain at the end of their training. [HL357]

Lord Kamall: We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the profession to understand the barriers faced by international medical graduates in general practitioner (GP) specialty training. The two-year General Practice Fellowship programme guarantees the opportunity for every newly qualified GP entering general practice, including international medical graduates, to receive funded mentorship, one funded session of continuing professional development opportunities per week and rotational placements in Primary Care Networks to develop their experience and support their transition into the workforce.

General Practitioners: Retirement

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of GPs retiring in the next few years; and what steps they are taking to address this. [HL305]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made as the decision to retire can be influenced by many factors. We are working to support and increase the general practice workforce, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice.

The updated GP Contract Framework for 2020/21 announced a new retention schemes and continued support for existing schemes to allow more general practitioners (GPs) to remain in the National Health Service. We are also working with the NHS and the profession to understand how GPs' working environment can be improved.

Government Departments: Buildings

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to dispose of offices currently (1) owned by, (2) leased to, or (3) vacated by, civil service departments. [HL376]

Lord True: The Government Estate Strategy 2018 set out our goals for better use of the estate. This included reducing the number of office buildings in which central government operates and a long-term ambition to reduce the number of offices within London (from over 65 in 2018) to no more than 20, enabled by our Places for Growth programme to relocate civil service roles from the Capital to across the UK. A new Government Property Strategy is being prepared, which continues to focus on consolidating the government estate. It is the aim of the government to critically review and seize opportunities to break a lease or dispose of a property, where possible and appropriate.

Each civil service department is required to develop and maintain a strategic asset management plan which sets out their occupational needs. Summary plans are usually published on gov.uk; publication was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic but is planned to resume this financial reporting year.

Great British Railways

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage private investment to the Great British Railways. [HL328]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Great British Railways will get best value from the private sector, including restoring competition for passenger services contracts. Under the new industry structure, Great British Railways will engage with suppliers from a position of strength, offering high-value opportunities to the private sector to compete to deliver world-class solutions for passengers. Simpler procurement within a stable commercial environment will give the private sector confidence to engage and will help to remove barriers to investment and innovation.

Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June. [HL388]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government supports Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and welcomes the wide range of organisations across the country that celebrate it each year. This includes schools, colleges, housing associations, Government departments and local authorities.

High Speed 2 Line: Procurement

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that (1) Hikvision, and (2) Dahua, cameras and technology are not used in the procurement supply chain for the HS2 railway line. [HL236]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: It is not government policy to comment on security arrangements.

HS2 Ltd's procurement process is undertaken in line with the Utilities Contract Regulations (2016 as amended). HS2's contracts specify a level of capability which suppliers of products must be able to meet.

Higher Education: Care Leavers

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, if any, to increase the number of care leavers at high tariff higher education institutions. [HL298]

Baroness Barran: We have published guidance for higher education (HE) providers, setting out areas where care leavers are likely to need additional support, including examples of the types of additional support that have been put in place, drawing on best practice from across the sector. We have also introduced the Care Leaver Covenant, which enables organisations, including HE providers, to make offers of support to care leavers.

The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers has developed the Quality Mark: a developmental accreditation process for universities and colleges to demonstrate their support for the inclusion and success of care experienced students. The Quality Mark has a focus on getting the right information to students on academic and pastoral support available to them, along with tailored mentoring and financial advice.

As autonomous bodies independent from government, HE providers are responsible for their own admissions decisions. However, the department encourages HE providers to put the interests of students at the heart of their decision-making, including providing the appropriate support for care leavers.

All HE providers in the approved (fee cap) category of the Office for Students' (OfS) register are required to have an access and participation plan (APP) agreed by the Director for Fair Access and Participation at the OfS. In order to be approved, APPs must represent a credible,

ambitious strategy to reduce gaps in access, participation and attainment for disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

As care leavers are underrepresented within HE, APPs will often address specific interventions by the provider for improving equality of opportunity for care-experienced individuals. This may take the form of targeted outreach, additional pastoral, accommodation or financial support while studying, or support through mentorship or buddy schemes.

Care leavers attending HE courses are treated as independent students when their entitlement to living costs is assessed. This means that in nearly all cases they will qualify for the maximum loan for living costs. Care leavers undertaking HE also qualify for a £2,000 HE bursary from their local authority. Additional bursaries are offered by some HE providers for care leavers in higher education.

The enclosed attachment contains the department's analysis of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record showing the number of care leavers who entered courses at English HE providers in each academic year from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Coverage refers to entrants domiciled in England prior to study and care leavers are defined as codes 01 and 04 in the HESA care leaver collection documentation. Further information can be found here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c20051/a/careleaver>.

The summary table below shows the number of care leavers who entered courses at high tariff[1] English HE providers in each year, along with total care leavers entering courses at all HE providers. A full breakdown by institution can be found in the attachment.

<i>Academic year</i>	<i>Care leavers entrants at high tariff providers</i>	<i>Care leavers entrants at all providers</i>
2018/19	435	3,570
2019/20	505	3,895
2020/21	580	4,290

We will take account of the recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, which is due to report shortly, when assessing what further support can be provided to increase the number of care leavers who attend university.

[1] The tariff grouping used here is the same as that which the Office for Students defined in Annex A (pg 20) of their technical guidance, available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6591e671-624a-4ebf-a5fb-1be904a5eb9f/technical-guidance-to-accompany-provider-modelling-finalforweb.pdf>.

They are based on the average UCAS tariff score of their young (aged under 21) UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants in the 2012-13 to 2014-15 academic years. Providers in the top third of the ranking by average tariff score form the 'High tariff' group.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL298_table [HL298_care_leavers_entering_HE_providers .xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL298>

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care leavers entered high tariff higher education institutions in each of the last three years for which the data are available; and how many entered each institution. [HL300]

Baroness Barran: The enclosed attachment contains the department's analysis of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record showing the number of care leavers who entered courses at English higher education providers (HEPs) in each academic year from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Coverage refers to entrants domiciled in England prior to study and care leavers are defined as codes 01 and 04 in the HESA care leaver collection documentation. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c20051/a/careleaver>.

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They are based on the average UCAS tariff score of their young (aged under 21) UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants in the 2012-13 to 2014-15 academic years. Providers in the top third of the ranking by average tariff score form the 'High tariff' group.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL300 table [HL300_table_for_care_leavers.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL300>

Homicide: Young People

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 14 March (HL6441),

whether they will provide the equivalent data for the 20 years up to April 2022. [HL58]

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

A response to the noble Lord's Parliamentary Question of 10 May is below and attached.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician
The Rt Hon. the Lord Field of Birkenhead CH DL
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW
18 May 2022
Dear Lord Field,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking for the number of offences, by age, currently recorded as homicide by sharp instrument for the previous 20 years up to April 2022 (HL58).

The Office for National Statistics publishes homicide figures where the method of killing was by a knife or

sharp instrument sourced from the Home Office Homicide Index, which is a database separate from the main police recorded crime dataset. It contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by the police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main police recorded crime dataset.

Table 1 presents the number of offences currently recorded as homicide by a sharp instrument, by age, for the year ending March 2011 to the year ending March 2021. This data was published alongside Homicide in England and Wales, year ending March 2021 [1]. We do not hold up-to-date data on the number of offences currently recorded as homicide by a sharp instrument, by age, for year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2010 as requested [2].

Data for year ending March 2022 will not be published until February 2023.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Offences [3] currently recorded as homicide by a sharp instrument, by age [4], year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2021 [5]

	Apr 2010 to Mar 2011	Apr 2011 to Mar 2012	Apr 2012 to Mar 2013	Apr 2013 to Mar 2014	Apr 2014 to Mar 2015	Apr 2015 to Mar 2016	Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Apr 2018 to Mar 2019	Apr 2019 to Mar 2020	Apr 2020 to Mar 2021
Number of victims											
Total	236	208	195	203	186	211	216	281	260	270	235
Under 16	14	10	9	4	6	9	6	6	7	10	8
16-17	8	7	11	10	8	11	10	14	17	13	10
18-24	40	46	38	47	44	37	51	82	61	77	54

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2021>.

2 This data may be available if you contact the Home Office directly.

3 As of 10 December 2021; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.

4 The age categories that have been used in this table are supplied by the Home Office.

5 Home Office statisticians and police forces have undertaken a review of homicide data for year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2020 to update suspect data and cancelled crimes. Totals shown in this table will not match previously published figures.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQHL58 (1) (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-10/HL58>

Hong Kong: Human Rights and Religious Freedom

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Cardinal Charles Bo of 14 May, concerning the threat to human rights and religious freedom in Hong Kong; and what discussions, if any, they have had with the Cardinal. [HL248]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Sino-British Joint Declaration is a legally binding treaty between the UK and China, and under this China committed to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and protect the rights and freedoms of its people. This explicitly includes freedom of expression and freedom of religious belief.

We continue to make clear to mainland Chinese and Hong Kong authorities our strong opposition to the National Security Law, which is being used to curtail freedoms, punish dissent and shrink the space for opposition, free press and civil society.

The FCDO meets with key stakeholders from all sides on a range of foreign policy issues.

Horizon Europe

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the UK's application to be an associated country to Horizon Europe is not delayed because of problems relating to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; what discussions they have had with universities about the financial and reputational effects of the UK not being associated with Horizon Europe; and what was the total income for UK research projects from Horizon Europe in each of the last three financial years. [HL550]

Lord Callanan: The UK stands ready to formalise our association to Horizon Europe, but there have been persistent delays from the EU, who have openly stated they are not proceeding with the UK's participation in EU programmes due to wider political issues.

The Northern Ireland Protocol and the UK's participation in Union programmes are entirely separate issues, and contained in different agreements. We are disappointed in the politicisation of valuable R&D collaboration, and continue to urge the Commission to finalise the UK's participation in Horizon as soon as possible.

Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period of uncertainty has been our top priority. The Government engages regularly with the R&D sector, including with groups and individuals representing universities across the whole of the UK.

The net EU contribution of awards won by UK beneficiaries in Horizon 2020 – the predecessor programme to Horizon Europe which made its final awards in 2021 – by year of project signature date is:

UK Awards by grant signature year € m (Excluding Euratom) [i]

Year of Grant Signature	2019	2020	2021
Grand Total	950	898	565

[i] Figures are given in million EUR. Figures in GBP change with exchange rates and cannot be accurately reported due to exchange rate volatility. Data source is the Horizon R&I projects dashboard.

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current position regarding the UK's membership of the Horizon Europe research programme and the ability of British scientists to join it. [HL590]

Lord Callanan: I refer my noble Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central on 27 April 2022 to Question 156445.

Horticulture: Migrant Workers

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue agricultural visas for picking and processing fruit and vegetables to female Ukrainian workers; and what consideration they have given to housing any such individuals in RAF Linton-on-Ouse. [HL304]

Lord Benyon: The Home Office already operates such an immigration route. The Seasonal Worker visa scheme, which has been extended to 2024, allows overseas workers to come to the UK for up to six months to harvest both edible and ornamental crops. 30,000 visas will be available in 2022, and this is being kept under review with the potential to increase by 10,000 visas if there is evidence of need.

The Seasonal Workers visa route is managed by four scheme operators. The scheme operators select, sponsor and monitor migrants, and adhere to all Home Office requirements in practice, including those on migrant safety and welfare.

Under the scheme, licenced operators can recruit workers of any nationality or gender from any EU or non-EU country, including from Ukraine.

The operators of the Seasonal Worker visa route manage accommodation arrangements and must ensure that all workers are housed in safe hygienic accommodation and many UK farms are already set up for accommodating seasonal workers on site for the spring and summer months. Only asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute will be accommodated in the new reception centre at RAF Linton-On-Ouse.

On 24 February the Government announced that all Ukrainian nationals on an existing seasonal worker visa will have their leave in the UK extended to 31 December 2022 and can now switch to the Ukraine Extension Scheme visa if eligible.

Under the Ukraine Extension Scheme those who are successful in their application can stay in the UK for up to three years and will be able to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds. Further details on eligibility can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-stay-in-the-uk-under-the-ukraine-extension-scheme>. A copy of the guidance is also attached to this answer.

Ukrainian women who are currently in the UK and have a right to work here can also access agricultural jobs through the Department for Work and Pensions' Find A Job website.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Ukraine Extension Scheme [Apply to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL304>

Hospitality Industry: Business Rates

Asked by Lord Smith of Hindhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how much money hospitality businesses saved in business rate reductions as a result of COVID-19 financial assistance in (1) 2020, and (2) 2021. [HL552]

Asked by Lord Smith of Hindhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how much money hospitality businesses are forecast to save from the 50 per cent business rate reduction during the 2022–23 financial year. [HL553]

Baroness Penn: Businesses in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sector will receive a tax cut worth almost £1.7 billion in 2022–23. This builds on over £16 billion of business rates support already provided to the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors throughout the pandemic, including a £10 billion business rates holiday for 2020–21 and a scheme worth £6 billion in 2021–22.

House of Lords: Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they consider that the QEII Conference Centre is unsuitable accommodation for the House of Lords; and what evidence they have for this. [HL358]

Lord Greenhalgh: Levelling Up is central to the Government's mission and the Government would welcome the House of Lords playing a leading role in that effort.

Peers relocating out of London during the decant would not only be a powerful symbol but a very practical way to boost local economies and ensure that lawmakers could hear directly from those beyond the capital. For this reason, the Secretary of State cannot support the use of the QEII Conference Centre, a location in the heart of Westminster, as a decant location for the House of Lords.

Housing: Courts

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value of a specialist housing court; and when they will make an announcement of their intentions regarding establishing such a court. [HL360]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government published a call for evidence in 2018 to better understand and improve the experience of people using courts and tribunal services in property cases and to consider the case for a housing court. A government response is being prepared and will be published shortly.

Immunosuppression

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will appoint a ministerial lead specifically responsible for the immunocompromised in order to improve future (1) policy, (2) communication, and (3) guidance, for that group. [HL346]

Lord Kamall: The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Vaccines and Public Health (Maggie Throup MP) has Ministerial responsibility for immunocompromised groups.

Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to (1) control infections, and (2) reduce costs, in NHS controlled hospitals. [HL165]

Lord Kamall: On 14 April 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement published the National infection prevention and control manual for England, which sets out how Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) are to be used by all staff in all settings regardless of whether infection is known to be present to ensure the safety of those being cared for, staff and visitors in the care environment. SICPs may be insufficient to prevent cross transmission of specific infectious agents. Additional precautions called Transmission Based Precautions may be required when caring for patients with known or suspected infection or colonisation. Clinical judgement and decisions should be made by staff on what additional precautions are required. A copy of the manual is attached.

The Government has set an efficiency target of 2.2% for the National Health Service, which NHS England and NHS Improvement have incorporated into planning guidance. In the draft annual plans, NHS systems have set out cost savings across a number of categories. These include temporary staffing, digital investments, purchasing of goods and services and estate running costs. There are also national programmes intended to support organisations to reduce costs, including agency staffing reductions, procurement of goods and services at a national scale and support organisations to review patient pathways to improve patient outcomes and reduce cost.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Manual [C1244_National-infection-prevention-and-control-manual-for-England_April-2022_v1.1.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-11/HL165>

Intellectual Property: Entertainers

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by Equity Stop AI Stealing the Show, published on 21 April, what assessment they have made of the effect of artificial intelligence, including AI-made performance synthetisation, on the intellectual property rights of performers and creative workers in relation to the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. [HL522]

Lord Callanan: The Government recently consulted on AI and its relationship with copyright and patents. Equity was among 88 organisations and individuals who responded to this consultation. The Government will publish its response in due course.

The UK's intellectual property framework, which includes strong protections for performers' rights, is consistently rated among the best in the world and the Government intends for this to continue. The law is kept under constant review to ensure it meets the challenges of modern technology as part of the usual policy process and as guided by the evidence.

Internet: Fraud

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the incidence, and (2) aggregate cost to victims, of online fraud; and what assessment they have made of the success of (a) the technology platforms, and (b) enforcement authorities of (i) identifying fraudulent sites or activity, and (ii) effectively countering them. [HL244]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As of March 2021, online fraud was estimated, using data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, at 58% of fraud while the volume of fraud against individuals was 4.65 million incidents. The most recent estimate (December 2021) of fraud against individuals was 5.2 million incidents. However, an estimate of online fraud for this period is unavailable at present.

The Home Office does not collate statistics regarding costs to victims of online fraud. The most recent estimate of the total cost of fraud against individuals is £4.7 bn for the FY 2015/16. The Home Office also does not measure 'success' of technology platforms and enforcement authorities in identifying fraudulent sites and activity and countering them. The Home Office works closely with the National Cyber Security Centre who launched their Suspicious Email Reporting Service in April 2020. This has already led to over 11 million reports received and the removal of over 78,000 scams and 144,000 harmful websites to date.

The Government's programme of work to tackle fraudulent online advertising in collaboration with industry includes the Online Safety Bill and the Online Advertising Programme.

Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises During Covid Restrictions

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what was the purpose of the meeting between the Prime Minister and Sue Gray in May. [HL445]

Lord True: The Prime Minister discussed the process and procedure on timings and publication arrangements. The findings and contents of the Second Permanent Secretary's independent report was a matter for her, as the Prime Minister made clear in his oral statement on 25 May 2022.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the judgment by Israel's High Court on 4 May concerning the eviction of Palestinian residents of Masafer Yatta. [HL274]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the eviction of the Palestinian residents of Masafer Yatta. [HL275]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what humanitarian support they are providing to Palestinian families evicted from their homes in Masafer Yatta. [HL276]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the eviction of Palestinian families from Masafer Yatta will have on the prospects for negotiating a two-state solution in the Middle East. [HL277]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property and the evictions of Palestinians from their homes is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Reporters Without Borders that there have been more than 140 instances of violence by Israeli security forces against journalists in Friday protests since March 2018. [HL324]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to the protection of media freedom around the world. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work. We continue to reiterate the importance of a free and open press, and freedom of expression to the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Jerusalem: Religious Freedom*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of religious freedom for (1) Christians, and (2) Muslims, in Jerusalem, especially during Jewish festivals. [HL423]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. The UK condemns all attacks on the right to freedom of religion or belief. Israel is a thriving democracy, and has made clear its commitment to freedom of religion. We encourage the Israeli Government to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all enshrined in its laws.

Land: Sales*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 28 April (HL7965), how many applications for the Community Right to Bid have been received for local land sales. [HL259]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Department does not collect this information. Councils in England are responsible for overseeing their own Community Right to Bid schemes and are not required to provide updates to Government on local applications. They are however required to make this information available locally by publishing local updates.

Landscapes Review*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to implement the recommendations of the Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs led by Julian Glover. [HL260]

Lord Benyon: The Government published its response to the Landscapes Review on 15 January. We have received over 15,000 responses to our consultation and are currently analysing the consultation responses.

Since the review was published, we have launched the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to provide funding for farmers and land managers to work in partnership with National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) teams to deliver projects on climate, nature, people and place. In the first year of the programme, more than 1,000 projects have been supported.

The Government is supporting more diverse and inclusive engagement in our protected landscapes, through programmes such as Generation Green programme, which has been funded through our Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The Government is also running green social prescribing pilots at several sites in or near protected landscapes, which will test how connecting people with nature can improve mental wellbeing.

Natural England is implementing an ambitious new landscape designation programme, which includes considering the creation of two new AONBs in the Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge, and extensions to the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs. The new programme is also exploring new approaches to improve landscapes for people and nature, particularly in and around towns and cities.

Languages: Classroom Assistants*Asked by Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many classroom language assistants were placed in maintained schools in each of the last five years; and what assessment they have made, if any, of how this compares to the numbers in independent schools. [HL340]

Baroness Barran: The department continues to welcome talented individuals to teach or train to teach in the UK, including through the Language Assistants programme. UK schools can continue to benefit from the presence of a Modern Language Assistant (MLA) by applying through the official programme managed by the British Council on behalf of the department and devolved administrations.

In the 2022/23 academic year, the department has seen a 29% increase in requests to host MLAs in the UK, from 506 to 653 MLAs supporting the teaching of languages in schools of all types across the country. The MLAs will come from 14 partner destinations worldwide.

The British Council and the department recognise the importance and impact MLAs can have in both maintained and independent schools, and therefore encourage and welcome applications from all types of educational institutions. The British Council has introduced more flexibility to make the programme more

affordable and appealing to schools, which includes flexible periods of appointment and offering schools in the UK the option to apply for shorter posts of under 6 months which reduces the overall cost.

A UK-wide breakdown of the number of British Council MLAs in maintained and independent schools over the last five years is set out below:

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Maintained</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Total</i>
2022/23	446	207	653
2021/22	371	135	506
2020/21	453	169	622
2019/20	517	175	692
2018/19	648	204	852

(Data provided by British Council, correct as of 23 May 2022).

Leasehold: Reform

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce further legislation on leasehold reform. [HL386]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government remains committed to creating a fair and just housing system that works for everyone. The Government is taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to improve fairness and transparency in the leasehold market.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 will come into force on 30 June. This means that landlords will be prevented from requiring a financial ground rent in most new long residential leases. We will also publish accompanying guidance for enforcement officers and consumers.

This is the first part of seminal two-part legislation to implement leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament.

Local Enterprise Partnerships: Finance

Asked by Lord Inglewood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what will be the funding basis for those Local Enterprise Partnerships not integrated into local authorities, bearing in mind that those which are companies limited by guarantee must meet the test of being 'going concern' as contained in company law. [HL375]

Lord Greenhalgh: As set out in the Local Enterprise Partnerships integration guidance published on 31 March 2022, Local Enterprise Partnerships will each receive £375,000 core funding for financial year 2022-23. No decision on core funding beyond 2022-23 has yet been made.

Local Government Finance: Climate Change

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they plan to give to the promotion of municipal bonds to enable residents to invest in local initiatives to reduce the impact of climate change. [HL323]

Lord Greenhalgh: DLUHC has consulted with DCMS following their work on municipal bonds for community investment.

In 2019 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport sponsored independent [research](#) (attached) into the concept of crowdfunding as a way for people to invest in Local Authority projects in their communities. The report, entitled *Financing for Society: Crowdfunding Public Infrastructure*, was published by the University of Leeds and included case studies about the use of community municipal bonds for projects including those aimed at tackling climate change. DCMS has no current plans for further promotion of this financing mechanism.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Financing for society report [Financing for Society _ The Bauman Institute - HL323.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-17/HL323>

Migrants: Domestic Abuse

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their evaluation of the Support for Migrant Victims pilot scheme. [HL303]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Tackling domestic abuse and ensuring victims receive the support they need, is a priority for this Government. Furthermore, anyone who has suffered domestic abuse must be treated as a victim first and foremost, regardless of immigration status.

In April 2021, the Home Office launched the £1.5 million Support for Migrant Victims Scheme for migrant victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The pilot, being run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners for a duration of 12 months, provides wraparound support for migrant victims of domestic abuse, including subsistence, accommodation and counselling.

We have appointed an independent evaluator, Behavioural Insights Ltd, to assess the Scheme, with a view to producing a final report later this year. The Scheme and independent evaluation will help to build the evidence-base needed to better understand the diverse needs of the migrant population, which in turn should inform any future change in policy decisions.

In the interim, as announced in our recently published Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, we will provide £1.4 million in 2022-23 to continue to fund support for migrant

victims of domestic abuse, whilst we take on board vital lessons learned from the pilot to inform future policy decisions.

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan will seek to transform the whole of society's response in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems processes in place needed to deliver these goals. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) National Statement of Expectations, and Commissioning Toolkit, which we have published alongside the Plan, will also provide support to commissioners to help them increase provision of 'by and for' and specialist services.

Military Aircraft

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is an approved staff requirement for a sixth generation manned fighter; and if so, whether the number of (1) manned aircraft, and (2) supporting Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs), has been accepted as part of the defence programme. [HL286]

Baroness Goldie: The Future Combat Air System (FCAS) is being designed to deliver sixth-generation capabilities for UK combat air, to meet the requirement for a replacement for Typhoon. The FCAS programme entered the Concept and Assessment Phase in summer 2021. This phase will define and begin design of the system, mature key technologies and invest in the skilled workforce and advanced industrial capabilities needed to deliver it, helping us to identify an optimal future force mix and enable major programme choices by 2024.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a sixth generation manned fighter and its accompanying Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) would be seen as replacing the F35B in its role as part of the carrier air-group. [HL287]

Baroness Goldie: In line with the Integrated Review, we are continuing to develop Future Combat Air System (FCAS) as a replacement for the capabilities provided by our Typhoon aircraft. Advances in technology mean it is being designed to deliver an even larger range and depth of capabilities, including greater networked interoperability with uncrewed aircraft and F-35.

Money

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people who use cash in transactions; and whether this number is (1) increasing, or (2) decreasing. [HL443]

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of (1) inhabitants, and (2) tourists, to withdraw cash whilst in the Isles of Scilly archipelago. [HL444]

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.

UK Finance's UK Payment Markets report publishes figures annually on cash use in the UK. Cash remained the second most frequently used payment method in the UK as of 2020, representing almost a fifth (17%) of all total payments made. This is a reduction from 56% a decade earlier and 23% in 2019.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) publishes data on access to cash coverage across the UK. As of the third quarter of 2021, the FCA reported that nearly 96% of the UK population are within 2km of a free-to-use cash access point.

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. The Government's planned legislation will ensure that people can continue to use cash in their day-to-day lives, and that local businesses can continue accepting cash.

Motorway Service Areas: Fuels

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations of profiteering in the retail sale of petrol and diesel, especially amongst motorway service stations; and what steps they will take to address such profiteering. [HL400]

Lord Callanan: There are rules requiring transparency of petrol and diesel prices, including at motorway service stations so that prices are displayed before fuelling commences. Consumers can then make an informed purchase decision.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently stated that it stands ready to take action should there be evidence that competition or consumer protection law has been broken in the fuel retail market, and is monitoring the evidence closely. The CMA will continue to work with BEIS to analyse developments. This work will build on the knowledge base the CMA has accumulated during some of the recent mergers it has intervened on in this sector.

National Grid

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to refit the electrical grid to handle different kinds of energy flows. [HL316]

Lord Callanan: The Government recognises that the electricity network will require substantial investment and technical evolution to deliver a clean, secure and affordable British energy system. The British Energy Security Strategy includes proposals to accelerate the delivery of network infrastructure. Later this year, the Government and Ofgem will set out their approach to transform the network in more detail through the Electricity Network Strategic Framework.

Nature Conservation

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made with the roll-out of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. [HL256]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is working to put in place the key measures necessary for preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to begin across England. We are developing regulations which will set out the process that must be followed in preparing a LNRS and guidance on what each Strategy should contain. Development of these two documents is being informed by over 400 responses we received to our consultation which closed in November as well as lessons learnt during our five LNRS pilots (report published [here](#) and attached).

We are working to identify the geographies that each LNRS will cover and appropriate "responsible authorities" to lead the preparation of each one. We have had very positive initial engagement with potential responsible authorities across the country, building towards agreeing LNRS areas and securing formal appointments later this year.

To enable these formal appointments, we are developing our financial offer for responsible authorities to ensure that they have sufficient resource to deliver their new role. We are also compiling the nationally-held data and information that we will provide to each responsible authority to help them prepare their LNRS.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

LNRS pilots: lessons learned [Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilots_lessons learned - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-16/HL256>

Asked by *Baroness Parminter*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish in full the recommendations at a species level from the Joint Nature Conservation

Committee arising from the 7th Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, submitted to Ministers on 19 April. [HL314]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: JNCC's seventh Quinquennial Review report provides the Secretary of State with independent scientific advice on proposed changes to Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. We are required to publish recommendations and advice received from JNCC, before both Houses of Parliament under Section 24(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. We will consider the recommendations carefully and the Government's response before aiming to publish JNCC's advice later this year.

Nigeria: Terrorism

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the joint report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, International Organisation for Peacebuilding and Social Justice and Christian Solidarity International Breaking Point in Central Nigeria? Terror and Mass Displacement in the Middle Belt, published in March. [HL406]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We welcome this report and its recognition that the underlying drivers of violence in Nigeria's Middle Belt are complex. The Minister for Africa visited Nigeria in February 2022 and raised rising insecurity and its impact on the Nigerian people in meetings with the Vice President, Foreign Minister and several State Governors. The Minister was pleased to be able to meet with a range of interlocutors, including faith and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) leaders, who are working towards peace in Nigeria's Middle Belt. In all these meetings, the Minister reiterated the UK's commitment to working with actors across Nigeria to address violence, protect human rights, and promote dialogue and respect between different ethnic and religious communities. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

Noise: Urban Areas

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce noise pollution in built-up areas. [HL387]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is committed to ensuring that noise is managed effectively to promote good health and minimise disruption to people's quality of life. We have strong protections in place to avoid significant noise impacts from transport, as well as in our planning system, our environmental permitting systems, in vehicle and product standards, and noise abatement legislation. Defra helps to manage noise,

mainly from transport, through the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, which aim to reduce noise exposure in the worst affected areas.

The Regulations require, on a five-year cycle:

- The determination, through noise mapping, of exposure to environmental noise from major sources of road, rail and aircraft noise including large urban areas (known as agglomerations).
- The adoption of Action Plans based upon the noise mapping results, which are designed to manage environmental noise and its effects, including noise reduction if necessary.
- Provision of information to the public on environmental noise and its effects.

The Regulations also require that the Action Plans identify 'Important Areas', where the 1% of the population affected by the highest noise levels is located. This approach has been taken in order to target mitigation efforts towards those at greatest risk of experiencing a significant adverse impact to health and quality of life as a result of their exposure to noise. These areas should then be prioritised for investigation and, where appropriate, action by the relevant transport authority or the relevant local authority depending on whether the noise is being caused by railways or roads.

The next Round of mapping is due to be completed later this year, with Noise Action Plans for Railways, Roads and Agglomeration due to be published in 2023.

Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they did not seek advice from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission regarding the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill. [HL503]

Lord Caine: The Northern Ireland Office held discussions on legacy with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on 14 April 2022. Discussions with the Commission, and other interested parties, will of course continue during passage of the Bill.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill does not refer to investigations in addition to reviews. [HL504]

Lord Caine: Investigations are a crucial part of the work of the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR). The ICRIR will, in statute, have the necessary powers to secure information and conduct thorough and robust investigations, including the power to compel witnesses and test forensic evidence.

The legislation also places an obligation on authorities with information potentially relevant to an incident to provide full disclosure to the ICRIR.

The ICRIR will have a Commissioner for Investigations, and the scope of the ICRIR's investigative process will be an operational matter for the ICRIR, and will depend on the specific circumstances of each case, including whether there is an outstanding ECHR obligation and the wishes of the family or individual.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government which crimes are eligible for the immunity process under the proposed provisions in the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill. [HL505]

Lord Caine: Only serious or connected Troubles-related offences that took place between 1 January 1966 and 10 April 1998 and are related to a death or serious injury will be eligible for immunity - conditional on cooperation with the Independent Commission as set out in legislation.

Troubles-related offences that are not linked to a death or serious injury will not be investigated by the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), and so will not be subject to immunity provisions.

Any offences from between 1 January 1966 and 10 April 1998 which are not Troubles-related could still be investigated by PSNI, or GB police forces.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have set the bar for immunity in the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill as only requiring a perpetrator to provide an account which is true to the best of their knowledge and belief. [HL506]

Lord Caine: The test for immunity, as set out in the Bill, requires an individual to make an application to the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) for immunity. The panel must then be satisfied that the individual has provided an account which is true to the best of their knowledge and belief, and which describes conduct which forms part of the Troubles.

In forming a view on whether an individual's account is true to the best of their knowledge and belief, the ICRIR must take into account any relevant information that it holds or obtains as part of that investigation. That could include information that the ICRIR obtains from witnesses or from disclosure of information from statutory agencies during the course of its investigation.

Those who do not cooperate with the ICRIR will not be granted immunity, and will remain liable to prosecution should sufficient evidence exist, or come to light.

Offshore Industry: Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose a one-off windfall tax on oil and gas producers' profits. [HL281]

Baroness Penn: The Government is introducing the Energy Profits Levy, a new 25% surcharge on the extraordinary profits the oil and gas sector is making.

The new Energy Profits Levy will raise around £5 billion over the next year which will go towards supporting people with the new cost of living measures announced by the Chancellor.

As part of the levy a new tax relief is being introduced to encourage firms to invest in the UK. The new 80% Investment Allowance will mean businesses will overall get a 91p tax saving for every £1 they invest.

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review their decision not to impose a windfall tax on energy companies in response to the increased cost of living. [HL384]

Baroness Penn: The Government is introducing the Energy Profits Levy, a new 25% surcharge on the extraordinary profits the oil and gas sector is making.

The new Energy Profits Levy will raise around £5 billion over the next year which will go towards supporting people through the new cost of living measures announced by the Chancellor.

As part of the levy, a new tax relief is being introduced to encourage firms to invest in the UK. The new 80% Investment Allowance means businesses will overall get a 91p tax saving for every £1 they invest.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to levy a windfall tax on oil and gas firms throughout the UK to address rising levels of fuel poverty. [HL449]

Baroness Penn: The Government is introducing the Energy Profits Levy, a new 25% surcharge on the extraordinary profits the oil and gas sector is making.

The new Energy Profits Levy will raise around £5 billion over the next year which will go towards supporting people through the new cost of living measures announced by the Chancellor.

As part of the levy, a new tax relief is being introduced to encourage firms to invest in the UK. The new 80% Investment Allowance means businesses will overall get a 91p tax saving for every £1 they invest.

Old Oak Common Station

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their latest estimates for the cost of the station serving Great Western, Heathrow Express and TfL train services at Old Oak Common; how many station platforms are planned; when development approval will be sought; and whether these costs related to Old Oak Common station are included in the Government's cost estimate for HS2. [HL241]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Old Oak Common will contain 14 platforms: 6 subterranean High Speed platforms and 8 conventional rail platforms for services on the Great Western Main Line.

Within the Target Cost for Phase One, the budget allocated by HS2 Ltd for the Old Oak Common station, including contingency for risk, is £1.67bn (2019 prices). A more detailed breakdown of costs cannot be provided as this information is commercially sensitive.

The High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands) Act provides the necessary powers for the station.

Pauline Wallace

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 20 May (HL131), whether they asked Pauline Wallace for information when preparing their response; and if not, whether they will now do so. [HL472]

Lord Callanan: Pauline Wallace has informed the Government that she had no involvement in the tribunal between the Accountancy Investigation and Discipline Board and PwC.

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will respond to the email from Lord Berkeley to Lord Harrington of Watford sent on 22 April concerning the visa applications GWF064118049 and GWF064118784. [HL337]

Lord Harrington of Watford: The Lord Harrington responded to the Lord Berkeley's correspondence on 19 May 2022.

Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Financial Conduct Authority has (1) collected, and (2) published, data in any of the years since 2015 showing how many members of contract-based pension

schemes have fully withdrawn their pension fund, paying more than 20 per cent in tax; and if so, how many of these had no other pension provision. [HL392]

Baroness Penn: This issue is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), who are operationally independent from the Government.

These questions have therefore been passed to the FCA who will respond by letter. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Planning Permission: Biodiversity

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a requirement to deliver biodiversity net gain will be obligatory for planning decisions under the proposed Levelling up and Planning legislation. [HL257]

Lord Greenhalgh: As the requirement for mandatory biodiversity net gain has already been introduced through the Environment Act 2021, and will be brought into force by 2023, it is not necessary to make provisions for mandatory net gain in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

We are working alongside the principles in the Environment Act 2021 to ensure that development results in environmental improvement rather than merely preventing harm. We will work with Defra to further embed this approach through updates to national planning policy, to ensure that environmental considerations feature fully in all planning decision making.

Platinum Jubilee 2022: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what events they are planning in Northern Ireland to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. [HL492]

Lord Caine: The Northern Ireland Office shares with the rest of the United Kingdom in celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen and in thanking Her Majesty for 70 years of selfless devotion to duty and leadership of our whole nation. The Northern Ireland Office worked closely to deliver and collaborate on a range of exciting projects and events to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. We saw a range of events in Northern Ireland including the lighting of beacons, Jubilee Big Lunches as well as the return of the Northern Ireland annual Garden Party that acted as a moment of celebration in this Platinum Jubilee year for people in Northern Ireland.

We also worked with a range of local organisations to develop a Jubilee hamper which showcased the best of Northern Irish produce and was sent to the Royal Household. We ran an exciting competition for young people to design a rug for Her Majesty and we also worked to profile the many organisations and individuals across Northern Ireland who have been honoured by Her

Majesty in her last 70 years. In addition, the commemorative Jubilee book was distributed to Primary Schools across Northern Ireland. We wanted to make sure that the Jubilee brought communities together, celebrating the best of Northern Ireland.

Private Education: Charities

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the requirements of charitable status on independent schools; and who ensures that those requirements are fulfilled. [HL279]

Baroness Barran: The department does not regulate the charitable status of independent schools. The Charity Commission is an independent, non-ministerial government department that has responsibility for registering eligible organisations as charities and for outlining the requirements placed on them when achieving charitable status.

The advancement of education is a charitable purpose and so independent schools are capable of being charities. Currently, approximately 50% of independent schools hold charitable status. Irrespective of charitable status or otherwise, all independent schools must always meet the same independent school standards.

Railway Stations: Greater Manchester

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Greenhalgh on 11 May (HL Deb col 98) on the £5 billion delivery of an underground station in Manchester, how many platforms the plan includes; what are the length of the tunnels connecting to the station platforms in both directions; whether any non-HS2 trains could use the underground station; what are the lengths of the platforms; and what is the overall cost estimate for the underground station and its tunnels. [HL238]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The High-Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill deposited in parliament on 24 January set out the Government's commitment for a surface station. The Bill does not contain plans for an underground station and the Government continues to consider that an enlarged (6-platform) surface station can meet requirements at substantially lower cost and construction impact than underground alternatives. These views are reflected in the Bill that has been deposited in parliament.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the (1) development, (2) construction, and (3) commissioning (a) times, and (b) costs, for the proposed underground Manchester HS2 station project; and what closures of the tram services in Manchester will be required during the construction. [HL239]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Manchester HS2 station project is for a surface station located on the same level as the existing Piccadilly Network Rail station. The HS2 surface station is based on a 6-platform surface station and will be accessed by a tunnelled route until the station approach. The Government is intent on working with HS2 Ltd to limit the level of disruption throughout construction.

HS2 Ltd expect the disruption to the Metrolink Ashton Line to last for around two years during which a bus replacement service will be provided between Ashton Cole and Manchester Piccadilly.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the overall cost for the construction of the proposed Manchester HS2 (1) surface station, (2) rail-related buildings, (3) tunnels, (4) portals, and (5) track and signalling. [HL240]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The High-Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill Business Case and Overarching Estimate of Expense provide key cost estimates for the Phase 2b Western Leg.

Railways: Timetables

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what passenger data informed the new railway timetable service from 16 May for (1) Welwyn Garden City to London, (2) Huddersfield to Wakefield, and (3) Ilkley to Bradford, services. [HL290]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Like other train operators, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and Northern are continuously reviewing services to achieve the best possible balance between passenger demand and the resources available. A range of data sources is used by the operators to build up a holistic picture of customer demand.

Refugees: Disability

Asked by Baroness Fraser of Cragmaddie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to support (1) the devolved administrations, (2) local councils, and (3) regional health authorities, to ensure that disabled refugee children have access to health and education services and support. [HL528]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Refugees, including children, have access to the statutory agencies who are responsible for social care and health issues for all UK residents.

The Government provides funding to enable local authorities, schools and health partners to provide vulnerable refugees with a safe environment and the chance to rebuild their lives.

Remote Education: Qualifications

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how academic qualifications are given online to students (1) internationally, and (2) in the UK. [HL371]

Baroness Barran: The assessment of qualifications in England is managed differently depending on the sector.

As autonomous institutions, higher education (HE) providers are responsible for determining the content of their courses and the manner in which they are taught, supervised, assessed and awarded including determining how online methods are used.

All registered providers in England must meet all the Office for Students' (OfS) revised registration conditions in relation to the quality and standards of HE, including on course design and delivery, and assessment and award, regardless of how or where teaching is delivered.

The department has made its expectation clear to HE providers in England that all students should be receiving a comparable amount of face-to-face teaching as before the COVID-19 pandemic. While virtual learning is a fantastic innovation, we are clear that it should only be used to complement and enhance a student's learning experience, not detract from it, nor should not it be used as a cost cutting exercise.

In March 2022, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced he wanted to start carefully considering the potential opportunities greater digital assessment could bring in the qualifications regulated by Ofqual, the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations, and assessments in England.

Ofqual published a report into online assessment in 2020, which included reviewing international examples and identified the key barriers to greater adoption of online and on-screen assessments in high stakes qualifications such as GCSEs and A Levels. Ofqual has also recently announced it will look at whether greater use of technology in qualifications could deliver benefits for students and apprentices in the long term. Ofqual has said it will undertake research into a number of areas as part of its new corporate plan.

The department believes technology has the potential to deliver a range of benefits in the classroom and we plan to work closely with Ofqual as this early exploratory work is undertaken.

Right to Buy Scheme

Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of awarding housing association tenants capital to buy in the private sector rather than allowing such tenants to buy their properties. [HL341]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is committed to helping housing association tenants realise their dream of

home ownership. We also believe the housing market should work for everyone including those who rent their homes and those who wish to buy them.

The Government is keeping its homeownership options under review and will announce more details in due course.

Russia: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the value of the economic support provided to Russia by Chinese state-owned enterprises. [HL336]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The world is watching what China chooses to say and do in response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We have been clear that if China wants to be seen as a responsible global actor, it should take concrete steps to show that it does not support Russia's actions. We continue to engage at all levels to urge China to use its relationship with Russia to contribute to peace and stability, and not to fuel aggression.

Russia: Orthodox Church

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to freeze the assets of the Russian Orthodox Church in the UK. [HL292]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since Russia's invasion, the UK has issued travel bans and asset freezes to over a thousand of Russia's most significant and high-value individuals and over 100 of its businesses. With our allies, we are and continue to impose the largest and most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, focusing on measures that have the greatest impact rather than the quantity. It is not appropriate to speculate on specific designations in the future. To do this could reduce the impact of the designations.

Russia: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to enact secondary sanctions against (1) Chinese state-owned companies, (2) Chinese entities, and (3) individuals, proven to establish commercial, economic or financial arrangements which would alleviate or circumvent international sanctions and export controls imposed on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. [HL289]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In lockstep with our allies, we are introducing the largest and most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, to help cripple Putin's war machine. We have now sanctioned

over 1000 individuals and over 100 entities since Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The world is watching what China chooses to say and do in response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We continue to engage at all levels to urge China to use its relationship with Russia to contribute to peace and stability, and not to fuel aggression. We do not speculate on future designations under the sanctions regime.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose sanctions on (1) Patriarch Kirill, and (2) other bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have supported (a) President Putin, and (b) the government of Russia. [HL291]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since Russia's invasion, the UK has issued travel bans and asset freezes to over a thousand of Russia's most significant and high-value individuals and over 100 of its businesses. With our allies, we are and continue to impose the largest and most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, focusing on measures that have the greatest impact rather than the quantity. It is not appropriate to speculate on specific designations in the future. To do this could reduce the impact of the designations.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the effectiveness of international sanctions against Russia, and (2) any potential gaps in those sanctions. [HL334]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: With our allies we have introduced the most significant economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced and they are having an impact. Since the invasion, the UK has sanctioned over 1,000 individuals and 100 entities, including hitting Putin's inner circle, oligarchs with a net global worth of over £117 billion under the Russia sanctions regime. Sanctions imposed by the UK and its international partners are having deep and damaging consequences for Putin's ability to wage war, with 60% (£275 billion) of Russian foreign currency reserves currently frozen. Analysis shows Russia is heading for the deepest recession since the collapse of the Soviet Union. We will continue to put more pressure on Putin's regime, including through further sanctions.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they monitor the economic support that Russia receives from other countries as part of assessing the effectiveness of sanctions; and if not, what plans they have to implement such a mechanism. [HL335]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK sanctions have been coordinated with international allies to impose severe cost on Putin and his regime. We are acting together, as our collective impact is greater than the sum of its parts. Russia seeks to have economic, diplomatic and industrial

relations with a very wide range of countries. We assess that these will be severely impacted by Russia's aggressive and unlawful actions against Ukraine.

Russia: Sequestration of Assets

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their ability to redeploy frozen Russian foreign exchange reserves held in the UK for (1) humanitarian, and (2) reconstruction purposes, in eastern Europe including Ukraine. [HL266]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On the enactment of an asset freeze, the funds and economic resources are frozen immediately by the person in possession or control of them. The release of frozen assets may be accomplished legally with a licence from the Treasury's Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation. The UK along with our allies will continue to put more pressure on Putin's regime until he withdraws his troops and ends this unjust war. Nothing and no one is off the table.

Senior Civil Servants: Overseas Workers

Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any civil servants in UK-based senior leadership roles have been working from abroad in each of the last three years. [HL302]

Lord True: The Cabinet Office does not hold departmental information about civil servants in UK-based senior leadership roles working from abroad.

In terms of departmental records, these records are not collected by the Cabinet Office, with information captured at a line manager level.

Working abroad has always been by exception in the Cabinet Office and is not permitted unless there is a specific business need or under the most exceptional of circumstances (an example of which might be where an employee's partner is a civil servant and is permanently posted abroad).

Sick Pay

Asked by Lord Dubs

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Department for Work and Pensions Health is everyone's business: Proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss, published in July 2019, what steps they have taken to bring forward its proposals (1) to allow statutory sick pay to be available from the first day of absence, and (2) to change statutory sick pay rules to help an employee returning from a period of absence to have a phased return to work. [HL246]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Health is Everyone's Business (2019) consulted on a broad package of measures related to the work and health agenda. This

included some proposals related to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

In the response to the consultation (2021), Government stated that the pandemic was not the time to introduce significant changes to SSP. As we learn to live with COVID-19, Government is continuing to take a broader look at the role of SSP and is keeping the system under review.

Social Services: Reform

Asked by Baroness Wheeler

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Infrastructure and Projects Authority has produced any analysis on their social care reforms; and if so, whether this analysis will be published. [HL467]

Lord True: IPA convened an independent assurance review of the Department for Health and Social Care's (Adult) Social Care Charging Reform Programme in March 2022, as it does at key stages for all programmes in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). It is not standard practice to publish these reviews. IPA has not produced any other analysis on the wider set of social care reforms.

Special Educational Needs

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Review. [HL307]

Baroness Barran: The department published the special educational needs and disabilities review on 29 March 2022.

We have also launched a full, accessible 16-week consultation so that everyone can have their say and the department is keen to hear from a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. We are making sure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their parents can respond, as well as people working in education, health and care, and charities and other experts.

Special Educational Needs: Appeals

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have they made of the impact of the policy set out in the SEND review which makes mediation mandatory before allowing families to go to the SEND tribunal, on levels of (1) stress, and (2) administration, for families with disabled children. [HL284]

Baroness Barran: Throughout the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review, parents and carers told us how lengthy, stressful, and often expensive, the tribunal process can be.

The department's proposals set out in the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper, which is subject to consultation, seek to enable issues to be resolved earlier and improve relationships locally by strengthening mediation, including consulting on making it mandatory.

In the current system, in most cases, families must secure a mediation certificate before registering an appeal with the tribunal, but they do not have to participate in the mediation itself. If the parent or young person does decide to proceed with mediation, then the local authority must ensure that it arranges for mediation between it and the child's parent or young person within 30 days.

Waiting for a SEND tribunal hearing can take significantly longer. The tribunal has a performance measure that 75% of appeals should be brought to a hearing and the decision issued within 22 weeks.

Mediation is effective in most cases. In 2021, 74% of mediation cases were settled without the need to progress to a tribunal. Mediation is free of charge for families.

The department will make sure there is appropriate support available to parents to help them understand the mediation process and how best to engage with it. Parents will still be able to go to a tribunal if necessary.

The green paper is now out for public consultation on its proposals until 22 July.

State Retirement Pensions: Terminal Illnesses

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Marie Curie report *Dying in Poverty*, published in May. [HL320]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Department has noted the recommendations made in the report, values Marie Curie as a key stakeholder and welcomes our ongoing constructive engagement with them and other key end of life charities on policy development in this area.

The Government is committed to improving fast tracked access to benefits for people nearing the end of their life. Recent changes to Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance regulations have replaced the current 6-month rule for determining who get this fast-tracked access with a 12-month end of life approach.

The Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Bill, introduced in the Queens Speech earlier this month, will make similar changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Attendance Allowance (AA). Collectively, these changes, will enable thousands more people who are thought to be in the final year of their life to get fast-tracked access to the benefits they are eligible for.

Tunisia: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the protests against President Kais Saied on 15 May, what assessment they have made of the political situation in Tunisia; and what discussions they have with the President on his commitment to democracy in that country. [HL427]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by President Saied's decision to dissolve Parliament and the possibility of politicians from the previous government facing criminal charges. Tunisia faces many economic and political challenges that can only be addressed through democratic engagement, transparency, the protection of human rights, and free speech. The UK has closely monitored the political situation since the changes brought in by President Saied on 25 July 2021, and we will continue to do so. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Tunis met with President Kais Saied to present her credentials in January 2022. The Ambassador welcomed the moves toward public consultation and accountability to the Tunisian people in the President's political roadmap, and shared her hope that Tunisians would achieve their aspirations for jobs, freedoms and dignity.

Universal Credit: Low Incomes

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reinstate the £20 a week uplift in universal credit to help those on low incomes. [HL326]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are no plans to reinstate the temporary increase to Universal Credit.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and these are global challenges, but the government has taken action to support and help families with a package worth over £37 billion in 2022-23. These steps help ensure that on average a person in work is £6000 better off in work than on benefits. And we stand ready to do more as the situation evolves.

Visas

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) resources, and (2) processes, they have in place to conduct due diligence on visa applications in relation to (a) national security, and (b) illicit finance, risks. [HL253]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office and wider law enforcement have resources and processes in place to ensure that the UK offers no safe space for illicit finance, nor individuals who seek to undermine UK national security. Security checks are undertaken as part of all visa applications.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the reason for the backlog in the issuing of visas in the Home Office. [HL270]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is currently prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are communicating directly with customers that applications for study, work and family visas are taking longer to process at this time. Staff are being redeployed to these visa routes, in addition we continue to onboard and train more staff, as we approach the expected summer surge in visa applications including to study in the UK.

Where there are extremely compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example, a medical emergency), the Home Office will consider expediting specific cases. However, the bar for this is high and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Visas: Russia

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Russian citizens designated under any UK sanctions regime since Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014 have held Tier 1 (Investor) visas. [HL250]

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Russian citizens designated under any Russia-related international sanctions regime imposed following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 have held Tier 1 (Investor) visas. [HL251]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not comment on national security matters, nor do we comment on individual cases.

Water: Pollution

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government why different advice is being provided for new homes construction in the Wye, Lugg and Usk catchments between Natural Resources Wales and Natural England with regard to nutrient neutrality of foul water. [HL191]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In Wales, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) acts as the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation. Natural England works closely with NRW on environmental issues but it remains NRW's responsibility to provide relevant advice in Wales. Whilst the present advice in England and Wales is tailored to the relevant local circumstances, as appropriate, NRW is currently in the process of updating its advice.

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