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Wednesday
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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

Wednesday, 8 June 2022

British Virgin Islands: Commission of Inquiry

[HLWS80]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 18 January 2021 (Hansard, HCWS716, column 32WS), The House was informed that the then Governor of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) had launched a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into claims that corruption, abuse of position and serious impropriety had taken place in public office in recent years.

On 4 April, the BVI Governor received the Report of the independent Commissioner, the Right Hon. Sir Gary Hickinbottom. The Governor announced that publication would follow in June after discussions between BVI political leaders and the UK Government on the Report's findings and recommendations. However, the arrest by US authorities on 28 April of the then Premier of BVI, Andrew Fahie, led to the Governor publishing the Report the following day.

The Report is a thorough, evidence-based assessment of the state of governance in the BVI. The Commissioner has identified serious impropriety and gross failures of governance by elected officials through several administrations is highly likely to have taken place. I have today placed copies of the Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Report makes 48 recommendations to address underlying issues including urgent reforms, investigations and medium-term measures. These will help deliver the deep change, which the people of the BVI deserve.

The Commissioner made a further recommendation, assessing that elected officials in the BVI would not deliver the essential reforms required, he reluctantly concluded that the only way to ensure required change would be for a temporary suspension of those parts of the Constitution by which areas of government are assigned to elected representatives, and the assumption of related powers by the Governor.

Since the Commissioner delivered his report there have been a number of significant developments, not least with the removal of Andrew Fahie as Premier through a vote of no confidence and the creation of the new Government of National Unity (GNU). The Governor has also ordered a number of criminal investigations, as recommended in the COI Report.

The UK and the Governor have worked with the GNU since its formation to turn its public commitments to reform into a strong implementation plan with a strict and comprehensive set of milestones that need to be met. If

they are, it will protect against corruption and ensure the return of good governance.

I believe, in the first instance, the new government should have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to reform through the implementation of the 48 COI recommendations and the further measures they have proposed.

The Governor and UK Government will monitor implementation and assess progress quarterly. Each BVI Government ministry and department will also provide a monthly report. The detailed implementation plan will be published by the GNU in due course.

If it becomes clear that this approach is not delivering the reform the people of the BVI want and deserve we will take action. This may require the swift implementation of the final Report recommendation.

In order to be able to do so quickly if required, the UK Government has submitted an Order in Council to the Privy Council that would allow this administration to be introduced. The Order will be laid in Parliament, but not brought into force. Should it prove necessary to do so, I will instruct the Governor to make a proclamation in the BVI Gazette appointing a day that the Order will come into force.

The people of the BVI want and deserve change and have made their desire for better governance clear. Elected officials know this. We want to support the new government in making this change and allow them the opportunity to reform. The Order in Council will provide the people of the BVI with complete reassurance that change will happen.

We have a duty to protect the people of BVI from corruption, criminality and poor governance. We will stand by them.

Monkeypox Virus

[HLWS81]

Lord Kamall: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid) has made the following written statement:

Following the increased prevalence of cases of monkeypox in England, and transmission within the community for the first time, I would like to inform the House that as of Wednesday 8 June 2022, the following amendments have been laid and come into force:

1. The Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 have been amended to include monkeypox as a notifiable disease in Schedule 1 and monkeypox virus as a notifiable causative agent in Schedule 2.
2. The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 have been amended to include monkeypox in Schedule 1.

The public health assessment remains that the threat to the public is low. These amendments will support the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and our health partners to swiftly identify, treat and control the disease,

and reduce potential financial barriers to overseas visitors in England who require NHS-funded secondary care services in relation to monkeypox.

Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010

From today, 8 June 2022, monkeypox is a notifiable disease and there is now an explicit legal duty on doctors to notify the “proper officer” of the relevant local authority if they see a patient they suspect of having monkeypox virus in England. While we believe cases have been reliably notified to date, this amendment puts beyond doubt the legal obligation of doctors to report cases of suspected monkeypox. Placing a legal duty on doctors to report suspected monkeypox cases, and provide the relevant patient information, will strengthen our understanding of the virus and its transmission within the UK and, if required, support the implementation of timely prevention and control measures.

We have also placed a legal duty on laboratories to notify the UKHSA if they identify monkeypox virus when they test a sample in England, by listing the virus as a notifiable causative agent. Positive laboratory samples will be an important core dataset, strengthening surveillance and helping to inform our understanding of outbreak progression and trends to underpin action. Laboratory notification will also help to identify the links between cases and act as an important contingency if case notification by doctors has not occurred.

National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (“the Charging Regulations”)

The Charging Regulations require providers of NHS-funded secondary care to make charges to people not ordinarily resident in the UK (‘overseas visitors’) except where an exemption category applies.

We have taken swift action to ensure that, should an overseas visitor in England need NHS-funded secondary care services in respect of monkeypox, they will not face any charge for them. Providing such services without charge removes a potential financial barrier to overseas visitors presenting for NHS-funded secondary care, therefore ensuring that the risk to the public’s health from infected visitors is minimised. This brings monkeypox into line with most other infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and Covid-19.

The inclusion today of monkeypox in Schedule 1 of the Charging Regulations will mean that overseas visitors will not be charged for the diagnosis and treatment of monkeypox. The Charging Regulations have also been amended so that if any charges have already been incurred during this outbreak, they must be cancelled, or, if paid, they must be refunded.

UK-Luxembourg Double Taxation Convention

[HLWS79]

Baroness Penn: My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

A Double Taxation Convention with Luxembourg was signed in London on 7 June. The Convention reflects the improvements made in the latest version of the OECD’s Model Tax Convention. The text of the Convention is available on HM Revenue and Customs’ pages of the GOV.UK website and will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. The text of the Convention will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 8 June 2022

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by *Lord Green of Deddington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to section 16 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and the government of Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership arrangement, how many refugees from Rwanda will be resettled in the UK; and over what time period they will be resettled. [HL419]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: A small number of the most vulnerable refugees in Rwanda will be resettled in the UK as part of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership.

More details on the resettlement of vulnerable refugees will be set out in due course. The partnership between the UK and Rwanda is now under way and is expected to last for at least five years.

Buildings: Disability

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the comments by the Minister for Disabled People on 18 May concerning the Government's objectives "to see past a disability to a person's potential" and "to focus on what a person can do rather than what they can't", whether they plan to require occupiers of all buildings which are open to the public to provide ramps to provide access for wheelchair users, including, but not limited to, (1) shops, and (2) pubs. [HL395]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. For existing premises, everyone can expect goods and service providers, i.e. occupiers, to anticipate making reasonable adjustments and everyone has the option of support when making a claim if they face a physical barrier.

Building Regulations require reasonable provision is made for access in all new buildings. Provisions for wheelchair users to access new public buildings, including shops and pubs, are described in the Building Regulations' statutory guidance, Approved Document M, Volume 2 which is available (attached) at the following: [Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings, volume 2: buildings other than dwellings](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Document M [Approved_Document_M_vol_2- HL395.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-23/HL395>

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of wheelchair users who are not able to get employment since all buildings which are accessible to the public are not required to have full access for wheelchair users. [HL398]

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of wheelchair users who would be able to get employment if all buildings which are accessible to the public were made fully accessible to wheelchair users. [HL399]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No such estimate has been made and nor do we hold data on the number of wheelchair users affected in this way.

We are committed to supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to live independent lives. In the Levelling-Up White Paper we announced that the UK Government will provide £1.3bn over the Spending Review 2021 period to support disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. This includes Access to Work: a demand-led, discretionary grant intended to support disabled people to move into and sustain paid employment by providing a contribution to the costs of overcoming workplace barriers. The grant is not means tested and can contribute to the disability related extra costs in the workplace that are beyond standard reasonable adjustments.

In 2017 the Government set a goal to see a million more disabled people in employment between 2017 and 2027. The latest figures released for Q1 (January to March) 2022 show that between Q1 2017 and Q1 2022 the number of disabled people in employment increased by 1.3m – meaning the goal has been met after five years.

Buildings: Safety

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage innovation in building safety technologies. [HL418]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government's priority is to ensure that all higher-risk buildings are safe. It is important that industry takes advantage of innovative technologies that can support better building safety. The Construction Playbook sets out the Government's support for innovation including digital technologies and modern methods of construction. New technology and innovation have improved productivity, quality and choice across a range of sectors and the Government wants to see the same happen in housing. We are committed to creating a dynamic market for innovative technologies in the UK to enable the development and use of effective new technologies.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by **Lord Birt**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of the take-up of a third or booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine lagging behind the take-up of first and second doses. [HL471]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made.

While vaccine effectiveness is known to wane over time, protection against the most severe disease is maintained for a longer period of time. Several studies conducted in the United Kingdom indicate that two doses of vaccine are between 65% to 95% effective at preventing symptomatic disease from the Delta variant, with higher levels of protection against severe disease including hospitalisation and death. There is some evidence of waning of protection against infection and symptomatic disease over time, although protection against severe disease remains high in most groups at least five months following the second dose.

By the week ending 22 May 2022, vaccine uptake with three doses was greater than 90% those aged 70 years old and over and 51.7% in all age groups.

Cystic Fibrosis: Mental Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Davidson of Lundin Links**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) number, and (2) percentage, of (a) children, and (b) adults, with cystic fibrosis saw a clinical psychologist within the past 12 months, for each year since 2015. [HL482]

Lord Kamall: This information is not held in the format requested. However, the following table shows quarterly data on the proportion of children with cystic fibrosis in England who saw a clinical psychologist within the 12 months prior to their latest annual review. Data is not held prior to 2019 and information on Quarter 4 in 2021/22 is not yet available.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Quarter 1	78.6%	48.7%	63.8%
Quarter 2	57.3%	37.3%	44.2%
Quarter 3	66.1%	50.0%	58.2%
Quarter 4	58.6%	55.8%	-

Source: NHS England

The following table shows quarterly data on the proportion of adults with cystic fibrosis in England who saw a clinical psychologist within the 12 months prior to their latest annual review. Data is not held prior to 2019 and information on Quarter 4 in 2021/22 is not yet available.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Quarter 1	82.2%	20.4%	33.3%
Quarter 2	72.6%	66.8%	25.4%

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Quarter 3	80.2%	59.6%	38.5%
Quarter 4	65.3%	54.6%	-

Source: NHS England

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the letter from Lord Kamall on 10 May in response to Written Question HL7920, (1) how many, and (2) what percentage, of the expanded clinical psychology intake for each of the past two years who are relevantly qualified are expected to work with adults and children with cystic fibrosis. [HL521]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not held centrally.

Doctors: Gender Recognition

Asked by **Lord Clement-Jones**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what form of risk assessment was carried out before allowing doctors to register under a new name and gender without any link between their new and old registered identities on the General Medical Council medical register. [HL477]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made as the General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator responsible for operational matters. On the registration of new identities, the GMC states that it follows an established process for doctors who are transitioning and wish to change their gender identity. This ensures there is a maintained internal link between a doctor's previous and new identity on the medical register.

Fleet Solid Support Ships: Shipbuilding

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the three Fleet Solid support ships will be ordered from UK shipyards. [HL461]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lord to the answers given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin), in the House of Commons on 26 January 2022 to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mick Whitley) in response to Question number 108625: and on 23 September 2021 to the Rt Hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones) in response to Question number 51616.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Fleet Solid Support Ships [108625 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

Fleet Solid Support Ships [51616 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-05-23/HL461>

Fuels: Excise Duties

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure the UK's petrol retailers (1) do not profiteer at the expense of the public, and (2) pass on to consumers the 5p fuel duty cut announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 23 March. [HL430]

Baroness Penn: The Government has been clear that it expects those in the supply chain to have passed the fuel duty cut through to consumers, and to ensure that drivers across the country are getting a fair deal.

The Competition and Markets Authority has been engaged about the issue and stands ready to take action, should there be evidence that competition or consumer protection law has been broken in the fuel retail market.

Health Services: Private Sector

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the level of advertising to the public of private medical services, such as screening tests, in the past three years, and (2) the impact this may be having (a) in diverting medical staff into the private sector, (b) on public health, and (c) in increased pressure on the NHS for follow-up procedures. [HL565]

Lord Kamall: No specific assessment has been made. There are established ways of working between National Health Service employers and consultants wishing to take on private practice which allow flexibility for employees without detriment to NHS patients or services. Where a patient has received the results of a private screening test and presents for NHS treatment, they would receive the appropriate care, according to the relevant clinical guidelines.

High Speed 2 Line

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated cost saving if the Golborne Link was removed from the High Speed Rail Phase 2b Western Leg project. [HL394]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As part of its work on the Economic Case for the January 2022 Update on the Strategic Outline Business Case, Government undertook a sensitivity for the removal of the Golborne Link. This estimated that the removal of the Golborne Link would be expected to reduce the overall cost range for HS2 Crewe-Manchester to £13bn to £19bn (Q3 2019 prices), a cost range reduction of £2bn to £3bn.

High Speed 2 Line: Costs

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the estimated cost of the HS2 Phase 2b Western leg in (1) January, and (2) May; and if the estimate has increased, why. [HL470]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As set out in the latest 6-monthly Parliamentary report published in March 2022, the Government has set an estimated cost range for the HS2 Phase 2b Western leg scheme of £15bn to £22bn (2019 Q3 prices). This estimated cost range has not formally changed between January and May 2022.

Immunosuppression: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of individuals who are continuing to shield due to their immunocompromised condition. [HL217]

Lord Kamall: The Government ended the shielding programme on 15 September 2021 and wrote to everyone previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable and on the shielded patient list.

We will assess of the number of individuals continuing to shield when information on Covid-19 and treatments for people in England who are at the highest risk of infection is published by the Office for National Statistics on 17 June 2022. We expect that this information will provide data to estimate the proportion of people who report they are shielding and whose immune systems mean they continue to be at high risk from Covid-19.

Infosys: Contracts

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many contracts were awarded to Infosys in the last five years by the Department of Health and Social Care; and what was the cost to the taxpayer of each of those contracts. [HL544]

Lord Kamall: The Department has not held any contracts with Infosys in the last five years. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority, an executive agency of the Department, currently holds one contract with Infosys with a value of £350,000.

Mental Health Services: Females

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many women aged (1) 18 to 25, and (2) 26 years or older, have accessed primary care mental health services in each of the last 10 years. [HL531]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mental Health Services: Prisoners

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many women in prison aged (1) 18 to 25, or (2) 26 years or older, have been (a) in receipt of mental health care, or (b) referred to mental health support, whilst in custody. [HL533]

Lord Kamall: This data is not collected in the format requested. All those entering prison receive comprehensive health screening within 72 hours and a further general health assessment within seven days of arrival. This incorporates questions to establish any mental health concerns and allows referrals to the mental health team if indicated.

Military Aircraft: Electronic Warfare

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to replicate the USN Growler capability in any UK aircraft form. [HL466]

Baroness Goldie: The F-35 Lightning aircraft undertake the Electronic Attack roles similar to the E/A-18 Growler. Fitted with the AN/APG-81 radar and AN/ASQ-239 system, the F-35 has robust electronic warfare (EW) Capabilities and can operate in the EW role utilising the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) multi-function radar. Additionally, the Typhoon radar will be upgraded later this decade with ECRS Mk2 which will also possess EA capabilities.

National Flagship: Crew

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the national flagship will be manned by the Royal Navy; and whether there will be a consequent uplift in Royal Navy manpower ceilings. [HL464]

Baroness Goldie: The National Flagship will be crewed by the Royal Navy.

Details of the composition of the crew of the National Flagship are still being developed as part of the concept and assessment phase of the project. The ship's company is anticipated to be small and this will be absorbed within current personnel figures.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 28 April (HL7855), when the cost of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre was last reviewed. [HL409]

Lord Greenhalgh: Costs are currently being reviewed in light of the delay due to the High Court judgement.

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they have published no information about the cost of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre since December 2018. [HL411]

Lord Greenhalgh: Information on costs was published in September 2021.

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 28 April (HL7856), what criteria will determine when is the appropriate time to publish further information about the cost of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. [HL412]

Lord Greenhalgh: Publication will be considered when costs are no longer commercially sensitive.

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 28 April (HL7853), what steps they took before July 2019 to (1) ascertain, and (2) secure, the ownership of Victoria Tower Gardens for the proposed UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and what assessment they made of the statutory provisions that existed relating to the use of the land. [HL413]

Lord Greenhalgh: Victoria Tower Gardens is Crown land. The feasibility of the site was discussed with key stakeholders, including DCMS, Westminster City Council, and The Royal Parks, and no technical obstacles were raised that would prevent the Memorial and Learning Centre being built in Victoria Tower Gardens.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Finance

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 28 April (HL7855), why the answer did not provide the information requested regarding (1) spending to date, and (2) further sums already committed. [HL410]

Lord Greenhalgh: The information is still being assessed.

Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Shipbuilding

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether replacements for (1) RFA Argus, and (2) HMS Scott, will be built in UK shipyards. [HL465]

Baroness Goldie: The replacement medical capability for RFA Argus is being considered in the scope of the Multi Role Support Ship (MRSS) which is due to enter Service in the early 2030s.

Regarding the replacement for HMS Scott, the new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance (MROS) programme is in its concept and assessment phase. Options for the procurement strategy and the project schedule are under development, but no firm decisions have yet been made.

The National Shipbuilding Office will seek to maximise the opportunity for UK Industry within both of these programmes, within the boundaries of our international and legal obligations.

Pornography: Internet

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Online Safety Bill will ensure that commercial pornography websites do not carry any illegal content, such as (1) extreme pornography, or (2) prohibited images of children. [HL434]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Online Safety Bill will address the widespread availability of (1) sexually violent, or (2) abusive pornography, online that would not be approved for sale on DVD. [HL435]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Online Safety Bill principally applies to services that allow users to post content online or to interact with each other, and to search engines. Where commercial pornography websites facilitate user-generated content, they will have to deliver the illegal content duties under the Bill and, where the service is likely to be accessed by children, to protect them from harmful content. These will ensure that all platforms in scope of the Bill tackle illegal user-generated content on their services, including extreme pornography and prohibited images of children.

Where the illegal content is not user-generated but rather is created and published by the relevant company on its own site, then that website service is likely to be committing an offence so will potentially be liable for prosecution. Part 5 of the Bill creates a new duty on providers of published pornography, which includes some dedicated commercial pornography websites, to protect children from accessing pornographic content.

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Online Safety Bill will contain provisions to enable Ofcom (1) to proactively investigate pornography websites' compliance with the law, and (2) to take swift enforcement action where necessary. [HL436]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Ofcom will have a range of robust powers at its disposal to help it assess compliance with the Bill. Ofcom will have the power to

require information from regulated companies and relevant third parties, to interview employees, to require a company to undertake, and pay for, a skilled person's report, to enter and inspect companies' premises, and to carry out audits on services to assess compliance. Ofcom will need to take a proportionate approach in exercising these powers, and will be able to use information from a wide range of sources to help prioritise its investigation and enforcement activity.

Ofcom will also have robust enforcement powers to take action against companies which fail to comply. Those powers will include being able to require companies to take action to come into compliance or remedy any breach, impose fines and, in exceptional circumstances, to apply to the Court for business disruption measures to block or restrict access to non-compliant services. The Bill also provides for interim business disruption measures, which will provide a fast track, where appropriate, to blocking measures.

Proceeds of Crime: Nigeria

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will refrain from releasing any funds from the Abacha loot until concerns relating to corruption within the government of Nigeria are allayed; and whether they will commit to publishing a copy of any agreements reached on the transfer of the funds relating to the Abacha loot. [HL407]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the article by Bloomberg UK 'U.S. to Proceed with Case to Seize Nigerian Governor's Funds', published on 8 March, what steps they will take to ensure that the Abacha loot held in the UK will not end up in the hands of criminals. [HL408]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). In line with the UK's framework for transparent and accountable asset return, the UK ensures consistency, transparency and accountability in its process for returning funds to other countries.

The UK will always sign a case-specific agreement with the relevant country detailing the steps that the recipient Government will take to ensure the funds are put to their intended use.

All agreements which oversee the return of funds abroad are published on gov.uk

The NCA's recent recovery of \$23,439,724.98 from the associates and family of former Nigerian Head of State, General Sani Abacha, was carried out following a request from the US Department of Justice (USDOJ). As such, the Home Office will transfer the funds in this case to the USDOJ.

Regional Planning and Development: South West

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how are the (1) Isles of Scilly, and (2) Lundy Island, accommodated in the Levelling Up agenda. [HL442]

Lord Greenhalgh: As highlighted in the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government's central mission is to spread opportunity more equally across the country and bring left behind communities up to the level of more prosperous areas.

The South West is already benefiting from investments to boost living standards, spread opportunity, restore local pride, and empower local leaders, which includes:

- Investments through the Levelling Up Fund in the Isles of Scilly for key projects, including the upgrade of ferries;
- £200 million for the British Business Bank to provide a new fund for the South West, building on the success of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Investment Fund;
- Allocations for the £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), empowering local communities to invest in their priorities and build pride in place; and
- The establishment of three Institutes of Technology covering the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and Heart of South West LEP areas.

Schools: Energy

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to decrease energy costs in schools. [HL456]

Baroness Barran: The government is committed to reducing energy use in new and existing buildings, and to meeting the legislative net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050.

The department's capital funding and programmes help both to reduce carbon emissions and to save schools money on operating costs, through delivering new school buildings and improving the existing school estate.

The department recognises that schools will be facing cost pressures in the coming months, particularly due to the increase in energy prices. We are looking carefully at how this will impact schools and are considering what additional support we could offer.

The department has contacted all schools in England to get basic data on their current and future energy tariffs to better understand how they have been affected by recent energy price increases, so we can consider what additional support we can offer. The survey closed on 2 June 2022.

The department's schools resource management tools include recommended deals for energy costs and ancillary services relating to energy. We will also update and strengthen guidance on a regular basis to inform schools

of the market and commercial position, with practical advice on exiting existing and entering new contracts, available here: <https://www.get-help-buying-for-schools.service.gov.uk/procurement-support>. The 'get help buying for schools' service will also be able to offer support to schools in switching and entering new contracts and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-a-dfe-approved-framework-for-your-school>.

The department knows that every school's circumstances are different, and where schools are in serious financial difficulty, they should contact their local authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Sewers

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) sewerage capacity in the UK, (2) the need to increase capacity in line with population projections, and (3) the ability of privatised water companies to invest and deliver the capacity required. [HL441]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Under section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, sewerage undertakers have duties requiring them to provide, improve and extend their networks to ensure their area is properly drained.

Recognising the importance of having a robust drainage system both now and for future demands, a new statutory duty through the Environment Act 2021 will require water companies to produce comprehensive Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans from spring 2023. The first cycle of non-statutory planning is under way with draft plans being consulted on this summer, and final plans due spring 2023.

Sewerage companies are working with other risk management authorities to produce these plans, which will provide a full assessment of the condition and capacity of their networks and enable development of collaborative solutions. Statutory duties will better ensure companies identify long-term infrastructure needs and set out how they will manage and develop their sewerage networks.

Under the Water Industry Act, Ofwat has a statutory duty to ensure that companies can finance their functions, including those related to their statutory obligations.

Shipping: Procurement

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the ocean research ship will be ordered; and whether it will be built in a UK shipyard. [HL462]

Baroness Goldie: The new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance programme is in its concept and assessment phase. Options for the procurement strategy and the

project schedule are under development, but no firm decisions have yet been made.

No precise date has yet been set for the entry into service of the Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship.

The National Shipbuilding Office will seek to maximise the opportunity for UK Industry with this programme, within our international and legal obligations.

Sky Lanterns

Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ban sky lanterns. [HL424]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Research from 2013 showed that, whilst the overall environmental impact of sky lanterns was minor, they could pose a significant fire risk. Stakeholders have reported the risks have subsequently risen, and, as a result, we are commissioning new research to understand the risk they pose. This is expected in due course, and will allow for the Government to consider what further action might be justified.

Social Services: Fees and Charges

Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that chargeable adult social care users, particularly those who are elderly or who have a disability, do not face action from aggressive debt recovery agencies if they fall behind with care payments. [HL592]

Lord Kamall: Each local authority is responsible for managing its debt recovery processes under the Care Act 2014. All debt recovery systems should be designed with a full understanding of the needs and capacities of the local population, including how different approaches may impact a person's wellbeing. Local authorities also have a general duty to promote a person's wellbeing and consider whether debt has accrued due to factors outside of their control.

Special Educational Needs

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of budgets allocated to Special Educational Needs in England in each of the last five years since 1 April 2017. [HL446]

Baroness Barran: In response to the department's assessment of the extra demands on the high needs budget, which covers children and young people with more complex special educational needs (SEN), there have been increases to high needs funding allocations to

local authorities in England in the last five years, as shown in the table below. Furthermore, the department was able to announce last December that overall high needs funding for children and young people with complex needs is increasing in this financial year by £1 billion to over £9 billion. This includes a small amount of funding that is not allocated to local authorities.

Local authorities have also increased the notional amounts allocated to mainstream schools for their pupils with lower level SEN, and to meet costs up to £6,000 per pupil for those with high needs, and these are also included in the table below.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Total high needs funding allocations to local authorities (£ million)</i>	<i>Mainstream school notional SEN budget totals (£ million)</i>
2017-18	5,827	3,148
2018-19	6,115	3,693
2019-20	6,279	3,945
2020-21	7,063	4,117
2021-22	7,906	4,316
2022-23 (including supplementary funding)	8,981	Due to be published later this year

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect on the level of support for (1) disabled children, and (2) families, of the proposed policy change in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) review to decide the services disabled young people receive on the basis of a new national banding system. [HL491]

Baroness Barran: The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper sets out the department's proposals to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy, and productive adult lives. The proposals aim to drive national consistency in how needs are assessed, identified, and met across education, health, and care, through the introduction of national standards.

The department wants to ensure the most effective use of the investment in high needs funding and the proposal for a national framework of funding bands is to allow far greater consistency in funding arrangements throughout the system. We are consulting on how best to develop a national framework for funding bands and tariffs, to make it easier for children and young people, and their families, to understand not only the provision they can access locally, but also the funding levels that provision would attract, giving them greater assurance that their child's needs will be met appropriately.

Streaming

*Asked by **Baroness Merron***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what information gathering powers they intend to give to Ofcom to assess streaming services' audience protection arrangements; and whether they will ask Ofcom to assess whether platforms are basing age ratings on UK standards to prevent children seeing inappropriate programmes. [\[HL437\]](#)

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Ofcom will be given the necessary information-gathering and enforcement powers to fulfil a new ongoing duty to assess Ofcom-regulated video-on-demand providers' audience protection measures and ensure that the systems put in place are effective and fit for purpose. As the independent regulator, it will be for Ofcom to determine how that assessment is carried out.

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