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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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<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 Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
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, 29 June 2022

A Plan for Digital Health and Social Care

[HLWS155]

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

I would like to inform the House that [A Plan for Digital Health and Social Care](#) has been published today. This document sets out how we will build a more digitised, more efficient and more personalised health and care system.

Earlier this year, I made a speech setting out my four priorities for reform in health; prevention, personalisation, people and performance. We cannot deliver the change we need to see, unless we embrace the opportunities from digital technologies.

We are now embarking on a transformative programme of reforms that will make sure the NHS is set up to meet the challenges of 2048, not of 1948, when it was first established, and also to make the vital changes that are so urgently required in social care.

On 13 June we published a strategy for a data-enabled health and social care sector, [Data Saves Lives](#), which draws on lessons learned about the power of data from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data Saves Lives includes a range of commitments that will help connect systems and details how we will use data flowing through the digitised health and social care system to continually improve services while maintaining the highest standards of privacy and ethics.

The long-term sustainability of health and social care is dependent on having the right digital foundations in place, and so digital transformation is crucial in achieving and delivering these reforms.

This Plan sets how the delivery of health and social care will change, taking forward what we have learnt from the pandemic, and from tech pioneers across the world. The aim is something that we can all get behind: a health and social care system that will be much faster and more effective, and delivers more personalised care.

Digital is not, and will not, be the only means of access to health and social care services, but through it we can ensure that the needs and preferences of individuals are reflected in the services we provide.

Health and social care organisations and partners from industry can use the Plan to help shape their strategies to digitally transform services for their populations.

The NHS App will be at the heart of these plans. We saw during the pandemic how people grasped the opportunity to have healthcare at their fingertips.

I am determined to make this app the front door to NHS services, and this Plan shows how we will add an array of new features over the coming months and years, with new

functionality and more value for patients every single month. My vision is one in which the app is an assistant in your pocket and a permanent feature of how we do healthcare in this country.

With digitised services and a connected system that supports integration and harnesses the power of data, technology can create a transformed health and social care system that is more responsive to the needs and preferences of all people, identifies and reduces health disparities and delivers improved outcomes for everyone.

We have already made huge progress. Over 28 million people now have the NHS App in their pocket, over 40 million people have an NHS login, and most NHS trusts have an electronic patient record system in place. This is on top of unprecedented investment in the digitisation of adult social care, including £150 million of funding for digital adoption that we announced in our recent White Paper.

This Plan sets out the next chapter of this story of digital transformation. It sets out a vision of how we will build a more connected and much more efficient system.

The opportunities offered by digital transformation are huge, with benefits over the next decade running to billions of pounds in efficiencies, economic growth and private investment.

That Plan includes a raft of other initiatives, £2 billion of funding to support electronic patient records to be in all NHS trusts, and help over 500,000 people to use digital tools to manage their long-term health conditions in their own homes.

Just as we are putting the right technology in place, we also need to make sure that people are confident and supported in using it. The Plan also shows how we will relentlessly focus on digital skills, leadership and culture as well as building patient trust, at all levels, so we can make transformation durable right across the board.

This agenda matters more than it did when this pandemic began. I am determined to use the power of technology and the skills, leadership and culture that underpins it, to drive a new era of digital transformation. So that our health and care system, and our country, will thrive long into the future, delivering vast benefits for patients.

I will deposit a copy of the Plan in the Libraries of both Houses.

European Train Control System

[HLWS157]

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

I am pleased to announce over £1bn investment in the East Coast Digital Programme, which aims to introduce the European Train Control System (ETCS) to the Southern section of the East Coast Mainline.

European Train Control System, also known as digital signalling, brings signalling onto a screen in the train's

cab. This provides drivers with continuous real time information, for example maximum allowable speeds, and removes the need for line-side signals. Trackside sensors are retained to track the train on the network and support adaptive decision making, through assessing and understanding that particular train's characteristics such as speed and braking distance. This investment will fund the fitment of trains and lineside technology on the stretch of line from London King's Cross to Stoke Tunnel, just North of Peterborough, as well as the integration of this technology into the network and its operating companies.

This will be the first deployment of European Train Control System on a mixed-use mainline in the UK rail network, increasing punctuality and reliability for both passenger and freight services across the whole line. Trains will be able to run closer together safely, enabling more services to run on the same stretch of track. Fewer signalling failures and faster recovery from any delays will make the service more reliable for the customer.

This programme of work presents a unique opportunity to enable a positive step-change in technology on the network, with a move away from systems of signalling that emerged from Victorian times, and towards a high-performing digital alternative. As the rail sector continues to recover from the pandemic, it is vitally important that capacity and reliability are both increased in a financially viable way as demand returns.

This large upfront investment in the rail sector also presents an opportunity for savings in the long run, as maintenance of these assets is more affordable across the whole life of the signals. Furthermore, this programme will create approximately 5,000 highly skilled jobs in the rail industry.

Initial enabler projects have already begun, including the fitment of trains and some infrastructure on the Northern City Line, with works to continue through the 2020s.

This major investment is symbolic of this government's ongoing commitment to modernising our railways, making them fit for the 21st century. Deployment of this innovative technology for the first time on a mixed-use mainline in the UK will deliver improvements for the user, support the creation of a financially sustainable railway and also grow and level up the economy by delivering an upgrade to this vital economic artery which stretches along the spine of this country.

Industrial Development Act 1982: Use for Coronavirus-related Assistance

[HLWS151]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Industry) has today made the following statement:

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as coronavirus-related under the Coronavirus Act. This statement fulfils that purpose.

The statement also includes a report of the movement in contingent liability during the quarter. Hon. Members will wish to note that measures such as Local Authority grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and tax measures such as the suspension of Business Rates are not provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and hence are not included below.

This report covers the fourth quarter of 2021, from 1 October to 31 December 2021, in accordance with the Coronavirus Act.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has a negative expenditure in the fourth quarter of 2021 because the process to recover grant money underspent by applicants began in October 2021.

The Written Ministerial Statement covering the third quarter of 2021 was published on 7th March 2022.

Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of assistance designated as Coronavirus related provided in each relevant quarter. In the period from 1 October to 31 December 2021, the following expenditures were incurred:

Actual expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 1 October to 31 December 2021	£207,341,876
Actual expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 25 March 2020	£3,825,302,126

Expenditure by Department

Actual expenditure of assistance from 1 October to 31 December 2021 provided by:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	£199,303,263
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	-£213,724
Department for Transport	£8,252,337

Contingent liability under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 1 October to 31 December 2021	£1,863,365,448
All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020	£74,541,176,467

Newsquest/Archant Merger

[HLWS154]

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

On 18 March 2022 local news publisher Newsquest Media Group Limited (“Newsquest”) acquired Archant Community Media Limited (“Archant”).

On 26 April the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) wrote to Newsquest Media Group Limited (“Newsquest”) and Archant proprietor, RCapital, to inform them that I was ‘minded to’ issue an Intervention Notice. I outlined that public interest grounds specified in section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002 may be relevant to the transaction - in particular, the need for, to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable, a sufficient plurality of views in newspapers in each market for newspapers in the United Kingdom or a part of the United Kingdom.

In line with the statutory guidance on media mergers, the ‘minded to’ letter invited further representations in writing from the parties. I have now come to a final decision, which needs to be made on a quasi-judicial basis, on whether to issue an Intervention Notice.

In light of the new information provided to me by the parties to the merger, I have decided not to intervene in the merger. The information provided by the parties addressed my concerns regarding the potential grounds for a public interest intervention, including the need, to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable, for a sufficient plurality of views in newspapers in each market for newspapers in the United Kingdom or a part of the United Kingdom.

Officials have written to Newsquest and RCapital to inform them that, without prejudice to my ability to intervene if new or additional information comes to my attention, I do not intend to intervene in the merger on media public interest grounds.

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 Codes of Practice: Consultations

[HLWS153]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Security and Borders (Damian Hinds) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Proceeds of Crime Act contains a comprehensive package of measures designed to make the recovery of unlawfully held assets more effective. The operation of certain powers within POCA are subject to guidance in various Codes of Practice issued by the Home Secretary, the Attorney General and the Advocate General for Northern Ireland, the Department of Justice and Scottish Ministers.

An existing Code of Practice needs to be updated to reflect changes made to the UWO regime following the commencement of the expedited Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act (EC(TE) Act) on 15th May 2022.

POCA provides that before a revised Code of Practice is issued, I must consider any representations made and modify the Codes as appropriate, and subsequently lay the Codes before Parliament for approval.

I intend to consult on changes to the following Code of Practice:

The Investigations Code of Practice issued under s.377 of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance for investigators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

My rt hon Friend the Attorney General will also launch a consultation in tandem with this one, to seek a view on one further Code, which provides guidance for prosecutors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I will arrange for a copy of the consultation on the Investigations Code of Practice to be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

The Attorney General will arrange for a copy of the consultation on the Code providing guidance for prosecutors to be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Following the introduction of the upcoming Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill, I will launch another consultation on further changes to the same Code in relation to new powers to support the recovery of cryptoassets.

I then intend to lay a statutory instrument to issue an updated Code of Practice under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to reflect both sets of changes once the ECCT Bill is in force.

Road Safety Investigation Branch

[HLWS156]

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

I wish to inform the House that my Department has today published its response to the Government consultation on establishing a Road Collision Investigation Branch.

This government is committed to improving road safety and reducing the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on our roads each year. I am pleased to announce that the Government intends to bring forward new measures to enable the creation of the Branch which, following discussions with stakeholders will be named the Road Safety Investigation Branch.

This independent, safety-focused Branch will learn the lessons from road collisions and other incidents including those involving self-driving vehicles, by carrying out independent investigations and making recommendations to prevent future incidents, make our roads even safer and save lives across the country. The Branch will also

provide vital insight into safety trends related to new and evolving technologies, which will help ensure road safety policy keeps pace with new developments.

We expect to include measures to enable creation of the Branch in the forthcoming Transport Bill.

Short-term Holiday Letting in England: Call for Evidence

[HLWS152]

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

The Government is today publishing a call for evidence looking at short-term and holiday letting in England. This call for evidence will improve the evidence base on the tourism sector, gathering views and information on a range of issues related to short term lets. This will improve the Government's understanding of the benefits and challenges of the increase in short-term and holiday letting in England in recent years, and will help us to determine whether there are options the government should pursue through a formal consultation, in line with commitments set out in the Tourism Recovery plan which was published in June 2021.

The guest accommodation sector has changed significantly over the last fifteen years, both within England and across the world. In particular, there has been a major expansion in the number and range of accommodation suppliers operating in the market, driven by the growth of online platforms. Whilst such platforms provide a new route to market for many forms of guest accommodation, it is the increase in short-term letting of

residential premises through them that is perhaps the most notable development.

The sharing economy has brought many benefits, both to the tourism sector and the wider economy, but also to individual homeowners by creating an additional income stream, and to consumers by broadening the range of available accommodation. However the Government also recognises that the rise in short-term and holiday letting has prompted a range of concerns. These include the impact on the housing market and local communities, particularly in tourism hotspots, and a sense that new entrants in the market are not being held to the same health and safety standards as traditional operators of guest accommodation such as hotels and bed and breakfasts. Many other countries and cities have introduced measures in recent years in response to some of these issues. As the tourism sector recovers from COVID-19, the government believes that now is the right time to assess the picture in England.

The call for evidence will allow us to collect information on this important issue, and if necessary develop proportionate, evidence-based policy options for a possible future consultation. I am also cognisant of commitments in the Levelling Up White Paper to explore proposals for introducing a National Landlord Register in England, and my Department will continue to work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ensure the government is joined up in identifying the right solutions for each sector.

The Government is keen to hear from all interested parties, including hosts, guest accommodation businesses, online peer-to-peer platforms, enforcement agencies and tourism representative bodies. I will place a copy of the call for evidence in the libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 29 June 2022

Afghanistan: Refugees

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 26 May (HL Deb col 1011) that efforts to evacuate individuals from Afghanistan continue, what is the budget for the evacuation; how many staff are dedicated to it; and for how long it will continue. [HL974]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since Operation Pitting the UK has supported over 4,600 people to leave Afghanistan. As part of a cross-government effort, the FCDO remains committed to the resettlement of eligible Afghan citizens in the UK through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) schemes. The FCDO's share of that effort, which is under constant review, currently involves 30 staff in the UK and our network of Posts in the region, as well as support to eligible Afghan citizens in third countries while they undergo checks before being issued UK visas. The funding for this financial year will depend on the rate at which eligible Afghans are able to leave Afghanistan, which is difficult to predict. Our efforts continue while eligible Afghans require support to travel to the UK.

Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the EU's request in September 2021 for consolidated versions of Sanitary and Phytosanitary legislation integrating recent amendments to be made available as soon as possible, when they intend to make these versions available to the relevant Trade Specialised Committee. [HL949]

Lord Benyon: We have informed the EU that consolidated versions of legislation are publicly accessible on www.legislation.gov.uk and are made available as soon as possible.

Agriculture: Capital Investment

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Benyon on 8 June (HL Deb col 1151), what steps they are taking to ensure that private sector investment in the natural environment is carried out with "the proper social underpinning". [HL820]

Lord Benyon: The Government has an ambitious target to raise at least £500m a year of private finance for nature's recovery by 2027 and £1 billion by 2030. We are developing a number of tools to support that target, including standards and frameworks to ensure

investments are robust and credible, as well as taking appropriate account of factors such as local community impacts. We intend to set out more detail on this work shortly, however in the interim there are several policies that aim to address this for current investments.

For example, the UK Woodland Carbon Code provides a robust, internationally recognised standard for investment in new woodland creation. The Woodland Carbon Code includes a requirement to adhere throughout the lifetime of projects to the social aspects of sustainable forest management set out in the UK Forestry Standard. This includes taking action to safeguard against negative social outcomes, as well as to manage for positive social outcomes. Furthermore, any large or commercial woodland creation projects would require an Environmental Impact Assessment which requires a public consultation.

Under our COP26 Presidency, the Government has supported action to raise standards for voluntary carbon markets. This includes the international Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative, which published its draft Code of Conduct on 7 June.

Agriculture: Vacancies

Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent agricultural products from rotting because of a lack of agricultural workers. [HL944]

Lord Benyon: The Government recognises the importance of a reliable source of seasonal labour for crop picking and packing, and that it is a key part of bringing in the harvest for the horticultural sector.

On 24 December 2021, the Government announced that the seasonal worker visa route will be extended to 2024 to allow overseas workers to come to the UK for up to six months to harvest both edible and ornamental crops. This will provide a greater degree of certainty to the sector after a series of annual pilots between 2019 and 2021. An initial allocation of 30,000 visas was made available for 2022.

We have just announced in the Food Strategy that the Government will release an extra 10,000 visas for the Seasonal Worker visa route (bringing the total to 40,000 visas for 2022) with 8,000 of these going to the horticulture sector and 2,000 to the poultry sector. Further information on the operational details will be provided very soon.

We have also been working closely with the operators of the Seasonal Worker visa route to ensure that they can source potential workers in spite of the war in Ukraine. Operators are currently confident that they will be able to replace affected workers by recruiting from other countries.

The recently announced Food Strategy addresses the challenges faced by the food and farming sector, including a commitment to deliver an independent review to tackle labour shortages in the food supply chain,

considering the roles of automation, domestic labour and migration routes.

Defra's Review of Automation in Horticulture will also be published in early summer, to be followed by a formal Government response. Defra continues to work with other Government departments to ensure that opportunities for domestic recruitment are optimised.

Airports and Ports: Standards

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the delays and cancellations experienced by passengers at (1) airports, and (2) ports, in the UK. [HL996]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The aviation industry operates in the private sector, therefore it is the responsibility of the industry to manage demand, recruit and roster staff and have appropriate mitigations in place.

The Secretary of State and Minister for Aviation have made clear to the industry that the level of disruption that aviation passengers have faced is unacceptable and cannot be repeated.

Since the beginning of the year, Ministers and Officials have and will continue to extensively engage with the sector to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the industry. We have taken action in a range of areas, including security alleviations, skills, recruitment and consumer rights to support the aviation industry. On 21 June the Government laid regulations before Parliament that will give airlines a one-off "amnesty" on airport slots rules, allowing them to hand back slots ahead of the summer peak. This will give airlines a short window to hand back slots for the rest of the summer season that they are not confident they will be able to operate.

The Department has established a Strategic Risk Group that meets weekly and Chaired by the Aviation Minister and attended by industry CEOs. This group holds industry to account for delivering a robust service working jointly with them were appropriate to deliver solutions. In support there is a senior officials Summer Resilience Group chaired by DfT with Home Office and industry operational leaders, and a Task and Finish group to support information and communications for consumers.

The Aviation Minister also regularly engages with Minister Hinds, Minister of State and Security to address possible issues at the border, jointly hosting an aviation industry roundtable 12 May providing industry with a comprehensive update from Border Force on their preparations.

The Department and Civil Aviation Authority jointly wrote to the aviation industry 14 June to outline the five priorities for minimising further disruption over the summer. These being that airlines must review schedules to make sure that they are deliverable, that everyone in the sector must collaborate on resilience planning, that passengers are informed of their consumer rights and if

necessary compensated in good time, that assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers is to a high standard and that safety and security must never be compromised.

The Department recognises that there are always significant numbers of passengers at peak time departing from Dover by ferry to the Continent and Officials continue to work closely with the Port of Dover and the ferry operators to ensure that passengers face minimal delays in boarding, as well as with the Kent Resilience Forum planning in order to ensure that the right traffic management arrangements are applied.

Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Alcohol Health Alliance Contents unknown: How alcohol labelling still fails consumers, published in June; particularly the finding that only 65 per cent of alcohol products sampled contained accurate and up-to-date reporting of the UK Chief Medical Officers' advice on consumption; and what steps, if any, they will take to respond to the report. [HL975]

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce compulsory nutrition labelling for alcoholic drinks. [HL976]

Lord Kamall: We welcome the Alcohol Health Alliance's report. The Government has announced its intention to consult on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on pre-packed alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses, such as pubs and restaurants. The consultation will also seek views on whether the provision of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis. Respondents to the consultation can also suggest additional labelling requirements for consideration, such as ingredient listing. The Department continues to promote the low risk drinking guidelines through public health messaging, including the 'Better Health' campaign and the Drink Free Days app.

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to require (1) calorie, and (2) sugar, content labels on alcoholic drinks. [HL978]

Lord Kamall: The Government has announced its intention to consult on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on pre-packed alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses such as pubs and restaurants. The consultation will also seek views on whether the provision of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis. Respondents to the consultation can also suggest additional labelling requirements for consideration, such as ingredient listing.

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Alcohol Health Alliance UK's report Contents unknown: How alcohol labelling still fails consumers, published in June, what plans they have for improving consumer knowledge on the potential health impacts of alcohol consumption. [[HL1088](#)]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Alcohol Health Alliance UK's report Contents unknown: How alcohol labelling still fails consumers, published in June, what plans they have to improve the public's awareness of the Chief Medical Officers' low-risk drinking guidelines. [[HL1089](#)]

Lord Kamall: The Government has announced its intention to consult on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on pre-packed alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses, such as pubs and restaurants. The consultation will also seek views on whether the provision of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis. Respondents to the consultation can also suggest additional labelling requirements for consideration. The Department continues to promote the low risk drinking guidelines through public health messaging, including the 'Better Health' campaign and the Drink Free Days app.

Animal Breeding: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the difficulties in exporting farm animals for breeding purposes to the EU because of a lack of facilities to take them; and what steps they will take to ease the export of such animals. [[HL998](#)]

Lord Benyon: The construction and management of live animal Border Control Posts (BCPs) in the EU are commercial activities, and it falls on EU countries and competent authorities to approve the designation and operation of such facilities. As such, Defra is supporting National Farmers' Union and other industry bodies' efforts to push for the construction and designation of an appropriate BCP for livestock; specifically, through data collection and sharing to support the commercial case for such a facility, and through diplomatic channels to support the designation and approval process.

Animals: Imports

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to reduce the number of animals that can be brought into the UK in non-commercial vehicles. [[HL989](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We have introduced the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill into Parliament. This Bill includes a provision to reduce the number of pet dogs, cats and ferrets that can travel in one non-commercial movement from five per person to five per vehicle, or three per person if they are a foot passenger.

The Bill also includes a power to make regulations about the importation of pet animals into Great Britain for the purpose of promoting animal welfare. This will allow us to bring in new restrictions on the commercial import and non-commercial movement of pets on welfare grounds such as: increasing the minimum age that dogs can be moved for non-commercial purposes, or commercially imported, into Great Britain; prohibiting the importation of heavily pregnant dams, and dogs which have been subjected to low welfare practices such as ear cropping or tail docking. Under our proposals volumes would drop further if animals can no longer travel into Great Britain if they are not compliant with these new restrictions.

The Bill was successful in obtaining a carry-over motion on 25 April and was reintroduced in Parliament on 11 May 2022 following the Queen's speech. We are preparing for Commons report stage which will take place as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Apprentices: Construction

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to reinstate the practical 4-year apprentice scheme for the building industry in light of the reduction in skilled workers in this sector since the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL1032](#)]

Baroness Barran: This is a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. I have asked its Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, to write to the noble Lady and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Apprentices: Technology

Asked by Baroness Uddin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there is a deficit in the number of apprenticeships in the technology sector. [[HL1068](#)]

Asked by Baroness Uddin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to secure to the co-operation of small and large technology organisations to facilitate opportunities for apprenticeships in that sector. [[HL1069](#)]

Baroness Barran: The department continues to work in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture,

Media, and Sport and support their newly launched strategy to make the digital economy more inclusive, competitive, and innovative by supporting the growth of Digital, Cyber, and Artificial Intelligence strategies.

The department recognises the important role that small and medium sized employers (SMEs) play in creating apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for younger people and those in disadvantaged areas. On 1 June, we reset the reservation levels for all employers who do not pay the levy to zero. This means that employers will be able to make up to 10 new reservations to fund new starts.

Furthermore, we have just published a tender calling for suppliers to engage with SMEs, to encourage more apprenticeship starts. We are using this SME Pathfinder to improve opportunities for individuals and productivity for SMEs in sectors and areas of the country where these are needed most.

Employers in the digital sector have developed 26 high-quality apprenticeships standards including: level 3 Data Technician, level 4 Software Developer and level 7 Artificial Intelligence Data Specialist.

In the 2020/21 academic year there were 14,760 apprenticeship starts in the Digital sector subject area, with a further 10,130 starts so far in the second quarter of the 2021/22 academic year.

The department is also encouraging all employers to offer more flexible training models. There are two flexi-job apprenticeship agencies supporting the digital sector, ensuring apprentices are ready to work on-site and can benefit from the high-quality long-term training that an apprenticeship provides.

We continue to make improvements to the apprenticeship levy transfer system to make it easier for large employers to make full use of their levy funds and support more employers, including SMEs, to take on new apprentices in the technology sectors.

Army

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will reconsider their decision, announced in March 2021, to reduce the size of the army by 10,000 troops by 2025. [HL1012]

Baroness Goldie: I refer the noble Lord to the reply I gave on 24 May 2022 to the noble Lord, the Lord Coaker, in response to Questions HL43 and HL44.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL43 - Army [Hansards REF- Lords.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-06-15/HL1012>

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they spent on preparing the planned flight to relocate asylum applicants to Rwanda which was cancelled on 14 June. [HL1007]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many airlines they consulted regarding the cost of relocating asylum applicants to Rwanda on the scheduled flight of 14 June. [HL1008]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they selected a non-UK airline to relocate asylum applicants from the UK to Rwanda on 14 June. [HL1009]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The costs of our broken asylum system are at a 20 year record high, currently costing the UK taxpayer over £1.5bn a year, with £4.7 million a day being spent on hotels alone. This cannot continue – and the partnership with Rwanda is a key part of our plans to reform the system and put an end to unsustainable costs which impact the taxpayer.

The Government's efforts to facilitate entirely legitimate and legal returns of people who have entered the UK illegally are too often frustrated by late challenges submitted hours before the flight. These claims are very often baseless and entirely without merit, but are given full legal consideration which can lead to removal being rescheduled.

Costs for individual flights and legal services will vary based on a number of different factors and are regularly reviewed to ensure that best value for money is balanced against the need to remove those individuals with no right to remain in the UK.

We do not routinely disclose commercial or operational information relating to individual charter flights.

Aviation

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on (1) employment within, and (2) disruptions affecting, the aviation sector. [HL1206]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There is no evidence to suggest the current disruption affecting the aviation sector is due to the UK's departure from the EU. The disruption is not unique to the UK and results from service recovery challenges following the Covid-related reductions in capacity.

The Government is supporting the sector where we can as it works hard to build back resilience. As set out

in Flightpath to the Future, published in May 2022, supporting the aviation workforce is a priority for the Department and skills retention for highly trained jobs is a key element of the sector's recovery plan.

Broadcasting: Racial Discrimination

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish an independent racism reporting body for the broadcasting industry. [HL1016]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Her Majesty's Government believes that there is no place for prejudice or discrimination in the media or anywhere else and is committed to supporting the broadcasting sector to ensure it is a place which offers opportunities for people from all backgrounds to contribute and succeed. This can only be achieved through a diverse workforce which reflects modern Britain.

Ofcom, as the independent communications regulator, has a duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to employment in the broadcasting sector and has powers to ask broadcasters to provide information about their diversity policies and the make-up of their workforce. Her Majesty's Government is committed to working together with the industry and with Ofcom to support greater diversity and inclusion. Her Majesty's Government has no plans to establish an independent racism reporting body for the broadcasting industry.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve upon (1) 30, and (2) 90, day re-admission rates for those leaving hospital with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. [HL828]

Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement are implementing a care bundle for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) on discharge from hospital which aims to reduce the overall number of patients readmitted, including the rates at 30 and 90 days. This care bundle includes five actions to ensure improved clinical outcomes for patients admitted with an acute exacerbation of COPD. Patients should receive a review of medication and inhaler use; a written self-management plan and emergency drug pack; an assessment and referral for smoking cessation; referral for pulmonary rehabilitation if appropriate; and a follow up call within 72 hours of discharge. The discharge bundle is included in the Best Practice Tariff for COPD.

Crime: Gambling

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report from the Commission on

Crime and Gambling Related Harms Police awareness and practice regarding gambling related harms, published in June; and in particular, the finding that there is a lack of awareness among police forces about the links between crime and gambling harms. [HL982]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has acknowledged the importance for police and others to be able to recognise the signs early when dealing with somebody with a gambling addiction who is going through the criminal justice process, to ensure the best support is offered. Policing is collaborating with both the public and private sectors to improve the understanding of officers and staff of the signs to look out for.

In September 2021, a Level 2 Ofqual course, funded by the Gambling Commission, was developed and launched in collaboration with a number of experts from Gambling Health Alliance, Beacon Gambling Trust, Unite the Union and Addiction Recovery Agency. This course provides better knowledge for those working in the criminal justice system as well as those within the gambling industry, on understanding and spotting early signs of gambling addictions. This course is the first step in improving the understanding of those working within the criminal justice system, who will come across addicts in their role, using a First Aid approach to addressing and supporting those experiencing gambling-related harms.

The NPCC is currently gathering best practice from police forces on early screening of gambling addicts, ensuring the right offer of support is in place, and signposting where people can seek further help. The Government will continue to work closely with them to understand their findings and consider next steps.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the recommendations in the report by the Commission on Crime and Gambling Related Harms Police awareness and practice regarding gambling related harms, published in June, what steps they will take to ensure police officers are able to identify crimes and harms beyond traditional high-level fraud and theft. [HL983]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has acknowledged the importance for police and others to be able to recognise the signs early when dealing with somebody with a gambling addiction who is going through criminal justice process so that the best support is offered.

The NPCC is currently gathering best practice from forces on early screening of gambling addicts, ensuring the right offer of support is in place, and signposting where people can seek further help.

The Government will continue to work closely with them to understand and consider their findings.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the use of the Proceeds of Crime

Act 2002 for cases involving crime associated with gambling-related harms. [HL984]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We have no plans to review the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 for cases involving crime associated with gambling-related harms.

The Gambling Commission will continue to advise on the practical application of primary and secondary legislation to prevent gambling harm, and will continue to work with the Home Office and the rest of government to implement the Economic Crime Plan, the National Strategic Assessment and the Suspicious Activity Reports Transformation programme.

Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act 1822

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to commemorate the 200th anniversary in July of the Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act 1822. [HL988]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The introduction of the 1822 Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act was an important milestone. The UK was the first country in the world to pass legislation to protect animals and two years after this Act was passed, the organisation that would become the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed.

In 1875, we were the first country to introduce measures to improve conditions in slaughterhouses. In 1876, we were the first country to pass legislation regulating experiments on animals and passed the landmark Protection of Animals Act in 1911, an Act emulated by many other countries around the world. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 introduced a robust framework and powers for protecting all kept animals in England and Wales.

The UK has a strong track record for raising the bar when it comes to farm animal welfare standards, such as banning the use of battery cages for laying hens, close confinement stalls for pigs and veal crates for calves, and making CCTV mandatory in slaughterhouses in England. More recently we have introduced the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021, which increases the maximum sentence for the worst animal cruelty offences from six months to five years in England and Wales, and most recently, the Animals (Penalty Notices) Act and the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2022.

We continue to mark the achievement of this landmark 1822 Act through delivery of our Action Plan for Animal Welfare and by launching in its bi-centenary year the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway to drive even higher standards of health and welfare for farmed animals.

Defence

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for an immediate increase in UK defence (1) spending, and (2) equipment. [HL1011]

Baroness Goldie: We have already secured a generous £24 billion uplift in Spending Review 20 towards delivering the outcomes of the Integrated Review, the largest sustained spending increase since the end of the Cold War. Further analysis is required before we make substantial changes to our Equipment Plan, however the Russian invasion of Ukraine has provided an additional impetus to focus on its delivery.

Dogs: Holidays Abroad

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of UK holidaymakers who take more than two dogs when travelling abroad. [HL990]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill proposes reducing the number of pet dogs, cats and ferrets that can travel to Great Britain in one non-commercial movement to five pets per vehicle. This was informed by research and engagement with various stakeholders, including authorised pet checkers, carriers, animal welfare organisations and veterinary bodies, to determine a suitable limit that would disrupt the illegal trade abusing the non-commercial pet travel rules while minimising the impact of genuine owners travelling with their pets. While we have information on the number of pets owned by families, we do not hold detailed data on how many pets people actually choose to take with them when going abroad.

Electoral Register: Data Protection

Asked by Lord Gilbert of Panteg

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to (1) the Written Answers by Lord Gilbert of Panteg on 5 June 2018 (HL7937), 20 November 2018 (HL11157) and 5 June 2019 (HL15875), and Earl Howe on 12 February 2020 (HL923), and (2) remarks made by Lord Ashton of Hyde on 14 May 2018 (HL Deb col 418), what is the timetable for secondary legislation on electoral registers for the purposes of democratic engagement. [HL986]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is currently reviewing the timetable for secondary legislation on electoral registers to ensure that elected representatives and political parties can continue to use the electoral register for the purposes of democratic engagement. We will discuss plans with the Parliamentary Parties Panel and other stakeholders in due course.

Electronic Cigarettes: Children

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many people in England under the age of 18 regularly use a vape or e-cigarette. [HL1054]

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they are currently undertaking into the long-term health effects caused by smoking e-cigarettes and vapes. [HL1055]

Lord Kamall: The Government collects statistics on smoking and vaping for 11 to 15 year olds through the Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People survey. Due to the pandemic, the latest available data is from 2018, which shows regular use of vapes for 11 to 15 year olds at 3% and regular use of smoking cigarettes at 2%. Fieldwork for the latest survey is complete and due to be published later this year. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities collects data on vaping among 11 to 18 year olds, which will be published in its 2022 Vaping in England report shortly.

Under the current Tobacco Control Plan for England, the former Public Health England commissioned annual independent reports on vaping in England. The final report is due to be published by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities shortly. The report will include systematic reviews of the respiratory, cardiovascular and cancer risks and reports on the risks from fires, explosions and poisonings.

Epilepsy: Cannabis

*Asked by **Lord Field of Birkenhead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cannabis prescriptions have been issued to treat severe treatment-resistant epilepsy for each year since November 2018. [HL808]

Lord Kamall: This information is not held in the format requested. The NHS Business Services Authority holds data relating to drugs prescribed in the National Health Service in England and dispensed within a community setting. However, this does not record the condition for which a prescription is intended.

While details on private prescriptions for controlled drugs, including cannabis-based products for medicinal use, are also submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority, information on the condition for which a prescription has been issued is not held centrally.

European Network and Information Security Agency

*Asked by **Lord Selkirk of Douglas***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to participate in the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA); and if so, whether they will seek to increase its budget. [HL1010]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is open to participation in the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA). The ability to voluntarily participate in the activities of ENISA is included in Part 4 of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. It is not

for the UK, as a non-member of the EU, to comment on the budget of an EU institution.

Evusheld

*Asked by **Lord Tyrie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of Evusheld by other countries; and what data they have received on that drug's efficiency at combatting the effects of COVID-19. [HL1066]

Lord Kamall: The Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce engages with other nations on the use, deployment and evaluation of therapeutics and antivirals. We understand that more than 20 countries have procured Evusheld and a proportion have begun to deploy the treatment.

AstraZeneca announced positive trial data from the PROVENT trial, which showed Evusheld's efficacy against developing symptomatic COVID-19. However, this trial took place prior to the emergence of the Omicron variant. The TACKLE study will provide additional efficacy data on Evusheld for the treatment of COVID-19. AstraZeneca commissioned the UK Health Security Agency to undertake testing into the effectiveness of Evusheld against the Omicron variants. Initial data against BA.1 and BA.2 has been shared with AstraZeneca. The Department is currently reviewing the efficacy of Evusheld for prophylaxis.

Football

*Asked by **Lord Pendry***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the White Paper on the future of football governance will include detailed protections for key items of a club's heritage. [HL1044]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Her Majesty's Government has published its response to the recommendations made by the Independent Fan-Led Review of Football Governance. Her Majesty's Government has accepted the recommendation that there should be additional protection for key items of club heritage and more detail will be published in the forthcoming White Paper.

Furs: Imports

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the value of imported products made from rabbit fur to the UK economy, and (2) the cost of a ban on the importation of such products would have on the UK economy. [HL999]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data for 2019 indicates approximate values of £52,911,000 gross imports to the UK for raw furskins, tanned or dressed furskins, and

articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other furskin articles. HMRC does not collect data on specific fur-bearing species.

Under existing domestic legislation it is an offence to keep animals solely or primarily for slaughter for the value of their fur. However, we do permit the import and sale of such products. The Government is committed to exploring potential action in this area in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. If any action were to be taken on fur, a full assessment of the impact on UK businesses would be conducted.

Future Combat Air System

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 20 June (HL692), whether the RAF Tempest jet will be a carrier-capable aircraft. [HL1250]

Baroness Goldie: The Future Combat Air System (FCAS) is being designed to replace the capabilities provided by the RAF's Typhoon aircraft, which will leave service by 2040. This includes roles such as quick reaction alert with the ability to be fully interoperable with F-35B. It is therefore being designed to operate from airfields on the land.

Housing: Older People

Asked by Baroness Greengross

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the formation of the cross-departmental task force on older people's housing announced in their Levelling Up White Paper, published on 2 February. [HL987]

Lord Greenhalgh: This Government is committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people and boosting the supply of specialist elderly accommodation.

The Older People's Housing taskforce will look at ways we can provide greater choice, quality and security of housing for older people, and support the growth of a thriving older people's housing sector in this country. This work will be taken forward in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care. Further details about the taskforce including panel membership and scope will be confirmed in due course.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry report on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, published on 9 May; and in particular, the findings that Israel (1) has "no intention of ending the occupation", (2) is pursuing "complete

control" over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, (3) needs to end the occupation, and (4) needs to ensure equal human rights for Palestinians. [HL993]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry report on 9 May. The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We firmly believe a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions, which make peace more difficult.

NATO

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to honour the UK's commitments to the NATO military alliance. [HL1014]

Baroness Goldie: The UK is stronger with its NATO Allies and our commitment to the Alliance is unwavering. We have committed our Continuous at Sea Nuclear Deterrent (CASD) to NATO for the past 50 years and we are contributing well-supported and highly equipped conventional fighting forces across all domains.

The UK remains the highest spending European Ally, meeting the NATO Defence Investment Pledge to spend at least 2% of GDP on Defence. We secured a generous £24 billion uplift in Spending Review 20, cementing our position as the second largest spender in NATO.

The UK contributes heavily to NATO deterrence activity, leading NATO's Forward Presence battlegroup in Estonia alongside Danish and French forces. We have also provided a Reconnaissance Squadron in Poland to support the US led battlegroup and are providing support to the NATO enhanced Air Policing mission.

At the NATO Summit in June, it is expected that NATO leaders will agree the new Strategic Concept. This will reaffirm our commitment to freedom, openness and the rules-based order. It must also ensure that the Alliance is fit for future challenges, including how to modernise and adapt to emerging threats, advanced technologies and improving national resilience.

Occupied Palestinian Territories: Flags

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the right to freedom of expression concerning flags in the occupied Palestinian territories. [HL995]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to reiterate the importance of all forms of freedom of expression and free speech to both the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority. We continue to appreciate the vital work that human rights defenders and civil society play in holding the authorities to account.

Pensioners: Commonwealth

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support UK pensioners in Commonwealth countries. [HL1001]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The UK State Pension is payable worldwide to those who meet the qualifying conditions, and we continue to up-rate it abroad where there is a legal requirement to do so – for example where there is a reciprocal agreement that provides for up-rating.

People move abroad for many reasons and it is their own choice to do so. There is information available in leaflets and on GOV.UK on how to claim State Pension from overseas and on what the effect of going abroad will be on entitlement to the UK State Pension.

Pupils: Assessments

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a British Baccalaureate which offers a mix of (1) academic, and (2) vocational, qualifications at age 18. [HL1018]

Baroness Barran: Since 2010, the government's reforms have made a lasting improvement to the rigour of qualifications, ensuring they reflect the knowledge and skills pupils need to progress. With further reforms currently in train, the department has no plans to introduce a Baccalaureate-style system at age 18.

GCSEs were reformed from 2013 to ensure they rigorously assess the knowledge acquired by pupils during key stage 4. They are in line with the expected standards in high-performing jurisdictions. Around half of students change institution at age 16. GCSEs therefore provide an important reflection of academic attainment, giving students recognised and respected qualifications, and supporting a smooth transition between institutions.

With the benefit of a broad education pre-16, students can then specialise post-16. The academic and technical pathways the department has developed serve different purposes, but they are rigorous and enable students to progress to the next stage of their education or employment.

The academic pathway includes our gold standard A levels. We have worked with higher education (HE) providers to reform A levels to ensure they are as robust as possible and support progression to HE.

The technical pathway includes T levels, which have been designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to secure employment in a range of occupations or to progress to higher technical education. Our ten new T levels, including digital, construction, and health and science, are now being taught. Over twenty T Levels will be available by 2023.

In addition, our high-quality apprenticeships provide young people with the opportunity to earn while learning

the skills needed to start an exciting career in a wide range of industries. There are currently over 640 employer-designed apprenticeship standards available at all levels, ensuring a wide variety of options for young people. We are also promoting front-loaded and accelerated apprenticeships to ensure apprentices can hit the ground running, and to support progression from other skills programmes, including T levels.

The department is also streamlining and improving the quality of all post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below. The changes we are making will give students a clear route map to the high-quality technical and academic pathways available, which they can trust to lead to rewarding careers.

The department is confident that recent and upcoming reforms have and will provide students with a range of rigorous and evidence-informed academic and technical qualifications, and that our qualifications system supports all students to achieve their full potential.

Railways: Pupils

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of children at (1) primary schools, and (2) secondary schools, who travel to school using national rail services. [HL1210]

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of children at (1) state-funded schools, and (2) independent schools, who travel to school using national rail services. [HL1211]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The National Travel Survey does not provide a breakdown by state-funded and independent schools.

Rented Housing: Pets

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to support individuals who rent and have a pet (1) dog, or (2) cat, find suitable accommodation. [HL991]

Lord Greenhalgh: Everyone has the right to make the house they rent a home and responsible pet owners should not be discriminated against. This is why the Government have outlined legislative plans in our recently published White Paper, 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector', to ensure that private landlords do not unreasonably withhold consent when tenants request to have a pet in their home. We will also give tenants a right to challenge unreasonable decisions.

Alongside this, we will make it easier for landlords to accept pets by amending the Tenant Fees Act 2019 to include pet insurance as a permitted payment. This means landlords will be able to require pet insurance, so that any damage to their property is covered.

Currently landlords can use the Model Tenancy Agreement (MTA), the government's recommended contract for assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector, which aims to make it easier for tenants with pets to find private landlords who will accept them.

Social Security Benefits: Canada

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions, if any, they have had with the government of Canada about a reciprocal social security agreement between the UK and Canada; and what response, if any, they received. [HL1002]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are two separate social security arrangements in place between the UK and Canada, made in 1995 and 1998. The UK Government is not intending to change the social security relationship with Canada.

Syria: Airports

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reports that the bombing of Damascus International airport was directed by the government of Israel; and what representations, if any, they plan to make to the government of Israel about the incident. [HL994]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest.

Technology: Education

Asked by Baroness Uddin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which there is a skills shortage in the technology sector; in particular, in respect of emerging technologies. [HL1067]

Asked by Baroness Uddin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that young people have the skills necessary to enter the workforce in the technology sector, particularly organisations working on emerging technologies. [HL1070]

Baroness Barran: The recently published Digital Strategy (June 2022) identifies the supply of digitally and tech-enabled workers, at all levels, as crucial for the UK's long-term economic prosperity. It estimates that the digital skills gap costs the UK economy £63 billion per

year in lost potential gross domestic product. This gap cuts across all areas of the economy and is expected to widen. The department's Employer Skills Survey (2019) identifies that two-fifths of skills gaps (38%) involved a deficiency in digital skills, which includes both basic computer literacy and IT skills, as well as more advanced or specialist IT skills.

Building on the vision of the Skills for Jobs White Paper (January 2021), the department is working closely with the industry to tailor training offers to meet their needs and strengthen progression routes into the tech sector. We are growing the prestigious apprenticeships programme, rolling out T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications, and investing in Institutes of Technology. We have overhauled the outdated ICT curriculum and replaced it with computing and invested £84 million to improve the quality of computing teaching in England and to inspire the next generation of computer scientists. The newly formed Digital Skills Council will provide a crucial forum for developing these interventions, ensuring they are relevant and responsive to emerging technologies.

In addition, the department has established a new Unit for Future Skills to improve the quality of jobs and skills data and to make these available and more accessible to policymakers, stakeholders, and the public. Last month the Unit for Future Skills published new data products on the routes that learners take through education and into employment in different industry sectors (including the IT sector), which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/unit-for-future-skills>.

Tenancy Agreements: Pets

Asked by Baroness Hayman of Ullock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the uptake of the revised Model Tenancy Agreement to support more pet-friendly accommodation. [HL992]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has not made any specific assessment of the uptake of the revised Model Tenancy Agreement (MTA) in relation to supporting more pet-friendly accommodation. The most recent report from the English Private Landlord Survey (EPLS 2021) showed that 52% of landlords who responded said they used the MTA for assured shorthold tenancies. The same report also showed that less than half (45%) of private landlords are unwilling to let to tenants with pets.

The revision of the MTA aimed to make it easier for tenants with pets to find private landlords who will accept them. While the use of the MTA and adherence to its contents is optional, we set out in our White Paper, 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector', that we will go further by legislating to ensure that private landlords do not unreasonably withhold consent when tenants request to have a pet in their home. Tenants will be able to challenge unreasonable decisions. Alongside this, we will make it easier for landlords to accept pets by amending the Tenant Fees Act 2019 to include pet insurance as a permitted

payment. This means landlords will be able to require pet insurance, so that any damage to their property is covered.

Ukraine: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is their policy to increase their engagement with (1) NATO member states, and (2) European countries, as a result of the war in Ukraine; and if so, how they are seeking to do so. [HL1013]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is playing a leading role driving the international response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, regularly meets with Foreign Minister counterparts, including the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, G7 Foreign Ministers and NATO Foreign Ministers; and European counterparts, including the EU. We will continue to work with NATO and European allies to support the Ukrainian Government in the face of this assault on their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukraine: Development Aid

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the scale of the support that Ukraine may need to repair and rebuild after the war; and what steps they will take to support the provision of the resources required to do so. [HL1015]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK supports Ukraine's vision for rebuilding a sovereign, prosperous, democratic nation that is stronger than before Putin's invasion. The Government of Ukraine estimates that full-scale recovery will cost around \$600 billion so far. International estimates range from €200-500 billion. These costs will rise the longer the war continues. The Ukrainian government has established a National Recovery Council, which will develop its National Recovery Plan, to be announced at the Ukraine Recovery Conference at Lugano, Switzerland, 4-5 July. We are working with the Council to develop our support. We will be guided by Ukraine's priorities in harnessing the best of UK development, business and civil society capabilities in support of its recovery and reconstruction. The UK's total financial support for Ukraine so far stands at some \$3.6 billion, including military, humanitarian and fiscal support.

Universities: Admissions

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require the Office for Students to (1) monitor trends in international student recruitment, and (2) impose regulatory conditions on universities that have low diversity rates among their student body. [HL1017]

Baroness Barran: The department monitors international student recruitment trends and has set out in

the International Education Strategy (IES) that diversification and sustainable recruitment of international students remains a key strategic priority.

The IES sets an ambition to host at least 600,000 international higher education students in the UK, per year, by 2030. This ambition was met for the first time in the 2020/21 academic year, with over 605,000 international students studying in the UK.

The government does not plan to require the Office for Students (OfS) to undertake additional monitoring of trends in international student recruitment.

Regarding measures to improve diversity at specific providers, under OfS registration condition A1, all approved (fee cap) providers charging higher fees must have an approved access and participation plan in place. These must present a credible, ambitious strategy by the provider for closing identified gaps in access, continuation, and progression for disadvantaged and under-represented groups within their student body. Providers are held accountable on their targets via an annual monitoring return to the OfS. 171 providers had an OfS approved access and participation plan in the 2020/21 academic year, in accordance with the regulatory framework and powers under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

It is important that providers focus on supporting students to see good outcomes, not just getting more disadvantaged students through the door, this is what will ensure that Higher Education (HE) remains an engine of true social mobility. The department expects providers to do more to support high prior attainment for all, and to help students to identify and access the pathways that are right for them. That is why we have tasked the OfS through guidance issued in November 2021 with a reboot of access and participation in English HE.

John Blake, as Director for Fair Access and Participation at the OfS, is responsible for driving these changes forward. John is working closely with the sector to encourage stronger partnerships between HE providers and schools, and the expansion of the range of courses that are both offered and promoted to prospective students.

Veterans: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support is available for ex-service personnel in Northern Ireland who do not qualify for enhanced learning credits to fund (1) further, or (2) higher, educational courses. [HL1028]

Lord Caine: We remain committed to ensuring that our veterans can access gold standard services irrespective of where they live in the UK - including in Northern Ireland where circumstances mean a slightly different approach is necessary.

Whilst skills is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland, with further and higher education the responsibility of the

Northern Ireland Department for the Economy, the Government has shown time and time again that it is committed to supporting Northern Ireland, levelling up across the UK and strengthening our Union.

We have invested £15m from the New Deal for Northern Ireland to enable the Department for the Economy to deliver the 'Skill Up' initiative, which will fully fund further education colleges and universities to provide approximately 15,000 training places to support key growth sectors.

Windrush Generation: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support members of the Windrush generation in their retirement. [[HL1000](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: For people of State Pension age, there is a contributory State Pension based on an individual's National Insurance record. It is supported by further measures for older people including Pension Credit which provides means-tested support for those most in need.

We are putting in place arrangements across Government to ensure where members of the Windrush generation have been denied access to employment because they were unable to demonstrate their lawful status, their National Insurance position is corrected so the period of the loss does not impact their State Pension entitlement.

Work on this issue is ongoing, and we continue to work with other government departments to finalise this area of work. As soon as arrangements are finalised, we will write again to explain what this will mean for affected individuals.

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