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Monday
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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 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

Monday, 4 July 2022

Aviation Industry: Government Support

[HLWS167]

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

The majority of UK flights continue to be on time and without disruption. However, some passengers have faced significant disruption, which has also occurred in the aviation sector across Europe and globally. The outcome for too many consumers has been unacceptable.

I have made it clear to the sector that they need to operate services properly and according to schedule or provide swift, appropriate compensation. I have already announced a one-off amnesty on airport slot rules, enabling airlines to plan ahead and avoid last-minute cancellations. I expect airlines to use this one-off amnesty now to ensure they are giving consumers certainty by offering schedules they can deliver. By the end of the slot handback period, I expect airlines to be offering services they are confident of delivering, and I will continue to seek reassurances from them that this is the case.

We have been extensively engaging with industry at ministerial and official level since the beginning of the year. As part of this engagement the Aviation Minister established a weekly Strategic Risk Group. This brings together CEOs from airports, airlines and ground handlers to work through the issues ahead of the summer.

Today, I am setting out all of the 22 measures the Government is currently taking to support the aviation industry, including: to help recruit and train staff; ensure the delivery of a realistic summer schedule; minimise disruption; and support passengers when delays and cancellations are unavoidable. The Government recognises that these issues are primarily for industry to solve, but this series of targeted measures will support their efforts.

The measures are:

ENSURE INDUSTRY DELIVER A REALISTIC SUMMER SCHEDULE

1. We and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have set out [5 specific expectations](#) to the industry to deliver a successful summer operation:

1. Summer schedules must be reviewed to make sure they are deliverable;
2. Everyone from ground handlers to air traffic control must collaborate on resilience planning;
3. Passengers must be promptly informed of their consumer rights when things go wrong and – if necessary – compensation in good time;

4. Disabled and less mobile passengers must be given assistance they require; and

5. Safety and security must never be compromised.

2. We have introduced [new regulations on airport slots](#) give airlines the tools to ensure that schedules are manageable and reduce flight disruption over the summer peak.

3. We have strengthened industry-government working, by establishing a new weekly Strategic Risk Group, chaired by ministers and attended by airline, airport and ground handler CEOs to ensure they are prepared for summer and can meet the schedules.

4. We have established a weekly Summer Resilience Group with airline, airport and ground handler Operational Directors to help them work through their pinch-points in the aviation system as they emerge and work collaboratively on solutions.

5. We have established a joint Home Office and Department for Transport Ministerial Border Group to identify and prepare for high levels of demand at the UK border.

6. We have worked with the major airlines and airports to get weekly updates and assurances to government that they can run their schedule of summer flights.

7. We are working with international partners, neighbouring countries and EUROCONTROL, to ensure that disruption is minimised through coordinated planning and cooperation across airspace boundaries.

8. We are undertaking a review of the ground handling market to seek out opportunities to improve quality and consistency of service.

SUPPORTING PASSENGERS

9. We will launch a new Aviation Passenger Charter, a one-stop guide for passengers informing them of their rights, responsibilities and what they can reasonably expect of the aviation industry when flying.

10. We have worked with the CAA and industry to publish and promote guidance for passengers as part of a joint campaign of activity to communicate things they need to know and do when travelling by air this summer, helping to speed up processing time and reduce queues and delays.

11. We have [written to airlines](#) to remind them of their legal responsibilities in providing information, care and assistance, refunds, and compensation.

12. We are working with the CAA reviewing airlines current practices to ensure legal responsibilities in providing information, care and assistance, refunds, and compensation are being met and encouraging best practice.

13. We intend on strengthening consumer protection for air passengers such as additional enforcement powers for CAA, our proposals are set out in the [aviation consumer consultation](#).

14. The [CAA has written to airports](#) to set out their plans for additional measures to improve provision of assistance to disabled and less mobile passengers and support the sector by providing guidance.

SUPPORTING INDUSTRY TO RECRUIT, RETAIN AND TRAIN STAFF

15. We changed the law so industry has more flexibility to train staff and allow them to deploy staff quickly and flexibly while maintaining security standards.

16. We are launching a Generation Aviation campaign, working with industry to promote awareness of aviation careers and increase the number of people applying for jobs in the sector.

17. We are working with the CAA to launch a £700,000 skills funding competition this autumn to support outreach across the sector and raise awareness of aviation careers to young people.

18. We have launched the [Aviation Skills Recruitment Platform](#) to support skills retention and recruitment in the sector.

19. We are building partnerships with colleges and universities to ensure students are attracted to and prepared for a career in aviation – and to support this we have launched the [Talentview Aviation platform](#) to connect students to aviation sector employers.

20. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to promote aviation roles and recruitment via job centres and training for Jobs Coaches.

21. We are delivering our Reach for the Sky outreach programme, supported by our [Aviation Ambassadors](#) to promote diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the sector.

22. We introduced the [Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme \(AGOSS\)](#) to support commercial airports and ground operators with fixed costs, through £161 million in grants.

There have been calls for a seasonal worker scheme to allow EU workers to fill vacant roles in our aviation sector. But the Government is clear that more immigration is not an obvious solution. The aviation sector's issues are not confined to the UK. Disruption is happening across the EU and in the USA due to staff shortages, and the Government is committed to building a robust and dependable domestic aviation industry, launching the Aviation Skills Retention Platform to help develop and hold onto UK workers. Similar schemes in other sectors experiencing shortages, such as the HGV sector, have not been widely used and have not significantly contributed towards a solution. Building a resilient, well-paid British workforce will prove a far more effective, sustainable and long-term solution.

The Government has taken action to support the industry, now the sector itself needs to take the appropriate steps to ensuring they deliver realistic summer schedules, work together as an ecosystem, and put the consumer first.

Bishop of Truro's Recommendations: Independent Report

[HLWS172]

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:

At the beginning of 2019, former Foreign Secretary The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, asked the Bishop of Truro to review what more the then FCO could do to address the persecution of Christians. The Bishop published a report in July 2019 setting out the gravity of the issue, as well as practical recommendations for an enhanced FCO response to the plight of persecuted Christians and people persecuted for holding other religions, beliefs, or no religious belief at all.

Recognising that the persecution of people for their religion or belief is unacceptable and a significant international problem, the Government committed to implementing the recommendations of the Bishop's review. His final recommendation was that an independent assessment of our progress in doing so should be carried out three years after the original report. I am pleased to publish that assessment today. We welcome and accept this expert review on progress and in line with the findings, accept their assessment for the need to continue to work to promote and strengthen Freedom of Religion or Belief as a fundamental human right for all. We thank the reviewers for their important work. A copy of the report will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

I have seen first-hand how much work has gone in across the organisation to delivering the review recommendations. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has worked closely with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fiona Bruce MP, to promote freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) internationally and to oversee progress on implementing the review recommendations. The independent assessment concludes that the majority of the recommendations are either at an advanced stage of delivery or in the process of being delivered, whilst noting that there is still more to do. The reviewers have also recognised where there have been constraints to delivery or an alternative approach has been taken.

I am encouraged by what has been achieved in recent years, in the face of many global challenges. We have led international efforts to increase collaboration to support those who are persecuted for what they believe. In March 2021, Lord Ahmad hosted a meeting at the UN Security Council to raise awareness of persecution of religious minorities in conflict zones. We used our G7 Presidency to secure language on FoRB in the G7 communique for the first time, galvanising support for those suffering discrimination and persecution. The FoRB Special Envoy holds the Chair of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance this year, demonstrating UK global leadership on FoRB. We have sent a clear message that

the international community will not turn a blind eye to serious and systematic violations of human rights through our Global Human Rights sanctions regime. Religion for International Engagement training is now available to all civil servants to enhance their understanding of the role of religion and belief in a wide variety of contexts, in order to deliver the UK’s international objectives more effectively.

Building on this work, we will continue to ensure that the changes we have made are embedded and to look for opportunities to make FoRB central to the FCDO’s wider human rights work. We will do this, working alongside others, to deliver real change for the good, protecting and promoting everyone’s right to freedom of religion or belief.

Our work on this important human rights issue will never be complete, and we will continue to champion global efforts on FoRB. As part of that, on 5-6 July this year, the UK will host an international ministerial conference on freedom of religion or belief. We look forward to welcoming partner countries and stakeholders from around the world to London.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

FoRB report - Bishop of Truro [Independent Report on the implementation of the Bishop of Truro’s recommendations.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2022-07-04/HLWS172/>

Building Regulations: Public Toilet Provision

[HLWS169]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, Minister of State for Equalities, Local Government, Faith and Communities (Kemi Badenoch) has today made the following statement:

Toilets, both in municipal and private sector locations, are an important facility for members of the public, in particular, women, those with children, older people and disabled people.

The Government has taken a number of steps recently to support the increase provision of ‘Changing Places’ toilets for disabled people for whom standard accessible toilets are not suitable. Last year, the Government introduced 100% business rates relief for public toilets in England and Wales.

In October 2020, Government published a review: *Toilet provision for men and women: call for evidence*. This stemmed from evidence that shows that increasing numbers of publicly accessible toilets are being converted into ‘gender neutral’ facilities, causing problems for women and older people in particular.

‘Gender neutral’ facilities mean men and women share the same space for waiting and hand wash facilities; these should be contrasted with dedicated, self-contained ‘unisex’ toilets which maintain privacy for the single user (also known as ‘universal toilets’).

Such ‘gender neutral’ toilets place women at a significant disadvantage. While men can then use both cubicles and urinals, women can only use the former. The net effect is actually to reduce toilet provision for women. Women also need safe spaces given their particular biological, health and sanitary needs (for example, women who are menstruating, pregnant or at menopause, may need to use the toilet more often). Women are also likely to feel less comfortable using mixed sex facilities.

The review also asked for views on increasing the ratio of female toilets. Male toilets typically allow for a quicker transition of customers due to the use of urinals, yet insufficient female toilets are provided for a comparative number of cubicles to allow the same number of users to be served. This is not to disadvantage any sex – but greater ratios of female cubicles would help avoid queues inside and outside toilets.

The Government is also aware of broader concerns that women’s biological differences are being ‘erased’ in public life. It is important that women’s biological needs are respected and taken into account in the provision of facilities such as toilets.

A high volume of responses were received to the call for evidence, all of which have been read and analysed.

The call for evidence analysis has been carefully considered, and research has been commissioned by my Department on the design of toilet facilities. Following on from this, in Autumn 2022, the Department will launch a technical consultation on formal changes to the building regulations and approved guidance, informed by the call for evidence responses.

The Government is minded to take the following approach to rules and guidance in England, subject to further consultation and assessment of equality impacts:

<i>policy goal</i>	<i>change to the building regulations and approved guidance</i>
to amend building regulations and guidance to ensure separate toilets for men and women continues to be provided	implementing a threshold approach i.e. above a certain number of toilet cubicles, require the provision of toilets for a range of users including separate male and female toilets, unisex toilets/ universal toilets, baby change, disabled persons toilets, and changing places toilets.
guidance to encourage the provision of a unisex toilet, where space allows where unisex toilets are provided, that privacy is ensured	to set out the design of a unisex self-contained/ universal toilet cubicle with a sink which is designed to maximise privacy (informed by research underway and the call for evidence analysis).
to announce the intent for greater provision of toilets to reduce queuing	we will work with the British Standards Institution to develop the evidence base with a view thereafter to them updating their relevant codes of practice.

The technical review will ensure that the specific requirements of disabled users remain salient, and that access to and provision of toilets for disabled people will

not be undermined by wider improvements to toilet provision more generally. The Department will be considering already commissioned research on the design of both disabled persons' toilets and Changing Places toilets as part of this review.

Better customer toilet provision in commercial environments may encourage people to visit the premises. The Government will be undertaking a full Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Such changes to building rules will also complement existing statutory provisions in education law for schools to provide sex-specific (or self-contained unisex) toilets for children.

We would also encourage Government bodies to consider how such principles can be adopted now in its own buildings, prior to formal changes in building regulations.

The Government believes the proposals that we are minded to adopt will have positive equality outcomes for women, older people, pregnant women, those with babies, people who come under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, and disabled people.

This common sense approach on protecting and improving toilet provision will ensure dignity, privacy, tolerance and respect for all, and further the cause of equality and inclusion by recognising the different needs of everyone in society.

Cost of Living Payments: Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS171]

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

The Department for Work and Pensions has obtained approval for an advance from the Contingencies Fund of £2,477,600,000. This will enable the department to administer the first Cost of Living Payments from 14 July, before the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill, which includes these measures, gains Royal Assent.

The amount covered by the advance is for the first Cost of Living Payment to eligible means tested claimants, worth £326, provided for by the Social Security (Additional Payments) Act.

The payments will deliver immediate support to around 8 million low-income families at a time of increased costs of living.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £2,477,600,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in the Main Estimate for the Department for Work and Pensions. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2,477,600,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The advance will be repaid at the earliest opportunity following Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill.

Early Years: Early Education and Childcare

[HLWS170]

Baroness Barran: My honourable friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince), has made the following statement:

This government is committed to ensuring that families can access high quality and flexible childcare and early education that helps children to learn in their earliest years, provides enriching experiences around school hours and supports families and the economy by enabling parents to work.

With the cost of living rising, we want as many families as possible to benefit from the childcare support they are entitled to, saving them money, and helping to give children the best start in life.

This government has extended access to early education and childcare to millions of children and parents over the past decade. We invest a significant amount of funding in early education and childcare, including over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on early education entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

We have also introduced tax-free childcare, which provides working parents with support of up to £2,000 a year to help with childcare costs for children under 12, or £4,000 for disabled children under 17, and Universal Credit, where parents can claim back up to 85% of eligible childcare costs, compared to 70% under tax credits.

The government has today announced plans to improve the cost, choice and availability of childcare that will benefit families and give childcare providers more flexibility and autonomy to make decisions about their settings and needs of children.

We will support more people to become childminders, which are generally the most affordable and flexible form of childcare, by:

- Reducing the upfront costs of becoming a childminder via financial support.
- Allowing childminders to spend more of their time working from a greater range of locations.
- Clarifying flexibilities in childminders' ratios when looking after their own children, or siblings of other children.
- Working with Ofsted to reduce inspection for childminders.
- Publishing a slimmed down, childminder specific Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
- Encouraging the growth of Childminder Agencies—stimulating competition and driving down costs while providing parents with more options for care.

We will also streamline the Ofsted registration process for providers. More providers registering would mean that parents have a wider choice of providers on which to use these schemes, to pay for childcare that supports their working lives.

With safety and quality at the heart, as a first step, today I am also confirming the publication of two consultations:

Childcare ratios and supervision while eating consultation

We are consulting on proposed [changes to the current statutory minimum early years staff:child ratios](#) in England for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5; and clarifying flexibilities in childminders' ratios when looking after their own children, or siblings of other children.

These proposals hand greater flexibility and autonomy to providers to exercise professional judgement in their staffing decisions, according to the needs of their children. This change would bring minimum requirements into line with those in Scotland.

As we continue this journey, there will be opportunities to explore further reform to statutory staffing requirements, and this document invites early views on some potential additional options.

We are also consulting on supervision requirements while children are eating, to ensure the safety of every child across early years settings. Engagement with early years providers to date suggests that for many settings, adequate supervision while eating is already understood to mean that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff. We believe that an explicit requirement in the Early Years Foundation Stage will reinforce this practice and ensure the safety of children in early years settings.

The Early Years National Funding Formula and Maintained Nursery School funding consultation

We are consulting on [Updates to the funding formulae](#) for the two-year-old and three- and four-year-old early education entitlements in England, the scope of which will also include the distribution of supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools.

We are proposing to update and adjust the funding formulae used to distribute the Government's investment in the early years entitlements - which deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare for eligible two, three and four-year-olds for 38 weeks a year - fairly and transparently to local authorities across England.

Many of the datasets which underpin these formulae, and which we use to reflect geographical cost variation, are not up to date. It is important that they remain current, to ensure the funding system can be fair, effective and responsive to changing levels of need across different areas, with targeted investment towards those areas where it will do the most good. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we are therefore planning to update the formulae for the 2023-24 financial year and intend to continue to do so annually thereafter. We are also

consulting on proposals to mainstream the early years elements of the teachers' pay grant and the teachers' pension employer contribution grant from 2023-24, bringing early years in line with schools and high needs.

The proposed update will result in some changes to local authority funding levels given costs and levels of need in certain areas will have changed relative to others. As such, we are also consulting on applying new year-to-year protections to local authority funding rates, to help local markets to manage changes better. The 2021 Spending Review settlement allows us to offer protections which means all local authorities will see an increase in the hourly rate that the government provides for 2023-24.

We are also consulting on proposals to reform maintained nursery school supplementary funding. Maintained nursery schools make a valuable contribution to improving the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children. As we have confirmed continuation of maintained nursery school supplementary funding throughout the Spending Review period, it is now right to examine the way in which this funding is distributed to LAs. We are therefore proposing to invest an additional £10 million into maintained nursery school supplementary funding from 2023-24 and are consulting on proposals to create a fairer distribution of the funding across all LAs with maintained nursery schools.

Taken together, our current and proposed reforms not only reflect the government's commitment to supporting as many families as possible with access to high quality, affordable childcare, but also provide the foundation for taking a renewed look into the childcare system.

Depositing Framework Documents in the House Libraries

[HLWS173]

Baroness Penn: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Clarke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Framework documents constitute a core constitutional document of Arm's Length Bodies, and it is imperative that Accounting Officers, Board members and senior officials are familiar with them, ensure they are kept up to date and use them as guide to govern the collaborative relationship between the Arm's Length Body, the Sponsor Department and the rest of Government. It is also important for the purposes of scrutiny that Parliament is familiar with these documents, and has ready access to them as they are agreed and updated.

It has long been a requirement under the rules as set out in *Managing Public Money* for framework documents to be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. In order for the Libraries to receive documents for deposit a ministerial commitment to deposit must be made in the House. To facilitate transparency and ease the process of ensuring these important governance documents are made available to Parliament I am making a commitment on behalf of government that all framework documents of all central government arm's length bodies and public

corporations shall be placed in the Library. This commitment should allow departments to meet their obligations to Parliament more easily and promptly.

I have also asked the Treasury Officer of Accounts to write to all Accounting Officers to ensure that all existing framework documents have been properly deposited. The public will continue to be able to access these documents via gov.uk or the relevant body's website.

In addition to framework documents transparency is served by Parliament having the opportunity to scrutinise the summaries of Accounting Officer assessments of major projects. I also make a commitment on behalf of government that copies of summary accounting officer assessments for projects on the Government Major Projects Portfolio should be deposited in the Library of the House of Commons in line with existing HMT guidance.

Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018: Second Post- Implementation Review

[HLWS168]

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 Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure, Julia Lopez MP:

Today I am publishing the statutory [post-implementation review of the Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018](#) on the Government's website. This is the second review of the Regulations since their implementation.

The Regulations came into force in May 2018. The objective of the Regulations is to improve the security of

network and information systems which are critical to the provision of essential services and digital services which, if disrupted, could cause significant economic and social harm to people, businesses, and critical national infrastructure.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has assessed the impact, costs and benefits of the Regulations, how effective the Regulations have been in achieving the original objectives, and whether those objectives remain appropriate for the UK four years on.

The review is clear that the Regulations have acted as an accelerator for improvements to the security of regulated organisations. Regulated organisations have shown an increase in the prioritisation of cyber security at senior level, increased investment in cyber security from boards, the introduction or improvement of cyber security policies, improved incident response management, and a greater awareness of aggregate risks.

The review concludes that the Regulations are an effective tool to drive good cyber security behaviours. As such, it recommends that the Government retain the Regulations to continue to incentivise organisations in scope to make security improvements.

The report also makes recommendations for changes to strengthen and future-proof the regulatory framework, so that it can adapt effectively to the rapidly evolving landscape. These changes were included in my department's public consultation on proposals for cyber security-related legislation in January this year. The outcomes of this consultation will be published later this year.

The next statutory Post-Implementation Review of the Regulations will be carried out in the next five years.

Written Answers

Monday, 4 July 2022

Abduljalil al-Singace

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) on 22 February (122816), what plans they have, if any, to respond to a letter by 27 human rights organisations on 17 January which called on them to help resolve the case of Dr Abduljalil al-Singace who is detained in Bahrain. [HL1050]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our apologies for the delay in responding to the letter in question, this was due to an administrative error. A response was issued on 22 June.

Arts: Higher Education

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of budget cuts on access to Higher Education arts courses on (1) the UK's economy, and (2) those from (a) lower socio-economic, and (b) minority, backgrounds. [HL1073]

Baroness Barran: The government recognises the importance of the creative arts to the economy and the UK. High-quality provision in a range of subjects is critical for our workforce and our public services. It is also culturally enriching for our society, which is why the government awarded nearly £8million directly to creative universities as part of the Culture Recovery Fund.

The Office for Students (OfS) has increased the high-cost subject funding rate per student for performing and creative arts and media studies to £125.76, a rise of 3.51% from the previous year, for the 2022/23 academic year. The department has also increased funding for world-leading specialist providers, including 11 providers specialising in the arts, by an additional £5 million in the 2022/23 financial year, on top of the increase of £10 million provided in the 2021/22 financial year. The department wants to ensure that such providers receive additional support, and that grant funding is used effectively to support students, including those with an interest in the cultural and creative sectors.

In January 2021, the former Secretary of State for Education reprioritised the Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG). This was to ensure value for money, support strategic priorities across the sector, including provision of courses vital for the economy and labour markets, and continued support for disadvantaged students and underrepresented groups. This resulted in the high-cost subject funding rate for some arts and music courses to be

set at £121.50, down from £243 in 2020/21. This reallocation of grant funding amounted to about 0.05% of affected providers' estimated total income.

The OfS consulted on the proposals and published its conclusions on their website. The consultation responses were carefully analysed. The issues raised were considered by both the OfS and the former Secretary of State in reaching their respective decisions about the allocation of the SPG in 2021/22.

The department considers that access to higher education should be based on a student's attainment and their ability to succeed, rather than their background. In 2021, 18-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds were 82% more likely to go to university than in 2010. There are also more disadvantaged students at university today than at any other point in our history.

Asylum: Military Bases

Asked by *Lord Newby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they will use to assess whether an asylum seeker will be appropriate to accommodate in (1) the proposed reception centre at RAF Linton, and (2) any other large-scale reception centre. [HL1091]

Asked by *Lord Newby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how asylum seekers will be screened to assess for any vulnerabilities which may make it inappropriate for them to be accommodated in large-scale reception centres. [HL1092]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: To ensure the safety and wellbeing of those being considered for accommodation at the proposed site in Linton-on-Ouse or other reception centre, an assessment would take place by the Home Office prior to allocation using suitability criteria. The factors that are currently considered when assessing the suitability of individual asylum seekers for particular accommodation is set out in the policy guidance 'Allocation of Accommodation'. This policy guidance will be reviewed as part of any preparations to open the proposed asylum accommodation site in Linton-on-Ouse.

The welfare of all asylum seekers in our care is of the utmost importance. Were Linton-On-Ouse to be used to accommodate asylum seekers, we would employ a robust screening process which would involve an evidence-based assessment of suitability for entry to Linton-on-Ouse. Individual suitability would continue to be assessed at regular intervals.

Asked by *Lord Newby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what healthcare facilities will be provided at (1) RAF Linton, and (2) other large-scale reception centres for asylum seekers; and whether the centres will be reliant on local healthcare services. [HL1093]

Asked by Lord Newby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what provision they will make for asylum seekers at (1) RAF Linton, and (2) other large-scale reception centres, to access legal advice; and what consideration has been given to shortages of legal aid and advice. [HL1094]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: *Healthcare:* We continue to work closely with NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in respect of the provision of health services at Linton-on-Ouse and the definition of health service provision and capacity is being led by the CCG. Experience and lessons learnt from Napier Barracks are being used by the CCG to identify health service provision requirements at the proposed development.

Healthcare at future reception centres will be developed using a similar approach.

Legal Advice: The site at Linton-on-Ouse is being designed to facilitate and support interaction between service users and their chosen legal advisors, whereby asylum seekers accommodated at Linton-on-Ouse will have the ability to access the support of legal representation, either face-to-face or remotely. Those with no legal representation will be sign-posted in seeking appropriate representation. The Home Office continues to liaise with colleagues in the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Aid Agency to finalise the details of this provision at Linton-on-Ouse.

Access to legal advisors at future reception centres will be developed using a similar approach.

Asked by Lord Newby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what forms of contract they propose for the providers of services at (1) the RAF Linton reception centre for asylum seekers, and (2) other large scale reception centres. [HL1095]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The proposed accommodation site in Linton-on-Ouse would be a contract change notice under the pre-established Asylum Accommodation Support Contract (AASC) for the North West region with Serco, to run for a period of two years, after which we intend to run a competitive commercial procurement process for a service supplier on that site.

For further accommodation centres, the Home Office would use a competitive and fair commercial procurement process for the provision of design, build or renovation and operation of national accommodation centres, including the subsequent service provision including management, maintenance and related works and services.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the full cost of chartering the flight to transport asylum claimants from the UK to Rwanda under the terms of the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic

Development Partnership, which had been due to depart on Tuesday 14 June; what was the expected cost per asylum-seeker on the flight; and whether they are liable to pay the full cost, or any cost, of chartering the flight, even in the event that it did not leave the UK for any reason. [HL1084]

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.

Australia: Navy

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to train Australian naval officers in the Royal Navy nuclear programme, in a similar way to the US Navy with the Australia-US Submarine Officer Pipeline Act. [HL1126]

Baroness Goldie: There are existing arrangements for training non-UK national Navy personnel, including the Royal Australian Navy, as part of Royal Navy training programmes.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to train Australian naval officers in the Royal Navy nuclear programme in a similar way to the US Navy with their Australia-U.S. Submarine Officer Pipeline Act. [HL1254]

Baroness Goldie: There are existing arrangements for training non-UK national Navy personnel, including the Royal Australian Navy, as part of Royal Navy training programmes.

Bahrain: Prisoners

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, if any, to the

government of Bahrain to ensure that prisoners receive treatment for tuberculosis; and what assessment they have made of reports that prisoners in that country have (1) not been tested for tuberculosis when displaying symptoms, and (2) been denied medical care for the disease. [HL1053]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials and ministers have regular discussions with senior Bahraini counterparts on human rights, including most recently when Minister Milling co-chaired the UK-Bahrain Joint Working Group with the Bahrain Foreign Minister on 16 June 2022.

The Government of Bahrain has been clear that access to medical care for those in detention is guaranteed. We welcome these assurances, and urge continued transparency and encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise them with the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body.

Bread and Flour: Regulation

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government which of the issues raised by the Real Bread Campaign in their submission to DEFRA, published in September 2021, ahead of the first meeting of the Bread and Flour Technical Working Group, will be included in the forthcoming public consultation and review of the Bread and Flour Regulations. [HL1074]

Lord Benyon: Defra, alongside the Department of Health and Social Care, the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and Wales, Food Standards Scotland and the Scottish and Welsh Governments, have been conducting jointly a review of The Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and The Bread and Flour (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1998 to ensure the regulations are fit for purpose and support UK industry while protecting consumers. To assist the review, Defra convened a technical working group made up of a wide range of relevant stakeholders including the Real Bread Campaign, to help identify and explore the issues around the regulations which cover the compositional requirements of bread and flour. We are now preparing to consult jointly on proposals to update the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998. The consultation is subject to a cross-government agreement process in England and ministerial agreement in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is therefore not possible to say definitively what will be included in the consultation, but we hope to be able to publish proposals shortly.

Bridges: Great Musgrave

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the £30,000 figure they provided for the cost of removing infill material at Great Musgrave Bridge remains accurate; whether this represents the total cost of the (1) removal, and (2) reinstatement; and if not, what is the

total amount allocated to that project by National Highways. [HL1244]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Great Musgrave bridge forms part of the Historical Railways Estate (HRE) and is managed on behalf of the Department by National Highways.

The high-level estimations provided in August 2021 by National Highways for the removal of the infill at Great Musgrave bridge were based on the assumption that the removal would occur at the same time as works to reinstate a railway. In this scenario, contractors would already be on site, with all associated plant, machinery, welfare and safety and traffic management in place. If removal were to occur without contractors being in place for railway reinstatement, then the costs of all associated plant, machinery, welfare and safety and traffic management need to be added to the sum. Based on it being a one-off operation, in October 2021 estimates were shared with the HRE Stakeholder Advisory Forum that advised that the costs of removing the infill would be in the region of £80,000 to £90,000 which includes for the contractor to remove the infill and make good the ground.

The difference between the two estimates relates to whether the work is done in isolation or is incorporated as part of a larger rail reinstatement scheme.

Following the recent planning committee decision on the retrospective application to retain the infill at Great Musgrave, the cost of removing the infill, disposing of it off-site, undertaking repairs and strengthening works and subsequent assessment and examinations over a 60-year period has been estimated to be between £316,000 and £431,000 depending on the strengthening technique that is applied. These costs were discussed with the HRE Stakeholder Advisory Forum in October 2021.

National Highways is working closely with the Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council to understand their aspirations for the structure and to agree appropriate works.

British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: Companies

*Asked by **Baroness Stern***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken towards the introduction of beneficial ownership in the British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. [HL1120]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies are self-governing jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments, who are responsible for their own financial services policy. The Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies already share beneficial ownership information with UK law enforcement and have committed to introduce publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership. The UK Government welcomes this action; it is an important step forward and a positive response to the changing UK, global norms on

corporate transparency. These commitments exceed the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force on beneficial ownership transparency, and put them ahead of most jurisdictions. The Overseas Territories Governments are making good progress, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is providing support with this, as required.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Kamall on 17 May (HL71), what is the average rate of staff turnover within the Coronavirus Test Device Approval team since its implementation; and what steps they are taking to ensure that this does not affect the ability of the review team, including new scientific advisors, to address the ongoing COVID diagnostics application backlog. [HL727]

Lord Kamall: We are unable to provide the information requested on average staff turnover as it is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The number of scientific advisors has remained stable. There are six new posts currently advertised to recruit permanent civil servants as scientific advisors, to replace contractors in these roles. In addition, organisational learning is being recorded to ensure continuity, including a new management information system and appropriate handover periods as staff are replaced.

Customs: Dover

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of acquiring the land for the Dover Inland Border Facility; and what has been the cost of (1) preparatory works undertaken so far to the site, and (2) access to the site. [HL1099]

Baroness Penn: The Department for Transport (DfT) is the owner of the land at Dover White Cliffs and bought the asset as a strategic and important site for the Government to establish functions that would ease pressure at the border. The Government is currently reviewing potential future use of the site. The initial cost of the land is currently confidential, pending the previous owner's agreement that this can be released.

The cost for developing the site was £18.3 million, with £6.4 million being spent on preparatory works by HMRC, and a further £11.9 million was spent by DfT towards site readiness before handing the site over to HMRC. These costs include £3.3 million being spent on the access to the site, which would have been incurred anyway in developing the fast-track road. Some of the costs such as site surveys, design, and materials, can be re-used by Government for the subsequent use of the land.

The decision has been made to cease delivery of the Dover IBF following the end of staged customs controls in January 2022. The demand on the IBF's has been lower than expected, and trade is flowing well into and out of GB, utilising the services HMRC and commercial operators offer.

The revised forecasting shows a substantial reduction in demand which has resulted in an opportunity to review the current size of the IBF network and identify substantial savings to the public purse of up to £120 million by ceasing delivery of Dover IBF.

Debts: Developing Countries

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation to limit the ability of private creditors to sue low-income countries indebted to them in the English Courts. [HL1245]

Baroness Penn: The Government is fully focused on ensuring that the private sector provides debt relief for low-income countries where this is required as part of an internationally agreed debt treatment. For example, under the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, private sector participation on at least as favourable terms as bilateral creditors is a fundamental principle. The G20, including the UK, has repeatedly emphasised the importance of this principle.

The Government does not currently have any intention to pursue a legislative approach that would force private lenders to participate in debt relief initiatives. Any legislative approach would need to address a number of challenges. For example, legislating may increase the cost of finance for low-income countries or reduce the availability of finance to meet wider development goals.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Armed Conflict

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Rwanda's current military involvement in the fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); and what discussions they have had with the government of the United States of America about their reported concerns over the presence of Rwandan forces in the DRC. [HL1085]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is concerning. We welcome regional efforts to deliver a peaceful solution. In recent weeks we have raised our concerns about the increase in violence, hate speech and increased movement of armed groups with the Governments of DRC, Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the leadership of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, MONUSCO. The UK engages frequently and at a senior

level with the Governments of Rwanda and DRC through our missions in the region, and in the UK. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon and the Minister for Africa most recently raised our concerns about the escalating violence in the region, with the Rwandan Foreign Minister last week. The Minister for Africa will also raise these concerns with the Government of DRC over the coming days. The UK is committed to supporting regional efforts to build stability and reduce violence in DRC, and we welcome the recent meeting of regional Heads of State in Nairobi towards this end.

We regularly discuss these issues with our international partners, including the Government of the United States. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and engage with all local and regional partners to improve the security situation.

Developing Countries: Food Aid

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will work with international partners to provide food supply guarantees to developing countries at risk of food shortages as a result of global food shortages and increasing food prices, caused by the war in Ukraine. [HL1112]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Over the next 3 years, the UK will direct £3 billion of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable countries and people to help them recover from crises. The UK played a leading role in persuading the World Bank to commit \$12 billion of new funding in the next 15 months to respond directly to the food security crisis, as part of its global lending package of \$170 billion. The UK is keen to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the global response through strong coordination and collaboration, and we are therefore supportive of the G7 Global Alliance for Food Security and the US-led road map and country coalition. The UK has committed another £10 million to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to build resilience in agriculture and food security in the poorest countries, bringing our total contribution to £186 million.

Developing Countries: Food Supply

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect on the (1) level of debt of, and (2) potential loss of life in, developing countries of global food shortages and increasing food prices, as a result of the war in Ukraine. [HL1062]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Before Russia's invasion, almost 1 billion people in 92 countries did not have enough food to eat and 55 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, were already in acute hunger crises, emergency or famine conditions. This has now risen to at least 1.7 billion with 49 million people already living a step away from famine (up from 25 million in 2020), and

almost 860,000 people estimated to be in famine-like conditions.

Steep increases in the price of staple commodities and agriculture inputs were already apparent before the war. Russia's aggression has further exacerbated these spikes - according to the World Food Programme the price of a food basket in Ethiopia has risen 66 percent, and in Somalia 36 percent. Higher import costs of fuel and food are exacerbating the fragile debt status of many countries particularly in Africa.

Evusheld

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the recent reported increase in COVID-19 infections, what plans they have to expedite the procurement of Evusheld. [HL1193]

Lord Kamall: The Department is currently assessing the efficacy of Evusheld, which includes advice from clinicians with available data, the public health situation and other treatments available. However, we are unable to confirm a specific timetable for decisions on the procurement of Evusheld.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the approval of Evusheld by the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on 17 March, when they plan to announce their policy on the provision of Evusheld; and if they are not yet ready to make an announcement, what progress they have made on developing the clinical commissioning policy for Evusheld. [HL1195]

Lord Kamall: The UK Health Security Agency has tested the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variants and initial data for BA.1 and BA.2 has been shared with AstraZeneca. The Department and the National Health Service are identifying appropriate patient cohorts and approaches to the potential deployment of pre-exposure prophylaxis. We have asked clinicians to advise on the most appropriate option for the NHS in line with all available data, the public health situation and other treatments available. However, we are unable to confirm a specific timetable for decisions for a commissioning policy for Evusheld.

Football: Equality

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the White Paper on the future of football governance, which is due to be published this summer, will include a detailed strategy on how to improve equality and diversity in football. [HL1096]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Her Majesty's Government's response to the recommendations made by the Independent Fan-Led Review of Football Governance

accepted the need for action on equality, diversity and inclusion in football. The response set out that Her Majesty's Government supports clubs' commitment to improving these, focusing on improving outcomes while remaining flexible on plans for action.

We will publish a White Paper in the summer which will set out the details on the implementation of our football governance reforms. This includes proposals on the approach to take forward plans for football clubs. We are working to deliver these measures which will bring sustainable reform to ensure that all fans continue to enjoy our national game.

Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow use of the meal voucher scheme during the summer holidays. [HL1123]

Baroness Barran: Free school meals (FSM) are an educational entitlement intended to support children while they are learning. Pupils do not receive FSM when they are not receiving education. This includes school holidays.

Children who are in receipt of FSM are eligible for a free place on the holiday activities and food programme. The programme is being delivered in all 152 local authorities in England. It ensures that disadvantaged children have access to healthy food and enriching activities during the longer school holiday periods.

To support people who need additional help, the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support via the Household Support Fund, which will be extended from October 2022 to March 2023. This brings the total amount provided through the Household Support Fund since October 2021 to £1.5 billion. This is administered by local councils in England and helps those in most need with payments towards the rising cost of food, energy, and water bills.

Government Departments: Dahua Technology and Hikvision

Asked by Lord Strathcarron

To ask Her Majesty's Government which government departments have banned the use of (1) Hikvision, and (2) Dahua Technology, surveillance equipment from their offices; and what plans they have for that equipment to be banned in all other government departments. [HL1326]

Lord True: As has been the case under successive administrations, it is not government policy to comment on the security arrangements of government departments. Specific details regarding the security systems used by departments are withheld on national security grounds.

Health Services and Social Services: Discrimination

Asked by Lord Lilley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to use the Everyday Discrimination Scale as recommended in the Review of Health and Social Care Leadership published on 8 June; and if so, what evidence they have that it provides useful objective evidence. [HL1155]

Lord Kamall: All seven recommendations in Leadership for a collaborative and inclusive future have been accepted by the Government. This includes positive equality, diversity and inclusion action, where the report encourages the use of the Everyday Discrimination Scale as a useful tool to support leaders and teams to address discrimination in the workplace.

The scale was developed by a Harvard University professor, which has been used globally to address issues through specific questions and considerations. However, the use of the scale is not being mandated in the National Health Service and social care. The Department considers this as one of a number of tools available to health and social care workers to ensure a welcoming and supportive environment.

Hire Services: Older People

Asked by Lord Vinson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of car hire companies refusing to lease vehicles to individuals based solely on their age; and what steps they will take to ensure that older drivers with full licences and insurance are not discriminated against. [HL1125]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Such actions would be concerning and potentially unlawful. The Equality Act 2010 provides that it is unlawful age discrimination for a service provider such as a car hire company to refuse, on age grounds, to lease a vehicle to an otherwise qualified person, unless the company can objectively justify its decision.

Where a company cannot, in those circumstances, show that their leasing policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, the affected person can bring a case to the County Court, or Sheriff's Court in Scotland. The court can then determine whether the "objective justification test" has been satisfied, and may award costs and compensation where the individual wins their case. A range of guidance is available to service providers on their obligations and to service users on their rights, most notably on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's website, but also through the Equality and Advisory and Support Service (EASS). The EASS can be contacted via its website - <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>, or it can be contacted by telephone on 0808 800 0082 (or by text phone on 0808 800 0084).

Infected Blood Inquiry

Asked by *Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals have brought claims against the Government for negligence in relation to contaminated Factor VIII blood products since the Government first made compensation payments to haemophiliacs infected with HIV in 1991. [[HL1183](#)]

Lord Kamall: A group claim has been brought on behalf of approximately 500 claimants or their dependants, in relation to Factor VIII and Factor IX products. This claim is stayed pending the outcome of the Infected Blood Inquiry.

Inflation: Young People

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce additional measures aimed at helping young people deal with inflationary pressures. [[HL1214](#)]

Baroness Penn: The government understands that millions of people across the UK, of all ages, are worried about the rising cost of living.

From 1 April 2022, the National Minimum Wage for people aged 21-22 increased by 9.8% to £9.18 an hour and the Apprentice Rate increased by 11.9% to £4.81 an hour.

On 26 May 2022, the government announced over £15 billion of additional support for households, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need, bringing total government support for the cost of living to over £37 billion this year.

Young people may be able to benefit from the additional support the government is providing, including:

- £400 off household energy bills from October through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS);
- a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650 for households on means-tested benefits; and an additional one-off disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 for disabled people; and
- an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund, for those in need of additional support.

Kate Josephs

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord True on 16 June (HL736 and HL840), what specific investigation processes are being referred to; who is carrying out each investigation; who each investigation will report to; and by what date they expect each of the investigations to be complete. [[HL1111](#)]

Lord True: The specific investigation process being referred to is that set out in both the Update of 31 January 2022 and the 25 May 2022 final report outlining the findings of the Second Permanent Secretary's investigation into alleged gatherings on Government premises. The methodology of the investigation is outlined within the report. The Second Permanent Secretary's Update made clear what investigation work had been carried out. It is never appropriate in investigations to either confirm or deny whether the Cabinet Office has had any communications with specific individuals in order to preserve the confidentiality and integrity of investigation processes.

Madagascar: Rio Tinto Group

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to call on Rio Tinto to pay compensation to local people affected by the escape of (1) toxic uranium, and (2) lead, pollution from the mine near Anosy in Madagascar. [[HL1035](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of allegations of pollution from the QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM) ilmenite mining operations in south-east Madagascar. QMM, a joint venture between Rio Tinto and the Government of Madagascar, has denied the allegations. The UK welcomes ongoing efforts involving the national and regional authorities, QMM and the local community to establish the facts in the case and address the concerns of local residents.

Manufacturing Industries: Business Rates

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce business rates for UK manufacturers over the next 12 months. [[HL1124](#)]

Baroness Penn: The Government has frozen the business rates multiplier for 2022-23, which will support all ratepayers and is a tax cut worth £4.6 billion to businesses over the next 5 years.

At Autumn Budget 2021, new business rates support for green technology was announced, worth around £170 million over the next five years. In addition, the Government is bringing forward the implementation of these measures by one year, starting from 1 April 2022. This will enable businesses to invest in energy efficiency and clean heat, and support the security of energy supply. Overall, this will save businesses an extra £35 million in 2022-23.

Medicine: Training

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons for the reduction in the number of university applications to study medicine

including dentistry; and what plans they have to fill any increase in the number of vacancies for doctors, nurses and dentists. [HL1154]

Lord Kamall: The latest available data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service data shows that applicants to undergraduate dentistry courses have remained at a similar level, with 3,625 applicants in 2011 and 3,635 applicants in 2021. As at March 2022, there are 38,972 full-time equivalent registered nursing vacancies and 8,016 medical vacancies. Many of the vacancies will be covered by bank and agency staff. Data on dental vacancies is not held centrally.

The Department has committed to deliver an additional 50,000 nurses by the end of this Parliament to ensure a sustainable long-term supply for the National Health Service. As of March 2022, the number of nurses had increased by over 30,000 compared to September 2019. More than 30,000 students have accepted a place on nursing and midwifery programmes in the 2021 recruitment cycle - an increase of 28% compared to 2019. We have also increased the number of medical school places by 25%. The NHS Retention Programme is also targeting interventions to encourage staff to stay in the NHS whilst supporting their health and wellbeing.

We are working with the British Dental Association to reform the NHS dental contract to make it more attractive to the profession. In its 'Advancing Dental Care Review', Health Education England made recommendations to improve the recruitment and retention of dentists and other professionals. We are also working to allow greater flexibility to expand on the registration options open to international dentistry applicants.

Nigeria: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 25 May (HL513), what assessment they have now made of the effectiveness of talks between the UK and the government of Nigeria in advancing the rights of the Nigerian people. [HL1023]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government is committed to promoting human rights for all Nigerians, and supporting efforts to respond to rising insecurity across Nigeria. We regularly raise these topics with the Nigerian Government and other Nigerian interlocutors including religious and community leaders. These discussions allow us to: demonstrate UK Government interest; push for progress; agree future cooperation; and understand what is proving effective in responding to negative developments. For example, in the Minister for Africa's meetings with religious and community leaders during her February visit, she heard about the importance of investment in dialogue, mediation and peacebuilding to tackle the drivers of conflict. The outcome of that discussion is helping to shape our future engagement and activity to respond to conflict and insecurity.

The UK Government has delivered programmes and projects in support of our commitment on promoting security and human rights. For example, we have funded projects in Kaduna, Plateau and Benue states, aimed at promoting tolerance and understanding, strengthening links and dialogue between civil society groups, religious leaders and religious (and non-religious) groups; and advocating for responsible journalism. At the first dialogue of our Security and Defence partnership in February, we agreed to continue working together to support long-term solutions to address the root causes of violence in Nigeria.

Nigeria: Human Rights and Security

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 25 May (HL513), what were the outcomes of the discussions between the Minister for Africa with community leaders, religious leaders and the Vice President and Foreign Minister of Nigeria on the topics of violence, human rights, and the security situation in Nigeria. [HL1024]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government is committed to promoting human rights for all Nigerians, and supporting efforts to respond to rising insecurity across Nigeria. We regularly raise these topics with the Nigerian Government and other Nigerian interlocutors including religious and community leaders. These discussions allow us to: demonstrate UK Government interest; push for progress; agree future cooperation; and understand what is proving effective in responding to negative developments. For example, in the Minister for Africa's meetings with religious and community leaders during her February visit, she heard about the importance of investment in dialogue, mediation and peacebuilding to tackle the drivers of conflict. The outcome of that discussion is helping to shape our future engagement and activity to respond to conflict and insecurity.

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Nurses: Migrant Workers

Asked by Lord Lilley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much was spent recruiting nurses from overseas on

accommodation, flights, quarantine and administration, excluding salaries, in the most recent year for which figures are available [[HL1159](#)]

Lord Kamall: The information requested on money spent on recruiting nurses from overseas is not collected centrally.

Overseas Students: Employment

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow overseas students to have the right to access paid work placements in the UK, of up to six months, under the Short-term Student (English language) route. [[HL1087](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Those who wish to study the English Language for up to 6 months can do so under the visitor route, they do not need to apply for a Short-Term Study Visa.

The Short-term Student (English language) route is for those whose aim is to study the English language, not for those wishing to work in the UK. Changing this position would open this route to potential abuse by those whose intention would primarily be to work, not study, as we saw in the past when the then student routes were widely abused for this purpose.

Railways: Agency Workers

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the possible impact of temporary agency staff replacing train drivers and signalling staff during rail strikes; when any such assessment was undertaken; and what the outcomes of any such assessment were. [[HL1205](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The use of agency and temporary workers in the rail sector is not a new development. Where this happens, agency workers must of course be qualified and trained to safely and efficiently undertake the work in question. However, this development should mean agency workers can be used to support services during times of industrial action, which is good news for passengers and those who rely upon the railway.

The Government and rail industry, including Network Rail, have worked together and continue to work together to ensure plans are in place to minimise disruption allowing for freight and passenger services to remain operational where possible. The Civil Contingencies Secretariat is also convening ministers daily during the strike period to assess operational response and impact.

Railways: Safety

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that appropriate safety measures will not be compromised due to the minimum rail service legislation; and what steps they have taken to study the safety measures that have been implemented in (1) Belgium, and (2) France. [[HL1196](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government and rail industry, including Network Rail, have worked together and continue to work together to ensure plans are in place to minimise disruption allowing for freight and passenger services to remain operational where possible. The Civil Contingencies Secretariat is also convening ministers daily during the strike period to assess operational response and impact.

We are looking at everything we can do to help maintain services amid disruption and Minimum Service legislation is just one part of that. We are experienced in safely running very reduced train services - the industry is currently doing so right now. Minimum service levels are a government manifesto commitment to introduce legislation which would require train operators to run a base number of services in the event of strike action. We of course encourage employers and unions to reach agreement wherever possible.

We will review any relevant comparable available evidence, including safety measures, in these countries and others, when developing any policy around the introduction of Minimum Service Levels.

Refugees: Electronic Tagging

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they will use to determine which refugees will be electronically tagged and which will not. [[HL1106](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: An individual assessment of the appropriateness for tagging will be undertaken for each case in line with our published policy (available at: Offender management - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)).

Refugees: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that some Ukrainian refugee families have not been accommodated successfully on arrival in England; and what steps they are taking in response. [[HL1109](#)]

Lord Harrington of Watford: We always anticipated that there would be some cases where accommodation is not found to be suitable, and in those relatively rare cases, government and local authorities provide alternative options or accommodation. Further guidance can be accessed (attached) here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-matching-organisations>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recognised-providers-organisations-who-can-help-guests-from-ukraine-find-sponsors-in-the-uk>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Guidance for Council [HL1109 - Homes for Ukraine_ guidance for councils - GOV.UK.pdf]

Guidance for matching organisation [HL1109 Homes for Ukraine_ guidance for matching organisations - GOV.UK.pdf]

Sponsors in the UK [HL1109 - Recognised Providers_ Organisations who can help guests from Ukraine find sponsors in the UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-06-20/HL1109>

Reservoirs

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reservoir capacity in (1) England, and (2) each of the nations of the UK, as part of their plan to avert water shortages (a) this summer, and (b) in the years ahead. [HL1039]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Environment Agency monitors water levels across England. At the end of May, across the regions of England, reservoir water levels ranged from 78% of total capacity in north-west England to 94% in east England. Reservoir levels for England were at 85% of total capacity. Most reservoirs are in a normal position for the time of year.

The Environment Agency's National Framework for Water Resources, published in March 2020, sets out the strategic water needs for England, and all its regions and sectors, up to 2050 and beyond. The Framework sets out how we will reduce demand, halve leakage rates, develop new supply infrastructure such as reservoirs, move water to where it is needed, increase drought resilience of water supplies and reduce the need for drought measures that can harm the environment. In the autumn, water companies will publish their statutory draft water resources management plans that will outline how they will manage their water supplies in the future.

Water policy is a devolved matter.

Russia: International Criminal Court

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with prosecutors at the International Criminal Court at The Hague regarding (1) investigations, and (2) potential prosecutions, of (a) President Putin, (b) other members of the Russian government, and (c) members of the Russian military, for (i) crimes of aggression, (ii) crimes against humanity, and (iii) genocide. [HL1114]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is for the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor to independently determine who should be prosecuted for crimes committed in Ukraine, including those that ordered them, in accordance with his mandate under the Rome Statute. The ICC does not have jurisdiction to prosecute the Crime of Aggression in Ukraine because neither Russia nor Ukraine are States party to the Rome Statute. We respect the jurisdiction of competent national or international courts, such as the ICC, to determine if the crime of genocide has occurred in Ukraine. The UK will continue to provide the necessary assistance to the ICC to support its investigations, including an additional £1 million contribution funded through the cross-Government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

Technology: Education

Asked by Baroness Uddin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with (1) universities, and (2) businesses, in the fields of (a) the metaverse, (b) blockchain technologies, (c) cryptocurrencies, and (d) artificial intelligence. [HL1071]

Baroness Barran: The Digital Strategy announced by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Tech and the Digital Economy on the 13 June, is the roadmap we will follow to further strengthen our global position as a science and technology superpower.

The Digital Strategy will lead to new jobs, skills and services that benefit and level up the whole of the UK. It will bring tech leaders together in a new Digital Skills Council to tackle the skills gap and to carry out a review of the UK's large-scale computer processing capabilities. The group will look at the issue of digital skills from schools through to lifelong learning and at ways the industry can inspire the next generation of talent from a wide range of backgrounds to consider a digital career.

As an illustration of our commitment to this, we announced that the Office for Students (OfS) will be providing 2,000 scholarships to ensure we have more of the advanced digital skills needed to maintain the country's leading position in cutting-edge AI and data science. The OfS allocate up to £23 million to universities to fund scholarships starting in 2023. Funding will be available for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds as well as black, women and disabled students to ensure the AI

built and used in the UK reflects the make-up of our society.

In this new landscape, businesses will be critical to supporting our ambitions. The Innovation Strategy, published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in July 2021, focuses on how the government supports businesses to innovate by making the most of the UK's research, development and innovation system.

As part of this UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will ramp up its investment in the technologies of the future including Artificial Intelligence, digital, and advanced computing, working with businesses to crowd-in investment and create world leading sectors and job-rich industries. Over the spending review period UKRI allocation for the 2022/25 financial year is £25.1 billion and will reach its highest ever level in the 2024/25 financial year (over £8.8 billion).

Ukraine: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that more than 2,500 civilians have been abducted or forcibly removed from Ukraine by Russian forces. [HL1057]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn Russian atrocities, including the alleged abduction and deportation of innocent Ukrainians. The UK has supported multilateral mechanisms to assess the situation in Ukraine, including the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism report, which found multiple instances of clear violations of international law by Russian forces in Ukraine. The Attorney General also led a scoping mission to the region from 8-11 May, to assess how the UK can help the Ukrainian Prosecutor General to identify and collect evidence of atrocity crimes. Alongside international partners, the UK is committed to assisting Ukraine's domestic investigation into war crimes, in addition to the International Criminal Court investigation. We also continue to hold the Russian Government to account. On 16 June, the UK announced a new wave of sanctions including against the Russian Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova for her alleged involvement in the forced transfer and adoption of Ukrainian children.

Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Russian military has (1) attacked civilians in Ukraine indiscriminately, and (2) attacked hospitals, schools, and railway stations in that country, causing injuries and loss of life. [HL1113]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine is a premeditated and barbaric assault on a sovereign democratic state. Russia's deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, railway stations and cultural sites constitute war crimes. The UK and its partners will ensure Putin's regime is held accountable.

The UK is a leading bilateral donor to Ukraine, having committed £220 million in humanitarian assistance. We have delivered over 11 million medical items and are donating ambulances, generators and multiple non-food items. Frontline medical aid charity UK-Med will also receive funding of up to £300,000 to help train Ukrainian doctors, nurses and paramedics on how to deal with mass casualties.

UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 20 June (HL780) and 23 June (HL1082), what were the range of factors taken into account when considering whether to nominate a candidate to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and what led to them to their decision not to nominate a candidate this time. [HL1274]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Ministers considered a range of factors when deciding whether to nominate an independent candidate for election to the CEDAW Committee, including the time and resources to mount a campaign, the potential benefits and the impact on other international elections. Following analysis of these factors Ministers decided not to nominate candidate for the 2022 election.

Universal Credit: Harrogate

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 28 April (HL7970) and the subsequent correspondence on 11 May, out of the 80 people invited to make a claim for Universal Credit during the Universal Credit managed migration pilot in Harrogate, how many had been (1) notified of a deadline day for claiming universal credit and (2) reached that initial deadline day, prior to the pilot being paused. [HL639]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Of those contacted during the pilot, 53 people were given a deadline to claim universal credit. Before the pilot was paused, 41 people reached the deadline.

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