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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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 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, 11 July 2022

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Appointment

[HLWS194]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce that Her Majesty The Queen has approved the appointment of Sir Mark Rowley QPM as the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, following my recommendation after a highly competitive recruitment process. I also had regard to the views of the Mayor of London, as occupant of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

The Metropolitan Police Service faces major challenges, having been moved to the engage phase by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), and needs to demonstrate sustained improvements in order to regain public trust in London and nationally. It is vital that the right person is in place to take on the biggest leadership role in policing in this country. I expect the new Commissioner to work with HMICFRS's Policing Performance Oversight Group to make the necessary improvements.

Sir Mark brings a wealth of experience with him and I am confident he will be able to exercise the strong and decisive leadership required, in order to deliver the sustained improvements that are so urgently needed. This will be a difficult time for the force as it seeks to regain the public's trust, but I am confident that Sir Mark is the right person to meet this challenge.

At a time when the Government is investing record sums into policing - including the recruitment of 20,000 additional police officers across England and Wales - the

new Commissioner will need to focus on delivering the aims we set out in our Beating Crime Plan: cutting crime, reducing the number of victims and make our capital and country safer. But, reflecting the context in which this recruitment has been made, I also want the new Commissioner to focus on getting the basics right, restoring confidence in policing, and ensuring that Londoners and those who visit our capital city get the service they deserve from the Metropolitan Police.

Support for police is often based on personal experience, and the public have a set of basic expectations of the criminal justice system. They expect to be able to contact their local police, knowing their names and how to reach them. They want to see police in their neighbourhood confronting crime and making streets safer. They expect crimes to be investigated, offenders caught and punished, and when a case proceeds for justice to be swift and certain. The Beating Crime Plan outlines our approach to this, but to be successful the new Commissioner must embed the aims and objectives in wider strategic plans.

While it is the responsibility of the Mayor to hold the Commissioner to account for the Metropolitan Police's transformation, I will be closely monitoring progress. I look forward to working with them both to drive real change in the force. The public deserves nothing less.

Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill

[HLWS193]

Baroness Penn: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers

Monday, 11 July 2022

Affordable Housing: Construction

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure factory-made modular homes maintain standards of high quality. [HL1328]

Lord Greenhalgh: DLUHC shares the cross-government objective of increasing the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). MMC provides an important opportunity to improve the quality of new homes, deliver greater energy efficiency, reduce construction waste, improve productivity and address the shortage in construction skills.

New technology and innovation have improved productivity, quality and choice across a range of sectors and the Government wants to see the same happen in housing.

Building regulations apply equally to homes built using Modern Methods of Construction as those built using traditional methods. Developers are responsible for carrying out a full risk assessment of any construction project, including ensuring any new techniques are used correctly.

Apprentices: Specific Learning Difficulties

Asked by *Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what programmes are currently in place to increase the number of people with learning difficulties taking part in apprenticeships. [HL1336]

Baroness Barran: Apprenticeships are available for all people of all backgrounds including people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) to start, progress or to re-train in a variety of industries.

In recent years we have seen an improved representation of people who have declared LDD starting apprenticeships, and we want this to continue. We have improved our Find an Apprenticeship service to allow people to identify Disability Confident Employers offering opportunities and ensuring apprenticeships are available to all.

In partnership with the Disability Rights UK, we launched a Disabled Apprentice Network to provide insight and evidence on how to attract and retain disabled people into apprenticeships. Disability Rights UK published a report during National Apprenticeship Week 2022 to support employers to improve the diversity of their apprenticeship programmes whilst highlighting the barriers people may face when undertaking an apprenticeship. In this report, the apprentices identified

the opportunity to build confidence, skills and networks with people with different experiences and gain paid work experience as the key points which influenced them towards undertaking an apprenticeship.

To ensure that more people who declare LDD feel confident to undertake apprenticeships, we have lowered the English and Maths requirements to apprenticeships for a defined group of individuals with LDD. We have also introduced British Sign Language (BSL) as an alternative to English Functional Skills for those who have BSL as their first language.

Furthermore, we make £1,000 payments to employers and providers for taking on 16 to 18-year-olds, or those 19 to 24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan and also offer £150 per month to help providers make reasonable adjustments for eligible apprentices with special educational needs. Providers can claim additional funding if the cost of support exceeds this rate.

Apprentices: Taxation

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow all employers to use their apprenticeship levy funds to tackle labour shortages. [HL1329]

Baroness Barran: The apprenticeship levy is an important part of the government's reforms, supporting employers of all sizes to invest in high-quality apprenticeship training, and helping employers address industry labour shortages by building the skilled workforces they need.

Employers can already choose from over 640 high-quality employer-designed apprenticeship standards, at all levels and in all sectors of the economy, to meet their skills needs and develop a diverse pipeline of talent for the future. The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education continues to work with employers to develop new apprenticeship standards where there is an employer demand.

The department is encouraging more employers to make greater use of their levy funds by helping them choose more flexible training models, such as accelerated and flexi-job apprenticeships, so that employers in all sectors can benefit from apprenticeships and apprentices can hit the ground running from day one.

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 starts in their supply chain, sector, or local area, and to support more employers, including small-medium-sized employers, to meet local or sectorial skills needs.

We also provide £1,000 payments to both employers and training providers when they take on apprentices aged between 16 and 18 years old, helping to support younger people into apprenticeships.

Cameroon: Cholera

Asked by *Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Cameroon about the impact of the cholera outbreak in Cameroon on the welfare and safety of prisoners in that country; and what assistance, if any, they plan to offer to them to help combat the outbreak. [HL1292]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The state of prisons and welfare of prisoners is a sensitive subject in Cameroon and requires careful handling. The UK's partner, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), conducts prison monitoring as part of its programme in Cameroon - last year, they visited 20 places of detention and 9,247 detainees. The UK has contributed to the wider cholera response in Cameroon through core contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which recently made an allocation of \$1.7 million to WHO and UNICEF. More generally, the UK has allocated over £20 million of humanitarian support for needs in Cameroon over the last five years, and regularly calls for continued humanitarian access. We continue to engage with the UN and other humanitarian actors active across Cameroon to ensure that urgent needs are met, including most recently with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 29 April, on the impact of the suspension of humanitarian activities.

Carbon Monoxide: Poisoning

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in formulating the draft Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022, they considered the impact of carbon monoxide poisoning arising from sources in adjacent properties; and why the draft Regulations do not include a requirement for audible carbon monoxide detectors in bedrooms where there is no fixed combustion appliance, except for gas cookers. [HL1273]

Lord Greenhalgh: In formulating the draft regulations, the Government considered national statistics on overall numbers of accidental carbon monoxide poisonings. This, and the falling costs of carbon monoxide alarms, supported the case to extend alarm requirements to include social housing, to rooms having fixed combustion appliances in both rented sectors and to rooms where fixed combustion appliances are installed all irrespective of heating fuel (excluding gas cookers). These regulations, which will provide parity between rented sectors, are applicable to dwellings where a landlord has responsibility for internal repairs and maintenance. They do not account for adjacent properties for which the landlord is not responsible. This decision was based on the evidence and the right balance between safety for residents and ensuring regulatory burdens are proportionate.

Requiring alarms in rooms with fixed combustion appliances will help to mitigate risks in other rooms, as alarms will detect and give audible warning of carbon monoxide before it has a chance to spread elsewhere. It would not be proportionate to mandate additional alarms in other rooms, including bedrooms, that do not contain a fixed combustion appliance.

Children: Finance

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have carried out an impact assessment of revising the income-based eligibility threshold for the (1) 15-hour childcare offer for two year olds, (2) the Healthy Start Scheme, and (3) free school meals. [HL1346]

Baroness Barran: At present, we do not plan to revise the income thresholds for the 15-hour childcare for two-year-olds. The national eligibility criteria aims to support the most disadvantaged children. It is right to target the support based on evidence of which children stand to benefit the most but are least likely to be accessing a place.

The Healthy Start Scheme is the responsibility for the Department of Health and Social Care.

Free school meal eligibility is kept under review ensuring that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

China: Human Rights

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to carry out an audit of UK assets held by Chinese Hong Kong officials who are linked to human rights violations. [HL1290]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are alarmed by the gross human rights violations in China and the deterioration of rights and freedoms in Hong Kong. It is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

Citizenship: Education

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ensure that the teaching of British values in schools respects protected characteristics, freedom of speech, and the freedom of conscience. [HL1289]

Baroness Barran: All schools must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broad, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later

life. The department expects all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include experiences and voices of people from all backgrounds. The curriculum offers many opportunities for schools to do this, notably through citizenship education and relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE).

The RSHE curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference. The citizenship curriculum includes content on democracy and human rights.

In delivering the curriculum, schools should be aware of their duties relating to political impartiality as set out under the Education Act 1996, and must ensure that, where political issues are discussed in the classroom, they are presented in a balanced way.

Pupils should learn about equality, kindness, and respect, and it is for schools to decide how they teach these important values. The department believes in the importance of these shared values which are taught and reinforced every single day in schools across the UK.

Colombia and Venezuela: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 28 June (HL885), what assessment they have made of results obtained from humanitarian expenditure of £45 million in Venezuela and Colombia over the past two years. [HL1313]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is extremely concerned by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. The crisis is not only making life untenable for the majority of the Venezuelan population of 28.4 million people but has led around 6 million Venezuelans to flee the country since 2016.

Since 2019, the UK Government has spent £37m in humanitarian aid in response to the Venezuelan crisis. These funds have provided life-saving support to very vulnerable people, much of it focused on health and nutrition, water and sanitation, both inside Venezuela and in other countries in the region, among them Colombia. Inside Venezuela, our funds have made an important contribution to childhood vaccinations and strengthening the capacity of the country to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to the entire population. We have also supported multi-sector projects implemented by 17 national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and 8 international NGOs through the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund, which we played a key role in establishing in 2020. The UK continues to be the largest contributor to the

United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund and provides considerable funding to other multilateral humanitarian agencies. We are also a founding donor of the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund, which is increasing funding to Venezuelan NGOs.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide a COVID-19 booster programme for the general population in light of new Omicron variants. [HL1325]

Lord Kamall: On 21 February 2022, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer an additional booster dose in spring 2022 to those most vulnerable as a precautionary measure. An additional dose has been offered to all residents in care homes for older adults, individuals aged 12 years old and over who are immunosuppressed and all adults aged 75 years old and over.

On 19 May 2022, the JCVI provided interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 booster programme, which stated that an additional dose should be provided to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those aged 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. The JCVI continues to review the vaccination of other patient groups and details on the definitions of clinical risk groups. The JCVI will issue further advice if necessary.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Freedom of Information

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 22 June (HL772), what proportion of responses to freedom of information requests made to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities were completed and communicated to the requester within 20 working days during the first quarter of 2022. [HL1306]

Lord Harrington of Watford: The Cabinet Office has responsibility for Freedom of Information policy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and publishes information on the handling of requests (attached): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/freedom-of-information-statistics-january-to-march-2022> During the first quarter of 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities received 243 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations. Of these requests, 91% were responded to within 20 working days, or a permitted extension.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

FOI statistics January to March 2022 [1306 - Freedom of Information statistics_ January to March 2022 bulletin - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-06-28/HL1306>

Developing Countries: LGBT+ People

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to LGBT+ communities in (1) low, and (2) middle, income countries to empower them to reform laws that discriminate against them. [HL1228]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. Ministers and our overseas missions work closely with partners to advance LGBT+ equality, and promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination.

On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

East Africa: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 23 June (HL835), what assessment they have made of the severity of the food shortages in East Africa; and what plans they have to provide additional UK emergency aid to assist in alleviating famine conditions in that region. [HL1322]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 23 June (HL835) and recent findings from Christian Aid which found that only 23 per cent of the British public are aware of the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, what plans they have to increase public awareness of the ongoing famine in East Africa. [HL1323]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region, providing more than £230 million to address humanitarian requirements across East Africa in FY 2021/2022.

The UK played a critical role in convening the recent UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus on the drought and it mobilised roughly US \$400 million in new funding.

The Minister for Africa is also engaging on the subject, attending a recent Ministerial Conference on global food security, highlighting there the need for greater focus on East Africa. In addition, she has also recently met with the Disasters Emergency Committee, comprising UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as writing to World Bank President David Malpass, urging further action on food security in the Horn of Africa.

We welcome the efforts of wider civil society organisations to raise public awareness. FCDO officials maintain continual dialogue with these groups, and have recently attended events in Parliament on the subject.

We continue to monitor the situation and our response closely.

Elections: Colombia

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister has spoken to the President-elect of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, since his victory in the Colombian presidential election on 19 June. [HL1236]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Prime Minister wrote to Gustavo Petro last week to congratulate him on his election as President. We look forward to working with him on the wide range of interests our two countries share after his inauguration on 7 August 2022.

Extradition: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards developing an extradition agreement with the European Union to replace the Dublin Regulation. [HL1285]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has an extradition arrangement with the European Union via the UK EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This provides for streamlined cooperation and safeguards for extradition requests between the UK and EU Member States.

This does not replace the EU's Dublin Regulation, which the UK is no longer bound by.

Food Technology

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to teach cookery skills at (a) primary, and (b) secondary, schools in England, and (2) to introduce a model curriculum which covers a basic range of cookery skills. [HL1310]

Baroness Barran: Cooking and nutrition are part of the national curriculum for design and technology, which is mandatory in state-maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3. The curriculum aims to teach children how to cook, with an emphasis on savoury dishes, and how to apply the principles of healthy eating and nutrition. It recognises

that cooking is an important life skill that will help children to feed themselves, and others, healthy and affordable food.

A food preparation and nutrition GCSE was introduced in September 2016. This requires pupils to understand and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating when preparing and cooking food. The first exams in this new qualification were taken in September 2018.

Furthermore, the department recognises that a firm grounding in cooking and healthy eating can play an important part in enabling individuals to reach their full potential to lead fulfilling and healthy lives. The Levelling Up White Paper has furthered the department's ambitions to drive up food education in schools. This will include developing new curriculum content covering a basic range of cookery skills. We will also be investing up to £200,000 to pilot new training for school governors and academy trusts on a whole school approach to food.

Free School Meals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent estimate they have made of the number of children in England who are eligible for income-related free school meals but are not registered for the scheme. [HL1307]

Baroness Barran: The department does not routinely collect information on the proportion of pupils that would be entitled to a free school meal but do not make a claim. Our last estimate is that take-up is around 89% of those who are entitled.

Whilst take-up of free school meals is strong, the department wants to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this, we provide an Eligibility Checking System to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities. We have also developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals and provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

Gambling

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the NERA report Economic Assessment of Selected House of Lords Gambling Reforms, published 26 May 2021; and what assessment they have made of how gambling reform could help to level up disadvantaged communities. [HL1291]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The report of the House of Lords Select Committee has been an important contribution to the evidence base informing our Review of the Gambling Act 2005. We have also carefully considered the "Economic Assessment of Selected House of Lords Gambling Reforms" by NERA, along with a wide range of evidence from other sources including the 16,000 submissions to our call for evidence. We are determined to tackle gambling harms across society with effective but proportionate controls, and will publish a white paper outlining our vision for the sector in the coming weeks.

Government Departments: Heating

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 28 April (HL7750), whether they will now answer the question with the details requested, namely, in respect of the principal offices of each government department located in central London, (1) what temperature the offices are heated to during working hours in winter, and (2) what assessment they have made of the advantages and disadvantages of reducing that temperature by 2°C. [HL1278]

Lord True: With respect to part 1 of the question, Government Property Agency (GPA) managed offices located in central London are heated to 22°C with a $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ tolerance.

With respect to buildings which GPA does not manage, the individual departments are responsible and it would be for them to respond.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 set requirements for most aspects of the working environment. Regulation 7 deals specifically with the temperature in indoor workplaces and states "during working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable". The reasonableness of the temperature is dependent on the work activity being conducted.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) approved code of practice and guidance (L24) advises the minimum temperature for a workplace should normally be at least 16°C.

With respect to part 2 of the question, the temperature of an office floor plate is not uniform. There will be areas which when heated to 22°C with a $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ tolerance will be at the lower end of the spectrum. In naturally ventilated buildings, ventilation is provided by the controlled opening of windows by the occupants. This means that from time to time temperatures are likely to dip lower than the noted threshold.

Reducing nominal temperatures by 2°C moves GPA into an operational band of 18-22°C, which, if windows are open could risk falling close to the lower threshold of 16°C.

Hospitality Industry: Investment and Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a new tax and investment regime for the hospitality sector. [HL1368]

Baroness Penn: The Government provided significant tax and grant support to the sector over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of this support continues, such as the 2022-23 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme for England, announced in the Budget in October 2021, which provides eligible, occupied retail, hospitality, and leisure properties with a 50 per cent relief, up to a cash cap limit of £110,000 per business.

The Government keeps the tax system under review but currently has no plans to introduce a new tax and investment regime for the hospitality sector.

Internet and WiFi

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of people in the UK aged (1) 20–39, (2) 40–59, (3) 60–79, and (4) 80 and over, have no (a) internet, or (b) Wi-Fi, access in their own home. [HL1262]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: At present, 94% of UK households have internet access and Her Majesty's Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible. Today, 69% of premises can access gigabit-capable broadband, up from just 9% in November 2019.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport does not hold information broken down by the specific age brackets registered.

According to 2021 Ofcom data, the percentage of those without internet access in their own home is (1) 1% for 18 - 24 year olds; (2) 0% for 25 - 34 year olds; (3) 3% for 35 - 44 year olds; (4) 2% for 45 - 54 year olds; (5) 3% for 55 - 64 year olds; and (6) 20% for those aged 65+.

In addition, the Office for National Statistics releases information relating to internet access across the UK. Its most recent release was in April 2021.

Internet: Safety

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have undertaken on the effectiveness of different types of media literacy initiatives in tackling (1) misinformation, and (2) disinformation. [HL1280]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: On 16 April 2022, DCMS published the Year 2 Online Media Literacy Action Plan, setting out our media literacy work programme for the financial year 2022/23. The Action

Plan announced that DCMS is establishing a media literacy research programme to bridge evidence gaps about the effectiveness of media literacy interventions, which includes initiatives tackling misinformation and disinformation. We will report on the progress of the Action Plan in due course.

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Online Safety Bill's ability to ensure companies in scope are (1) supporting, and (2) improving, the media literacy skills of their users. [HL1281]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Online Safety Bill includes measures to encourage regulated service providers to promote media literacy to their users. Following a recommendation from the Joint Committee which conducted the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Online Safety Bill, media literacy is now included in the risk assessment duties. This requires in-scope companies to consider how the promotion of users' media literacy can be used to mitigate harms on their platforms.

Media literacy is also expressly referred to in Ofcom's new transparency reporting and information gathering powers, giving Ofcom enhanced visibility of industry spending and activity related to media literacy. Social media platforms currently play a significant role in boosting media literacy, in particular with regards to the funding of programmes. This greater visibility of spending and activity in this area will therefore strengthen Ofcom's ability to undertake its statutory duty to promote media literacy.

Iran: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iran about the execution of prisoners held in Ilam, Kermanshah and Urmia; and what assessment they have made of (1) the murders in 2018 and 2021 of Qadir Qadiri and Mousa Babakhani, and (2) the car-bombing of Akbar Sinjabi in Erbil, all members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran. [HL1312]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and we have repeatedly condemned its use, including in Iran. Representations are also frequently made to the Iranian government with regards to Human Rights more broadly. We continue to take action with the international community to urge Iran to improve its poor human rights record.

On the deaths of the KDP-I members, we understand the relevant Iraqi authorities secured convictions in the case of Qadir Qadiri and have initiated an investigation into the car explosion in Erbil on 6 June 2022. The British Government takes any allegations of extrajudicial killings extremely seriously.

Mobile Phones

Asked by *Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of people in the UK aged (1) 20–39, (2) 40–59, (3) 60–79, and (4) 80 and over, do not own a smartphone. [HL1261]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: According to Ofcom's [Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report](#), published in April 2021, smartphone usage by the following age categories was: 16–24 (96%), 25–34 (96%), 35–44 (96%), 45–54 (94%), 55–64 (86%), 65+ (55%).

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Disclosure of Information

Asked by *Baroness Deech*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 22 June (HL771), whether they will provide the information requested in FOI 17451012 about optimism bias in the costing of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. [HL1270]

Lord Greenhalgh: The estimated cost of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre has been produced in line with Green Book guidance. The publication of further information about costs will be addressed when costs are no longer commercially sensitive.

Ophthalmic Services: Special Educational Needs

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps (1) they, and (2) NHS England, plan to take to (a) ensure that children in receipt of the NHS Special Schools Eye Care Service to attend day special schools will continue to benefit from that service, (b) ensure that the NHS Long Term Plan reflects the NHS England pledge to roll out this service to all special schools, and (c) monitor whether all children in special schools are benefiting from this service by January 2024. [HL1271]

Lord Kamall: The NHS Long Term Plan committed to ensure that children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both in special residential schools have access to eyesight, hearing and dental checks. NHS England commenced a proof-of-concept programme in 2021 to pilot and evaluate a potential service model in residential schools. Once the evaluation is complete, NHS England will develop a model specification for use in special residential schools. The evaluation may result in recommendations for future service provision in day schools. Children in day schools who are unable to attend high street opticians can currently access eye tests in their homes through existing domiciliary services.

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Resolution Foundation report *Income outcomes: Assessing income gaps between places across the UK*, published on 27 June; and what plans they have to re-evaluate the feasibility of the Levelling Up programme. [HL1293]

Lord Greenhalgh: This report reaffirms our finding that disparities in incomes are significant and persistent, both within and between different parts of the UK. These findings reinforce the scale of the challenge we face, but also the vital need for levelling up. The living standards mission sets out government's ambition to narrow the gap in living standards between different areas of the country.

The report's use of the ONS's Gross Disposable Household Income (one of the supporting metrics for the living standards mission) as a data source adds considerable nuance and detail that provides important insights for levelling up and avenues for future research. This analysis also shows the value of improving subnational data to deepen our understanding of the UK's disparities and how they can be addressed. The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities is continuing to work with the ONS and others to improve our subnational data, and will continue to engage with experts like the Resolution Foundation to build the evidence base that we need to deliver levelling up.

Our Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will enshrine in law our commitment to report on spatial disparities within the UK. To do this, we will continue to develop and monitor the suite of metrics we outlined within the Technical Annex of the Levelling Up White Paper, which will enable us to evaluate progress and better understand what works to improve outcomes across different places.

Russia: Detainees

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report from Interfax, published on 18 June, what discussions they have had with the government of Russia about the (1) whereabouts, and (2) treatment, of the 1.9 million Ukrainian civilians, including 307,000 children, who Russia says have been transferred from Ukraine to Russia; and whether they intend to press the government of Russia to give the United Nations unfettered access to the facilities where the Ukrainians are being held. [HL1264]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is clear that there can be no normalisation in our relationship with Russia while it threatens our allies. We do however need to maintain a diplomatic framework that allows us to: keep open a channel for crisis communication and space for diplomacy; defend our values; and fulfil our responsibility to communicate on international security issues with a fellow P5 member. Following Russia's

invasion of Ukraine, the UK Government has suspended all engagement with the Russian authorities unless absolutely necessary to preserve vital UK foreign policy and security interests. The UK has repeatedly called for Russia to respect its obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

Schools: Mental Health

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on teachers and education staff of the reported increase in mental health challenges for children and young people in schools. [HL1468]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the mental health of teachers and education staff of the post-COVID-19 education recovery programmes. [HL1469]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relationship between the mental health of teachers and education staff and pupils' educational attainment. [HL1470]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the mental health and wellbeing of early career teachers. [HL1471]

Baroness Barran: The department recognises the pressure that staff in schools have been under and is grateful to them for their efforts especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The department continues to work proactively with the sector to understand the drivers behind wellbeing and mental health of staff and pupils and improve our policies and interventions.

The department has not undertaken specific assessments of the relationship between the mental health of teachers and education staff on pupils' educational attainment, or undertaken assessment of the impact on teachers and education staff of the mental health challenges for children and young people in schools. However, the department regularly commissions research on the mental health of leaders, teachers and school staff (see, for example, the 'leader and teacher wellbeing' chapter in the February 2022 wave of the School Snapshot Survey, which is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074740/School_and_College_Panel_Report_-_February_2022_wave.pdf). The department also monitors emerging research in the field, such as Education Support's annual teacher wellbeing index, which reports on the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff. The index is available here:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>.

The department is committed to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of staff in schools, including early career teachers, and as part of the department's initial teacher training and early career framework reforms, trainee and early career teachers will receive high-quality training on how to manage workload and wellbeing.

Last year, the department published the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>. The charter is a set of commitments from government, Ofsted, and schools and colleges to protect and promote the wellbeing of staff. Over 1,900 schools have signed up to the charter since it was launched for sign-up in November 2021.

The department is funding a support scheme for school leaders to improve and promote good mental health and wellbeing, providing one-to-one supervision, peer support and counselling to around 2,000 school leaders until March 2023. The department is currently procuring an independent research evaluation of the support scheme, the findings of which will be published.

Finally, the department has published a mental health GOV.UK page, which brings together information about the various mental health support offers and training available to schools and colleges. This includes specific guidance and signposting for staff on supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing. The page is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

Schools: Uniforms

Asked by Baroness Pinnoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to remove VAT from school uniforms. [HL1353]

Baroness Penn: Under the current VAT rules, all children's clothing and footwear designed for young children who are less than 14 years of age, including school uniforms, attract a zero-rate of VAT, meaning that no VAT is charged on the sale of these items.

The UK is one of only two countries among the 37 OECD member countries to maintain a VAT relief for children's clothing.

Special Educational Needs: Vocational Guidance

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current career support available for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. [HL1337]

Baroness Barran: Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The government's education policies are intended to ensure that all young people, whatever their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to reach their potential. Careers support for young people supports anyone, including young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) or in disadvantaged groups, to go as far as their talents will take them and have a rewarding career.

The statutory guidance for schools and colleges on careers guidance includes an expectation that schools and colleges will use the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance to develop and improve their careers programmes. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>. The third benchmark focusses on addressing the individual needs of each student. The department expects schools and colleges to tailor careers activities and educational goals to the needs of each student, taking account of their prior knowledge and skills, the choices and transitions they face, and any additional support that may be needed to overcome barriers.

The department is working in collaboration with The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and the National Careers Service to ensure careers advice for young people with SEND is of the highest quality. The department funds the CEC to increase young people's exposure to the world of work and support schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks. The CEC runs a community of practice focused on inclusion. Schools, colleges and training providers work together to support each other in their local community to work with students from disadvantaged groups, including young people with SEND, through the sharing of good practice and the development of resources. The National Careers Service provides free careers information, advice and guidance to both young people and adults through a website and telephone helpline.

To help more young people with SEND get into great careers, the department is also taking action to improve careers guidance, providing support, resources and SEND-specific training for Careers Leaders and special educational needs coordinators who design and deliver inspirational careers education programmes, tailored to the needs of young people with SEND.

Sudan: Disinformation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the involvement of the Wagner Group in gold mining in Sudan. [HL1302]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the involvement of Russian companies in misinformation campaigns in Sudan. [HL1303]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Russian state and non-state activities in Sudan are seeking to capitalise on instability for their own interests. The Minister for Africa has repeatedly made clear our concerns over negative Russian activities in Africa, which include reports of Wagner Group involvement in gold mining and in disinformation campaigns in Sudan. Senior FCDO officials raised our concerns directly with Sudan's military leadership in Khartoum on 3 March. Troika (UK/Norway/US) Heads of Mission in Khartoum also published an op-ed on 21 March highlighting how Russian malign influence and Wagner Group activities in Sudan spread disinformation, and undermine good governance and the rule of law.

UK Endorsement Board: Public Appointments

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 21 June (HL866), why the position of Technical Director of the UK Endorsement Board is not an executive function of (1) the UK Endorsement Board, or (2) the Financial Reporting Council. [HL1266]

Lord Callanan: The Secretary of State delegated statutory powers to the UK Endorsement Board. The Secretariat, including the Technical Director, have no decision-making powers. Their role is to provide technical advice to the UK Endorsement Board to support the delivery of its statutory functions. The UK Endorsement Board Secretariat is also ring-fenced from the Financial Reporting Council functions and is not involved in the decision-making of the Financial Reporting Council, nor do members of the Secretariat sit on the FRC's Executive Committee.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 21 June (HL866), whether they have asked Mike Ashley whether he had any involvement in the recruitment of Seema Jamil O'Neill from KPMG to the staff of the UK Accounting Standards Board while he was a member of that Board and a partner at KPMG; and if not, whether they will now do so. [HL1267]

Lord Callanan: As noted in my response for HL866 on 21 June, the UK Endorsement Board Secretariat provides an administrative role with no executive function so staff

in the Secretariat should not be subject to parliamentary questions about their previous experience.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implementation programme for the UK Prosperity Fund. [HL1317]

Lord Harrington of Watford: Local government has been given responsibility for delivering the Fund, recognising that those closest to local people and businesses understand the needs and unique characteristics of their own areas better than central government.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will manage delivery at Northern Ireland scale, recognising the distinct and different role local authorities play there.

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they have allocated to the UK Prosperity Fund in each of the financial years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. [HL1319]

Lord Harrington of Watford: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund ramps up from £400 million in 2022/23, to £700 million in 2023/24 until it reaches £1.5 billion a year in 2024/25.

The UKSPF allocations published (attached) at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/ukspf-allocations>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

The UKSPF allocations [HL1319 - UKSPF allocations - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-06-28/HL1319>

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Devolution

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the UK Prosperity Fund will be allocated to (1) England, and (2) the devolved administrations. [HL1320]

Lord Greenhalgh: England will receive £1.5 billion, Scotland £212 million, Wales £585 million and Northern Ireland £127 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund across the years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Ukraine: Development Aid

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ukraine regarding the damaged infrastructure in that country; and what plans they have, if any, to provide financial assistance to help with the rebuilding of that infrastructure. [HL1445]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK and Ukrainian Governments have regular discussions on the UK's support to Ukraine, including on damaged infrastructure. Such discussions have informed the UK's plan to support Ukraine's reconstruction. This was presented at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano on 4 July. It includes support to address the Government of Ukraine's financial gap to ensure it can pay wages and restore critical infrastructure. Additionally, in response to President Zelenskyy's request of the Prime Minister, the UK will champion the recovery of Kyiv region. Alongside this, the UK-led £37m Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine has already begun identifying priority repair works.

We are a leading donor in response to the crisis, committing economic, humanitarian and military support totalling approximately £3.8bn. This includes £10m to the Energy Support Fund for repairs to energy infrastructure, and £10m for equipment to facilitate the movement of grain by Ukrainian railways to neighbouring countries.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government what target they have for (1) 2022, and (2) 2023, for reducing the number of people reaching the UK via the English Channel in small boats. [HL1287]

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons the number of people reaching the UK via the English Channel in small boats has been rising since 2019. [HL1288]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: These crossings are illegal, dangerous and unnecessary. France is a safe country with a fully-functioning asylum system, as are multiple countries in Europe through which these people have travelled. Our asylum system is broken – that is why the UK has been so attractive to those who could otherwise be assured of international protection in the safe countries of Europe – but through the Nationality and Borders Act we are getting it fixed. Our joint work with France is seeing more and more crossing attempts prevented before departure. Both the UK and France are committed to reducing these crossings attempts and to pursuing the criminal gangs who endanger people for profit.

Wilton Park: Northern Ireland

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the matters discussed at the conference A more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland, hosted by Wilton Park from 22 to 24 June in association with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Northern Ireland Office. [[HL1282](#)]

Lord Caine: The Wilton Park conference provided an opportunity for participants to discuss and explore how to create a more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland.

Participants discussed a range of themes including education, skills, opportunities for young people and how community groups can support opportunity and integration.

Workplace Pensions: Young People

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the eligibility age for auto-enrolment pensions to 18. [[HL1295](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The government set out its ambitions to implement changes to automatic enrolment into workplace pensions in the mid-2020s, consistent with the 2017 Review of Automatic Enrolment, and we will do so as soon as possible. As part of the Review proposals, we committed to reduce the eligibility age for being automatically enrolled from age 22 to 18. Our implementation plans will be informed by consultation, including with businesses, workers, and their representatives, alongside our priorities to support the economy.

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