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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....3

[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 Harrington of Watford	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Kamall	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Channel Four Television Corporation: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021

[HLWS199]

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

The Channel Four Television Corporation (C4C) Report and Financial Statements 2021 have today been laid before Parliament.

The 2021 annual report shows that C4C performed well last year, delivering on its remit and obligations and reporting a strong set of results, particularly in terms of growth in digital revenue and viewers. To enable C4C to continue to build on this success over the long term, it needs greater access to capital and the option to make and own content to ensure it has the best tools to support a long-term sustainable future. In this context it is right that the Government acknowledges both the considerable opportunities and challenges presented by the dynamic market context in which C4C operates. The Government is committed to take the steps necessary to protect one of our most important public service broadcasters (PSBs) not just today, but in the years to come. That is why, as part of a package of reforms set out in the recent White Paper: [Up Next](#), the Government is moving ahead with plans to move C4C out of public ownership to become a privately-owned, free-to-air public service broadcaster, alongside other successful privately-owned PSBs, including ITV, STV and Channel 5.

On 14 June 2022, the House of Commons debated a motion on the future of C4C. This statement fulfils the Government's obligation to respond to this debate.

The motion called on the Government to reverse its decision on C4C. Like every broadcaster, C4C faces huge competition for viewers, for programmes and for talent. Streamers such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video and global media groups such as Disney and Paramount have far deeper pockets than our PSBs. C4C is uniquely constrained. Under its current ownership model, C4C has fewer options to invest, fewer options to innovate, and, crucially, fewer tools to support its growth than its competitors.

As a responsible Government, we must recognise these constraints and be prepared to act now to address them. We therefore believe it is the right time to unleash C4C's full potential, and open the broadcaster up to private ownership while protecting its public service broadcasting remit. A sale will allow C4C to access greater investment - meaning it can create more great programming made by people who live and work in the UK - without losing what

makes it distinctive and without exposing taxpayers and the public finances to greater risk.

The motion called on the Government to protect C4C's contribution to levelling up and maintain its Leeds headquarters and commissioning expenditure outside of London. The Government recognises and values C4C's ongoing commitment to levelling up, as emphasised in its annual report, and its support for national and regional economies. We will maintain C4C's existing obligations in terms of production outside London and England. We expect C4C's access to networks outside London and its ability to speak to a diverse range of audiences across the UK to be an attractive asset that any potential buyer will look to nurture and develop. Across PSBs, it is clear that ownership is not correlated to regional spending. In fact, though its latest annual report shows it is on an improving path, C4C spent less in the North of England as a percentage of its total production spend than PSBs as a whole [in 2020](#), and less than privately-owned ITV, with C4C spending 19.3% in 2020 in Northern England, compared to ITV's 30.4%. There is no reason that a sale could not accelerate the process of growing the broadcaster's impact outside London.

The motion also called for the Government to maintain the publisher-broadcaster restriction. The Government will remove this restriction to enable C4C to diversify its revenue streams into content and improve its business resilience. C4C will still be required to commission a minimum volume of its programming from independent producers, in line with the quotas placed on other PSBs, ensuring its continued contribution to the sector. The Government believes that in the long run, the UK production ecosystem will benefit from a more sustainable C4C. A change of ownership that improves Channel 4's access to capital could increase spending on production. For example, Channel 5's overall content budget increased following its acquisition by Viacom in 2014, with first-run spending up by an average of 7% per year [between 2014 and 2018](#). C4C has excellent relationships with independent producers right across the UK and there is no reason this should change. Indeed, we expect a new owner to value and want to build on those relationships.

The Government is clear that C4C will remain a public service broadcaster. Its public service broadcasting remit will remain written into law and the right buyer for Channel 4 will be one who shares our ambition for the business and our belief in what makes it special. We are not trying to change the distinctive role C4C plays; we are seeking to give it the best set of tools and the freedom to flourish and thrive long into the future.

Intelligence and Security Committee's Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism Report: Publication

[HLWS200]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement.

The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) has today laid before Parliament a report on Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism, examining the threat to the UK and the UK's response. I welcome the comprehensive and detailed nature of the report, and thank the Committee for the extensive work that has gone into it.

This report highlights the significant close working relationship between our Security and Intelligence Agencies and Counter-Terrorism Policing. It is through this regular collaborative approach that we can keep our citizens safe from all forms of terrorism. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Agencies and Counter-Terrorism Policing for their excellent work to better understand and disrupt the threat from Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism.

The Government will consider the ISC's report in full and respond formally in due course.

Transport for London Funding Settlement: Extension

[HLWS198]

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

Following my statement to the House on 27th June, I am updating the House on an extension of the current Transport for London (TfL) funding settlement that was due to expire on 13th July to 28th July. This has been agreed by the Mayor of London.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have supported the transport network in London with over £5bn funding through extraordinary funding settlements for Transport for London. We have recognised the reliance of London's transport network on fare revenue, and Government continues our commitment to mitigating loss of fare revenue because of the pandemic.

This extension to the current funding settlement is necessary due to the unsatisfactory progress made by TfL on meeting agreed deadlines, including relating to pensions. Resolving these issues is an integral part of setting TfL on the path to financial sustainability, and Government stands ready to engage constructively to reach a resolution. This extension ensures that they receive due attention.

Government is committed to supporting London's transport network as we have since the start of the pandemic and is in discussions with TfL on a longer-term settlement. By rolling over the provisions of the existing agreement, the extension provides continued support to Transport for London and certainty to Londoners while we work with Transport for London on their funding needs.

This extraordinary support to Transport for London has always been on the condition that Transport for London reaches financial sustainability as soon as possible and with a target date of April 2023 and Government continues to press the Mayor of London and Transport for London to take the decisions needed to put the organisation on a sustainable footing. I will update the House at my earliest opportunity on the details of any longer-term funding settlement.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Alexander Lebedev

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister met Aleksandr Lebedev in Italy in 2018 without his officials present whilst he was Foreign Secretary; and what was discussed during that meeting. [HL1565]

Lord True: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has committed to write to the Liaison Committee on this and other matters raised with him during his appearance. A copy of that letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Armed Forces: Pastoral Care

Asked by *Baroness Massey of Darwen*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, (1) how levels of satisfaction with the armed forces' pastoral support services are measured, (2) whether they will publish the results, and (3) whether armed forces personnel are asked if they wish to receive non-religious pastoral care. [HL1351]

Baroness Goldie: Military Chaplains are professionally qualified to provide pastoral care to everyone, regardless of philosophy or faith background. Service personnel who do not wish to talk to a Chaplain are encouraged to seek support from a variety of alternative sources, which can be facilitated by the Chaplain. This includes their Chain of Command, through the Services' professional social workers, medical staff and welfare staff. Mutual support is also available via the various staff networks, including the Humanist and Non Religious in Defence (HAND) Network.

The publicly available annual Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey shows that, of those who have used chaplaincy support provided by their Service, satisfaction with the service has ranged between 61% and 65%. Dissatisfaction levels have been consistently low, recorded at either 4% or 5%, with the remaining 30% to 35% of respondents having a neutral stance on the service.

Bilateral Aid: Malaria

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the publication of The UK government's strategy for international development, what assessment they have made of the UK's bilateral programmes to tackle malaria. [HL1364]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In line with the Health Systems Strengthening and Ending Preventable Deaths

(EPD) papers, published last year, future bilateral health programmes will focus holistically on strengthening health systems as the bedrock of sustained improvements to health and well-being worldwide. Our bilateral programmes on EPD will take consideration of the disproportionate impact that malaria has on pregnant women and children under five as a key driver of preventable deaths, as noted in our position paper.

Our current direct investments in malaria services are primarily through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund provides over half of international funding for malaria and is an essential partner of the UK in the shared fight against HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria, as well as in strengthening health systems and supporting pandemic preparedness. The UK is a co-founder of the Fund and long-term contributor, having provided £4.1 billion in funding to date.

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the publication of The UK government's strategy for international development, what assessment they have made of the case for additional investment in surveillance for malaria and other diseases. [HL1365]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Surveillance is an important aspect of efforts to control malaria and other diseases. UK investments support low and middle-income countries to strengthen their routine disease surveillance systems.

Multilateral investments on routine disease surveillance include the work of the World Bank, the World Health Organisation and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. On malaria specifically, we have supported the Global Fund's Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative in response to the emergence of drug-resistant malaria in the Greater Mekong region.

Bilateral programming on disease surveillance includes the Tackling Deadly Diseases in Africa Programme, the International Health Strengthening Programme and the Fleming Fund.

Climate Change: Weather

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to implement additional policies (1) to adapt to, and (2) to mitigate the effects of climate change, in the light of global extreme weather events. [HL1316]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: While we accelerate efforts to end our contribution to climate change, we must continue to take robust action to ensure the country is well prepared to face the challenges the changing climate is bringing.

The Government has extensive plans in place and underway to adapt to and mitigate the risks of climate change, including through our National Adaptation Programme. The next programme (NAP3) will set out the

policies the Government will implement to build climate resilience, in light of the latest evidence in the Climate Change Committee's Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk, and will address the risks caused by a warmer climate.

To mitigate further climate change, the UK has driven down emissions by 44% over the past three decades, the fastest reduction of any G7 country. In October 2021 we published our Net Zero Strategy which sets out a comprehensive set of measures to support and capitalise on the UK's transition to net zero by 2050.

Commonwealth: Membership

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether membership of the Commonwealth is open to any country; and what is the eligibility criteria. [HL1332]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries. Membership is open to any country subject to meeting the criteria. The Membership criteria can be found here: <https://thecommonwealth.org/about/joining>. The most recent countries to join were Togo and Gabon, who joined at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali last month (June).

Community Centres: Advisory Services

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have carried out an impact assessment of increasing the numbers of face-to-face advice services covering (1) household finances, and (2) benefit entitlement, in community centres that provide food to households on low incomes. [HL1344]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made.

DWP staff provide benefit and employment support across Great Britain through our national network of Jobcentres, who work in partnership with a variety of organisations that offer local budgeting and debt advice support.

The Government is keen to ensure that everyone accesses the benefits they are entitled to, which is why we have just launched an eligibility checker that can be found at Gov.uk.

DWP also funds the Money and Pensions Service that provides additional support to help people – particularly those most in need – to improve their financial wellbeing. It provides access to high-quality money and debt advice through its “MoneyHelper” services and signposting to third party organisations best placed to help.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the NHS is taking to administer a COVID-19 booster vaccine, together with the annual flu vaccine, this autumn. [HL1350]

Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that National Health Service systems should maximise opportunities to jointly promote and administer vaccinations where possible and clinically advised, particularly where this improves patient experience and uptake.

The enhanced service specification for the COVID-19 vaccination programme also states that, where it is operationally expedient, administration with the flu vaccine may be provided. Individuals are offered COVID-19 and flu vaccines when eligible and in some instances, a short delay between vaccines will ensure that more individuals receive both vaccines, such as in care homes. Vaccination sites have been asked to use their discretion to maximise these opportunities.

Covid-19 Inquiry

Asked by Lord Morris of Aberavon

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the terms of reference for the UK COVID-19 public inquiry, chaired by Lady Hallett, will be published; and what are the reasons for the delay. [HL1398]

Lord True: The final terms of reference for the UK COVID-19 inquiry were published on 28 June 2022. This followed a full and extensive public consultation process led by the inquiry's independent chair, in addition to engagement with the devolved administrations as required by the Inquiries Act 2005.

Government Departments: Buildings

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 22 June (HL862), (1) by what date, and (2) by what means, the Whitehall Boiler System will be fully decarbonised. [HL1421]

Lord True: The date and means to fully decarbonise the Whitehall Boiler System are not currently known, as the next phase (Phase 2) of the project to reduce carbon emissions/decarbonise is currently undergoing a feasibility/options appraisal and is anticipated to be the subject of an investment decision as part of the next spending review (SR).

Phase 1 includes installation of pipework lagging (completed 2021/22) and replacing heat exchangers to lower the operating temperature (to be completed from 2022/23). Phase 1 will result in a carbon saving of approximately 17%.

Phase 2 is anticipated to run from 2024 to 2028 and include delivery of Ground Source Heat Pumps to achieve carbon savings of approximately 71% (including Phase 1 carbon savings).

Phase 3 is a further potential scheme that could connect into a wider district heating system anticipated from 2026 to 2035. Phase 3 could achieve carbon savings of approximately 92% (against current emissions).

Government Departments: Social Media

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect government accounts on social media from hacks and cyberattacks. [HL1461]

Lord True: We are committed to protecting government accounts on social media. Public sector organisations are responsible for securing their own services, including social media accounts. The Cabinet Office, with the support of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), regularly provides advice and guidance to organisations on how best to secure social media accounts from hacks and cyber attacks.

Guantanamo Bay: Detainees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the humanitarian resettlement of Guantanamo Bay detainees, including by signalling support for countries willing to receive those detainees cleared for transfer. [HL1339]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government's long-standing position remains that the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay should close. We will continue to engage with the US Government on this issue, as we do on a range of national security issues, and in the context of our joint determination to tackle international terrorism and combat violent extremism.

Haemochromatosis

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that NHS Trusts are equipped with the resources needed to (1) diagnose, and (2) treat, haemochromatosis. [HL1335]

Lord Kamall: Genomic testing for haemochromatosis is available through the NHS Genomic Medicine Service for patients in England showing unexplained iron overload suggestive of hereditary haemochromatosis. This testing is delivered via NHS Genomic Laboratory Hubs (GLHs), which ensures that testing is available for all eligible patients in England. Any clinician who suspects haemochromatosis can order this testing via the local GLH.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is developing an evidence-based guideline to define high quality care for haemochromatosis and reduce variation in practice. Following the publication of this guideline, the National Health Service will review service provision to implement any treatment pathways recommended.

Hatun Tash

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to instigate an inquiry into (1) the arrest of Miss Hatun Tash at Speakers' Corner on 26 June and her subsequent detention and questioning at 04.30 am on 27 June, and (2) the actions of the police towards other individuals present at Speakers' Corner before and during Miss Tash's arrest. [HL1352]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is a long-standing tradition in this country that people are free to demonstrate their views, provided they do so within the law.

The investigation of criminal offences where they are suspected of having occurred is an operational matter for the police. Ministers are unable to intervene in individual cases or in operational decisions made by the police. To do so would undermine the principle that the police are independent of Government.

Horizon Europe

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans for the UK to join Horizon Europe; and if so, what steps they are taking to secure the UK's membership. [HL1390]

Lord Callanan: The UK stands ready to formalise our association to Horizon Europe at the earliest opportunity. The Government continues to do everything it can to complete this process swiftly, but disappointingly there have been persistent delays from the EU.

In order to provide reassurance to the sector, the UK Government has guaranteed funding for the first and second waves of eligible successful applicants to Horizon Europe who expect to sign agreements by December 2022 and who have been unable to sign grant agreements with the EU. If the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe, we will be ready to introduce a comprehensive alternative programme of international science, research and innovation collaborations.

Internet: Children

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include a statutory watchdog to advocate for children as users of online services, funded by a levy on the tech industry, in the Online Safety Bill. [HL1369]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Protecting children online sits at the heart of the new Online Safety Bill. The new regime will ensure that children are protected from harmful or inappropriate content such as grooming, bullying, pornography and the promotion of self-harm and eating disorders.

Once the regime is operational, Ofcom's new responsibilities under the Bill will be fully funded by industry fees. They will oversee and enforce service providers' compliance with the duties in the Bill, including the child safety duties.

The regulatory framework is already designed to capture the insight and expertise of organisations that represent the interests of children. For example, Ofcom must consult relevant experts when designing its codes of practice, which will determine the recommended safety measures platforms put in place. It must also undertake research into users' experience of regulated services, which will inform its regulatory approach and priorities. In addition, the Bill expands the remit of the Communications Consumer Panel. This panel, which is an independent group of experts, will act on behalf of users by conducting research, carrying out consultations and giving advice to Ofcom. Ofcom will also have the flexibility to choose other mechanisms better to understand users and their experiences as it deems appropriate. Finally, the super-complaints mechanism will also ensure that Ofcom is alerted by eligible bodies, which will include advocacy bodies like the Children's Commissioners, to any significant or systemic risks to children, though the ongoing consultation and research will likely mean Ofcom is able to tackle such issues upstream.

Adding an additional 'watchdog' would duplicate the existing provisions in the Bill, creating a confusing landscape. This would not be in the best interests of children.

Israel: Administration of Justice

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the conviction of Mohammad El Halabi, a former head of World Vision's Gaza office, by an Israeli court of financing terrorism; and whether they share the concerns of the UN Human Rights Office about the court's reliance on secret evidence for their verdict. [HL1347]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the verdict on this case and are monitoring closely. During her visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestine Territories in June 2022 the Minister for the Middle East, Amanda Milling, met with human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organisations to discuss the pressures they face. The Minister emphasised the UK's strong support for freedom of speech and media freedom. We continue to value the important role civil society plays in upholding human rights and democracy.

Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Coastal Areas

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with local authorities regarding the potential advantages of supporting maritime projects through the (1) Levelling Up, and (2) Shared Prosperity, funds. [HL1388]

Lord Harrington of Watford: Maritime projects are a crucial part of our heritage and modern economy. Officials from my department have recently met with Maritime UK for a briefing session on Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund and have consistently engaged with local authorities on the design and scope of both funds. A key theme of the Levelling Up Fund is transportation, while the UKSPF will build pride in place – with both funds working to support and benefit maritime organisations. We would welcome future bids for maritime projects.

Local Government Services: Disadvantaged and Ethnic Groups

Asked by Lord Parekh

To ask Her Majesty's Government what controls are placed on the use of additional capital funding given to local authorities for special programmes for meeting the needs of (1) ethnic minority groups, and (2) social deprivation, after the programmes have closed; and in particular, whether any remaining unspent funds are expected to be transferred to their general budgets, or remain ring-fenced for alleviating the specified needs. [HL1531]

Lord Harrington of Watford: The primary power used by Government to make grant payments to local authorities in England is Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 ('Section 31'). This power can also be used to make payments to authorities in Wales.

For Section 31 grants, Government has a long-standing policy to provide funding to local authorities on a non-ringfenced basis. Once the funding is issued local authorities have the flexibility to manage funding according to local priorities and deliver efficiencies, rather than central government trying to control every spending decision. Therefore, where a specific grant is provided to local government this should be non-ringfenced unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The conditions imposed on a particular grant will vary according to the needs of the particular policy. There isn't a single approach for all grants in a particular policy area. As part of this, departments will decide how they want to deal with underspend as a condition of the grant.

For Section 31 grants with a capital element, conditions must be imposed which require the capital element to be used only for capital purposes, enable the capital element to be 'clawed back' if this condition is not complied with,

and require a declaration to be made by the recipient that the conditions of the grant have been complied with. These conditions are required to meet accounting rules and audit obligations.

Prisoners: Voting Rights

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow prisoners to vote in (1) parliamentary, and (2) other elections; what assessment they have made of the case for allowing prisoners to vote in such elections; and whether they plan to publish the results of such an assessment. [HL1383]

Lord Harrington of Watford: It is the Government's long-established position that when someone commits a crime, which is sufficiently serious to receive a prison sentence, they are deemed to have broken their contract with society to such an extent that they should not have the right to vote until they are ready to be back in the community. We have maintained that position for all elections that fall within the UK Parliament's competence.

This position was clearly set out in the Government's 2019 manifesto, which stated: 'We will maintain the ban on prisoners voting from jail'.

Refugees: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of barriers to removing the requirement to have a UK phone number to sign up for email updates to the gov.uk page 'Welcome: a guide for Ukrainians arriving in the UK'; and whether they will place a copy of that assessment in the Library of the House. [HL1433]

Lord Harrington of Watford: Individuals can sign up to receive email updates to the gov.uk page via email without having to enter to UK mobile number via the following link (attached): <https://www.gov.uk/email-signup?link=/government/topical-events/russian-invasion-of-ukraine-uk-government-response>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

e-mail sign up [HL1433 Get emails from GOV.UK - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-07-04/HL1433>

Somalia: Al Shabaab

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the government of Somalia to end its conflict with the Al-Shabaab Islamist insurgency. [HL1394]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As we seek to keep the UK and our interests at home and overseas safe from the threat of terrorism, tackling Al-Shabaab is one of our top counter-terrorism priorities. With international allies, regional partners, and with the Federal Government of Somalia and our international partners, we are pursuing a comprehensive effort to address the Al-Shabaab threat and the conditions through which Al-Shabaab has become entrenched in Somalia, as well as working with the new government in Somalia to improve governance, economic reform, security and justice, and humanitarian resilience in the country.

The UK continues to play an important role in strengthening Somalia's security capabilities and supporting the transition towards Somali-led security. The UK has provided training to the Somali National Army and Somali Police, and provided technical advice to civilian institutions to help improve operational effectiveness. As penholder at the UN we helped to secure authorisation for a reconfigured African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. We are supporting efforts to weaken Al-Shabaab and restrict its financial flows, including through UN sanctions.

Sudan: Politics and Government

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what engagement they have had with representatives of the Sudanese National Congress Party in 2022. [HL1404]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Sudanese authorities banned the National Congress Party (NCP) following the Sudanese revolution in 2019. In the course of our diplomatic engagement, particularly in supporting an end to the political crisis, we speak to a broad spectrum of political actors. This includes ex-ministers and ex-officials, some of whom may have been NCP members. Such engagement allows us to encourage all Sudanese actors to deliver a civilian-led government and a democratic transition.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1

Channel Four Television Corporation: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021	1
Intelligence and Security Committee’s Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism Report: Publication	1
Transport for London Funding Settlement: Extension	2

Written Answers.....3

Alexander Lebedev.....	3
Armed Forces: Pastoral Care	3
Bilateral Aid: Malaria.....	3
Climate Change: Weather.....	3
Commonwealth: Membership	4
Community Centres: Advisory Services	4
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....	4
Covid-19 Inquiry	4
Government Departments: Buildings	4
Government Departments: Social Media	5
Guantanamo Bay: Detainees	5
Haemochromatosis	5
Hatun Tash	5
Horizon Europe	5
Internet: Children.....	5
Israel: Administration of Justice.....	6
Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Coastal Areas	6
Local Government Services: Disadvantaged and Ethnic Groups.....	6
Prisoners: Voting Rights.....	7
Refugees: Ukraine	7
Somalia: Al Shabaab	7
Sudan: Politics and Government	7