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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>
<b>Lord True</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Baroness Barran</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
<b>Lord Bellamy</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
<b>Lord Benyon</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist</b>	Spokesperson, Wales Office, Whip
<b>Lord Caine</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Davies of Gower</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Harlech</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Markham</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Lord Murray of Blidworth</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
<b>Baroness Neville-Rolfe</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Lord Offord of Garvel</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>Lord Sharpe of Epsom</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Lord Stewart of Dirleton</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

*Monday, 28 November 2022*

## COP27: UK Presidency

[HLWS377]

**Lord Callanan:** My Right Honourable friend the Minister of State for Energy and Climate (Graham Stuart) has today made the following statement:

After COP26 we were able to say with credibility that we kept the pulse of 1.5C alive. We welcome the progress made at COP27, but there is no cause for complacency.

We have seen progress since COP26 during our Presidency year and outstanding work is taking place to cement the gains of the Glasgow Climate Pact. A full breakdown of progress has been captured in the [Presidency's Outcomes Publication](#) and I will place a copy in the Libraries of the House.

In the challenging geopolitical context and amidst a global energy crisis, the UK's objective at COP27 was to secure continued delivery of the Glasgow Climate Pact, make further progress to keep 1.5 in reach and support those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister pledged at COP27 to speed up the transition to renewables, to create new high-wage jobs, protect UK energy security and deliver on net zero. He also chaired a high-level meeting on forests which built on momentum secured through the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration for Forests and Land Use.

With regard to support for the most vulnerable, the Prime Minister reinforced that the UK is delivering on the commitment of £11.6 billion in international climate finance, and made a number of other financial announcements within this: the tripling of funding for climate adaptation from £500m in 2019 to £1.5bn in 2025; recommitting to spend £1.5bn on forests; £90m for conservation programmes in the Congo Basin; £65m in funding for the Nature, People and Climate Investment Fund; and £65.5m for the Clean Energy Innovation Facility.

In parallel to COP27, at the G20, leaders agreed to implement fully their Glasgow Climate Pact commitments to limit global warming to 1.5C and accelerate coal phase down and the transition to clean energy.

To demonstrate delivery on COP26 commitments, we hosted a series of high-level side events at COP27 which helped to drive progress on the key sectoral areas: the Breakthrough Agenda; forests and nature; energy transition; and zero emission vehicles. Events at the UK Pavilion covered a range of topics, including: finance, adaptation, indigenous leadership, youth and education, gender, forests and nature, energy, and sustainable agriculture.

The negotiations were challenging, concluding only in the early hours of Sunday morning. The UK negotiating team played a key role throughout and particularly in the final 24 hours in mobilising countries behind ambition.

The deal made significant progress on loss and damage and the agreement reached to establish new funding arrangements, including a fund, took place against the backdrop of increasing climate impacts globally. Designed and implemented well, this has the potential to increase support for the most vulnerable from a range of sources.

The deal in Egypt also preserves the historic commitments to keep 1.5 alive that countries agreed to last year in the Glasgow Climate Pact. The UK rallied nearly half the Parties to push for further ambition - including on fossil fuels and peaking global emissions before 2025 - which were not taken up by the Presidency but we did secure a reiteration of the commitment made in Glasgow for countries to revisit their NDCs before the end of 2023 to ensure that they are aligned with the Paris Agreement, as the UK has done. Progress was made on the work programmes on mitigation and adaptation agreed in Glasgow, carbon markets, and on the new post 2025 finance goal.

My right hon. Friends the [Foreign Secretary](#), Business Secretary and Environment Secretary also announced a range of investments throughout the summit, including more than £100 million to support developing economies to respond to climate-related disasters and £65 million for the world's first large scale Industry Transition Programme.

Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) were pioneered with UK leadership at COP26. At COP27 a joint statement on the South Africa Investment Plan was published during the World Leaders Summit, while the PM joined other world leaders announcing the [Indonesia JETP](#) at the G20 Summit in Bali.

The Government is grateful to my right hon. Friend Alok Sharma and his team for their service and leadership as COP Presidency over the past two and half years. The UK will continue to deliver net zero in the UK and to support other countries in their own transitions, ensuring we leave no communities behind and keep 1.5C alive. We will use all our levers, including through the G7 and G20, our bilateral partnerships, our climate finance, trade and diplomacy, as well as our deep UK expertise and track record, to uphold the legacy of COP26, and we will continue to work with all countries through to COP28 in the UAE.

## Intimate Images Abuse Offences

[HLWS378]

**Lord Bellamy:** My right honourable friend Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Dominic Raab), has made the following statement:

I wish to inform the House that the Government intends to legislate to introduce a package of new criminal offences on intimate image abuse when Parliamentary time allows. We also intend, to make some of these changes earlier by way of Government amendments to the Online Safety Bill.

Intimate or sexual images can now easily be taken, copied or shared without consent and used for unacceptable, cruel or malicious reasons. This behaviour can be highly intrusive, humiliating and distressing. It is therefore important that we ensure that our legal framework effectively deals with this behaviour.

The Government intends to bring forward a package of criminal offences based on the recommendations made in the Law Commission's report 'Taking, Making and Sharing of Intimate Images Without Consent', which was published in July 2022. We will create a new 'base' offence of taking or sharing an intimate image without consent, and three further, more serious, offences. Two of these more serious offences will cover instances where the intimate image is taken or shared without consent, and with the intention of obtaining sexual gratification, or of causing humiliation, alarm or distress to the victim. The third more serious offence will target those 'threatening to share' an intimate image. Finally, we intend to introduce a fifth new offence, aimed at prohibiting a person from installing equipment with the intention, or enabling them or another person, to commit the offence of taking an intimate image without consent.

These measures will involve the repeal or amendment of several current offences, and the creation of a new, more coherent package of measures. Whilst we have already created criminal offences to deal with upskirting, revenge porn and breastfeeding voyeurism, this new package of offences will also ensure that we deliver on the PM's pledge to criminalise "downblousing".

These new offences will provide the police with the powers they need to fully investigate this increasingly intrusive and disturbing behaviour; and address mounting public concern around the law's ability to deal effectively with the harms caused by non-consensual taking, making and sharing of intimate images.

In addition to this medium-term plan, we do have the opportunity in the Online Safety Bill, to address some of the current concerns with the criminal law. We will therefore bring forward a Government amendment to the Online Safety Bill during the Lords stages of the Bill to address concerns in relation to the sending of intimate images including addressing matters concerning intent and the type of images the offence will cover. Introducing these specific measures in the Online Safety Bill will ensure that we provide victims with the additional protection they deserve sooner rather than later.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for all the important work that the Law Commission has carried out as part of this review and which has enabled the Government to conclude there is a need to legislate.'

### **Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Strategy**

[HLWS381]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth

and Development Affairs (James Cleverly), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today we have presented our vision for ending the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). With this strategy, the UK is stepping up our ambition: we will deliver a step change in the international response, working with our partners to support survivors, hold perpetrators to account and put an end to these heinous acts for good.

Progress has been made to support survivors and strengthen accountability but sexual violence continues to be widely used in conflict, demonstrated by the appalling reports from Ukraine. We need a stronger international response for all those affected.

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Strategy will support the delivery of the International Development Strategy and the Integrated Review. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon is the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

There are significant challenges including reliable data collection, gathering evidence on what works, securing justice and providing holistic survivor support.

This strategy will seek to change this by delivering four key objectives:

1. Strengthening the global response to CRSV;
2. Preventing CRSV, including by addressing root causes such as harmful gender norms;
3. Improving justice for all survivors and holding perpetrators to account; and
4. Enhancing support for survivors and children born of sexual violence in conflict, including tackling the stigma they face within their communities.

We will strive to deliver these objectives by showing UK leadership to strengthen the global response. This will include working with partners to deliver the commitments made at the PSVI International Conference and the Political Declaration launched there. We have launched a new initiative on accountability that will strengthen the ability of national authorities to end impunity for CRSV. This aims to bring together expertise and best practice, build capacity, improve national implementation in focus countries, and increase support to survivors.

We will drive concerted action on the Crimes Against Humanity Convention to strengthen international law in this area, including on some forms of CRSV.

Key policy initiatives:

The Call to Action to Ensure the Rights and Wellbeing of Children Born of Sexual Violence in Conflict;

The Murad Code, a global code of conduct to ensure that the documentation of the experiences of CRSV survivors is effective and upholds survivors' rights;

The Declaration of Humanity, a faith and belief-based call for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict that denounces the stigma faced by survivors and children born of rape; and

Increasing the UK's focus on conflict and atrocity prevention to tackle the drivers of conflict before violence becomes widespread.

We will use our development budget to deliver change, including through:

The £67.5 million committed to the *What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale* programme, which pioneers and rigorously evaluates scalable solutions to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence in conflict settings;

Up to £12.5 million of new funding that the PSVI team will use over the next three years to tackle CRSV. This funding will be complemented by wider CRSV programming across FCDO. The £12.5 million will include:

- a contribution of up to £5.15 million to the Global Survivors Fund, which aims to enhance CRSV survivors' access to reparations, including through the provision financial support, livelihood assistance, education, and health care; and
- continued funding to the UK's PSVI Team of Experts, a group of independent specialists deployed to support the work of national and international bodies and NGOs to strengthen their response to CRSV.

Delivering on our commitments under the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies, including working with our operational partners to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV, including CRSV, from the earliest stages of a humanitarian crisis.

We will continue to work closely with international and UK partners to put an end to the scourge of sexual violence in conflict.

## Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures

[HLWS380]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM) Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

*Between 1st March to 31 May 2022:*

TPIM notices in force (as of 31 May 2022)	2
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 May 2022)	2
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	2

TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices expired (during reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	3
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	0
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	1

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. The second quarter TRG meetings were held on 5 and 7 July 2022.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 one individual was found guilty on four counts of breaching the monitoring measure of the TPIM notice. The individual was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 one individual pleaded guilty to 5 breaches of the electronic communication device measure of the TPIM notice. The individual was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment plus a 12-month separate period on licence upon release.

*Between 1st June to 31 August 2022:*

TPIM notices in force (as of 31 August 2022)	1
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 August 2022)	1
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	1
TPIM notices expired (during reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	1
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	2
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	1

The third quarter TRG meetings were held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

In this quarter one individual was charged with a breach of the residence measure. No trial date has yet been set.

## Trade Update: CPTPP and Mexico

[HLWS379]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Kemi Badenoch MP) has today made the following statement:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has made good progress on two key trade negotiations. This statement provides Parliament with an update on the UK's trade negotiations with Mexico and negotiations towards accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

*Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)*

The UK has taken part in further discussions to negotiate accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The latest round of talks took place in Sydney from 10 - 13 October 2022. Negotiations covered market access on trade in goods, services and investment, financial services, government procurement, temporary entry of businesspersons and legal and institutional issues. UK negotiators made good progress across the areas of discussion and talks are set to continue during the rest of the year.

Joining CPTPP will help UK businesses trade more easily across borders and will help keep critical supply chains open and predictable. Embracing closer trading links and breaking down barriers to trade with a diverse group of trading partners could support businesses in diversifying their supply chains promoting greater resilience.

Ahead of the UK's Accession Working Group, the CPTPP Commission convened for its 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on 8 October 2022. In a concluding Joint Ministerial Statement, the Commission announced that it 'look(s) forward to further progress on the accession process with the commitment of both the CPTPP membership and the United Kingdom.'

Separately, Malaysia has now announced its completion of the ratification process to enter CPTPP into force. The Ministry for Trade and Industry have announced that they deposited the instrument of ratification in early October. The agreement will enter into force for the country on 29 November 2022. This could provide the UK with significantly better access to the Malaysian market, which is home to over 32 million consumers. UK's accession to CPTPP will support the UK and Malaysia's shared

ambitions to remove barriers to trade and create new opportunities for businesses and investors.

*UK- Mexico Trade Negotiations*

Round two of UK-Mexico trade negotiations took place from 31 October to 11 November 2022 in a virtual format across 29 policy areas over 35 separate sessions.

During the round, the UK set out its policy positions having exchanged draft chapter text with Mexico across most policy areas before the round. A key objective at this early stage was to continue to build a firm understanding of Mexico's trade policy positions and priorities. As expected at this stage, areas of convergence and divergence were identified. However, discussions remained positive. Both negotiation teams took actions to consider each other's positions and identify opportunities to move closer together ahead of round three.

The negotiations continue to reflect a shared ambition to negotiate a comprehensive agreement which is better suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and one which strengthens our trading relationship, already worth over £4.2 billion in 2021. Both countries agree that this is an opportunity to add value and complement the UK's accession to the CPTPP.

His Majesty's Government remains clear that any deal we sign will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy. We will not compromise on our high environmental and labour protections, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and we will maintain our right to regulate in the public interest. We are also clear that during these negotiations, the NHS and the services it provides is not on the table.

His Majesty's Government will continue to work closely with CPTPP Parties and Mexico to ensure negotiations proceeds at pace and takes place on terms that are right for the UK.



# Written Answers

Monday, 28 November 2022

## Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products

Asked by *Baroness Meacher*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that research into cell and gene therapies is adequately funded. [[HL3425](#)]

**Lord Markham:** The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy fund research into cell and gene therapies including through the Office for Life Sciences. The Department of Health and Social Care has recently announced the outcome of an open competition for designation and funding of the National Institute for Health and Care Research's (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs). Of the 20 BRCs, 14 conduct research into cell and gene therapies, which has the potential to address complex diseases, such as motor neurone disease and rare disorders for which there are currently no effective treatments.

Since April 2017, the NIHR has provided £38,623,171 to fund 39 specific research projects. While the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including cell and gene therapies, it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, established by Innovate UK, develops the cell and gene therapy industry in the United Kingdom, working with academia and industry to ensure therapies can be used in health services globally. The Catapult has received £75.4 million from the Government in the current five-year funding period until March 2023. The Medical Research Council (MRC) funds the research and development of advanced therapies across its response mode funding schemes and through a number of strategic funding calls. In 2021/22, the MRC funded £33.9 million in research and infrastructure for advanced therapies from discovery research through to translation and clinical trials.

## Asylum: Children

Asked by *Baroness Northover*

To ask His Majesty's Government how initial safeguarding judgments are used by (1) Home Office staff, and (2) contractors, when deciding on the treatment of asylum-seekers, in particular of unaccompanied children. [[HL3370](#)]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office and its accommodation providers have robust processes in place

to ensure that where someone is at risk they are referred to the appropriate statutory agencies of police, NHS and social services to promote appropriate safeguarding interventions.

All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents. However, the statutory agencies retain responsibility for all decisions on intervention activity.

We have safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in emergency interim hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses.

## Blood: Donors

Asked by *Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the current status of NHS Blood and Transplant's blood stocks; and how they plan to ensure that their target of six days' worth of supply is reliably maintained. [[HL3157](#)]

**Lord Markham:** NHS Blood and Transplant returned to a pre-amber alert on 8 November 2022. Blood stocks have stabilised to target levels and as of 18 November, red cells were at a total of 7.4 days of supply. NHS Blood and Transplant has created additional capacity to accept donations and donors with the blood groups in greatest need have been fast-tracked to appointments.

It is increasing frontline staffing levels to ensure appointments for blood donors are available to maintain the target of six days' worth of blood supply over the winter period. NHS Blood and Transplant is working with NHS England to ensure that clinical guidance for blood stock management is followed, while also increasing workforce resilience.

## Business Premises: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Fox*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether the aim of the Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022 to "share in the impacts of pandemic" has been achieved; and what evidence they used to reach their conclusion. [[HL3350](#)]

Asked by *Lord Fox*

To ask His Majesty's Government what communication they have had with the Approved Arbitration bodies established as a result of the Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022. [[HL3351](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy engaged with the arbitral bodies and with stakeholders to keep oversight of uptake of the scheme and to determine if initial stakeholder concerns about cost and capacity had any substance. We reminded

parties in August of the closing deadlines for the submission of cases.

The deadline for the submission of cases recently passed on 23 September 2022 and arbitrators are in the process of considering the cases submitted and will be publishing the outcomes as required by the Act. The assessment of the impact of the Act is ongoing and will be published in due course.

*Asked by Lord Fox*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether it was their policy that arbitrators direct tenants to divulge trading information to their commercial landlords, under the terms of the Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022. [HL3352]

*Asked by Lord Fox*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether it was their policy that tenants' confidential commercial information used as evidence in arbitration could then be used in rent reviews or renewals under the terms of the Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022. [HL3353]

**Lord Callanan:** Confidential information disclosed as part of the arbitration proceedings should be used only for the purposes of the proceedings and the making of the arbitration award. However, there are exceptions to the general principles of confidentiality applying to arbitration, including where disclosure to a third party is reasonably necessary to protect legitimate interests, which could include disclosure reasonably necessary to establish or protect a party's legal rights.

### Care Homes: Fees and Charges

*Asked by Lord Lipsey*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether it remains their policy to introduce a cap of £86,000 on individuals' care costs from 2023. [HL2737]

**Lord Markham:** We have listened to the concerns of local government and have taken the difficult decision to delay the planned adult social care charging reforms from October 2023 to October 2025. The funding intended for implementation will be retained in local authority budgets to meet current pressures.

### Classics: GCE A-level

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many pupils in England took A Levels in (1) Latin, and (2) Ancient Greek, for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and how many of these were from (a) state schools, and (b) independent schools. [HL3492]

**Baroness Barran:** The number of A level entries by students in England aged 16 to 18 in Latin or classical Greek since the 2012/13 academic year can be found in

the attached table. A breakdown by state funded students only exists from the 2017/18 academic year.

*Number of A level exam entries for Classical Greek in England*

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>All state-funded students</i>	<i>Independent schools</i>
2021/22	187	19	168
2020/21	162	15	147
2019/20	185	9	176
2018/19	202	18	184
2017/18	234	24	210
2016/17	211		
2015/16	213		
2014/15	224		
2013/14	250		
2012/13	241		

*Number of A level exam entries for Classical Greek in England*

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>All state-funded students</i>	<i>Independent schools</i>
2021/22	1,023	266	757
2020/21	1,018	274	744
2019/20	982	230	752
2018/19	1,078	282	796
2017/18	1,150	296	854
2016/17	1,173		
2015/16	1,108		
2014/15	1,224		
2013/14	1,271		
2012/13	1,249		

[1] Exam entries are for the academic year for 16-18 students, after discounting. Includes pending awards.

[2] Figures are based on provision data (from 2017/18 to 2021/22) and revised/final data from (2012/13 to 2016/17).

[3] Subject breakdown on institution types (All state-funded students) not published prior to 2017/18.

### Companies and Financial Institutions: Sustainable Development

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what powers they have to require (1) listed and unlisted companies, (2) fund managers, and (3) pension funds to (a) produce and publish net zero transition plans, and (b) meet sustainability disclosure requirements. [HL3376]



**Baroness Penn:** The powers to require the production and publication of transition plans and the meeting of sustainability disclosure requirements for listed and unlisted companies, fund managers, and pension funds sit with the relevant department or regulator with responsibility for the sector. The government's approach to Sustainability Disclosure Requirements and net zero transition plans was set out in *Greening Finance: A Roadmap to Sustainable Investing*. His Majesty's Treasury works closely with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to advance sustainability disclosure requirements.

Powers over listed companies and regulated fund managers in this policy area reside with the FCA, where these policies advance the FCA's objectives as set out in the Financial Services and Markets Act of: protecting consumers of financial services, ensuring market integrity and promoting effective competition in relation to sustainable finance.

The FCA has extensive powers to require companies within the scope of their authority to prepare and publish net zero transition plans and to impose some of the Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR) that the Treasury has proposed. The FCA's approach can be seen in the FCA documents including: PS21/23, PS21/24 and CP22/20 and the references therein. However, HM Treasury does not have the power to require the FCA to require specific disclosures, or to direct matters to which the FCA must have regard in developing its approach.

Powers over occupational pension schemes reside with DWP. DWP introduced the Occupational Pension Schemes (Climate Change Governance and Reporting) Regulations 2021, which came into force on 1 October 2021. The Regulations impose requirements on trustees of larger occupational pension schemes, for the identification, assessment and management of climate-related risks and opportunities.

Powers over UK-registered companies reside with the Secretary of State for BEIS. BEIS have already made regulations requiring disclosure against the standards set out by the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. These regulations came into force on 6 April 2022.

## Companies and Financial Institutions: Taxation

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have powers to require (1) listed and large unlisted companies to provide information on their UK taxation compliance, and (2) fund and pension fund managers to pass information about a company's taxation compliance to their clients. [HL3375]

**Baroness Penn:** There is no HM Government power that requires:

(1) listed and large unlisted companies to provide information on their UK taxation compliance (to their shareholders), and

(2) fund and pension fund managers to pass information about a company's taxation compliance to their clients.

However, there are two legislative obligations that require disclosure about a large company's approach to their tax obligations.

### 1) *Senior Accounting Officer regime*

Large companies are required to appoint a senior accounting officer (SAO). The SAO must take reasonable steps to ensure that the company establishes and maintains appropriate accounting arrangements that will enable the company's relevant liabilities to be calculated accurately in all material respects.

Additionally, the SAO must annually provide HMRC with a certificate to confirm that the company has maintained appropriate accounting arrangements throughout the year. Where the SAO is unable to provide that assurance, they must provide an explanation of the respects in which the accounting arrangements of the company fell short of being able to accurately calculate the company's tax liability.

This certification is provided to HMRC but is not available publicly.

### 2) *Publication of Tax Strategies*

Large companies are required to annually publish a tax strategy which includes the:

- approach of the group to risk management and governance arrangements in relation to UK taxation;
- attitude of the group towards tax planning (so far as affecting UK taxation);
- level of risk in relation to UK taxation that the group is prepared to accept; and
- their approach of the group towards its dealings with HMRC.

This information is available to shareholders and the general public. However, it does not require the company to publish the amount of taxes and duties paid as part of their tax strategy, or information that is commercially sensitive.

In addition to these two general information powers, HMRC has the power to require specific information as part of a compliance check. However, this information would be to confirm or quantify a company's tax liability, and not provide information on their general tax compliance.

None of the powers described above oblige fund managers to pass details of their approach to tax compliance to their clients.

## Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the report by OpenSAFELY on behalf of NHS England,

published on 13 October, which showed that 25 per cent of potentially eligible White patients received treatments through the Covid Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU) versus 13 per cent of Black patients, what assessment they have made of the reasons for racial and socioeconomic disparity in access to Covid treatments. [HL3060]

**Lord Markham:** NHS England is committed to minimising potential inequalities of access to COVID-19 treatments and has led on United Kingdom-wide clinical policy arrangements which support access to evidence-based treatments through consistent clinical criteria, regardless of geography. The OpenSAFELY analysis of patient records contributes to our understanding of access and enables the National Health Service to undertake targeted actions. NHS data indicates that access is highest in those of white British, white Irish and Asian backgrounds and lowest in those of black or black British backgrounds. Over 80% of potentially eligible patients in community settings can be identified digitally and therefore automatically referred for clinical assessment.

NHS England's initial assessment indicates that individuals in black and black British groups are more likely to be uncontactable during the five to seven day treatment window and are also more likely to decline the treatments offered through the clinical assessment process. NHS England works with local health systems to ensure that information on differences in access and treatment can be considered locally and action can be taken by front line clinical teams. NHS England also has regular engagement with charities, patient groups and other stakeholders to understand experiences of the COVID-19 testing and treatment pathway and to consider further action to mitigate any potential barriers to access.

As integrated care boards prepare for routine access arrangements for COVID-19 medicines recommended following the conclusion of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's current multiple technology appraisal process, NHS England continues to support local systems to address any disparities. This includes developing a dedicated health inequalities dashboard to identify disparities and sharing learning and best practice from other programmes. NHS England encourages systems to use a population health management approach, as defined in NHS England's CORE20PLUS approach for narrowing health inequalities, which enables integrated care systems to respond to the needs of its local population and ensure equity of access to treatments.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will seek the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on coronavirus immunisation treatment using prophylactic antibodies. [HL3289]

**Lord Markham:** The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is an independent expert

advisory committee which provides advice to Government on immunisation. The JCVI's remit is focused on vaccination, rather than antibody treatments and prophylaxis, therefore there are no plans to commission such advice.

The multi-agency RAPID C-19 was established in 2020 to ensure treatments for COVID-19 are made safely available for National Health Service patients as soon as possible. RAPID C-19 has the relevant expertise in the range of therapeutic options available for COVID-19 treatment and prevention. It also draws on relevant expertise, including an NHS expert working group and the Prophylaxis Oversight Group.

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the position that coronavirus vaccines and immunisations, including prophylactic antibodies, should be assessed through the JCVI. [HL3367]

**Lord Markham:** No such assessment has been made. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is an independent expert advisory committee which advises United Kingdom health departments on immunisation. The JCVI's remit is focused on vaccination rather than antibody treatments and prophylaxis.

The multi-agency RAPID C-19 was established in 2020 to ensure that treatments for COVID-19 are made available safely to National Health Service patients as soon as possible. RAPID C-19 has the relevant expertise in the therapeutic options available and consults experts in an NHS expert working group and the Prophylaxis Oversight Group. The Chief Medical Officer for England has agreed that Evusheld should be referred to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for further evaluation, which is underway.

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government what cost is being charged by Pfizer for the Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.1 medicine. [HL3450]

**Lord Markham:** We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive. However, the Government has ensured that the supply agreements for COVID-19 vaccines provide access to updated vaccines, such as the bivalent mRNA vaccines deployed during the current booster vaccination campaign.

### Dedicated Schools Grant

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of arrangements to extend the statutory override on the treatment of Dedicated Schools Grant deficits. [HL3343]

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish the outcome of the consultation, launched on 7 June, on extending the statutory override on the treatment of Dedicated Schools Grant deficits beyond March 2023. [HL3344]

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide councils with a long-term extension of the statutory override on the treatment of Dedicated Schools Grant deficits. [HL3345]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** In August 2022 we carried out a voluntary Call for Evidence across local authorities with the objective to understand current and projected Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial positions and inform decision making around extending the DSG statutory override beyond March 2023. This was not a formal consultation and we are unaware of a consultation that launched on 7 June. The data collected in this Call for Evidence was to support DLUHC policy development and was unvalidated, therefore it would not be appropriate to publish as such.

We understand a decision on the DSG statutory override needs to be communicated to the sector as soon as possible to provide certainty for the next - and future - financial years. We plan to announce this ahead of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

### Diabetes: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of cases of type 2 diabetes since the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3558]

**Lord Markham:** No specific assessment has yet been made, as data collected by the National Diabetes Audit for 2021 to 2022 has not been finalised.

### Economic Recession

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the forecast by the Bank of England that the UK economy will enter recession, what steps they plan to take to support (1) high street businesses, and (2) the voluntary sector. [HL3389]

**Baroness Penn:** In addition to the comprehensive package of support which protected businesses and jobs through the pandemic, the Autumn Statement demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to the businesses that make our high streets and town centres so successful.

The Chancellor announced a generous package of changes to business rates, worth £13.6 billion over five years. In addition to freezing the multiplier, the Autumn

Statement extended the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) relief scheme in 2023-24 and increased relief from 50% to 75%, up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business. This means around 230,000 properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will receive a tax cut worth almost £2.1 billion in 2023-24.

We will also support businesses and the voluntary and public sector facing pressure from substantial global price pressures this winter through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS). The government will discount wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic consumers. This is a temporary measure that will protect them from soaring energy costs and provide them with the certainty they need to plan through the acute crisis this winter.

### Economic Situation: Brexit

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Brexit on the UK economy. [HL3531]

**Baroness Penn:** It is for the Office for Budget Responsibility to provide economic and fiscal forecasts. Global external factors, including Covid and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, continue to put pressures on the UK economy. It is challenging to definitively disentangle the effect of these global factors from the longer-term impacts of EU exit on the UK economy and households.

### Electronic Cigarettes

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to publicise the finding contained in the Nicotine Vaping in England: 2022 evidence update, published on 29 September, that "vaping is not risk-free, particularly for people who have never smoked"; and whether the review update found any evidence that fruit-flavoured vaping products may contribute to increased (1) usage, and (2) addiction, in young people. [HL3503]

**Lord Markham:** The report details that vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking in the short-to-medium term. It also states that never or long-term former smokers should be discouraged from taking up vaping, unless the individual would otherwise relapse to smoking, as the degree of any long-term risks remains unclear.

The report will inform the Department's communications and the advice given by the online only resources Better Health and Ask Frank. Several of its chapters have been or will be published in peer review journals and the authors will be undertaking webinars and conference presentations. The report notes that while fruit flavours are commonly used by adults and young people, no evidence is presented of these products being more addictive.

## Embassies: China

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the involvement of the Chinese Consul in Manchester in violence against a protestor, what plans they have, if any, to call-in the planning application PA/21/01327/A1 for the construction of a new Chinese embassy at Royal Mint Court. [HL3331]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Planning application PA/21/01327/A1 for the construction of a new Chinese embassy at Royal Mint Court is currently being considered by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has received a request that the application be called in. This request is under consideration. Government's policy on calling in applications is set out in a Written Ministerial Statement of 2012 (Hansard 26 October 2012, Columns 71WS and 72WS). This sets out that the Secretary of State's policy.

## Employment: Disability

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to publish their response to the consultation Disability workforce reporting, which closed on 8 April; and when they plan to publish the findings of their review of the Disability Confident scheme. [HL3385]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The commitment to consult on disability workforce reporting was set out in the National Disability Strategy. In January 2022, the High Court declared that the strategy was unlawful because the UK Disability Survey, which informed it, was held to be a voluntary consultation that failed to comply with the legal requirements on public consultations.

The Department aims to minimise the risk of acting inconsistently with the Court's declaration, without compromising on the ambitious agenda we are delivering for disabled people. As such, we have paused a limited number of policies referred to in the Strategy or directly connected with it, including the planned findings report and next steps publication for the Disability Workforce Reporting consultation and work directly related to the Disability Confident review.

We are committed to disability policy that supports all areas of life, and to taking action to create a society that works for everyone.

## Energy Bills Rebate

Asked by *Lord Teverson*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will provide further detail on how and when heat network customers can expect to receive the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund rebate and the Alternative Fuel Payment. [HL3392]

**Lord Callanan:** Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) Alternative Funding will provide a £400 discount on energy bills for the small percentage of households that will not be reached through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. Eligibility, timescales and method of delivery will be announced in the coming weeks.

Heat network consumers receive support through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) and will not receive the Alternative Fuel Payment, which has been designed to support households using alternative fuels. As the EBRS will be scaled back from April 2023 the Government will bring forward a route to deliver bespoke support for those on heat networks. Further details will be published shortly.

## Energy: Vulnerable Adults

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure public awareness of the availability of the Priority Services Register, including among owner occupiers; and what requirements they have placed on energy suppliers to ensure that households registered with a Priority Services Register have safe gas and electricity supplies in their homes. [HL3347]

**Lord Callanan:** Condition 26 of Ofgem's gas and electricity supply licence conditions requires suppliers to identify consumers who are eligible for the Priority Service Register and offer to add any, or all, of the Minimum Details to the Priority Services Register during interactions. Condition 29 of Ofgem's gas supply licence conditions requires suppliers to provide a gas safety check free of charge to vulnerable consumers. Further details on support available for those on the Priority Service Register can be found on the Ofgem website.

## English National Opera: Finance

Asked by *Lord Smith of Finsbury*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with Arts Council England to understand their decision to withdraw all national programme funding from English National Opera; and what plans they have to ask the Arts Council to reconsider this decision. [HL3387]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** The Secretary of State, other Ministers, and officials from DCMS all regularly meet Arts Council England – which is an arms-length body of the Department – to discuss all aspects of its work. This includes meetings to discuss Arts Council England's 2023–26 Investment Programme.

All decisions on which organisations to fund through the 2023–26 Investment Programme, and by how much, have been taken by Arts Council England. In line with the long-standing principle that the Arts Council makes such decisions at arm's length from Government, there are no plans to ask it to reconsider these decisions. The



Department is keen that Arts Council England and English National Opera work together on the future of the organisation.

### **Ethiopia: Armed Conflict**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 15 November (HL Deb, col 875) that the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) report is not usually published, whether they will disclose the JACS assessment of Ethiopia by either (1) publishing it in its entirety, (2) publishing the section relevant to the issue of atrocity crimes, or (3) place a copy in the Library of the House. [HL3491]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) report is an internal document and will not be published. The JACS was commissioned to develop a cross-Whitehall understanding of the drivers, dynamics, triggers and resilience for conflict, insecurity and instability in Ethiopia and the implications for UK interests and priorities. It is being used to guide the cross-Whitehall approach to supporting peace and stability in Ethiopia and prevent human rights abuses and violations as a result of conflict.

### **Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prospects for the success of the peace process in Ethiopia. [HL3501]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We welcome the agreements signed between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on 2 November and 12 November. They provide for an end to two years of brutal conflict in northern Ethiopia. These represent a comprehensive peace accord which, if implemented in full, can serve as the basis for a lasting peace. However implementation will require sustained leadership on all sides, and support from Ethiopia's partners across the international community. Along with other international partners, the UK has underlined to the Ethiopian Government and African Union its willingness to provide support to this process.

### **EU Law**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to review all retained EU law on the UK statute book, by the end of 2023. [HL3391]

**Lord Callanan:** Work is already taking place in each department to draw up plans for each piece of REUL in scope of the sunset, including an SI program.

The process of cataloguing retained EU law across government has been ongoing, and a dashboard was published on 22 June 2022, as part of the cross-Whitehall substance review of REUL.

The dashboard presents an authoritative catalogue of retained EU law, not a comprehensive list of retained EU law. We will continue to work across government to develop this catalogue where EU-derived legislation remains on our statute book and the data will be updated on a quarterly basis.

### **Evusheld**

*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government what papers and data were consulted in advance of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Chief Medical Officer taking the decision not to pursue procurement of Evusheld; and what is the most recent real time evidence of Evusheld's effectiveness that they have consulted. [HL2602]

**Lord Markham:** The decision not to procure Evusheld for prevention through emergency routes at this time is based on independent clinical advice by the multi-agency RAPID C-19 and a United Kingdom national expert policy working group. These groups considered a range of evidence, including clinical trial data, international studies and testing conducted by the UK Health Security Agency.

The most recent observational studies reviewed included *Tixagevimab/Cilgavimab for Prevention of COVID-19 during the Omicron Surge: Retrospective Analysis of National VA Electronic Data; Association between AZD7442 (tixagevimab-cilgavimab) administration and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection, hospitalisation and mortality; Tixagevimab/cilgavimab pre-exposure prophylaxis is associated with lower breakthrough infection risk in vaccinated solid organ transplant recipients during the omicron wave; Efficacy of anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibody prophylaxis and vaccination on the omicron variant of COVID-19 in kidney transplant recipients; and COVID-19 morbidity decreases with tixagevimab-cilgavimab pre-exposure prophylaxis in kidney transplant recipient non-responders or low-vaccine responders*. A copy of these studies is attached.

The Chief Medical Officer for England is content that the correct process for providing clinical advice has been followed and this should now be referred to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for further evaluation.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Evusheld observational studies reviewed evidence [Reviewed Evidence w Jurdi abstract (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-10-13/HL2602>



*Asked by Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to undertake an equalities assessment on the availability of protection from COVID-19, given that immunocompromised and vulnerable patients' only access to Evusheld costs up to £3,000 on the private market. [HL3368]

**Lord Markham:** The Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce has undertaken an equalities impact assessment which informed the advice to Ministers on the decision not to procure Evusheld at this time. The impact assessment analysed the effects of any such decision on groups with protected characteristics. It also reviewed the OCTAVE study to determine whether individuals with immunosuppression receive adequate protection from COVID-19 via the national vaccination programme. The study found that 11% of immunocompromised patients fail to generate any antibodies following vaccination and 40% mounted a low serological response. This suggested that a small number of individuals remain vulnerable to COVID-19 infection despite the vaccine programme.

However, due to the uncertainty of the impact of the Evusheld as a prophylactic treatment against Omicron variants, the degree of any such benefits is unclear. It has now been referred to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for further evaluation. While AstraZeneca has made Evusheld available privately in the United Kingdom, this is a matter for individual patients and healthcare providers and is distinct from any Government consideration of its use within the National Health Service. Additional pharmaceutical interventions, including antivirals, are available to treat hospitalised and non-hospitalised patients most at risk from COVID-19 infection.

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of immunocompromised people in England who could potentially benefit from Evusheld if it is found to be appropriate for prescription on the NHS. [HL3401]

**Lord Markham:** The National Health Service estimates approximately 500,000 patients in England are immunosuppressed. A minority of these patients may not respond adequately to vaccines and could potentially benefit from pre-exposure prophylaxis. The OCTAVE study found that 11% of immunocompromised patients fail to generate antibodies following vaccination and 40% mounted a low serological response. The use of antibody testing could potentially identify which patients have lower levels of protection and should be prioritised for treatment.

This data is approximate and the Department has commissioned additional advice from independent experts to refine its understanding of vaccine response and the patient cohorts which could be prioritised for prophylaxis and for other interventions. If the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) ascertains that

Evusheld as a pre-exposure prophylaxis is clinically and cost effective, the National Health Service will make Evusheld available as appropriate. NICE's appraisal will also consider suitable patient cohorts.

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect a decision to be made as to the suitability of prescribing Evusheld on the NHS. [HL3402]

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what factors they are taking into account as they reach a decision on the suitability of prescribing Evusheld on the NHS. [HL3403]

**Lord Markham:** The Government has decided not to procure Evusheld at this time for prevention through emergency routes. This is a decision based on independent clinical advice by the multi-agency RAPID C-19 and a United Kingdom national expert policy working group, which considered all available evidence for whether treatments are likely to be effective at preventing symptomatic infection, hospitalisation or mortality from COVID-19. The groups concluded that there is currently insufficient evidence of benefit to recommend deployment at this time.

Evusheld has now been referred to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for evaluation. NICE's appraisal process will consider the clinical and cost effectiveness of Evusheld in order to assess its suitability for prescription in the National Health Service. The outcome of NICE's evaluation on the use of Evusheld as a pre-exposure prophylactic treatment against COVID-19 is due in April 2023. If NICE recommends its use is clinically and cost effective, the NHS will make Evusheld available as appropriate.

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government why, given that Evusheld has been approved for private prescription, it has not yet been approved for prescription on the NHS. [HL3404]

**Lord Markham:** The Government has decided not to procure Evusheld for prevention through emergency routes at this time. This is based on independent clinical advice by the multi-agency RAPID C-19 and a United Kingdom national expert policy working group, which concluded that there is insufficient evidence of benefit to recommend deployment.

While the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency gave a Conditional Marketing Authorisation to Evusheld in March 2022, it did so noting that there a lack of data on its response to the Omicron variant. AstraZeneca has made Evusheld available privately in the UK, which is a matter for individual patients and their healthcare providers. It is distinct from any Government consideration of its use within the National Health Service.

## Exercise and Food: Health

Asked by *Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their general advice for (1) how much fat, and (2) what kind of fat, they recommend people eat; and what assessment they have made of the effect of exercise to weight reduction by comparison with reducing the number of calories in the diet. [HL3562]

**Lord Markham:** Fats are an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet. The Government's dietary recommendations state that no more than 33% of total energy should come from fats, including no more than approximately 10% of total energy from saturated fats. The advice for the general population is to reduce intakes of saturated fats and replace with more unsaturated fats from sources such as oily fish, rapeseed oil, sunflower oil, nuts and seeds.

Daily physical activity can contribute to maintaining a healthy weight and the prevention and management of certain diseases. This approach should place an emphasis on changing dietary behaviour to reduce calorie intake and support people to self-monitor and manage everyday challenging situations.

## Financial Services: Climate Change

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what evidence they have collected regarding the voting record of UK authorised fund managers and pension funds in relation to climate-related resolutions at AGMs. [HL3377]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** We do not collect this information.

## Gender Recognition: Children

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of off-label puberty blockers; and how many children have been given off-label puberty blockers in the last five years. [HL3451]

**Lord Markham:** Clinicians can prescribe medicines outside the licensed indication where it is considered the best treatment for the patient. Gonadotropin-releasing hormone antagonists are used in line with granted medical authorisations and 'off label' to treat several medical conditions in children, including precocious puberty, some forms of cancer, gender dysphoria and endometriosis. Clinicians are professionally accountable for prescribing decisions and to service commissioners.

Dr Hilary Cass is currently reviewing how the National Health Service prescribes puberty blockers to children and young people with gender dysphoria. Her interim review concluded that there is insufficient evidence currently available for any firm recommendations on the routine use and that further research is needed. NHS

England and the National Institute for Health and Care Research are designing and commissioning a research protocol which will prospectively enrol young people being considered for hormone treatment. Information on prescriptions of puberty blockers dispensed in the community in England for gender dysphoria is not held centrally.

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of effect that puberty blockers have on the (1) mental, and (2) physical, development of patients when given to them as children. [HL3452]

**Lord Markham:** Gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogues are used in line with granted medical authorisations and 'off label' to treat several medical conditions in children and young people. These include precocious puberty, some forms of cancer, gender dysphoria and endometriosis.

The Department is supporting a review led by Dr Hilary Cass into the gender identity services provided to children and young people, including the use of hormone treatments. Dr Cass has recommended that the National Health Service consider establishing a formal research programme which would prospectively enrol young people where the use of puberty blockers is being considered and follow their development into adulthood. NHS England supports this recommendation and will work with the National Institute for Health and Care Research to design and commission the necessary research protocol.

## Gene Therapies

Asked by *Baroness Meacher*

To ask His Majesty's Government which Minister has overall responsibility for ensuring that the NHS is able to deliver the next generation of cell and gene therapies to patients. [HL3426]

**Lord Markham:** The Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince MP) has overall responsibility for cell and gene therapies and the uptake of new treatments in the National Health Service.

## Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made a forecast of the potential impact of reducing UK funding of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on the Commonwealth commitment to end malaria by 2030. [HL3510]

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK's pledge to the Global Fund

in terms of tackling (1) malaria, (2) AIDS, and (3) tuberculosis. [HL3513]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Global Fund remains one of our top global health investments, reflecting the high priority we place on the fight against these diseases. The UK's pledge of £1 billion will help: avert over 28 million infections of the three diseases; provide antiretroviral therapy for 1.8 million people; provide TB treatment for over one million people; and distribute 86 million mosquito nets to protect children and families from malaria.

The responsibility of funding the Global Fund is shared across Governments, the private sector, and private foundations; the UK will continue to encourage everyone to continue the fight against the three diseases - inspiring others with our significant commitment.

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to make further contributions or top-up pledges to the Global Fund before its Eighth Replenishment in 2025. [HL3511]

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following their pledge of £1bn to the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund, whether they plan to make additional bilateral investments to that Fund. [HL3523]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Foreign Secretary and Ministers carefully considered funding options in light of the current and forecasted UK and global economic situation and our other essential ODA commitments. The Global Fund remains one of our top global health investments, and our pledge of £1 billion reflects the high priority we place on the fight against these diseases. There are currently no plans to make a further contribution before the eighth replenishment. The UK remains the third largest donor overall to the Global Fund and has invested over £4.4 billion to date.

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with governments of low- and middle-income countries concerning any impact of their pledge to the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund. [HL3522]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The FCDO will combine its development and diplomatic expertise to work with partner countries to help ensure the finance provided by the Global Fund has the maximum impact; saving lives and preventing illness. The Global Fund works with many delivering partners in country and globally with organisations such as the WHO. The UK will continue to fund our Global Fund Accelerator programme that provides expert technical support, including through placing skilled health advisers in key countries in countries which the Global Fund supports to

help advise governments and in-country partners on programme proposals for greatest effect.

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their pledge to the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund on (1) the United States' contribution, (2) the incentive for other potential donors, (3) the role and influence of the UK within the Global Fund, and (4) health outcomes. [HL3525]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK is a committed supporter of the Global Fund and is the third largest historical donor, investing over £4.4 billion to date. The UK has pledged £1 billion to the Global Fund's seventh replenishment. This pledge has unlocked a further £500 million from the US match fund. The responsibility of funding the Global Fund is shared across governments, the private sector, and private foundations; the UK will continue to encourage everyone to play their part - inspiring others with our significant commitment. The UK will continue to hold a seat on the Board and will work with other constituencies to ensure the Global Fund makes the greatest impact. The UK pledge to the Seventh Replenishment will help save over one million lives and avert over 28 million infections of the three diseases.

### **Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the reduction of the UK's pledge to the Global Fund, what other means the UK Government has to continue supporting global health security and fighting malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS. [HL3512]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Tackling these diseases remains a priority for the UK Government - as evidenced by our significant £1 billion pledge at a time of challenging global fiscal conditions. The International Development Strategy (IDS) highlights how global health and global health security is a top UK priority; key for economic prosperity and global stability. Combatting these diseases supports the UK's commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children, and our priority to strengthen country health systems. We have invested around £400 million in Product Development Partnerships, and our commitments to Unitaid, Child Health Advocacy Initiative (CHAI) and MedAccess support access to innovations aimed at ending the three epidemics.

### **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: Females**

*Asked by Baroness Sheehan*

To ask His Majesty's Government, given that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by HIV and

malaria, what is the role of the Global Fund within their wider objectives for women and girls. [[HL3524](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** 60% of the Global Fund's spending is specifically targeted to programmes for women and girls and around one-third of Global Fund investments directly benefits Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Thanks to the UK's support to the Global Fund, more than 85% of pregnant women living with HIV now have access to medicine to prevent transmitting HIV to their babies, and in 2021 the Global Fund supported 12.5 million pregnant women to receive preventive therapy for malaria. Our investments in the Global Fund remain important to advance the International Development Strategy's priority to provide women and girls with the freedom they need to succeed.

### Health Professions: Pay

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the maximum hourly rates for NHS (1) consultants, (2) doctors, and (3) nurses. [[HL3442](#)]

**Lord Markham:** The Pay Review Body process is the established mechanism for determining pay increases in the public sector, outside of negotiating multi-year pay and contract reform deals.

For consultants and doctors, the hourly basic pay rate based on 40 hours per week at the top of the pay scale is £57.12 per hour.

The majority of National Health Service nurses are paid on the Agenda for Change contract at bands 5 to 7, although the highest band 9. Nurses at the top of band 9 earn £55.99 per hour. This refers to basic pay and does not include allowances or premiums for unsocial hours or the High Cost Area Supplement.

### Health Professions: Regulation

*Asked by Baroness Harding of Winscombe*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to introduce legislation to regulate physician associates and anaesthesia associates. [[HL3313](#)]

**Lord Markham:** We plan to publish the public consultation on the draft legislation that will enable the General Medical Council (GMC) to regulate physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) by the end of 2022. Following this consultation, we will finalise the legislation, complete the required legal checks and lay the order in Parliament in the second half of 2023, subject to Parliamentary time. The GMC will then develop and implement its rules and processes for regulating PAs and AAs within 12 months, enabling regulation to commence in the second half of 2024.

### Health Services

*Asked by Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 November, how they measure patient access to multi-disciplinary teams; and what steps they are taking to ensure that people with rare bone conditions can access a multi-disciplinary team. [[HL3432](#)]

**Lord Markham:** The level of patient access to multi-disciplinary teams is not currently measured. Services for rare bone conditions are required to have multi-disciplinary teams as outlined in the specialised rheumatology service specification. This defines the standards of care expected from organisations funded by NHS England to provide specialised care.

### Health Services: Prisons

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) healthcare staff are currently in post for each prison in England and Wales; and what is the target number of FTE healthcare staff in each case. [[HL3457](#)]

**Lord Markham:** This information is not held centrally. National Health Service regional commissioners hold contracts with a number of healthcare providers to deliver health services within each prison. While the contract specifies the services which should be provided, it may not stipulate the number of staff which should be employed or the specific roles of health professionals to fulfil those services.

### Home Shopping: Taxation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to introduce (1) a financial support mechanism, and (2) an online sales tax, for small and medium sized supply chain businesses. [[HL3530](#)]

**Baroness Penn:** As announced at Autumn Statement 2022, the Government has decided not to introduce an online sales tax. This decision reflects concerns raised about its complexity and the risk of creating unfair outcomes between different retail business models. Stakeholders also expected it would lead to higher prices for consumers.

At Autumn Statement 2022 the Government announced a package of support worth £13.6 billion to protect businesses as they transition to their new bills at the business rates revaluation. This includes a freeze to the multiplier for 2023-24, which will benefit all ratepayers,



and a generous Transitional Relief scheme worth £1.6 billion over the next 3 years which will support businesses facing bill increases at the revaluation. The Government is also delivering significant reform to the system by scrapping downwards caps, which restricted falls in bills at previous revaluations. This is expected to benefit around 300,000 ratepayers who will see a full fall in their bills from 1 April 2023.

Furthermore, through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), the Government will provide a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic consumers (including UK businesses, the voluntary and public sectors).

This is a temporary measure that will protect them from soaring energy costs and provide them with the certainty they need to plan through the acute crisis this winter. An HMT-led review of the EBRS will determine support for UK non-domestic energy consumers after March 2023, the results of which will be published in due course.

### Hotels: Temporary Accommodation

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support, if any, they will provide to local authorities using hotels as temporary accommodation for (1) refugees, and (2) homeless people. [HL3382]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Local authorities are responsible for providing temporary accommodation for eligible homeless households, which includes refugees where they are eligible for statutory homelessness assistance. Local authorities can access funding to help meet the costs of temporary accommodation through the core Local Government Funding Settlement, Housing Benefit, and the Homelessness Prevention Grant where in 2022/23 local authorities in England have received £316 million.

### Hourglass

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of (1) the work of the charity Hourglass, and (2) its helpline for older people. [HL3565]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** This government recognises that, although anyone can suffer from domestic abuse, for older victims, abuse may be more hidden and disguised or compounded by other age-related factors such as ill health.

When tackling domestic abuse, we also understand the importance of specialist and 'by and for' services (specialist services that are designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve) are vital in providing the tailored support that victims and survivors of domestic abuse need.

We work closely with and fund organisations providing this support, including Hourglass, which supports elder victims of abuse, including domestic abuse.

Since 2018, the Home Office has funded Hourglass to enhance their helpline, provide casework support, and train specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisers. As with all our funded programmes, we hold regular monitoring meetings with Hourglass to understand the impact of this funding. In 2021/22, Hourglass supported over 3,000 cases.

### Housing: Older People

*Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask His Majesty's Government when the task force on housing for older people will be launched as promised in the White Paper, Levelling up the United Kingdom, published on 2 February. [HL3348]

*Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the International Longevity Centre UK The Mayhew Review – Future-proofing retirement living: Easing the care and housing crises, published on 1 November; and in particular the recommendation that His Majesty's Government should aim to build 50,000 new homes for older people each year to address issues in the (1) housing, and (2) social care, sectors. [HL3349]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Ensuring older people have access to the right homes that suit their needs can help them to live independently for longer and feel more connected to their communities. We announced in the Levelling Up White Paper an older people's housing taskforce, to explore how we can improve the choice of and access to housing options for older people. We are continually increasing our understanding of this market, and note the recommendations in Professor Mayhew's recent review alongside contributions from other stakeholders.

### Internet: Curriculum

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to increasing the time devoted to online media literacy as part of the national curriculum. [HL3528]

**Baroness Barran:** The Department continues to support schools to deliver media literacy education. There are many opportunities across the national curriculum for pupils to acquire knowledge of online media literacy. It is taught through the compulsory subjects of computing and citizenship and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which was introduced in September 2020. Non-online media literacy is also covered in history and English.



The computing curriculum teaches children how to use technology safely. This includes understanding the internet, using search technologies effectively, and being discerning when evaluating digital content.

Citizenship education equips pupils with the knowledge to explore issues critically, weigh evidence, make reasoned arguments, and take informed action. Pupils are taught the role of responsible journalism in democratic society, enabling them to identify misinformation.

The RSHE curriculum includes online relationships, the implications of sharing private or personal data, including images, online, harmful content and contact, cyberbullying, overreliance on social media, and where to get help and support for issues that occur online.

### Internet: Education

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment Ofsted has made of Ofcom's progress towards improving the online media literacy of internet users. [HL3529]

**Baroness Barran:** Ofsted is not responsible for evaluating the work of Ofcom and has made no assessment of Ofcom's progress on this matter.

Ofsted sets clear expectations that schools teach pupils how to understand and recognise risks they may encounter online. This should include a well constructed relationship, sex and health education curriculum that addresses online abuse and harassment, online safeguarding risks, and what constitutes a healthy relationship online. Ofsted also expects schools to act to ensure bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual violence, online or offline, are unacceptable and dealt with quickly, consistently, and effectively should they occur.

### Manufacturing Industries

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking (1) to support the UK manufacturing industry, and (2) to introduce a new post-Brexit industrial policy. [HL3390]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government is safeguarding and enhancing our manufacturing base by providing substantial funding for projects in important sub-sectors such as aerospace, automotive and life sciences. We have committed nearly £1 billion to fund the High Value Manufacturing Catapult centres and the Made Smarter programme.

The Government recognises that for UK manufacturing to remain internationally competitive it must continue investing to keep the sector at the forefront of net zero innovation. We will launch a new Manufacturing Investment Prospectus to showcase UK manufacturing,

the policies which demonstrate our commitment to the sector and to help promote investment in UK manufacturing.

### Marine Environment: Conservation

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to include the restoration of saltmarshes for blue carbon in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory. [HL3362]

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the findings of the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership. [HL3363]

**Lord Benyon:** Nature-based solutions, including blue carbon habitats such as saltmarshes, have an important role to play in preventing biodiversity loss and supporting adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside their carbon sequestration benefits. HM Government cannot currently commit to inclusion of coastal wetlands in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory as there are significant evidence gaps that prevent the accurate reporting of anthropogenic activities and therefore emissions from coastal wetland habitats, including saltmarshes.

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is responsible for the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, but through the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership, Defra is working with BEIS and the other UK Administrations to address key research questions relating to blue carbon, including to support the potential future inclusion of saltmarshes within the inventory. The first aim of the Partnership has been to identify and then clearly set out the most pressing research questions relating to blue carbon in an Evidence Needs Statement that will act as a signal to the research community.

### Medical Equipment: Power Failures

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, or plan to take, to ensure that those dependent on life-critical support machines are protected in cases of power blackouts. [HL3448]

**Lord Markham:** The Department for Health and Social Care is working with the health and social care sector to assess the impact of any potential disruption to energy on services. In addition, we are working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to understand the likelihood of any power outages. Care providers and equipment suppliers support those with long term conditions to use medical equipment at home safely and in cases where the equipment is disrupted. In a power outage scenario, the Priority Services Register is maintained by electricity network operators to target support to the most vulnerable customers.

## Medical Records: Data Protection

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the letter sent from the National Data Guardian to NHS Integrated Care Systems and Senior Information Risk Owners on 1 November (NDG reference 299/1541); and whether they will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House. [HL3551]

**Lord Markham:** A copy of the letter sent by the National Data Guardian to National Health Service integrated care systems and Senior Information Risk Owners on 7 November is attached. This letter was published by the National Data Guardian on 23 November 2022.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

National Data Guardian letter to ICBs  
[Letter\_to\_ICBs\_issued\_07.11.22.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-18/HL3551>

## Metabolism: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 November (HL2833), what plans they have to update the service specification for inherited metabolic disorders. [HL3429]

**Lord Markham:** NHS England has no current plans to review the adult and paediatric metabolic disorders service specifications. The Metabolic disorders Clinical Reference Group is responsible for the adult and paediatric metabolic disorders service specifications and the Lysosomal Storage Disorders Service (Children). It is anticipated that the service specification for Lysosomal Storage Disorders Service (Children) will be reviewed by the Clinical Reference Group in 2023/24.

## Neural Tube Defects

Asked by *Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the prevalence of births affected by neural tube defects in the UK; and what assessment they have made, if any, of how this figure compares with equivalent figures in other OECD member states. [HL3566]

**Lord Markham:** Two neural tube defects, anencephaly and spina bifida, are screened for by the NHS Fetal Anomaly Screening Programme at the 20 week scan. In England and the crown dependencies, there were 752 births with neural tube defects in 2019 and a prevalence of 12.2 births per 10,000 total births.

The National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service submits data to EUROCAT, the European network of population-based registries for the

epidemiological surveillance of congenital anomalies. In 2019, the overall prevalence of neural tube defects for participating full registries across Europe, including full participating regions of England, was 11.36 per 10,000 births.

## Neural Tube Defects: Research

Asked by *Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what Government-sponsored research is currently underway regarding neural tube defect births. [HL3520]

**Lord Markham:** Through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Department funds research into the safety of maternity and neonatal services and the national maternity ambition to halve maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and brain injury by 2025. The NIHR's Oxford Biomedical Research Centre has supported 19 studies on neural tube defects. The NIHR has also funded a £2.2 million multicentre randomised controlled trial, which included children with neural tube defects, to determine the optimal type of shunt to treat hydrocephalus and reduce infection rates. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including research on neural tube birth defects.

## NHS: Agency Workers

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to cap NHS agency staff budgets, including for doctors and nurses. [HL3441]

**Lord Markham:** In 2015, the Government introduced several measures to reduce agency spend, including price caps, procurement frameworks and expenditure ceilings. These measures have contributed to the reduction in National Health Service spending on agency staff from £3.6 billion in 2015/16 to £2.4 billion in 2020/21. In September 2022, NHS England re-established measures to control spending on agency staff, including a system expenditure limit.

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the use of agency staff in the NHS, and (2) any potential impact of the use of agency staff on existing NHS staff shortages. [HL3443]

**Lord Markham:** The introduction of agency rules in 2016 has reduced expenditure on agency staff by approximately £1.2 billion, from £3.6 billion in 2015/16 to £2.4 billion at the end of 2020/21. Agency spend as a percentage of the total wage bill has decreased from 7.9% in 2015/16 to 3.7% in 2020/21.

Reducing the use of agency staff must be balanced with providing safe care to patients. Trusts are able to use flexible staffing to respond to situations where there is insufficient staff. In September 2022, NHS England re-

established measures to address spending on agency staff, including a system expenditure limit.

### NHS: Databases

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government how patients can dissent from the secondary use of their patient data within the Federated Data Platform, including pursuant to rights under (1) the National Data Opt-Out, and (2) the Data Protection Act 2018 (incorporating the UK General Data Protection Regulation). [HL3535]

**Lord Markham:** Any patient can opt out from the sharing of their data for secondary use purposes in line with the National Data Opt-Out policy. This can be done at any time through the NHS App, online, by phone, email or post. Implementation of the National Data Opt-Out policy has been mandatory for health and adult social care organisations since 31 July 2022.

The procurement process for the Federated Data Platform has not yet commenced. Once operational, data will be treated in accordance with the provisions set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation. Opted out data will be separated from non-opted out data prior to the commencement of secondary use.

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of NHS England's announcement that Shared Care Records will be incorporated into its Federated Data Platform. [HL3536]

**Lord Markham:** Shared Care Records and the Federated Data Platform will operate separately. The objective of Shared Care Records is to ensure that authorised health and care professionals providing direct care to patients have safe, secure and ready access to the person-based records and care plans needed to provide high quality individual integrated care.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what provisions they have made to enable patients to dissent from the secondary use of their patient data within the Federated Data Platform, including pursuant to rights under (1) the National Data Opt-Out, and (2) the Data Protection Act 2018, incorporating the UK General Data Protection Regulation. [HL3548]

**Lord Markham:** Any patient can opt out from the sharing of their data for secondary use purposes in line with the National Data Opt-Out policy. This can be done at any time through the NHS App, online, by phone, email or post. Implementation of the National Data Opt-Out policy has been mandatory for health and adult social care organisations since 31 July 2022.

The procurement process for the Federated Data Platform has not yet commenced. Once operational, data will be treated in accordance with the provisions set out in

the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation. Opted out data will be separated from non-opted out data prior to the commencement of secondary use.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government on what statutory basis NHS Digital has made the judgment that individual level pseudonymised data is not personal data. [HL3550]

**Lord Markham:** NHS Digital has not judged that individual level pseudonymised data is not personal data. NHS Digital processes this data on the basis that it is personal data, in line with the definition within the UK General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### NHS: Pay

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the benefits of moving to a system of local pay bargaining within the NHS, whilst preserving a national pension scheme. [HL3400]

**Lord Markham:** The independent Pay Review Body process is the established mechanism for determining pay increases in the public sector, including for National Health Service staff, outside of negotiating pay and contract reform deals. Terms and conditions for NHS staff are agreed nationally through collective agreements with trade unions. The Department is represented on the NHS Staff Council for Agenda for Change staff and at the Joint Negotiating Committees for medical staff.

Flexibility exists within the national terms and conditions for employers to use local recruitment and retention premia. We understand that these flexibilities are seldom used by employers locally due the administrative process, complying with legislation on equal pay and the risk of exacerbating recruitment, retention and pay issues with neighbouring trusts and within the local labour market.

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the maximum hourly rates for NHS (1) agency consultants, (2) doctors, and (3) nurses. [HL3568]

**Lord Markham:** For agency medical consultants, maximum hourly rates are determined by NHS England's price cap, which includes worker pay and all expenses such as travel and accommodation. The current level is £80.61 or £107.47 for unsocial hours, defined as those outside of 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday and bank holidays. There are exceptions, including for circumstances concerning patient safety and suitable rates for extra-contractual working hours are agreed locally.

For doctors employed on nationally agreed terms and conditions, the highest hourly pay rate is that of a medical consultant. The hourly basic pay rate based on 40 hours

per week for a consultant at the maximum of the pay scale is £57.12 per hour. This does not include enhancements for working unsocial hours.

The majority of National Health Service nurses are paid on the Agenda for Change contract at bands 5 to 7, although the highest is band 9. Nurses at the maximum of band 9 earn £55.99 per hour. This refers to basic pay and does not include allowances or premiums for unsocial hours or the High Cost Area Supplement. In 2015, measures to reduce agency spend were introduced, including price caps, procurement frameworks and expenditure ceilings. These have contributed to the reduction of spending on agency staff from £3.6 billion in 2015/16 to £2.4 billion in 2020/21.

### NHS: Productivity

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they calculate NHS productivity; and whether, in each year since 2009, it has increased. [HL3399]

**Lord Markham:** The Government uses the Office for National Statistics' measure of Quality-Adjusted Total Factor Productivity growth, which reviews how the level of quality adjusted outputs produced per input has changed compared to the previous year. Quality-adjusted output is measured through cost-weighted activity, where more intensive treatments are attributed more weight than lower intensive treatments. This is then quality adjusted where increased life expectancy, shorter waiting times, improved survival rates and patient reported outcomes all increase output. Inputs include both labour and non-labour inputs, where labour inputs are weighted by expected skill level.

The following table shows whether English healthcare productivity increased in each year since 2009/10.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Productivity increase/decrease</i>
2009/10	Decrease
2010/11	Increase
2011/12	Increase
2012/13	Increase
2013/14	Increase
2014/15	Increase
2015/16	Increase
2016/17	Increase
2017/18	Increase
2018/19	Decrease
2019/20	Decrease

The productivity measure usually reports 21 months following the end of the financial year. We expect data for 2020/21 to be published in January 2023.

### NHS: Strikes

*Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to the imminent industrial action by NHS workers; and what estimate they have made of the impact this will have on the current elective (1) medicine, and (2) surgery, waiting lists in England. [HL3424]

**Lord Markham:** The Department is working with NHS England on the operational planning and assurance in the event of any industrial action and with NHS Employers on national discussions with trade unions and to support employers locally. Employers and trade unions will discuss local derogations to identify which services are exempt from strike action in order to protect patient safety.

### Out of Area Treatment

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to increase patient awareness that travel and accommodation costs will be paid for by the NHS if they choose to receive treatment outside their local area. [HL3397]

**Lord Markham:** The National Health Service asks those patients offered earlier treatment at an alternative provider whether they are able to travel and discusses any issues associated with that offer. This may include covering costs associated with travel and overnight accommodation, if clinically appropriate.

### Parkinson's Disease

*Asked by Baroness Gale*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that NHS staff providing care to people with Parkinson's are given training on the importance of time-critical medication. [HL3354]

**Lord Markham:** National Health Service employers are responsible for ensuring that staff are trained and competent to carry out the duties for which they are employed, including those providing care to those with Parkinson's disease.

### Personal Independence Payment

*Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 9 November (HL2940), what plans they have to direct assessors for Personal Independence Payments to speak to more claimants directly before they make an initial decision. [HL3394]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Following the consultation with a health professional and receipt of the subsequent



functional assessment report, DWP Case Managers are trained to make outbound calls to customers, where necessary, as part of the decision-making process to clarify any gaps in evidence or further clarify customers' restrictions.

### Primary Education: Free School Meals

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to extend the provision of healthy free school meals to all primary school children. [HL3596]

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will restore the meal voucher scheme for eligible school children during future school holidays. [HL3597]

**Baroness Barran:** The department will continue to keep eligibility conditions for free school meals (FSM) under review to ensure that FSM are supporting those who most need them. In setting a threshold, the department believes that the current level, which enables children to benefit from FSM while remaining affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right one.

The latest published statistics show that around 1.9 million pupils are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. This equates to 22.5% of all pupils, up from 20.8% in 2021. Together with a further 1.25 million infants supported through the Universal Infant Free School Meal policy, 37.5% of pupils are now provided with FSM.

Over £200 million a year is being invested in the holiday activities and food programme. This programme provides healthy meals, enriching activities and free childcare places to children from low-income families, benefiting their health, wellbeing and learning through the provision of healthy free meals, nutritional education, and physical activities on a daily basis.

### Prisoners on Remand

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people in prison had been held on remand for longer than (1) six months, (2) one year, and (3) two years, on (a) 31 December 2021, and (b) up to the current date. [HL3408]

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison who have been held on remand for longer than (1) six months, (2) one year, and (3) two years, broken down by offence category. [HL3409]

**Lord Bellamy:** The number of people who had been held in prison on remand for longer than six months, one year and two years on 31 December 2021, also broken down by offence group, is provided in the attached tables.

The department's latest prison population data as part of the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly is available up to 30 September 2022 and can be found here: [Offender Management Statistics quarterly: April to June 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL3408 [2022-11-29 HL3408 Final.xlsx]

HL3409 [2022-11-29 HL3409 Final.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-15/HL3408>

### Prisoners: Higher Education

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prisoners are currently participating in higher education courses. [HL3337]

**Lord Bellamy:** The latest available figures (October 2022) show that 1435 prisoners were studying with the Open University. In addition, 50 learners were enrolled on Access to Higher Education courses, with support from the Prisoners' Education Trust.

We have recently changed the law to allow prisoners to begin apprenticeships whilst in custody, working in key industries such as hospitality and construction.

Information on the support available for prisoners wishing to undertake Higher Education is available in prison libraries.

### Public Expenditure: EU Countries

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much money the UK has paid the EU since the UK's departure from the EU; how much they paid in each year; and for what purposes. [HL3505]

**Baroness Penn:** The UK's financial relationship with the European Union is set out in the annual European Union Finances Statement (EUFS). The 2021 edition was published in July 2022 and gives a breakdown of invoices received from the EU and payments made in 2021 under the European Union Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020. The document also provides an overview of the April 2022 invoice, the last payment of which was made on 30 September 2022. A copy is available in the Library of the House and electronically on Gov.uk. Following the publication of the EUFS, the UK received the second invoice of 2022 in September. The UK was invoiced €6,396,952,144.11 to be paid over eight months from 30th October 2022. Full details of payments made in 2022 will be included in the next edition of the EUFS which will be published in 2023.



## Pupil Premium

Asked by *Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many children were eligible for Pupil Premium in (1) 2020–21, (2) 2021–22, and (3) the current academic year. [HL3570]

**Baroness Barran:** The overall pupil premium eligibility figures for each of the last three academic years are 2,161,075 in 2022/23, 2,086,736 in 2021/22, and 2,031,666 in 2020/21. Further information on the number of pupil premium eligible pupils in England, including allocations for financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>, and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2022-to-2023>.

Information in these links shows the total number of pupil premium eligible pupils broken down by the different strands of eligibility. The total number of pupil premium eligible pupils can specifically be found in the 'School Type', 'Local Authority' and 'Parliamentary Constituency' sheets of the relevant allocations file.

## Radon Gas: Health Hazards

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to analyse the risk of radon gas build-up in homes arising from the installation of insulation and other retrofit products approved by Government. [HL3315]

**Lord Markham:** Indoor radon concentration is a complex combination of factors, including underlying geology, building structure and settlement, usage, occupancy, indoor versus outdoor air temperature, ventilation, air pressure, wind speed and outdoor radon concentration. Radon concentration cannot be predicted; only the probability that a property in a particular location will have a radon level above the 'Action Level' threshold.

In 2019, the former Public Health England co-authored a paper through the Complex Urban Systems for Sustainability and Health project, which analyses the effect of energy efficiency measures on radon levels in homes. This analysis suggested that energy efficiency measures in homes should be reviewed to account for the potential for increased radon exposure as a result of air tightening and especially in high radon areas. A copy of the analysis is attached.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is continuing research on radon levels, including indoor air quality. On 3 November 2022, the UKHSA held an annual forum for stakeholders during Radon Awareness

week, including discussions on the effect of energy efficiency and sustainability on indoor radon concentrations.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

CUSSH Radon and Energy Efficiency [CUSSH Radon and energy efficiency.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-09/HL3315>

## Rheumatology: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 November (HL2833), what plans they have to update the service specification for specialised rheumatology services. [HL3427]

**Lord Markham:** A review of the service specification for specialised rheumatology services is included on the work programme for the internal medicine programme of care, one of six national programmes of care overseeing the commissioning of specialised and highly specialised services. Preliminary work has been undertaken and the revision is expected to be completed by spring 2023.

Asked by *Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 November (HL2834), what process they use to assess compliance with the specialised rheumatology service specification, including the requirement for clinical psychologists to be provided as a core component of a multi-disciplinary team. [HL3431]

**Lord Markham:** NHS England does not specifically assess compliance with the national service specification. However, regional commissioning teams work with providers to regularly review provision.

## Saltmarshes: Conservation

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to strengthen the protection and restoration of saltmarsh habitats. [HL3365]

**Lord Benyon:** HM Government has a clear, long-standing ambition to implement measures that protect the marine environment, both internationally and domestically. England already has 40% of its waters in Marine Protected Areas, covering the majority of saltmarsh habitats. Our focus is now on ensuring these are effectively protected.

The Environment Agency's (EA) Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRe) initiative is working to restore our estuarine and coastal habitats to benefit people and nature. The EA's restoration handbooks are a key tool to support restoration of coastal blue carbon habitats in

the UK and beyond. They offer clear practical guidance on restoration best practice, including for saltmarshes, and were produced through collaboration between Government bodies, NGOs and academics. They provide a tool to support local authorities, community partnerships and environmental organisations to restore blue carbon habitats.

Natural England and the EA are also producing a national database/inventory of opportunities for restoration of coastal habitats including saltmarsh. This will signpost developers seeking to fulfil obligations under the planning system.

We are supporting direct investment into saltmarsh restoration through our £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which is supporting nature recovery projects across England. Through our Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund, we are supporting three projects with almost £300k of grants to measure and verify the carbon storage potential in saltmarsh habitats, which will help leverage private investment into these important habitats.

The public consultation on the next round of Flood Risk Management Plans (2021-2027) closed earlier this year. The proposed plans include provision for natural flood management approaches which will protect saltmarsh and also protect communities.

### **Saltmarshes: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to monitor, understand and analyse saltmarsh habitats, including the risks to present emissions and wider ecosystem value. [HL3364]

**Lord Benyon:** Nature-based solutions, including blue carbon habitats such as saltmarshes, have an important role to play in preventing biodiversity loss and supporting adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside their carbon sequestration benefits. Through the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership, Defra is working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the other UK Administrations to address key research questions relating to blue carbon.

In April 2022, HM Government launched its £140 million Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme, a flagship three-year R&D programme, spanning England's land, coast and sea. The programme includes mapping of blue carbon stock and sequestration rates in important coastal environments such as saltmarsh habitats, alongside wider ecosystem services which provide societal, ecological and economic benefit. This work will be used to inform marine planning and development decisions.

In the programme's proof-of-concept year, the Environment Agency (alongside its ongoing role monitoring saltmarsh extent and change), mapped areas within saltmarshes with different capacities to capture and store carbon, bringing the national saltmarsh zonation

map up to 96.5% coverage of England's total saltmarsh habitat.

In addition, Natural England monitors, and assesses the condition of, saltmarsh within sites of special scientific interest.

We are also improving understanding of the impact of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems. The Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP) synthesises the latest research and evidence on climate change impacts and predicted trends affecting those ecosystems. Established in 2005, MCCIP engages with a wide range of scientific authors and reviewers to produce updates on the evidence base.

### **Somalia: Famine**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the light of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report Somalia: Famine Review of the IPC Analysis, published on 5 September, which found that "the world has a narrow window of opportunity to act in order to prevent what could otherwise become a full-fledged famine in a few months", what steps they have taken, together with international partners, (1) to increase funding, and (2) to ensure safe access, for humanitarian aid providers in the (a) Baidoa, and (b) Burhakaba, regions of Somalia. [HL3498]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK is playing a leading role in Somalia to build strategic partnerships to channel additional funding for the famine response. On 21 September, the former Minister for Development announced a £22.8 million package of assistance for Somalia to alleviate the impact of drought and address the risk of famine, which included support for both UN and Non-Governmental Organisations delivering food, nutrition, health and water assistance for populations in Baidoa and Burhaba in South West State. Linked to that announcement, on 21 November, the Minister for Development signed a new match funding arrangement with Saudi Arabia of £1.7 million to deliver emergency food assistance through the World Food Programme.

FCDO officials met South West State officials both bilaterally and together with other international humanitarian donors since the release of the latest famine risk assessment data in September. We continue to raise the importance of safe and principled humanitarian access.

### **Tigray: Peace Negotiations**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to consolidate the recent ceasefire agreement in Tigray; and whether these include (1) the delineation of the boundaries in the region, (2) the movement of

armed forces, and (3) other verification measures. [HL3357]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We welcome the recent agreement between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Under the terms of the agreement, the African Union will chair a monitoring committee comprising of representatives from the Ethiopian Government, the TPLF, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). They will be assisted by a team of African experts. The agreement calls upon international partners to support the agreement, help rebuild infrastructure, and support economic recovery. However, it is clear that this must be an African-led mechanism. The UK is ready to provide support as requested and is exploring with the Ethiopian Government and African Union.

### Transport: Isles of Scilly and Isle of Wight

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) foot passengers, (2) cars, (3) freight vehicles, and (4) coaches, were carried on each of the (a) surface, or (b) air services, between the Isles of Wight and the mainland for each of the last five years. [HL3683]

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many foot passengers were carried on the surface mode services between the Isles of Scilly and the mainland for each of the last five years. [HL3684]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Data on the number of UK domestic sea passengers by route is published annually in table SPAS0201. Data on passengers between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is shown in the table below for the last five years available. Data on the route between Penzance and the Isles of Scilly is not published separately and is included in the "other domestic sea crossings" category. These statistics include all vehicle drivers, their passengers and foot passengers on ferries.

Number of passengers (thousands)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hampshire to/from Isle of Wight	8,770	8,667	8,660	4,452	5,835
Other domestic sea crossings (including to/from Isles of Scilly)	183	234	132	48	162

The Department does not hold data on vehicles carried by ferry services on these routes. The ports on the Isles of Scilly and Isle of Wight are classified as minor ports in

DfT Port Freight Statistics as they handle less than a million tonnes of cargo annually, therefore only total tonnage is collected from the ports to reduce the burden on smaller ports and companies in the UK. The Department does not hold data on the number of air passengers carried between the Isle of Wight and the UK mainland.

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 November (HL2956), whether they will now provide up-to-date figures on the total number of migrants calculated to have reached the UK by boat from France for each of the last three months, broken down by (1) the estimated number of those of Albanian origin, and (2) the number of those of Albanian origin who are single men. [HL3334]

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 November (HL2956), at what speed the process of identifying country of origin for individuals who have reached the UK by boat from France is being completed. [HL3335]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office have previously answered a very similar question in UIN HL2956 on 9 November 2022.

Data on small boat arrivals up to the end of September 2022 will be published on 24th November at Gov.UK in the 'Irregular migration to the UK statistics' quarterly report.

Further information on small boat crossings, with a focus on Albanian nationals, is available in a recently published one-off factsheet at Gov.UK, titled 'Small boat crossings since July 2022.'

### Visas: English Language

*Asked by Lord Johnson of Marylebone*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discretion higher education institutions have to accept evidence of English language ability other than by reference to the result of an approved Secure English Language Test, for the purpose of Student Route visa applications. [HL3358]

*Asked by Lord Johnson of Marylebone*

To ask His Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that applicants have English language skills at the level of proficiency required for courses when higher education providers have discretion to assess English language ability other than by reference to the result of a Secure English Language Test. [HL3361]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** An application for entry clearance to the UK or permission to stay as a student must show the student meets the English language requirement as specified in Appendix English Language of the Immigration Rules.

There is a degree of flexibility for sponsors that are Higher Education Providers (HEP) with a track record of compliance to self-assess the English proficiency of their students studying at degree level or above. The HEP choose their own method to assess the English ability of such students. Where they do so, they must state on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) the method which they have used, including, where relevant, the applicant's English language test scores in all four components (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

Additional discretion is available to such sponsors via their ability to waive the English language requirement if the student is studying at degree level and the sponsor considers the student to be gifted. This must only be done if English language proficiency is not integral to the course of study and a pre-sessional course would be inappropriate. If a sponsor wants to waive the English language requirement for a gifted student, their academic registrar, or the institution's equivalent, must approve this waiver. The CAS must state that the student is gifted, as well as including an explanation of why this is the case and the name and contact details of the academic registrar or equivalent.

*Asked by Lord Johnson of Marylebone*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the applicants from non-English speaking countries for the Student Route visa in the last three years have taken a Secure English Language Test to prove that their English language skills are at the level required for higher education courses considered below degree level; and how many applicants did so with (1) IELTS SELT Consortium, (2) LanguageCert, (3) Pearson, (4) Trinity College London, and (5) PSI Services (UK) Ltd. [HL3359]

*Asked by Lord Johnson of Marylebone*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the applicants for the Student Route visa in the last three

years have taken a Secure English Language Test to prove that their English language skills are at the level required for courses at National Qualifications Framework level 6 or above; and how many applicants did so with (1) IELTS SELT Consortium, (2) LanguageCert, (3) Pearson, (4) Trinity College London, and (5) PSI Services (UK) Ltd. [HL3360]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office does not routinely publish data on the number of applicants for the Student Route visa who have used a Secure English Language Test to evidence their English language skills.

## West Coast Main Line

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that there is a direct Holyhead to Euston rail link. [HL3380]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Avanti West Coast is currently operating a reduced timetable due to staff shortages. From 12 December Avanti plans to reinstate direct services between London and Holyhead in each direction.

## Youth Mobility Scheme

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the Youth Mobility Scheme to allow applicants from EU countries. [HL3366]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** We remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) arrangements with other countries and territories including EU Member States. However, each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement and, we are unable to disclose the status of negotiations as they occur. Further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

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