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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<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
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<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
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# Written Statements

Tuesday, 29 November 2022

## Defence Equipment Plan

[HLWS383]

**Baroness Goldie:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to place in the Library of the House a copy of the 2022 Defence Equipment Plan report, which details the Department's spending plans in equipment procurement and support projects over a period of 10 years.

This year's Equipment Plan report comes at a pivotal point in time as the Ministry of Defence has become increasingly in the spotlight over the last year in the wake of Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The uplift received from the 2020 Spending Review meant we were able to rectify an existing deficit and produce an affordable Equipment Plan. We have retained this affordable position for the 2022 Plan and continue to hold a contingency to mitigate against emerging financial pressures.

Since the publication of the last report the Department has made significant improvements in the process and production of the Equipment Plan. We have revised guidance to improve realism judgments, strengthened our assessment of affordability and ensured closer engagement between Top Level Budget holders and Head Office to mitigate finance and capability risks.

The recent Autumn Statement has recognised the need to increase Defence spending, and we look forward to the outcomes of this once the Integrated Review is refreshed. For now, however, we are assured that the spending decisions we have set out remain in line with Departmental priorities.

The Plan is not immune to risk, we have set ambitious savings targets and made hard decisions in spending priorities across the Commands. The Defence landscape has shifted, and we must and will remain agile to those emerging threats. We are entering a new age of warfare and will face pressure from the rising levels of inflation; the Department however remains confident in the resilience of our spending decisions despite now living in a more volatile environment.

## Energy Security

[HLWS384]

**Lord Callanan:** My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has today made the following statement:

It will not be news to the Hon. Members that in the past year, Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine has sent energy prices soaring.

Without this Government's support, it would have sent thermostats sinking this winter, too. We have taken decisive action to keep homes, businesses, hospitals, and schools warm this winter. But if we are to avoid foisting this crisis onto future generations, we must think about the years to come, too.

This government is investing now in a long-term plan, deploying transformative technologies to secure a cheaper, cleaner, reliable supply of energy for Britain and laying firm foundations for growth.

We're one of the biggest economies in the world, but for far too long our energy dependency has threatened to make us vulnerable, when the price of our energy is dictated by the whims of international energy markets.

To put a stop to this situation, we're securing our energy sovereignty.

We're building an energy system fit for the future, by delivering low-carbon energy and greater energy efficiency. We will continue working with our allies, whilst reducing the impact of international energy markets on our energy system.

By developing our world-leading renewables and investing in new nuclear, we will generate home-grown British energy for British families and businesses, boosting British jobs and British growth even as we transition to Net Zero.

Energy sovereignty is within our grasp. Clean, affordable energy for households and businesses is not a pipe dream, but a project we have now embarked on. Today I am setting out the steps we're taking on our path to energy freedom, delivering opportunity, security, and prosperity for all.

### *I. Investing in nuclear power*

Nuclear power will be at the core of our three-fold mission: to secure our energy supply; supercharge growth; and cut our carbon emissions. Today, it was announced that we have delivered on our commitments in the Autumn Statement, and that the Government will progress Sizewell C.

Our investment, the first made directly by a Government in nuclear power for thirty years, will drive forward the project's development, and confirm the Government as a project shareholder. Next year, the Government, EDF, and the project company will work together to raise private capital under our new Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model for nuclear.

This is a truly significant moment, and our biggest step so far towards increasing our energy independence. Sizewell C will create 10,000 highly skilled jobs for the area and provide cleaner, cheaper, low-carbon electricity for the equivalent of 6 million homes for over 50 years.

### *II. Great British Nuclear*

We remain committed to developing a pipeline of new nuclear projects beyond Sizewell C, where these offer clear value for money for taxpayers and consumers. We have been working at pace on the scoping and set up of Great British Nuclear (GBN), with the support of

industry, and we will make an announcement on the set up of GBN early in the new year.

GBN will be tasked with helping projects through every stage of the development process and developing a resilient pipeline of new builds. We will back it with funding to support projects to get investment ready and through the construction phase, while recognising the challenging fiscal environment outlined by the Chancellor at the Autumn Statement.

GBN will enable the delivery of clean, safe electricity over the decades to come, protecting future generations from the high prices of global fossil fuel markets.

### *III. Boosting energy efficiency*

We must do all we can to boost energy generation, but we can also make sure that none of us uses more than we need.

The days of wasting energy are over. Boosting energy efficiency with warmer homes and buildings is key to bringing down bills and boosting jobs along the way with green growth.

We're aiming high, with a target to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030. And we're providing the money to get there, with a new £6 billion investment from 2025 to 2028 that comes on top of the £6.6 billion we are already spending over this parliament.

Installing insulation in hundreds of thousands of homes across the country will save consumers around £310 a year through our ECO+ scheme – making our energy system more resilient and secure by slashing energy demand.

We recently launched a consultation so that we can make sure that the right support gets to the right people in the right way.

The Government has stepped in with an unprecedented package of support for households this winter, but there is more that households can do to help meet our energy demand reduction target and save money on their bills.

The Government is expanding its public awareness campaign to help reduce bills for all households and protect the most vulnerable over this winter and beyond.

Backed by £18 million, this campaign will complement existing government support schemes. It will use public messaging to help consumers understand how they can reduce their own household usage and bills through making their homes more energy efficient for this winter and next. Moreover, it will provide vulnerable groups with the information they need to reduce energy usage without harming their health.

This information will also be available on the existing Help for Households website.

### *IV. Legislating to drive investment and to secure our energy future*

We've put the legislative vehicle to power up this long-term plan, the Energy Security Bill, back on track; it will be taken forward this Parliament.

The Bill will liberate private investment, driving jobs and growth in every corner of the country. Importantly, it will help to transform our energy industry by firing up the nascent CCUS and Hydrogen industries, in which we already have a head start with pioneering projects from the Humber to the Mersey.

The Bill will encourage competition in the energy sector, enabling the economy to grow and flourish by creating opportunity, prosperity, and security with clean jobs, new skills, and cheaper bills.

## **Funding for Woodlands and Timber Industry**

[HLWS386]

**Lord Benyon:** My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Dr Thérèse Coffey) has made the following Statement:

Today we announced £20 million of funding to improve tree planting stocks, woodland resilience, domestic timber production and to accelerate tree planting across England.

£10 million has been awarded through the Woodlands into Management Innovation Funds and the Tree Production Innovation Fund to support projects that explore new technologies and business models to improve tree planting stocks and woodland resilience.

In addition, 57 local authorities have been awarded nearly £10 million to accelerate tree planting.

These initiatives will see hundreds of thousands of trees planted in communities across England. They represent another step forward in the Government's drive to treble tree planting rates across England by the end of this Parliament.

The Local Authority Treescapes Fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund will reopen for new applications early in 2023.

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Total Grant £</i>
Oxfordshire County Council	150,000
Lancashire County Council	300,000
Tees Valley Combined Authority	299,996
Nottinghamshire County Council	149,845
Kent County Council	299,642
West of England Combined Aut.	299,738
Rotherham Metropolitan BC	107,000
North Yorkshire County Council	150,000
City of York Council	149,800
Warwickshire County Council	150,000
City of Trees	299,880
Gateshead Council	147,886
Wakefield Metropolitan DC	147,921
Gloucestershire County Council	149,853

Lambeth Council	142,024
London Borough of Enfield	144,042
London Borough of Hillingdon	148,712
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	103,153
City of Bradford Metropolitan DC	150,000
Portsmouth City Council	147,116
Calderdale Borough Council	55,332
Devon County Council	298,476
Lincolnshire County Council	283,387
Doncaster Council	138,108
Shropshire Council	149,618
Hertfordshire County Council	148,500
Halton Borough Council	148,402
Knowsley Metropolitan BC	150,000
Newcastle City Council	290,000
Buckinghamshire Council	144,778
North Somerset Council	150,000
Kirklees Council	80,524
Worcestershire CC	149,708
North Lincolnshire Council	149,932
Surrey County Council	150,000
London Borough of Islington	146,411
Haringey Council	88,296
Somerset County Council	296,948
Sheffield City Council	147,520
Leicestershire County Council	149,577
London Borough of Barnett	100,000
Walsall Council	149,624
Cheshire West & Chester Council	144,520
Royal Borough of Greenwich	135,488
Wirral Council	85,274
Hampshire County Council	150,000
Norfolk County Council	148,225
Leeds City Council	125,176
Central Bedfordshire	140,028
Solihull MBC	149,215
Wiltshire Council	294,800
Bedford Borough Council	150,000
Cambridgeshire County Council	300,000
St Helens Council	149,000
North Northamptonshire	150,000
City of London Corporation	88,292
Peterborough City Council	149,809

## Further Education

[HLWS382]

**Baroness Barran:** My Right Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (Robert Halfon), has made the following statement:

Today the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published their decision to reclassify the further education sector and their subsidiaries as part of the central government sector.

The ONS is an agency independent of ministers, and periodically reviews the classification of all sectors of the economy for the purposes of National Accounts. More information on classification and how the ONS has reached this decision is available on their [website](#).

This means the statutory further education sector (FE) (FE colleges, sixth form colleges and designated institutions) and their subsidiaries are treated from today 29 November 2022 for financial and accounting purposes as part of the central government sector, with my department as the principal department responsible for ensuring the sector complies with financial and accounting rules. In practice, this means that colleges are now subject to the framework for financial management set out in the Parliamentary document [managing public money](#), guidance on senior pay and other relevant central government guidance.

The mission of colleges, to continue to fulfil their role at the heart of their communities, working in partnership with employers, local governments, and other providers to meet the needs of learners and the labour market has never been more important. The decision to reclassify the FE sector will not alter these strategic aims. Colleges will continue to play a leadership role in England's skills system. My officials will work to make sure that they provide the world-leading skills infrastructure that our country needs whilst adequately demonstrating that we are managing public money well.

My officials said at the start of the review that we wanted to ensure that if colleges were reclassified, it happened in as seamless a way as possible, maintaining continuity and stability for the sector where possible. We have taken the time to get these changes right; to give colleges the support that they need as the transition takes place; and to explore the ways that colleges, learners, employers, and communities might all make the most of this change. Colleges will retain many of the flexibilities they currently have and day to day operations will continue with minimal changes, so colleges can maintain a smooth delivery.

With that in mind, my officials are publishing the government's response to this reclassification decision today, which sets out how my department will continue to support colleges following the ONS's decision.

To support and protect colleges, we'll be:

- investing £300 million of payments before the end of the current financial year to eliminate the current deficit

in funding experienced by March and move to a profile of funding which better matches need, recognising the challenging environment the sector faces;

- providing an additional £150 million of capital grant funding in 2023 to 2024 to support and protect colleges planning to invest in their infrastructure/estate where previously they would have borrowed from commercial lenders;
- allowing colleges to retain flexibility on using surpluses and sale of assets ensuring that colleges can continue to invest in their estates, while complying with the managing public money framework; and
- working in partnership with the sector to develop the future approach to financial reporting, and a new college handbook.

This means that how colleges report to and interact with government will change. Colleges will be required to ensure their systems of financial control support public sector standards of accountability.

Managing public money is clear that public sector organisations may borrow from private sector sources only if the transaction delivers better value for money for the Exchequer. Because non-government lenders face higher financing costs, in practice it is very unlikely that central government bodies (now including colleges) will be able to satisfy this condition for future private sector borrowing. If colleges have any proposals for new private sector borrowing, they will now need DfE approval (we'll update college learner grant agreements to include this as a condition of funding).

In recognition of the limitation on private sector borrowing that reclassification as part of central government imposes, and in response to feedback from the FE sector and stakeholder groups, I am pleased to confirm that my department will be investing an additional £150m of capital funding in further education and sixth form colleges. This change means that although colleges will have only very limited access to private finance, they will benefit from additional grant funding to improve the condition of the college estate. From the research we have done with colleges, I understand this is one of the main reasons that colleges currently seek private finance, and so I hope it will be welcomed by the FE sector.

Furthermore, to help colleges manage their cashflow, my department will address the historical issue of uneven monthly payments from central government, which leave colleges out of pocket by March each year. My department will invest £300 million in bringing forward payments into this financial year to enable us to smooth out the funding, so we have a new even profile for colleges from 2023 to 2024 for both the 16 to 19 and adult education budgets.

I can also confirm that colleges will retain the flexibility to carry over surpluses from one year to the next and to keep and spend the proceeds from the sale of assets, subject to certain conditions and this will be kept under review.

Many colleges have subsidiaries, some of which are profit making entities with commercial operations. Subsidiaries play an important role in the college system, both in delivering provision and generating commercial income. Colleges will also retain the ability to operate their trading subsidiaries, which the ONS has reclassified to the central government sector.

Regarding financial reporting, colleges will continue to produce their own annual report and accounts as normal for the year ended 31 July 2023. The Department will eventually be required to consolidate the accounts for all FE colleges into one. This means we will require additional information from colleges. We will be working with the sector to ensure that the impact of this request is manageable.

My officials will begin work to write a new College Financial Handbook and engage with representatives from the sector from the outset, with a view to sharing in draft with colleges and sector bodies in Autumn 2023 for consultation so that they are clear what is expected of them and build their understanding and support. In parallel, my officials will set up the necessary processes and data collection systems to operationalise the new MPM requirements. The handbook will be finalised for publication in March 2024, ahead of an effective date of August 2024 to coincide with the start of the financial year.

The changes will be explained in more detail in a letter from the Accounting Officer of the Education and Skills Funding Agency to all college financial directors and will be followed by further guidance to help colleges comply with the managing public money framework and other central government guidance as quickly as possible.

I am also writing today to college principals to explain the changes that need to be made and to thank them for the important role they will play in the public sector.

We have taken the opportunity of reclassification to strengthen our arrangements for, and invest more in, this hugely important sector, which is now more obviously than ever a vital part of the government's skills agenda for the future.

The government's response ensures we use this opportunity to continue to support colleges to do what they do best, whilst balancing this against the need to adequately demonstrate that we are managing public money well.

## Online Safety Bill

[HLWS385]

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

The Online Safety Bill is a vital, world-leading piece of legislation, designed to ensure that tech companies take more responsibility for the safety of their users,

particularly children. It is also vital that people can continue to express themselves freely and engage in pluralistic debate online. For that reason, I am today committing to make a number of changes to the Online Safety Bill to strengthen its provisions relating to children, and to ensure the Bill's protections for adults strike the right balance with its protections for free speech.

Since taking up the role of DCMS Secretary of State I have engaged extensively with colleagues to hear views on this legislation. We have heard concerns from many parliamentarians, stakeholders and members of the public on a number of issues, including a desire to go further on child protections, wanting better protections for legal speech and a concern that too much power over what we see and engage with online rests with tech giants themselves. Making progress on these important concerns did not, in my view, need to come at the expense of one another. I therefore set out a clear approach with three main aims:

- i) Strengthen the protections for children in the Bill.
- ii) Ensure that adults' right to legal free speech is protected.
- iii) Create a genuine system of transparency, accountability and control to give the British public more choice and power over their own accounts and experience.

We can say with confidence that all three aims have been achieved with the amendments the government is putting forward. We will go further to strengthen the elements of the Bill that specifically protect children online. At the same time, we will remove the clauses pertaining to 'legal but harmful' content for adults and replace them with a 'Triple Shield' that empowers users and ensures that control over the online experience rests with individuals rather than anonymous committees in Silicon Valley.

#### *Protections for Children*

The Bill's key objective, above everything else, is the safety of young people online. Not only will we preserve the existing protections, I will table a number of amendments that go further to strengthen the existing protections for children in the Bill to:

- make clearer the existing expectations of platforms in understanding the age of their users and, where platforms specify a minimum age for users, require them to clearly explain in their terms of service the measures they use to enforce this and if they fail to adhere to these measures, Ofcom will be able to act. I will table these amendments in the Commons;
- require the largest platforms to publish summaries of their risk assessments for illegal content and material that is harmful to children, to allow users and empower parents to clearly understand the risks presented by these services and the approach platforms are taking to children's safety; and
- name the Children's Commissioner as a statutory consultee for Ofcom in its development of the codes of

practice to ensure that the measures relating to children are robust and reflect the concerns of parents.

The government will table the remaining amendments in the Lords.

#### *Legal Free Speech*

A large number of colleagues, stakeholders and members of the public have been particularly concerned about provisions that would result in the over-removal of legitimate legal content by creating a new category of 'legal but harmful' speech. However admirable the goal, I do not believe that it is morally right to censor speech online that is legal to say in person.

I will therefore table a number of amendments in the Commons to remove 'legal but harmful' from the Bill in relation to adults, and replace it with a fairer, simpler and we believe more effective mechanism called the Triple Shield, which will focus on user choice, consumer rights and accountability whilst protecting freedom of expression. We are taking the same approach when assessing the proposed new harmful communications offence, which when applied could potentially have criminalised legitimate discussion of some topics. I have therefore tabled amendments for the second day of Report stage to remove the harmful communications offence from the Bill.

To retain protections for victims of abusive communications, including victims of domestic abuse, we will continue progressing new offences for false and threatening communications. Furthermore, the Bill will no longer repeal the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and relevant sections of the Communications Act 2003. To avoid duplication in legislation, the Government will remove elements of the offences in these Acts which criminalise false and threatening communications.

#### *Protection for Adults: The Triple Shield*

It is unquestionable that speech that is illegal in the street should also be illegal online, and that major platforms should remove illegal content from their sites. While most platforms, including social media sites, have robust terms of service detailing the types of content they do or do not allow, anyone who uses these platforms regularly will know that there is a widespread failure of companies to enforce their own terms of service and platforms can often treat some sections of society differently. Lastly, I believe that rather than censoring adults, the government should be standing up for free speech and choice by empowering people.

Together, these three common sense principles form the basis of the Triple Shield, a comprehensive set of tools to protect and empower adults. Under this system, three important rules apply:

- i) **Illegal:** Content that is illegal should be removed. The Bill includes a number of priority offences, and companies must proactively prevent users from encountering this content. The Bill includes the relevant offences for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Companies will also have to remove

other relevant illegal content, when they become aware of it.

ii) Terms of service: Legal content that a platform prohibits in its own terms of service should be removed, and legal content that a platform allows in its terms of service should not be removed.

iii) User empowerment: Rather than tech giants' algorithms alone deciding what users engage with, users themselves should have the option to decide. Adults should be empowered to choose whether or not to engage with legal forms of abuse and hatred if the platform they are using allows such content. So the 'Third Shield' puts a duty on platforms to provide their users with the functionality to control their exposure to unsolicited content that falls into this category. These functions will, under no circumstances, limit discussion, robust debate or support groups' ability to speak about any of these issues freely.

The user empowerment tools will allow adults to reduce the likelihood that they will see certain categories of content if they so choose. The duty will specify legal content related to suicide, content promoting self-harm and eating disorders, and content that is abusive or incites hate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation. This is a targeted approach that reflects areas where we know adult users, in particular vulnerable users, would benefit from having greater choice over how they interact with these kinds of content. For the first time, tech giants will be required to give individual adults genuine control over their own accounts and online experience. I will table amendments relating to these provisions in the Commons.

This will be done while upholding users' rights to free expression and ensuring that legitimate debate online will not be affected by these stronger duties. There are high thresholds for inclusion in these content categories, which will exclude discussions about these broad topics - even where that could be controversial or challenging - but where it does not become abusive. Nothing in this duty will require companies to remove or take down legal content. This will also be made clear through the Bill's Explanatory Notes.

Category 1 services will still need to give users the option to verify themselves and choose not to interact with unverified users. This duty will remain unchanged, and again reinforces this government's commitment to ensuring users have genuine choice over their online experience.

These changes will ensure the Bill protects free speech whilst holding social media companies to account for their promises to users, guaranteeing that users will be able to make informed choices about the services they use and the interactions they have on those sites.

#### *Accountability and further measures*

*Publication of enforcement notices:* The regulator, Ofcom, will hold companies to account if they fail to comply with the requirements in the Bill by issuing fines

or notifications requiring them to take steps to remedy compliance failures. To further strengthen transparency for users, we will give Ofcom the power to require services to publish the details of any enforcement notifications, including notices requiring them to remedy breaches, that they receive. I have now tabled these amendments in the Commons.

*Self-harm:* I am aware of particular concerns around content online which encourages vulnerable people to self-harm. While the child safety duties in the Bill will protect children, vulnerable adults may remain at risk of exposure to this abhorrent content. I am therefore committing to making the encouragement of self-harm illegal. The government will bring forward in this Bill proposals to create an offence of sending a communication that encourages serious self-harm via an amendment in the House of Lords. This new offence will ensure that trolls sending such messages to a person, regardless of the recipient's age, face the consequences for their vile actions.

*Tackling violence against women and girls:* It is unacceptable that women and girls suffer disproportionately from abuse online and it is right that we address this through the Online Safety Bill. Therefore, extensive work has been undertaken, including with Home Office colleagues, to understand how we can further protect women and girls through the Online Safety Bill, including to:

- List Controlling or Coercive behaviour as a priority offence. This is an offence that disproportionately impacts women and girls - listing this as a priority offence means companies will have to take proactive measures to tackle this content, therefore strengthening the protections for women and girls under the Bill.
- Name the Victims' Commissioner and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as Statutory Consultees for the codes of practice, to ensure that they are consulted by Ofcom ahead of drafting and amending the codes of practice.

These changes will be made to the Bill in the House of Lords.

As announced last week by the Deputy Prime Minister, we are also going to take forward reforms to the criminal law on the abuse of intimate images. Building on the campaign of Dame Maria Miller MP, as well as recommendations from the Law Commission, we will criminalise the sharing of people's intimate images without their consent. This, in combination with the measures already in the Bill to make cyberflashing a criminal offence, will significantly strengthen protections for women in particular as they are disproportionately affected by these activities. The government will table these amendments in the Lords. Separate to the Online Safety Bill, the Government will also bring forward a package of additional laws to tackle a range of abusive behaviour including the installation of equipment, such as hidden cameras, to take or record images of someone without their consent.

*Epilepsy Trolling:* I have tabled amendments for the second day of Report Stage to legislate for a new flashing images offence. I would like to pay tribute to the passionate campaigning that has been done on this issue, both by the Epilepsy Society, and parliamentarians from across both Houses to help the Government ensure that this appalling behaviour is tackled and that we fulfil the Government's previous commitment to legislate to protect victims from epilepsy trolling. We have also made a number of other technical changes to clarify existing policy positions, further details of which can be found in the amendment paper.

To ensure the proposed changes go through proper scrutiny, we intend to return a number of clauses back to a Public Bill Committee for consideration. These are issues that are of fundamental importance to the regime, and to members of this House, such as freedom of expression, user empowerment, and age assurance, and it would not be right to proceed with these changes without detailed scrutiny in the House of Commons. We intend to make further changes, as set out above, in the House of Lords, however the timing of these amendments will depend on parliamentary scheduling.

### **Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil Case: Independent Review**

[HLWS387]

**Lord Stewart of Dirleton:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Attorney General for England and Wales (Victoria Prentis MP), has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Following the Court of Appeal's judgment in the Unaoil case (*R. v Akle & Anor*) in December 2021, the then Attorney General, the Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, commissioned Sir David Calvert-Smith to conduct an independent review into the Serious Fraud Office's (SFO) handling of the case.

On 21 July 2022, in a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS), the then Attorney General provided Parliament with the findings of Sir David's review and a response to his recommendations. This also included a commitment to update Parliament on progress in delivering these recommendations in both November 2022 and February 2023. This WMS provides the first of these updates.

Sir David's review made eleven recommendations, which were accepted. These cover a range of matters, including record keeping and case assurance, compliance with policies, and resourcing. While many of the changes recommended by Sir David can be — and have been — made quickly, it will necessarily take longer to fully embed his recommendations and assess the effectiveness of changes made.

Within this context, I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in delivering Sir David's recommendations. For nine of the eleven recommendations, the SFO has already implemented specific measures or steps to ensure their effective delivery. For the two remaining recommendations, work has commenced to make changes in response to Sir David's proposals.

A detailed update on progress will be published on GOV.UK today and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

I would also like to take this opportunity to notify Parliament of a change to the timing of the second update on Sir David's recommendations. This was originally planned for February 2023 but will now be provided by no later than May 2023. This is to allow the findings of an inspection of the SFO by His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate to be considered as part of the update. The inspection, a report of which will be published in April 2023, is examining case progression in the SFO with reference to relevant findings in Sir David's review.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 29 November 2022

## Abuse: Older People

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of people aged over 65 who were victims of (1) physical, (2) psychological, and (2) sexual, abuse for the most recent year for which figures are available. [HL3614]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Noble Lord's Parliamentary Question: HL3614 is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Victims of Abuse [UKSA\_Response\_to\_PQHL3614 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-21/HL3614>

## Asylum: Children

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the practice of placing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in hotels, with little or no supervision. [HL3420]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The UK is experiencing an unprecedented increase in the number of people making life-threatening journeys to cross the Channel. These boats are often carrying unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Out of necessity and with the children's best interests in mind, we have arranged for them to be accommodated on an emergency and temporary basis in hotels whilst placements with local authorities are being vigorously pursued. These emergency interim hotels only accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children accommodated temporarily in these hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported with wrap-around care 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.

## British Indian Ocean Territory: Ilois

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Statement by the Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 3

November (HCWS354), what steps they are taking to take account of the views of the Chagossian communities, including those based in the UK, with regard to issues relating to the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago and their descendants. [HL3285]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK and Mauritius have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. We know there are a wide range of views among Chagossian communities about the future of the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago and will ensure we have conversations with communities.

## Cars: Lighting

Asked by *Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to creating new regulations on car headlight glare, in the light of the number of drivers reporting problems with dazzling, particularly from LEDs. [HL3598]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Regulations are already in place to help prevent headlamps, including those using LED technology, from causing dazzle and glare. Vehicle manufacturers must supply evidence that their new vehicles comply with international road vehicle approval regulations and the requirements applied to headlamps define maximum and minimum intensity, light pattern and position on the vehicle. In addition, domestic legislation prohibits the use of headlamps that cause undue dazzle or discomfort for other road users and headlamp aim is checked at the annual MOT test.

Police recorded collision statistics in Great Britain do not show any discernible trend over time that would suggest an underlying road safety issue linked to advances in lighting technology. The Department's officials continue to support international activity reviewing the relevant vehicle lighting standards.

## Coinage: Latin

Asked by *Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their policy on the use of Latin on the coinage. [HL3564]

**Baroness Penn:** The designs of UK coins are approved by the Chancellor as Master of the Mint, His Majesty The King and the Privy Council. This process is supported by the advice of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee, whose role is to ensure that designs meet high standards. UK coinage includes a combination of Latin and English.

## Committee of Privileges

Asked by *Lord Howard of Rising*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the legal opinion by Lord Pannick published by the Government on 2 September relating to the House of

Commons Privileges Committee, whether any supplementary opinion has been provided to the Government by Lord Pannick. [HL3546]

*Asked by Lord Howard of Rising*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the legal opinion by Lord Pannick published by the Government on 2 September relating to the House of Commons Privileges Committee, what plans they have, if any, to publish any second or supplementary opinion by Lord Pannick. [HL3547]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** Notwithstanding that in the exceptional circumstances the Government at the time determined it was in the public interest for Lord Pannick's legal opinion to be published, it remains the case that the Government does not comment on legal advice that may or may not have been sought or received. This is in line with the long-standing policy under successive administrations.

### **Cost of Living: Low Incomes**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support low income families with the increased cost of living this winter. [HL3439]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living this Winter and is taking action to support people with their energy bills. The government's Energy Price Guarantee, running from October 2022- March 2023, will save a typical British household around £900 this winter, based on what energy price would have been under the current price cap – reducing bills by roughly a third. This is in addition to the over £37bn of cost of living support announced earlier this year which includes the £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

The £37bn also includes cost of living payments worth up to £650 (paid in 2 lump sums of £326 and £324) which have targeted support at around 8 million low-income households on means-tested benefits. In addition, 6 million eligible disabled people have received a one-off disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 and pensioner households will receive a one-off payment of £300 alongside the Winter Fuel Payment from November.

For those who require additional support the current Household Support Fund, running from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, is providing £421m of funding for those most in need. The devolved administrations have been allocated £79 million through the Barnett formula.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement the Government has announced £26bn in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable. In 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Cost of Living Payments. A £300 payment will be made to pensioner households and

individuals in receipt of eligible disability benefits will receive a £150 payment. Also included is the amended Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24 and raising the benefit cap by 10.1% in line with inflation.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

In addition, we are uprating benefits for working age households and disabled people, as well as the basic and new State Pensions, all by 10.1%. We are also increasing the National Living Wage by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour from April 2023.

### **Crime: Rural Areas**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the rising levels of crime and low conviction rates in rural areas. [HL3411]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to setting up rural crime units. [HL3412]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the conviction rate for rural crime. [HL3413]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what guidance they plan to issue to farmers to protect themselves from violent crime. [HL3415]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** The Statistical Digest of Rural England, published in August 2022 by DEFRA, states "average crime rates (police recorded crime) are lower in rural areas than urban areas". However, we recognise that some crimes are unique and specific to rural areas.

The Home Office routinely publishes information on the number of offences recorded each quarter and the investigative outcomes of crimes including charges recorded by the police in England and Wales by offence category which can be found at Gov.UK. Our manifesto committed us to use our additional police resources to tackle rural crime. As at 30 September 2022, 15,343 additional uplift officers have been recruited in England and Wales through the Police Uplift Programme, 77% of

the target of 20,000 additional officers by March 2023. The deployment of these officers, and the creation of any local rural crime unit, is an operational decision for Chief Constables. In addition, we are taking steps to address issues that we know affect rural communities. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act empowers and equips the police and courts with the powers they need to combat hare coursing. The Government is also providing funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

The Government is also committed to reducing serious violence and putting an end to the tragedies afflicting our communities. This financial year (22/23) we are investing £130 million in tackling serious violent crime, including homicide and knife crime. This includes £64m for Violence Reduction Units, and an extra £30 million to support the police in taking targeted action in parts of England and Wales most affected by serious violence.

### Developing Countries: Humanitarian Aid

*Asked by Lord Selkirk of Douglas*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding the UK has contributed to the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact since 2021. [HL3325]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact was agreed during the UK's G7 Presidency and we have provided our share of the \$7 billion in humanitarian assistance to the countries one step from famine in 2021. Globally we intend to spend UK humanitarian funding of £3 billion over the next three years. We continue to deliver on our policy commitments in the Compact. For example, in 2021 we partnered with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Germany to co-host the High-Level Event on Anticipatory Action.

### Electric Vehicles: Safety

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what information they have received from Fire and Rescue Services about the safety of (1) e-bikes, and (2) e-scooters; and the safety of the batteries of those vehicles. [HL3417]

**Lord Callanan:** All e-bikes and e-scooters must comply with product safety legislation including the batteries used to power them. The Government maintains regular contact with the Fire and Rescue Services and has discussed many issues including fire incidents relating to e-bikes and e-scooters. We encourage users to follow available guidance, including from Electrical Safety First and from the London Fire Brigade, alongside manufacturer instructions on safe use.

### Fly Tipping: Crime Prevention

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to granting additional powers to (1) the police, and (2) local authorities, to reduce fly-tipping. [HL3414]

**Lord Benyon:** Local authorities carry out enforcement activity for the vast majority of fly-tipping incidents. In recent years we have bolstered their powers by introducing fixed penalty notices of up to £400 and strengthening their powers to stop, search and seize the vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. The Environment Act 2021 will also help authorities better tackle waste crime through better access to evidence and improved powers of entry.

We have committed to raising fly-tipping penalties in our manifesto. We have published notice of our intention to commission a research project that considers the effectiveness of current enforcement practices which will inform policy development in this area.

Local authorities can also prosecute fly-tippers. In collaboration with the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG) we have recently produced a guide on how local authorities, and others, can present robust cases to court to support sentences that properly reflect the severity of fly-tipping.

The Environment Agency responds to the most serious illegal dumping incidents and has enforcement powers of its own.

### Greyhound Racing: Tax Yields

*Asked by Lord Lipsey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the estimated overall contribution of licensed greyhound racing to HM Treasury in the latest available year; and in the two years before that, what is the estimated taxation revenue received through (1) bookmakers who offer bets on greyhound racing, and (2) directly from greyhound racing. [HL3561]

**Baroness Penn:** HMRC does not hold information on the breakdown of General Betting Duty revenue by forms of betting such as greyhound racing, horseracing and football.

Revenue from General Betting Duty largely paid by bookmakers on all forms of betting was £586 million in 2019 to 2020, £595 million in 2020 to 2021 and £649 million in 2021 to 2022.

### Health and Safety: Delivery Services

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what health and safety measures fast food delivery companies are

required to put in place to ensure employees carrying out deliveries on their behalf are charging their e-scooters and bikes safely. [HL3418]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** E-bikes provided by employers for use at work are classed as work equipment and employers should provide a charging unit recommended by the manufacturer; They should assess and manage the risks from e-bikes and chargers. Employers should make sure workers have the knowledge they need to use and maintain e-bikes safely, including giving them the information they need, e.g. manufacturer's instructions, operating manuals and training courses. They should also check workers' understanding of the information provided.

Where an employer is providing charging facilities at their workplace to charge any e-bikes then they have a duty to ensure the chargers appear safe to use, facilities are suitably designed and situated, and instructions provided.

In addition, the Health and Safety Executive have published guidance on the safe use of batteries, available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg139.pdf>. The guidance includes advice to follow the battery manufacturer's instructions on charging and to always use a dedicated, well-ventilated charging area.

### Hospitals: Cambridge

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to commission the Cambridge Children's Hospital; and when they expect the hospital to become operational. [HL3599]

**Lord Markham:** In 2018, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was allocated £100 million of Wave 4 Sustainability and Transformation Partnership funding for Cambridge Children's Hospital. The Department and NHS England are working with the Trust regarding plans for the scheme, including delivery timescales.

### Hospitals: China

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the letter from Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 9 November regarding the hospital being built in Hangzhou, China, by the International Hospital Group, whether it will include organ transplantation facilities. [HL3574]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** The hospital being built in Hangzhou, China, referred to in Baroness Neville-Rolfe's correspondence of 9 November, has neither the relevant licences nor capability to perform organ transplants of any kind, and there are no plans to apply for such licences.

## Intelligence and Security Committee

*Asked by Lord Tyrrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what formal discussions they have had with (1) the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, and (2) the Committee as a whole, since June 2016. [HL3627]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** His Majesty's Government regularly engages with the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, and with the Committee as a whole. Details of formal interactions with the Government are published in the Committee's Annual Reports, which are publicly available on the Committee's website.

The Government values the work of the Committee, and understands the importance of regular engagement as part of an effective oversight relationship.

### Liver Diseases: Death

*Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of deaths from liver disease since the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3553]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Noble Lady's Parliamentary Question: HL3553 is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Liver Disease [UKSA\_Response\_to\_PQHL3553 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-18/HL3553>

### Manufacturing Industries

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reduction of 2.3 per cent in manufacturing output for the three months to September 2022 compared to the previous three months; and the impact of this reduction on economic activity. [HL3434]

**Lord Callanan:** Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the rise in global energy prices and supply chain issues have strained all corners of the UK economy including manufacturing.

Manufacturing has recovered since the pandemic with output in 2021 almost 10% above its 2019 level while many comparably sized EU member states were still below 2019 levels. While manufacturing output has since declined it remains higher than at any time before the pandemic.

The Government is committed to supporting the UK's world-class manufacturing sector and is working closely with businesses during this challenging global economic context.

### **Manufacturing Industries: Skilled Workers**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that more skilled workers are employed in the infrastructure sectors by the end of 2022. [HL3437]

**Lord Callanan:** BEIS continues to work with the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions, and representatives of the construction sector through the Construction Skills Delivery Group, which aims to drive increased investment in construction skills, including those relevant to the infrastructure sector. To date, the Group has made good progress in supporting a greater number of apprenticeship starts, encouraging pledges to transfer unspent Apprenticeship Levy funding, and to provide better information and easier routes into the industry for those seeking careers in construction.

### **NHS: Databases**

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to reports on 13 November that Shared Care Record systems will be moved into the proposed Federated Data Platform without the seeking of further patient consent, what assessment they have made of (1) the Summary Care Record system, (2) the implications for this System of the proposed moves. [HL3549]

**Lord Markham:** Shared Care Records and the Federated Data Platform will operate separately. Shared Care Records will 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 required to provide high quality, individual and integrated care.

There must be a clear, legal basis to use data held in Shared Care Records for purposes other than direct care, which includes explicit patient consent. Approval may be given under the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002, subject to advice from the Confidentiality Advisory Group of the Health Research Authority, which protects and promotes the interests of patients and the public while facilitating appropriate use of confidential patient information for purposes beyond direct patient care.

### **NHS: Protective Clothing**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 17 November (HL Deb cols 207GC to 215GC), how much

it has cost to date to store 120 million items of PPE in China. [HL3630]

**Lord Markham:** From April to September 2022, the cost of storing personal protective equipment in China was £16.3 million. We aim to further reduce this expenditure.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 17 November (HL Deb cols 207GC to 215GC), how much longer 120 million items of PPE will be stored in China; and how much they anticipate this will cost. [HL3631]

**Lord Markham:** We aim to reduce the cost of storing personal protective equipment in China and further information will be available in due course.

### **Pension Funds**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what update they can provide on the implementation of their pension funds plan for 2023. [HL3486]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Department's formal consultation on the draft Occupational Pension Schemes (Funding and Investment Strategy and Amendment) Regulations 2023 closed on 17 October 2022 and we are currently analysing responses. These Regulations will come into force in due course along with the Pension Regulator's revised Defined Benefit Funding Code of Practice.

### **Pharmacy: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Rogan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Community Pharmacy NI about funding for pharmacies in Northern Ireland. [HL3667]

**Lord Caine:** This Government has had no discussions with Community Pharmacy NI about funding for pharmacies in Northern Ireland.

The former Minister of State for Northern Ireland met a member of the Community Pharmacy NI board in December 2021 as part of a wider visit to businesses in Northern Ireland.

The Government is acutely aware of the broader pressures facing health and social care services in Northern Ireland. A programme of reform at the devolved level is needed to tackle long-standing and systemic problems. Consecutive Executive Ministers have failed adequately to address this issue.

In the absence of an Executive, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has introduced a Bill that clarifies the powers for Northern Ireland Departments to maintain delivery of public services. These powers are, however, limited. The Secretary of State has also set a Budget for

this financial year. This Budget for Health provides £7.28bn in funding which is an increase of £228m above 2021/22 spending which included significant COVID-19 funding, or £786m if we compare to last year's funding excluding the one-off COVID-19 funding. This will protect spending to address the critical health pressures in Northern Ireland.

The Government's immediate priority remains facilitating the restoration of a fully functioning Executive that can progress long-term solutions to transform healthcare in Northern Ireland. That is the best way to progress the necessary long-term solutions to healthcare.

### **Prisons: Security**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government which of His Majesty's Prisons are still operating a 23-hour per day or similar lockdown; what are the reasons for the continued use of this practice; and what plans they have, if any, to stop this practice. [HL3355]

**Lord Bellamy:** Prisons operate regimes that are Safe, Decent, Secure, Resilient and Sustainable and most prisons are routinely operating normal regimes. Prisons will from time to time have to make difficult decisions on how they deploy limited staff resources to best facilitate activities and services using their 'Regime Management Plans'. In the past 4 months, a small minority of prisons, including HMP Long Lartin and HMP Swaleside have had to significantly restrict their regimes for short periods due to staffing shortfalls. The Operations Stability and Resourcing Panel of HMPPS meets weekly to provide support to those prisons with the most acute resourcing pressures, where this is impacting the stability of the prison.

### **Public Health**

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the public health impacts, including on loneliness, lack of opportunities for physical activity and provision of services locally to where people live, of the sale of public buildings and spaces each year in England. [HL3744]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** Any decision involving the sale of public buildings will consider social cost and public value, in line with HM Treasury Green Book guidance. Property sales may form part of a wider programme. Where this is the case, the net social value will form part of the overall cost benefit analysis.

### **Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the seasonal workers' scheme. [HL3436]

**Lord Benyon:** Over recent months the Government, predominantly through the Department for Transport and Defra, has had a sustained dialogue with haulage companies and other organisations involved in the goods supply chain, as well as ministers and officials in the Devolved Administrations. This has included ministerial and industry roundtables, industry summits and tailored workshops.

Through this dialogue, we have been able to strengthen communication between government and industry and discuss issues and solutions, on a range of matters that have the potential to cause disruption to UK supply networks, especially with regard to the supply of food. This includes logistics issues at ports of entry for goods entering the UK, labour shortages across the supply chain (particularly lorry drivers), and the domestic supply of carbon dioxide.

### **Social Services: Finance**

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement on 17 November, what proportion of the £2.8bn funding increase for the social care sector will go towards supporting carer services and workers. [HL3507]

**Lord Markham:** The Government is continuing to finalise the conditions of this funding and further information will be issued to local authorities in due course.

### **Telephone Systems: Digital Technology**

*Asked by Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in ensuring that analogue telecare devices continue to work safely after the digital switchover in 2025. [HL3606]

**Lord Markham:** Following a Ministerial meeting on 7 September on the telecommunications industry led digital switchover, on 24 November we wrote to telecare service providers and telecare device manufacturers to request the results of tests undertaken and recent alarm call data history, to understand the reliability of analogue telecare devices on digital telephone lines. This was supported by the Tech Enabled Care Services Association, the Local Government Association, the Housing Learning and Improvement Network, TEC Cymru, the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government and Digital Health and Care Northern Ireland. Initial data will be analysed and will be available by early February 2023. We have also agreed a Telecare Stakeholder Action Plan to encourage further testing of analogue devices, which will be published shortly.

## Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what payments have been made to the government of France in each of the last five years in relation to cross-Channel migration; and what is their estimate of such spending for this financial year. [HL3419]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border.

In January 2018 both countries signed the Sandhurst Treaty. The UK made a commitment of €50 million (£45.5m) to implement the terms of the Treaty, which adopted a “whole of route approach” to tackling illegal migration.

In 2019 the two countries signed the Joint Action Plan on Combatting Illegal Migration Involving Small Boats under which The UK committed €3.6m (approximately £3.25m). This was supplemented with a further €2.5m (£2.25m) dedicated to the deployment of gendarme reservists and preventive security measures at the French coast.

In 2020 the UK pledged €31.4 million (roughly £28.1 million) to support joint efforts to tackle the rise in small boat crossings. A further bilateral arrangement was reached on 20 July 2021 supported by UK investment of €62.7 million (approximately £54 million).

Most recently, on 14 November the Home Secretary agreed to a new multi-year strategic and operational plan with Minister Darmanin, supported by investment of up to €72.2 million euros (approximately £62.2 million) this financial year.

Joint work with the French has led to over 23,000 small boat crossings being prevented in 2021 and over 30,000 so far this year.

Alongside this we have dismantled 55 organised crime groups (OCGs) and made over 500 arrests supported by the work of the UK-France Joint Intelligence Cell.

## Vacancies: Migrant Workers

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address reported labour shortages; and what assessment they have made of the impact of current immigration rules on workforce levels. [HL3438]

**Lord Callanan:** The labour market is strong by historical standards. The overall inactivity rate, a factor in labour shortages, remains historically low.

Where low pay is a barrier to certain sectors, the Government is supporting better pay by, for example, ensuring that all tips go to staff and increasing the National Living Wage to £10.42 an hour.

The Government is also investing £3.8bn into skills and further education over this Parliament to ensure workers can develop the skills that businesses need.

The Home Office meet regularly with a range of industry stakeholders to discuss immigration policy and the needs of each sector.

## Victims: Slavery

*Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge*

To ask His Majesty's Government which minister in the Home Office has responsibility for victims of modern slavery within the UK. [HL3433]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Modern Slavery is a complex issue, with links to crime, safeguarding and immigration.

Therefore, as set out on gov.uk, the Minister of State for Immigration, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, will have responsibility for aspects of the policy which link to the National Referral Mechanism and migration.

The Safeguarding Minister, Sarah Dines, leads on victim support policy across all crime types, as well as the Home Office relationship with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

## Warships: River Clyde

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that the five new warships to be built on the Clyde are not subject to delay. [HL3406]

**Baroness Goldie:** The Type 26 Batch 2 contract is structured to motivate both the Ministry of Defence and BAE Systems to deliver a successful outcome, with both parties sharing in the pain and gain in delivering the programme, ensuring value for public money and protecting the taxpayers from any project overrun costs.

The Batch 2 contract introduces further investment in BAE Systems' shipbuilding facilities on the Clyde, as demonstrated by the submission of planning application for a new Shipbuilding Hall at Govan, which will allow two frigates to be built under cover simultaneously and enable the ships to be built faster, improving the efficiency in the programme and expanding the facilities for future work at the yard.

## Winter Fuel Payment

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 27 October (HL2738), when they expect to have a figure available for the expenditure on the winter fuel allowance during the year 2020–21. [HL3471]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The DWP benefit and expenditure tables show the outturn for winter fuel payments for the year 2020/21 to be £1,958 million in nominal terms.

Further detail can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-2022>.

The Winter Fuel Payment statistics for 2020/21 and 2021/22 have now been published and can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/winter-fuel-payments-caseload-and-household-figures>.

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