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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<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
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<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
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# Written Statements

Monday, 5 December 2022

## Flexible Working Consultation: Government Response

[HLWS400]

**Lord Callanan:** My Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Kevin Hollinrake) has today made the following statement:

The Government has today published its response to the consultation on flexible working. This delivers on our manifesto commitment to encourage flexible working, and represents an important part of our drive to deliver growth by helping people to access and stay in work.

### *Flexible Working Consultation Response*

In 2021, the government consulted on changes to the right to request flexible working. This right currently supports all employees with 26 weeks continuous service to make applications to change their work location, working hours and/or working pattern. The legislation enables employees and employers to find arrangements that work for both sides. The consultation proposals were intended to help ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The response, published today, states that the Government will legislate to:

- Make the right to request flexible working a day one right – this will bring an estimated additional 2.2 million people into scope of the legislation and encourage early conversations about flexibility in the job design, recruitment and appointment phases. Supporting employees and employers to agree flexible working arrangements from day one will be an important measure in the context of a tight labour market, as it will assist those who wish to return to work but can only do so on certain patterns.
- Introduce a new requirement for employers to consult with the employee when they intend to reject their flexible working request – this will enable both parties to explore the types of flexibility that may be available within the specific role before reaching a conclusion.
- Allow two statutory requests in any 12-month period (rather than the current one request) – this will help to ensure that individuals do not feel ‘trapped’ in certain work arrangements they know are not sustainable for them, particularly in the event that their circumstances change within 12 months.
- Require a decision period of two months in respect of a statutory flexible working request (rather than the current three) – this acknowledges that long delays in responding to requests can lead to negative outcomes for both employers and employees, for example where a response is needed quickly, and the alternative is the person dropping out of work.
- Remove the existing requirement that the employee must explain what effect, if any, the change applied for

would have on the employer and how that effect might be dealt with – this will create a level playing field among those making requests as it will mean the legislation no longer favours those with more experience or better writing skills.

The first of these measures will be delivered through secondary legislation. The other measures require primary legislation, and the Government is pleased to support the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Bill introduced by Yasmin Qureshi MP.

The response also commits to non-legislative action: developing guidance to raise awareness and understanding of how to make and administer temporary requests for flexible working; and launching a call for evidence to better understand how informal flexible working operates in practice.

As a package, these steps will encourage better two-way conversations about flexible working and prompt both the employer and employee to focus on identifying an arrangement that works for them both.

The Review of the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 showed that flexible working can reduce vacancy costs; increase skill retention; enhance business performance; and reduce staff absenteeism rates. In the current context of a tight labour market, flexible working can also play a key role in attracting people into work. Research conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team has shown that offering flexible working can attract up to 30% more applicants to job vacancies, and a recent ONS publication revealed that older workers working flexibly would be more likely to say they were planning to retire later. Strengthening the legislative framework will therefore help to ensure that those who are under-represented in the workforce have access to more employment opportunities.

The Government recognises there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to work arrangements since the needs of businesses and individuals will differ in each circumstance. It is therefore important that the legislation remains a right *to request*, not a right *to have*, and that employers continue to be able to refuse requests for specified business reasons.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in the Government’s consultation response extends to Great Britain (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

I will place copies of the consultation response in the Libraries of the House.

## Homelessness Prevention Grant: Additional Funding

[HLWS401]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken decisive action to support households. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, to support households with their energy bills over the winter, and a further £37 billion of support for the cost of living this year. At Autumn Statement the Chancellor also unveiled £26 billion of support to protect the most vulnerable households in 2023/24.

I recognise that some vulnerable households may find themselves at risk of homelessness and may need additional support. The Government wants to make sure councils are able to respond effectively to support households and prevent homelessness.

#### *Homelessness Prevention Grant – Winter 2022 financial support*

I am therefore announcing an additional £50 million that will be made available to local authorities in England in 2022/23 through a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The additional funding will support local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless. Local authorities will target this funding to those who need it most to help manage local homelessness pressures.

The details of individual local authority allocations can be found [here](#). This additional £50 million investment builds on the £316 million in funding already available to local authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2022/23, bringing total spend through that grant to £366 million. This is part of £2 billion of Government funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

[HLWS402]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** My Hon. Friend the Minister for Levelling Up (Dehenna Davison MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today, my department is announcing the outcome of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan validation process: the approval of plans for England, Scotland and Wales, and the publication of the UKSPF Investment Plan for Northern Ireland.

When we launched [the UKSPF Prospectus](#) in April, my department outlined the ambition of the Fund to invest in domestic priorities and target funding where it is needed most: building pride in place; growing pay, employment and productivity; supporting high quality skills training; and increasing life chances across the UK. This announcement represents a significant step in delivering on this ambition.

Councils and mayoral authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, have worked with the private sector, civil society and others, as well as the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, to develop local investment plans. These plans set out how funding will be targeted on local priorities, against measurable goals. All investment plans for England, Scotland and Wales have now been validated and approved, unlocking three years of investment, and we now expect UKSPF delivery to commence in earnest.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for delivery of the UKSPF. My department has worked closely with key partners and other stakeholders to develop the [UKSPF Northern Ireland Investment Plan](#), ensuring it reflects the needs and opportunities of Northern Ireland's economy and its people. The plan published today outlines the specific interventions which will be supported, and how these will be delivered. Information regarding project funding, including commissions and our plans for project competitions, will be announced shortly.

The delivery of the UKSPF, worth £2.6 billion including Multiply, is a central pillar of this government's levelling up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. As such, today's announcement reaffirms our manifesto commitment to match EU structural fund receipts in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and all areas of England.

The approval of investment plans kickstarts delivery in every part of the country and will lead to visible, tangible improvements to the places where people work and live. Alongside investment in skills, supporting those furthest from the labour market, and promoting community cohesion, this will give individuals right across the UK even more reasons to be proud of their area.

# Written Answers

Monday, 5 December 2022

## Afghanistan and Iraq: Reserve Forces

Asked by **Lord De Mauley**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many reservists have died on operations in (1) Iraq, and (2) Afghanistan, since 2000, broken down by service. [HL3592]

**Baroness Goldie:** The requested information is provided in the following table:

*UK Armed Forces Reservist deaths as a result of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, numbers, 1 January 2000 to 20 November 2022*

*Conflict*

	<i>Iraq1</i>	<i>Afghanistan2</i>
ALL	8	24
Royal Navy	0	0
Royal Marines	0	1
Army	7	22
RAF	1	1

Source: Defence Statistics Health

- 1) Includes deaths on Op TELIC and Op SHADER.
- 2) Includes deaths on Op VERITAS, Op HERRICK and Op TORAL.

Information on deaths as a result of operations is regularly published in the Official Statistic on UK Armed Forces operational deaths post World War Two: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-operational-deaths-post-world-war-2-2022>. The latest update was published on 31 March 2022 (as of 28 February 2022).

## Asylum: Children

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the answer of Lord Murray of Blidworth on 21 November (HL3244), whether they plan to publish the report of the independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee. [HL3607]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** In December 2021, the Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office set up an independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee to provide her with independent scientific and associated ethical advice, recommendations for best practice and advice relating to issues raised by key stakeholders on the implementation of scientific methods of age assessment.

We have always been clear that any decision to implement scientific methods of age assessment would be subject to independent scientific advice. No official

decisions have been made about if and how to implement scientific methods.

## Avian Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask His Majesty's Government what international discussions they have had about supporting research into avian influenza vaccines. [HL3620]

**Lord Benyon:** Defra continues to invest in avian influenza research and monitors the situation in Europe and globally. International collaboration and knowledge exchange is facilitated through discussions between the UK Chief Veterinary Officer and her counterparts in the EU and globally through the World Organisation for Animal Health. Both the UK CVO and representatives from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) avian influenza national reference laboratory were present and engaged in discussion with their global counterparts at the recent International Alliance for Biological Standardisation conference on High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) Vaccination Strategies to Prevent and Control HPAI held in Paris in October.

## Banks: Closures

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support communities affected by recent bank branch closures; and what representations they are making to banks. [HL3822]

**Baroness Penn:** The Government believes that all customers, wherever they live, should have appropriate access to banking services. Nonetheless, decisions on opening and closing branches are a commercial issue for banks and building societies. The Government does not intervene in these decisions or make direct representations regarding these branch networks.

Guidance from the Financial Conduct Authority sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to close their branches or free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on the everyday banking and cash access needs of their customers and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This ensures that the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

Alternative options for access can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows 99% of personal banking and 95% of business banking customers to deposit cheques, check their balance and withdraw and deposit cash at 11,500 Post Office branches in the UK. New shared bank hubs are also being piloted, providing basic banking services and dedicated space where community bankers from major banks can meet customers of that bank.

As part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill 2022, the Government has introduced legislation to protect access to cash. The Bill protects access to cash by establishing the Financial Conduct Authority as the lead regulator and providing it with appropriate powers to ensure reasonable provision of withdrawal and deposit facilities.

### Cameroon: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have conducted a Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability assessment of the current situation in Cameroon; when such an assessment was last conducted; if so, what responses to the assessment they have initiated; and if not, whether they will undertake such an assessment. [HL3575]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** In 2019, the FCDO jointly conducted a conflict analysis for Cameroon with independent experts. The analysis made recommendations including promoting inclusive dialogue to seek a peaceful resolution, and providing humanitarian assistance, which the UK Government continues to pursue. The UK regularly urges the Government of Cameroon to engage in inclusive dialogue, including at the UN Human Rights Council, and endorses previous dialogue efforts. UK Government has delivered food supplies, sanitation, healthcare and social protection to Cameroon over the last five years with over £20 million of humanitarian funding. The West Africa FCDO Research Analyst visited in 2022 and updated the 2019 analysis. We continuously update our analysis across government and with partners, to ensure our interventions are appropriate to the context.

### Cancer: Health Services

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to publish their 10 Year Cancer Plan. [HL3747]

**Lord Markham:** Following a call for evidence for a new cancer plan earlier this year, we received more than 5,000 responses. Further information will be available in due course.

### Congenital Abnormalities

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether all regions of England are covered by the register of congenital anomaly cases. [HL3721]

**Lord Markham:** The National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Service collects data for all regions in England and the Crown Dependencies for births from 1 January 2018.

### Custodial Treatment

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) male, and (2) female, prisoners are currently serving an extended determinate sentence with a custodial term of (a) less than 12 months, (b) between 12 months and two years, (c) between two and four years, (d) between four and five years, (e) between five and seven years, (f) between seven and 10 years, (g) 10 years to less than 14 years, and (h) 14 years or more. [HL3588]

**Lord Bellamy:** The table below shows the number of prisoners serving an extended determinate sentence (EDS), by custodial term, and by sex, as at 30 September 2022, in England and Wales:

	Male	Female
Less than 1 year	5	0
1 year to less than 2 years	8	0
2 years to less than 4 years	138	*
4 years to less than 5 years	474	23
5 years to less than 7 years	971	19
7 years to less than 10 years	1,516	18
10 years to less than 14 years	1,871	23
14 years or more	1,895	*
Sentence length not recorded	3	0

The data above shows the custodial term imposed under the extended determinate sentence and therefore the maximum time offenders serving the sentence could spend in custody. Such prisoners may be released after having served two thirds of this custodial term at the discretion of the parole board.

#### *Data sources and quality*

The figures in this table have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. Small values marked by an asterisk have been suppressed in the above table to protect the identity of individuals.

*Source: Prison NOMIS*

PQ HL3588 (Ministry of Justice; Data and Analysis (Directorate))

## Detention Centres

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of (1) electricity and water supplies, (2) sanitary equipment, (3) food and cooking arrangements, and (4) precautions against communicable diseases, at each of the immigration detention centres. [HL3601]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The safety and welfare of all those in our care is of the utmost importance and we accept nothing but the highest standards from companies employed to provide detention and escorting services on our behalf.

Immigration removal centres (IRC) suppliers are required to provide a safe and secure environment for detained individuals in their care and the conditions and facilities at all immigration detention facilities are kept under regular review.

In addition, all IRCs, short-term holding facilities (STHFs) and the escort provider have robust contingency plans covering a wide range of risks (including loss of power and water supplies and communicable diseases). These are tested on a regular basis and are audited by Home Office compliance teams.

## Diplomatic Service: Prisoners

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consular access is granted to (1) citizens of the UK who are in prison in a foreign country, and (2) those who are also citizens of that country in which they are imprisoned. [HL3474]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Consular access to nationals detained in another State is generally governed by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR). Where a British national consents to the British Embassy or Consulate being informed about their detention, consular officers have the right to visit and communicate with them. The VCCR also states that these rights are to be exercised in conformity with the laws and regulations of the detaining State. The Government's ability to provide consular assistance remains at all times dependent on other states respecting the VCCR and must be done in accordance with the laws of that country. Providing assistance to dual nationals in their other country of nationality can be difficult and the help we can provide depends on what the host government will allow.

## Economic Situation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support households using a wellbeing economy approach given the increased cost of living. [HL3862]

**Baroness Penn:** The government understands that people are worried about the cost of living challenges ahead. That's why decisive action has been taken to support households across the UK through cost of living challenges ahead, whilst remaining fiscally responsible.

On 17th November, the Government has announced further support for next year designed to target the most vulnerable households. This cost of living support is worth £26 billion in 2023-24, in addition to benefits uprating, which is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities. This support for 2023-24 is in addition to the generous support already in place to support households this winter.

A 'wellbeing economy' starts from the idea that public interests should determine economics. The government is continuing to invest in the UK's human and environmental capital to support individual wellbeing and societal strength. To help key public services continue to deliver, the government is prioritising further funding in the next two years to support the healthcare system and schools. The government has also recommitted to tackling climate change and delivering our net zero emissions targets by 2050.

## Energy: Conservation

*Asked by Lord Moynihan*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the £6.6bn energy efficiency measures announced in the autumn statement on 17 November includes funding for Scotland and Wales; and if so, as part of which programmes. [HL3612]

**Lord Callanan:** Energy Efficiency is a devolved policy, but a national priority. The Government will work closely with devolved administrations as the Taskforce is established, drawing on experience across the UK to meet our national ambition to reduce demand. Further details on allocation of additional funding will follow in due course.

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve the (1) consistency, and (2) reliability, of data on (a) delivery, and (b) funding, of energy efficiency measures. [HL3622]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government is committed to ensuring the consistency and reliability of data on the delivery and funding of energy efficiency measures.

The UK has a range of energy efficiency schemes, with different measures and delivery modes. BEIS reports against each scheme with the data aligned to the schemes' rules and definitions. This data is then aggregated into Official Statistics publications produced against the Government Code of Practice for Statistics.

## Gender Based Violence

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to tackle violence against women and girls; and in particular, what steps they are taking in response to the goals of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls campaign. [HL3699]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a government priority. VAWG is an unacceptable, preventable issue which blights the lives of millions.

We have made significant progress since we published the Tackling VAWG Strategy in July 2021 and the complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan in March 2022, including action to tackle the causes of these crimes. We have supported the introduction of a new full-time National Policing Lead for VAWG, DCC Maggie Blyth, to help strengthen the police response as well as ratifying the Istanbul Convention on 21 July 2022, demonstrating to women in the UK and to our partners overseas our commitment to tackling VAWG.

One of the primary goals of The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is to educate people about gender equality and VAWG crimes. We have launched our national communications campaign, 'Enough', to challenge the harmful behaviours that exist within wider society, educate young people about healthy relationships and consent, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and receive support. Phase two of the campaign started on 25 October. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is also now a statutory part of the curriculum to educate children about the importance of respectful relationships, as well as issues such as domestic abuse and sexual consent.

The government has announced we will add VAWG to the Strategic Policing Requirement meaning it will be set out as a national threat for forces to respond to alongside other threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse. We have also allocated £55 million to communities through the Safer Streets Fund and Safety of Women at Night Fund, including for extra CCTV, streetlighting and work to change attitudes and work to preventing VAWG in public spaces at night.

We have committed, by 2025, to have invested £75 million into perpetrator projects, research and interventions. This includes interventions like the Drive Project which targets high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators. It has reduced physical abuse by 82%, and jealous and controlling behaviours by 73%. And, we have doubled our funding for the National Domestic Abuse Helpline and will make it easier for more victims of domestic abuse to come forward by trialling the Ask for ANI codeword scheme in Jobcentre Plus Offices. The scheme currently operates in half of UK pharmacies and since 2021 there have been over 130 cases where pharmacists helped victims access support.

Through these actions we want to reduce the prevalence of VAWG crimes, whilst giving victims and survivors high-quality support to realise better outcomes.

## Healthcare Assistants: Migrant Workers

*Asked by Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the light of the shortage of health care assistants for working age disabled people, whether they have any plans (1) to review the criteria for the sponsorship of overseas workers, and (2) to make reasonable adjustments to the criteria to allow disabled people to employ personal carers directly. [HL3663]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The sponsorship system is designed to strike the balance between enabling UK employers to recruit overseas workers, while ensuring employers only sponsor workers who are eligible for visas, that those they do sponsor will comply with the conditions of their visa and that the safety and wellbeing of those workers is safeguarded. This approach ensures the integrity of the immigration system and provides important safeguards for those who migrate to the UK and for individuals requiring care.

The Government has no plans change this position.

## High Speed 2 Line: Expenditure

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government when parliament gave approval for spending on HS2 (1) Phase 1, (2) Phase 2A, and (3) Phase 2B West; and for what costs. [HL3685]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The approval steps for spending on all Phases of HS2 continue to be transparently documented, and I refer Lord Berkeley to the HS2 6 monthly statements made to Parliament.

## Housing: Energy

*Asked by Lord Moynihan*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the autumn statement on 17 November, what steps they will take to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the UK; and how the intended £6.6bn investment from 2025 to insulate homes and upgrade boilers will be made available, broken down by (1) programmes, (2) annual commitments, and (3) total budgets allocated to each programme. [HL3611]

*Asked by Lord Moynihan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce energy demand by 15 per cent this decade; and if so, (1) as part of which programmes, (2) at what cost, and (3) to what timeline. [HL3613]

**Lord Callanan:** In order to accelerate a reduction in energy demand, the Government is announcing a new

long-term ambition to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030 against 2021 levels.

To lead this national effort, a new Energy Efficiency Taskforce will be established. £6 billion of new Government funding will be made available from 2025 to 2028, in addition to the £6.6 billion allocated in this Parliament. This provides long-term funding certainty, supporting the growth of supply chains, and ensuring we can scale up our delivery over time.

Further details on allocation of additional funding and the taskforce will follow in due course.

### HMS Bristol

*Asked by Lord Trefgarne*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of HMS Bristol. [HL3625]

**Baroness Goldie:** I refer my noble Friend to the answer I gave on 15 November 2022 to Question HL3303 to the noble Lord, Lord West of Spithead.

### Home Office: Databases

*Asked by Baroness Brinton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the "purposes" currently active in the "Purpose-Based Access Control" feature in Palantir's Foundry software in use in the Home Office. [HL3639]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** The Home Office does not use Palantir Foundry software and therefore cannot provide information on the Purpose-Based Access Controls.

### House of Lords: Staff

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many people are in the House of Lords Inclusion and Diversity team. [HL3783]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The House of Lords Inclusion and Diversity Team is made up of three full-time posts: one Head of Inclusion and Diversity and two Inclusion and Diversity Managers. One Inclusion and Diversity Manager post is currently vacant but is expected to be filled in the New Year.

### Housing: Solar Power

*Asked by Lord Colgrain*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether all new builds should include solar panels, in the light of the decisions made at COP 27. [HL3590]

**Lord Callanan:** Solar power is a key part of the energy mix, and the Government will continue to support its

deployment to meet energy security and net zero goals consistent with COP27 ambitions.

In December 2021, the Government introduced an uplift in energy efficiency standards for new builds, which came into force on 15 June 2022 and expects that to meet the new standards, most new buildings are likely to be built with renewables, principally rooftop solar panels.

### Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

*Asked by The Earl of Leicester*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Cochrane Review Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, published on 20 November 2020, which found that mask use in the community was unlikely to be effective in containing the transmission of any respiratory infection, including COVID-19, whether they will review their guidance on face coverings. [HL3057]

**Lord Markham:** In November 2021, the UK Health Security Agency published *The effectiveness of face coverings to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in community settings: A rapid review (update 2)* to identify and examine the latest available evidence on the effectiveness of face coverings to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the community. The review includes 25 studies, two randomised controlled trials and 23 observational studies undertaken to 14 September 2021. The evidence suggests that face coverings reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community through source control, wearer protection, and universal masking. A copy of the review is attached.

As and when any new evidence on the effectiveness of face coverings emerges, we will consider whether any guidance should be amended.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKHSA face coverings review [The effectiveness of face coverings to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in community settings - update 2.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-10-31/HL3057>

### Living Wage

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in encouraging employers to pay the real Living Wage. [HL3624]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government has and will continue to encourage employers to pay their workers more than the National Minimum Wage/National Living Wage when they can afford to do so. In 2021, around 8 in 10 workers aged 16 to 22 earned above their age-related rate of the National Minimum Wage. However, we do recognise that

the ability to pay workers more than the statutory minimum may vary across businesses and sectors.

### **Mental Capacity: Payments**

*Asked by Lord Young of Cookham*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will respond to the consultation on the Mental Capacity Act: Small Payments Scheme, which closed on 22 January. [HL3628]

**Lord Bellamy:** I refer my noble Friend to the answer I gave Baroness Altmann on 14 November 2022 to question HL3027.

### **Migrants: Detainees**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals were held in immigration detention at the (1) Dover, (2) Manston, and (3) Napier Barracks, immigration centres on the most recent dates for which data are available; and what is the normal capacity of each facility. [HL3600]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Western Jetfoil at Dover is a reception area for individuals rescued from the Channel. Napier Barracks is not a detention facility. No individuals are held under immigration detention at either Western Jetfoil or Napier Barracks.

Manston is a processing centre and short-term holding facility, not a detention facility. As of 1500hrs on 24 November 2022, no persons were held under immigration detention at Manston. Manston provides a mix of different types of accommodation to allow the Home Office to flex to meet the demands of fluctuating numbers and cohorts of people crossing the Channel. That inevitably brings a level of fluidity to capacity levels.

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce a maximum time limit for immigration detention; and, if not, why not. [HL3602]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Detention is an essential part of effective immigration control. We only detain people where removal is a realistic prospect within a reasonable timeframe, or to establish their identity or the basis of their claim.

### **Neural Tube Defects: Folic Acid**

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the average prevalence of births affected by neural tube defects in countries applying food fortification with folic acid, compared to those who do not. [HL3668]

**Lord Markham:** This information is not held in the format requested.

### **NHS: Protective Clothing**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the procurement process for personal protective equipment purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the contract awarded to PPE Medpro. [HL3818]

**Lord Markham:** The Government has stated that it will review the response to procurement during the pandemic and learn lessons. PPE Medpro Ltd were awarded its contracts at the height of the pandemic in 2020. The new Procurement Bill will introduce new, transparent arrangements for how procurement should be conducted in an emergency, such as the pandemic. A new system for declaration of 'when action is necessary to protect life' will ensure confidence that contracts are let appropriately. These new rules will allow buyers to conduct a rapid informal competition in situations of extreme urgency.

All contracts, including those awarded in exceptional circumstances, are subject to the Department's contract management operating standards, which include a range of governance requirements.

### **Pakistan: Religious Freedom**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Guildford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what strategy they have, if any, for promoting freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan; and what discussions they have held with the government of Pakistan in pursuing any such strategy. [HL3538]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Pakistan is an FCDO human rights priority country and protecting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is central to the UK Government's human rights engagement in Pakistan. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, the Minister for South Asia and Minister for Human Rights, last raised the human rights situation on 14 October, in his meeting with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada. The UK has supported projects in Pakistan to promote greater tolerance and religious freedom. Our Aawaz II Programme works with communities to promote the rights of members of religious minorities.

### **Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance**

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether (1) acquired, or (2) restored, buildings as part of the Restoration and Renewal project will have a target of 15 per cent female-only toilet facilities. [HL3784]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The two Houses have recently agreed a new approach to the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster, as set out in the

Joint Report of the two Commissions (HL Paper 19) and in the resolution passed by the House on 13 July [HL deb. Col. 1497]. The new approach asks for different levels of ambition and a broader range of options for delivering the works to be considered. At this early stage in the development of proposals no targets have been agreed for the provision of toilet facilities in either (1) acquired or (2) restored buildings. Proposals for the restoration works require parliamentary approval, as set out in section 7 of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019.

### **Pancreatic Cancer**

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase awareness of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer. [HL3748]

**Lord Markham:** NHS England's 'Help Us, Help You' campaign seeks to address the barriers which may deter patients from seeking advice for potential symptoms of cancer, such as pancreatic cancer. A campaign focusing on abdominal and urological symptoms launched on 31 October 2022 and addresses symptoms of pancreatic cancer.

### **Parliamentary Estate: Bicycles**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what arrangements are in place for visitors who wish to bring folding bicycles onto the parliamentary estate. [HL3633]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Folding bicycles can be brought onto the parliamentary estate by visitors, provided they can fit through the security screening equipment. The screening equipment can accommodate items up to 550mm x 360mm, except at the main visitor entrance, Cromwell Green, where items up to 600mm x 400mm can be accommodated. Non-folding bicycles and folding bicycles that are too large for the screening equipment cannot be brought onto the estate by visitors and can be stored in the bike racks outside 1, 2 and 4 Millbank.

### **Planning: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by the Northern Ireland Audit Office Planning in Northern Ireland, published on 1 February; in particular in relation to their ambition to deliver a growing and rebalanced economy. [HL3867]

**Lord Caine:** Planning policy is a transferred matter in Northern Ireland and the Department for Infrastructure has responsibility for regional planning policy and legislation.

We note the concerns raised about the performance of the planning system in Northern Ireland in the Northern Ireland Audit Office report. Northern Ireland is governed best when governed locally and the concerns raised in the report highlight the need for functioning devolved institutions, delivering on key issues like ensuring Northern Ireland has an effective planning system that meets the needs of businesses and the public.

The UK Government is committed to growing and levelling up the Northern Ireland economy, which is why more than £3.5bn has been provided in recent years, in addition to the block grant, through the New Deal for Northern Ireland, City and Growth Deals, PEACE PLUS and the New Decade, New Approach financial package.

### **Poultry: Avian Influenza**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government why avian influenza vaccines are not permitted for commercial poultry. [HL3619]

**Lord Benyon:** Outside of zoos, the vaccination of birds as an immediate disease control response is not currently permitted. Swift and humane culling of birds on infected premises coupled with good biosecurity including the separation of poultry and other captive birds from wild birds and disease surveillance remains the most effective means of controlling the disease.

A limited number of commercial avian influenza vaccines are authorised for use in the UK; however, these vaccines are unlikely to provide full protection for the current strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza circulating in the UK and continental Europe, or provide cross-protection to other strains which may circulate in the future. At present, vaccination can help to reduce mortality, but it is likely that some vaccinated birds would still be capable of transmitting avian influenza if they became infected. This would increase the time taken to detect and eradicate the virus.

In addition, there are a number of practical, animal welfare and commercial disadvantages relating to the use of currently available vaccines which would present significant logistical and cost challenges to industry. These vaccines need to be delivered by individually injecting each bird and, since it is difficult to differentiate infected from vaccinated birds, this leads to significant trade issues relating to exporting poultry and their products to other countries.

Defra continues to invest in avian influenza research and monitors the situation in Europe and globally. In conjunction with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), Defra will continue to monitor the development and availability of vaccines for use to protect against avian influenza and as a control measure during avian influenza outbreaks, as they are put forward for marketing authorisation by vaccine manufacturers.

## Prisoners

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the (1) mean, and (2) median, number of months that prisoners serving (a) a life sentence, and (b) an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection, have spent in prison beyond their original tariff. [HL3587]

**Lord Bellamy:** The Government is committed to the protection of the public and the effective management of offenders. By law, a prisoner serving an indeterminate sentence who has completed his/her tariff will be released only when the independent Parole Board concludes that it is no longer necessary on the grounds of public protection for the prisoner to remain confined.

The following table shows the (1) mean, and (2) median, number of months that prisoners serving (a) a life sentence, and (b) an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection, have spent in prison beyond their original tariff as at 30 September 2022.

Status	Over tariff Months	
	Mean	Median
Unreleased Life	111	93
Unreleased IPP	109	113

Notes for all figures in the above table:

- i) Tariff length is the time between date of sentence and tariff expiry date.
- ii) Figures do not include whole-life orders.
- iii) Figures relate only to cases where the tariff expiry date is passed, and the offender remains in prison unreleased.
- iv) Numbers are subject to revision as more data become available.

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. Data has been supplied for as many of the requested years as it is possible to provide within cost limits; earlier years may not be available due to changes in recording over time.

## Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals from each ethnic group were in prison in England and Wales in each of the last five years, broken down by religion. [HL3584]

**Lord Bellamy:** The table attached provides the information requested, as of 30 September in each of the last five years.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table\_HL3584 [2022-12-05 HL3584 data.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-21/HL3584>

## Prisoners: Self-harm

Asked by **Baroness Fox of Buckley**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will publish the most recent statistics available on self-harm during the first 90 days in custody in the closed prison estate. [HL3593]

**Lord Bellamy:** We do not currently publish a breakdown of self-harm incidents by total time in custody or by prison. Changes to our self-harm tables are considered as part of our regular review of how our statistical publications can best meet the needs of their users and stakeholders. Statistics on self-harm incidents by time in custody, like all identified information gaps, will be considered ahead of our more detailed annual statistics on self-harm in custody, due to be published in April 2023.

## Prisoners: Training

Asked by **Baroness Fox of Buckley**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of HMP Dovegate's scheme to train prisoners to become fully qualified dog trainers; and whether they will implement similar schemes in all prisons across England and Wales. [HL3595]

**Lord Bellamy:** The Restart Dogs Programme at HMP Dovegate is currently funded through the local prisoners' Amenities Fund, and its continuation will be reviewed in line with routine assurance checks to ensure continuing value for money and defined outcomes. There are no plans to implement the project across prisons in England and Wales, but it is available to Governors under the Dynamic Purchasing System, using their Learning and Skills budgets, if they determine that there is a local need.

## Prisons: Pepper Spray

Asked by **Lord Bradley**

To ask His Majesty's Government on how many occasions PAVA spray incapacitant has been (1) drawn, and (2) drawn and deployed, in prisons since 1 April 2019, broken down by (a) ethnicity, and (b) religion, of each prisoner. [HL3585]

**Lord Bellamy:** We ensure all our prison officers are trained in how to use PAVA professionally, safely and lawfully and that it is only used when necessary and proportionate.

There has been a total of 470 incidents involving PAVA since 1 April 2019. Of those, PAVA was drawn and deployed in 320 incidents and 150 were drawn only. See below for a breakdown by ethnicity and religion.

The data provided for this response is collected as internal management information and reflects the data

held at the date of extraction. It is not quality assured in the same way as data prepared for publication and is subject to change.

	From Apr 2019	2020	2021	To 22/11/ 2022	Total
Total Number of Incidents:	55	104	148	163	470
Total Number of Drawn and Deployed Incidents	42	62	103	113	320
Total Number of Drawn only Incidents	13	42	45	50	150

#### *Ethnicity*

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Individuals Impacted</i>	<i>Drawn and Deployed</i>	<i>Drawn only</i>
Asian/Asian British	64	54	10
Black/Black British	396	316	80
Mixed	118	85	33
Other ethnic group	24	19	5
White	375	255	120
Not recorded	8	3	5
Total	985	732	253

#### *Religion*

\* denotes figures less than 5 which have been suppressed to avoid disclosure of information about individuals

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Individuals Impacted</i>	<i>Drawn and Deployed</i>	<i>Drawn only</i>
Buddhist	*	*	*
Christian	431	318	113
Hindu	*	*	*
Jewish	*	*	*
Muslim	279	217	62
Sikh	*	*	*
Other	20	15	5
No religion	236	171	65
Not recorded	8	4	4
Total	985	732	253

PAVA is used in incidents such as prisoner on prisoner violence, therefore the number of incidents differs from the number of individuals impacted. Data for 2022 is to date (as of 22/11/22).

## **Qatar: Migrant Workers**

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Qatar about the calls by the Football Association and the Football Association of Wales for the establishment of a workers' rights centre in Qatar and for the payment of compensation to migrant workers and their families for death or injury during the preparations for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. [HL3603]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise and welcome the steps Qatar has taken on workers' rights, including the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund created in 2018. The priority now is the full implementation and enforcement of those reforms. We encourage continued close collaboration between the Government of Qatar and the International Labour Organization (ILO) during the second phase of their technical cooperation programme. The UK Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy visited Doha on 9 October for a range of meetings to discuss how the UK can partner with Qatar and the ILO to support further progress in 2023. We look forward to a sustained partnership that supports continued advancement on this important issue translating into tangible progress for migrant workers.

## **Railways: Industrial Disputes**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to resolve current industrial action amongst railway workers. [HL3769]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Transport Secretary wants to see an end to the rail industrial disputes, which are affecting passengers, the industry and the rail workers themselves. He is very clear that it is for employers and Trade Unions to negotiate the details of essential workforce reforms that would enable an affordable pay deal. Ministers' role is to facilitate and support the ongoing discussions between the rail industry and Trade Unions regarding workforce reform and pay.

## **Reoffenders**

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce reoffending. [HL3637]

**Lord Bellamy:** Over the last 10 years, overall proven re-offending has decreased from 30.9 per cent (2009-10) to 25.6 per cent (2019-20).

In the 2021 Prisons Strategy White Paper, we set out ambitious cross-government plans to tackle re-offending issues. We are investing £550 million in services over the Spending Review period to get offenders into skills training, work and stable accommodation. The White Paper was published alongside the Government's 10-Year

Drug Strategy, and we are investing an additional £120 million to tackle substance misuse.

We are also strengthening the supervision and monitoring of offenders in the community by:

- making permanent the additional £155 million per year for the new unified probation service;
- promoting integrated working between the Probation Service, the police and other partner agencies; and
- investing £75 million a year by 2024-25 to expand the use of GPS-enabled and alcohol abstinence-monitoring electronic tagging of offenders.

We are also giving £300 million of funding over the Spending Review period to youth offending teams in England and Wales – the largest investment in youth justice in a generation.

### Russia: International Atomic Energy Agency

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the removal of Russian privileges from the International Atomic Energy Agency. [HL3579]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK continues to discuss our approach to Russia at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with Ukraine and our international partners, including the G7. Membership of the IAEA by nuclear states is important to uphold global non-proliferation standards and nuclear safety. We will continue to work with Ukraine, international partners and the IAEA to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine. This was demonstrated at the last Board of Governors on 14 November, where both the IAEA Director General's report and Ukraine Resolution provided a stark assessment of the severe nuclear safety implications of Russia's aggression.

### Russia: Ukraine

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the government of Ukraine regarding the collection of evidence for potential prosecutions of ecocide by Russian forces during the conflict in Ukraine. [HL3577]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has grave environmental implications, in particular the degradation and pollution of land, air and water, and ongoing risks to critical civilian infrastructure. We work with and support international partners and organisations who collect evidence of the environmental impacts of Russia's actions in Ukraine, and are working closely with the Office of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General to support its investigation and prosecution of conflict-related crimes. We continue to make clear that Russia must be held accountable and should pay for the damage it has caused.

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the (1) exchange, and (2) release, of (a) prisoners of war, and (b) other Ukrainians being held by the Russians, particularly the surviving defenders of Mariupol; and what assessment they have made of the work being undertaken by the International Red Cross in assisting these Ukrainians and their families; and how this relates to the IRC mandate. [HL3580]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government of Ukraine leads on negotiating the exchange or release of Prisoners of War (PoWs) and civilians detained by Russia. The UK Government is fully supportive of their efforts in this regard. PoWs and civilian detainees are protected under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and must be treated humanely. IHL grants the International Committee of the Red Cross access to visit PoWs and detainees to interview them without witnesses. Permission for such visits may not be withheld unless for temporary reasons of imperative military necessity.

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure international agencies provide full support for (1) children and their families, and (2) orphaned children, who have been kidnapped from Ukraine and taken to Russia to enable them to return home. [HL3581]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We condemn the forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians to Russia, and the reported illegal adoption of orphaned or unaccompanied children by Russian families. In June, the UK sanctioned the Russian Children's Rights Commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, for her alleged involvement in the forced deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children. We continue to call for Russia to grant meaningful access for humanitarian organisations to provide assistance to affected populations in Russia and Russian-controlled regions of Ukraine, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law. Ukrainian civilians in Russia must be allowed to leave if that is their choice.

### Social Security Benefits

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much the threshold for (1) income support, (2) income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, (3) income-related Employment and Support Allowance, (4) housing benefit, (5) child tax credits, and (6) pension credits, has increased (a) in line with inflation, and (b) in monetary terms, each year since 1997. [HL3573]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** For the benefits listed there are many different rates. The tables in the spreadsheet attached show a selection of illustrative examples for each benefit in both cash and real terms.

Child Tax Credits are administered by HMRC and are not a DWP responsibility. Rates are therefore not provided here.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL3573 attachment [Benefit Rate Tables 1997-2021.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2022-11-21/HL3573>

## Special Educational Needs: Finance

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of the additional money available for the school sector in England from April 2023, announced in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn statement on 17 November, will be allocated to support for children with special educational needs. [HL3583]

**Baroness Barran:** The department will set out plans for the allocation of the additional funding announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement shortly, including the proportion to be allocated to high needs.

## Syria: Sanctions

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to lift all unilateral sanctions on Syria as requested by the UN's Special Rapporteur for Sanctions. [HL3591]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK will not consider lifting sanctions in Syria until the Assad regime ceases brutalising its own people and regularly committing atrocities and violations of international law, evidenced by the UN Commission of Inquiry ongoing reports. UK sanctions are designed to hold the regime to account, and encourage Assad to engage in the UN-facilitated political process. Our designations are carefully targeted, and applied only where there is ample evidence to demonstrate culpability. To guard against unintentional impact on civilians, UK sanctions include humanitarian provisions, such as licensing grounds and exceptions. We also engage with international NGOs to minimise over-compliance.

## Turkey: Iraq and Syria

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Turkey regarding recent attacks by that country in (1) northern Syria, and (2) northern Iraq. [HL3652]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK recognises Turkey's legitimate security interests in Syria and Iraq and is closely monitoring the situation. It is important that the risks to civilians and to the security and stability of the region are minimised. FCDO Ministers and senior officials engage with Turkey regularly on issues of regional security. The Foreign Secretary last met Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on 30 November.

## Ukraine: Police and War Crimes

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to gender-sensitive policing and war crimes investigation in Ukraine. [HL3578]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is working with the Ukrainian authorities and international partners to hold those committing atrocities in Ukraine to account, including in responding to gender-based and sexual violence. The UK has led efforts to refer the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and contributed £1 million to the ICC to increase evidence collection capacity. We have also provided £2.5 million to the UK-EU-US Atrocity Crimes Advisory group to support Ukraine in investigating war crimes, including conflict related sexual violence. Our new two-year £10 million civil society fund will support local Ukrainian organisations, including those gathering evidence of war crimes.

## Visas: Families

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 November (HL2942 and HL2943), what assessment they have made of reports that TLScontact in St Petersburg is no longer offering applicants the option of purchasing the 'Keep My Passport' service pending decisions on family visa applications. [HL3626]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Added Value Services, including the Keep My Passport service, are currently unavailable in Russia. Where applicants are required to keep their passport in their possession to evidence their right to reside in Russia whilst their Family Migration application is under consideration, they can inform the Visa Application Centre staff who will work with UKVI to consider this. Applicants can choose to withdraw their application should they wish to do so, but will not receive a refund.

Family members of British Nationals in Russia, who need to make an urgent visa application, can contact TLS via the link on their website for support.

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