

**Session 2022-23
No. 97**



**Wednesday
18 January 2023**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Penn	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Lord Stewart of Dirlerton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
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Written Statements

Wednesday, 18 January 2023

Asset Purchase Facility

[HLWS494]

Baroness Penn: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Jeremy Hunt) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England (“the Bank”) decided at its meeting ending on 3 February 2022 to reduce the stocks of UK government bonds and sterling non-financial investment-grade corporate bonds held in the Asset Purchase Facility (APF) for monetary policy purposes by ceasing to reinvest maturing securities. The Bank ceased reinvestment of assets in this portfolio in February 2022 and has since commenced sales of corporate bonds on 28 September 2022, and sales of gilts acquired for its monetary policy purposes on 1 November 2022.

On 28 September 2022 the authorised maximum total size of the APF was increased by £100 billion from £866 billion to £966 billion to allow for the Bank to undertake a time limited financial stability intervention in long-dated and index-linked gilt markets, which took place between 28 September 2022 and 14 October 2022. Purchases under this intervention totalled £19.3 billion.

On 4 November the Governor and I agreed to reduce the maximum size of the APF by £80 billion from £966 billion to £886 billion to reflect the unused portion of the recent financial stability related APF expansion. Separately, on 22 November 2022, the authorised maximum size of the APF was reduced by £15 billion from £886 billion to £871 billion to reflect the reduction in the stock of assets held by the APF for its monetary policy purposes since 5 May 2022.

On 29 November 2022, the Bank began to unwind its financial stability related gilt portfolio which it completed on 12 January 2023. I welcome the successful unwind of this portfolio which I note has been completed in a timely and orderly manner. I have therefore agreed with the Bank to decrease the authorised maximum size of the APF by a further £20 billion, from £871 billion to £851 billion, which reduces the size of the contingent liability associated with the APF’s indemnity.

The risk control framework previously agreed with the Bank will remain in place, and HM Treasury will continue to monitor risks to public funds from the APF through regular risk oversight meetings and enhanced information sharing with the Bank.

There will continue to be an opportunity for HM Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the Government’s broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank, the APF and its directors from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal supply procedure.

A full departmental Minute has been laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.

Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contract for Manufacture

[HLWS493]

Baroness Goldie: My hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Alex Chalk KC MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am providing an update on our plans for the next stage of the Fleet Solid Support ship programme.

I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Defence has placed a contract with a value of around £1.6 billion (linked to CPI) for the manufacture of three Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships by Team Resolute. This is an excellent deal for the taxpayer and will strengthen and secure the UK shipbuilding enterprise as set out in the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

Team Resolute, comprising Harland & Wolff Belfast, Bath-based BMT and Navantia UK will manufacture these crucial vessels providing munitions, stores and provisions to the Royal Navy’s aircraft carriers, destroyers and frigates deployed at sea. The contract will deliver more than 1,000 new UK shipyard jobs, generate hundreds of graduate and apprentice opportunities across the UK and a significant number of further jobs throughout the supply-chain. Team Resolute has pledged to invest £77 million in shipyard infrastructure to modernise the UK shipbuilding sector.

Blocks and modules for the ships will be constructed at Harland & Wolff’s facilities in Belfast and Appledore, and this work will also support the UK-based supply chain. Some build work will also take place at Navantia’s shipyard in Cadiz in Spain, in a collaboration allowing for key skills and technology transfer to the UK from a world-leading shipbuilder.

The entire final assembly will be completed at Harland & Wolff’s shipyard in Belfast, to BMT’s British design.

The awarding of this contract will see jobs created and work delivered in Appledore, Devon, Harland and Wolff Belfast and within the supply chain up and down the country. This announcement is good news for the UK shipbuilding industry. It will deliver long-term improvements in UK shipbuilding capacity and capability through investing in shipbuilding infrastructure, productivity, skills, and a more resilient supply chain. Overseas expertise will be used to transfer to the UK high value skills and provide inward investment in technology in the UK whilst meeting the UK’s security requirements.

The contract will also balance shipbuilding across the whole United Kingdom. Alongside the existing Type 26 and Type 31 frigate construction in Scotland, the

Government is now committing substantial contracts to yards in England and Northern Ireland.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 18 January 2023

Dental Services: Contracts

Asked by **Baroness Redfern**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult on a new NHS dental contract to provide access to general dentistry; and what steps they will take to ensure that local commissioners work with providers to make existing contracts sustainable. [HL4628]

Lord Markham: NHS England is holding discussions and consulting with the British Dental Association (BDA) and the wider dental sector for additional reforms of the National Health Service (NHS) Dental System, planned for 2023. NHS England is responsible for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population, with many of these functions transferring to integrated care boards (ICBs) from April 2023. They will work with commissioners and providers, supported by NHS England's Assurance Framework.

'Our plan for patients', announced in September 2022 and available in an online-only format, outlines how we will meet oral health needs and increase access to NHS dental care. This includes improving the 2006 contract to ensure fairer remuneration for practices providing complex treatment as well as enabling dentists to make better use of dental teams to deliver NHS treatment. These changes were discussed with stakeholders and implemented through regulations that came into effect on 25 November 2022, improving access to general dentistry and making the NHS contract more attractive and sustainable to dentists and their teams.

The Department also worked with NHS England and the BDA to introduce a minimum Unit of Dental Activity value in October 2022, the implementation of which will support commissioners to work closely with providers in ensuring NHS dental contracts are sustainable.

Dental Services: Labour Turnover and Recruitment

Asked by **Baroness Redfern**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to collect data regarding a dental workforce to improve the (1) recruitment, and (2) retention, of dentists. [HL4627]

Lord Markham: The Government has committed to publishing a workforce plan next year, which will include independently verified forecasts for the number of healthcare professionals, including dental professionals, required in future years. This will take into account improvements in retention and productivity and will make use of available data sources.

Gift Aid: Automation and Modernisation

Asked by **Lord Kamall**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to modernise, and (2) to automate, the gift aid system. [HL4666]

Baroness Penn: The Government recognises the important work the charity sector does in the UK, which is why we currently provide tax reliefs to charities and their donors worth over £5 billion per year, including over £1.3 billion in Gift Aid. The Government has received ideas from the sector on developing Gift Aid for the digital age and continues to keep all aspects of this important tax relief under review.

Last year 99% of Gift Aid claims were already made online by charities with only 1% submitted by paper, but HM Revenue and Customs has been engaging further with the charity sector to understand the remaining challenges. This work remains ongoing and is considering all aspects of the service including whether it meets the needs of its users, as well as the registration and claims process. One way this has taken place is through inviting charities to complete a short survey about the process.[1]

[1] <https://zwgy80l7.optimalworkshop.com/questions/z6n2hh7v>

Growing Places Fund

Asked by **Lord Kamall**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 8 December 2022 (HL4451), what steps they are taking to encourage place-based giving schemes following the end of the Growing Place-based Giving Programme. [HL4669]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Charitable giving has a proud tradition in the UK, and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is keen to highlight the importance and impact of such giving.

Last year the Department encouraged charitable giving by supporting the Small Charity Week campaign (20–24 June 2022), aimed at promoting the work of small charities. As part of that work, the Department encouraged people to think about a local cause or small charity about which they care and, if they were able to do so, to consider supporting it by donating money, goods, or time.

The Department continues to endorse Payroll Giving, which allows tax-free donations to be made to charity directly from an individual's pay or pension. In 2021 this scheme raised **£137 million for charities**.

Hospitals: Food

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the correct nutritional information is provided for hospital meals so that type 1 diabetics

are able to calculate their correct dose of insulin. [HL4683]

Lord Markham: Menus within the National Health Service (NHS) are written and dietary coded, using the British Dietetic Association Nutrition and Hydration Digest, to provide appropriate nutritional information so patients can access the food and drink they want which also meets their health needs. The National Food and Drink Standards for NHS hospitals, published November 2022, requires every trust to have access to appropriate catering dietetic advice and support.

Additionally, all NHS hospital meals are nutritionally analysed to ensure the correct combination of nutrients is achieved and no patient menu is passed until this has happened. This will be done by either a trust using in house dietetic support or by the meal provider if using external delivered meal services.

Medicine: Education

Asked by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

To ask His Majesty's Government how many medical school places were available in England in each of the last 10 years; and how many applications were made on average per place. [HL4561]

Lord Markham: The following table shows the number of entrants to undergraduate medicine courses in England from 2012 to 2022.

<i>Academic year</i>	<i>Entrants</i>
2012	6,190
2013	5,980
2014	6,000
2015	5,880
2016	5,930
2017	6,095
2018	6,800
2019	7,565
2020	8,405
2021	8,485
2022	7,630

Source: Office for Students Medical and Dental Students Survey (2012-2022)

Note: 2022 entrants are based on initial figures and are likely to change.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service records the number of unique applicants and acceptances to undergraduate medical courses. Based upon this data, there has been an average of 3.2 applicants for each accepted place from 2011 to 2021.

Mortgages: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to support households with mortgages from the increased cost of living due to interest rate rises. [HL4638]

Baroness Penn: In December, the Chancellor held a roundtable with the major mortgage lenders, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Martin Lewis to discuss support for vulnerable mortgage borrowers. In this meeting, attendees confirmed the support lenders will provide and the steps borrowers should take to help those who are struggling return to a position where their mortgage is affordable and sustainable over the long term. The Chancellor also made clear his expectation that every lender live up to their responsibilities and support any mortgage borrowers who are finding it tough right now.

If mortgage borrowers fall into financial difficulty, or think they may struggle to keep up with payments in the future, it is vital they make contact with their lender early. FCA guidance requires firms to provide support through tailored forbearance options. This could include a range of options depending on individual circumstances.

The Government has also taken a number of measures aimed at helping people to avoid repossession, including offering Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans for those in receipt of an income-related benefit. Those eligible are entitled to help paying the interest on up to £200,000 of their loan. From spring, the Government will allow those on Universal Credit to apply for an SMI loan to help with interest repayments after three months, instead of nine. We will also abolish the zero earnings rule to allow claimants to continue receiving support while in work and on Universal Credit. In addition, the Government offers mortgage borrowers protection in the courts through the Pre-Action Protocol, which makes clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

More broadly, the Government has taken decisive action to support households across the UK through the cost-of-living challenges ahead, whilst remaining fiscally responsible. In addition to the £37 billion of support for the cost of living already announced for 2022-23, the Government has announced further support for next financial 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. The Government is also continuing to provide support to all households through the Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

Parking: Databases

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to place the National Parking Platform on a three year funding cycle. [[HL4675](#)]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to undertake a communications campaign to inform local government audiences about the government-backed National Parking Platform; and what assessment they have made of the benefits to local authorities of adopting the National Parking Platform. [[HL4676](#)]

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the second assessment of the Department for Transport's National Parking Platform was undertaken as required in October 2021; and if so, when the report will be published. [[HL4678](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has already invested £1.2m in the development of a National Parking Platform (NPP). The platform will digitise parking services and allow road users to choose one app of their choice wherever there is pay-by-phone parking. The funding has delivered user research and a prototype platform as part of a pilot led by Manchester City Council. Building on this research, the Department is working with the parking sector to establish governance and funding options for delivering the full production platform.

The user-research demonstrated the benefits that a publicly-owned platform capable of managing standardised data exchange across local authority parking operations would provide. The platform would enable any

local authority to contract directly with all service providers via the NPP and thus remove the need for several hundred local authority parking contracts and the burden of local procurement. The platform would enable collection of digital payments facilitating both digitised methods of operation, including automated payments, and improved data on the parking market.

The Department and the British Parking Association (BPA), the parking trade body, have already undertaken significant engagement both with local authorities and service providers. Further engagement plans are being developed and will include the Department communicating the benefits of the parking platform to every local authority.

The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) reassessment of the platform's alpha stage was held on the 10 March 2022 and the requirement was met. The report was published on the CDDO website on 23 March 2022.

Prisons: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the total spend in England on prison services in 2020 (1) in cash terms, and (2) as a percentage of total government expenditure. [[HL4589](#)]

Lord Bellamy: In answer to part 1, for the 2020-21 financial year, the direct cost of prison services was £2.6bn. This is based on our published Prison Unit Costs.

For part 2, we have used the 2019-20 financial year direct costs of £2.4bn which amounts to approximately 0.26% of the total government spend. The reason for using the earlier year to calculate the percentage of total government expenditure is that the latest published Whole of Government Accounts is for 2019-20.

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