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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Lord True	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Benyon	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Spokesperson, Wales Office, Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Davies of Gower	Whip
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Harlech	Whip
Lord Johnson of Lainston	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Markham	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Murray of Blidworth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
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 Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Chief Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Inspectorate Reviews into Serious Further Offences

[HLWS508]

Lord Bellamy: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of Justice (Damian Hinds) made the following statement:

Mr Speaker, today the Chief Inspector of Probation has published his Independent Review into the Probation Service's management of Jordan McSweeney, who murdered Zara Aleena on 26 June 2022 as she walked home after an evening out with friends.

Today's report follows another Independent Review into the management of Damien Bendall, who in September 2021 murdered an entire family – killing pregnant Terri Harris, her two children, John Paul and Lacey, and Lacey's eleven-year-old friend, Connie Gent. Bendall also pleaded guilty to rape.

Immediately upon learning that first Bendall and then McSweeney had been charged with murder whilst subject to probation supervision, Ministers asked the Chief Inspector to undertake independent reviews.

Before I address the Chief Inspector's findings, I wish to express my deepest sympathy towards the families and friends of the victims. They have suffered the most awful loss and continue to endure unimaginable suffering.

The Chief Inspector found serious failings in each case. The Probation Service did not assess the level of risk posed by McSweeney and Bendall properly – and that fundamental flaw meant that neither offender was managed as closely and robustly as was necessary to protect the public. I wish to apologise unreservedly to the families for these wholly unacceptable failings. We are determined to make sure that they are not repeated.

I have accepted the ten recommendations made by the Chief Inspector in the case of McSweeney, having accepted his seventeen recommendations in the case of Bendall. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has already implemented a comprehensive action plan to address the failings in the case of Bendall, including new mandatory checks with the Police and Children's Services before a probation officer may recommend to the Court that an offender may be sentenced to an electronically-monitored curfew. And HMPPS has today published its action plan to address the failings in the case of McSweeney, including mandatory training to improve the quality of risk assessments and new processes to ensure the swift recall of offenders who have breached their licence conditions and are no longer safe to be managed in the community.

Over and above the specific actions taken to implement the Chief Inspector's findings in each of the two cases, I should set out the action this Government is taking to

strengthen the Probation Service and ensure that it is equipped to manage offenders effectively and so protect the public.

We have unified the Probation Service in order to raise standards. We recognise that the Probation Service needs more staff, which is why we have invested heavily, injecting extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver tougher supervision of offenders, reduce caseloads and recruit thousands more staff to make the public safer.

This has helped us boost our trainee probation officers by 2,500 over the last two years and we plan to recruit a further 1,500 by March this year.

Beyond these changes, we are reforming the parole system, as we announced in March last year, including increasing Ministerial oversight of release decisions for the most serious criminals.

I recognise that the action we have taken and continue to take cannot bring back Terri Harris, John Paul Bennett, Lacey Bennett, Connie Gent and Zara Aleena. However, I can assure their loved ones, this House and the public that we are determined to do everything in our power to make sure that these kinds of tragedy can never happen again.

I commend this statement to the House.

Major Conditions and Diseases

[HLWS506]

Lord Markham: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay) has made the following written statement:

As this House is aware, the health and social care system faces long-term challenges to ensure the public enjoy longer and healthier lives. Currently in England, 5.4 million people live with cardiovascular disease, around 8.6 million live with chronic respiratory disease and 8.2 million people live with mental health issues.

An increasing number of us live with one or more major conditions. People with diabetes are twice as likely to have depression. Nine in ten dementia patients have another long-term condition. Half of people with a heart or lung condition have musculoskeletal disorders.

Tackling the major conditions that lead to people spending more years in ill health is a significant opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people. That is why today, I am announcing that, in consultation with NHS England and colleagues across government, my department will develop and publish a Major Conditions Strategy.

The Strategy will set out a strong and coherent policy agenda that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care, building on measures that we have already taken forward through the NHS Long Term Plan. Interventions set out in the Strategy will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health related labour market inactivity.

Our approach will be rooted in the best understanding of the evidence to tackle the major conditions which contribute to the burden of disease in England, namely:

- Cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke and diabetes
- Chronic respiratory diseases
- Dementia
- Mental ill health
- Musculoskeletal disorders

These areas account for around 60% of total Disability Adjusted Life Years in England. Tackling them is critical to achieving our manifesto commitment of gaining five extra years of Healthy Life Expectancy by 2035, and our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy by 2030.

Our approach will harness the potential of whole person care, addressing the fact that our health and care system has been built in silos, often focused around specific diseases or organs in the body. Our workforce model needs to adapt, reflecting that the NHS is caring for patients with increasingly complex needs and with multiple long-term conditions. We need greater emphasis on generalist medical skills to complement existing deep specialist expertise in the NHS, supporting clinical professionals to heal with whole person care. The Major Conditions Strategy and the upcoming NHS Long Term Workforce Plan work together to set out the standards patient should expect in the short term and over a five-year timeframe.

This is about shifting our model towards preserving good health, and the early detection and treatment of diseases. We have a proud record of opening new treatment possibilities in the NHS. Diseases that were once a death sentence have become conditions that can be managed over the long term. By harnessing innovation and technology we are increasingly capable of detecting diseases at an early stage, in some cases before symptoms emerge. Intervening at this point will reduce demand downstream on health and care services.

Healthy, fulfilled, independent and longer lives for the people of England will require health and care services, local government, NHS bodies, and others to work ever more closely together. People living in England's most deprived places live, on average, 19 fewer years in good health than those in the least deprived places. The Strategy will set out the supporting and enabling interventions the centre can make to ensure that ICSs and the organisations within them maximise the opportunities to tackle clusters of disadvantage in their local areas where they exist, informed by the Hewitt Review. This will include addressing unwarranted variation in outcomes and the care people receive in the context of the recovery from the pandemic.

This work combines our key commitments in mental health, cancer, dementia and health disparities into a single, powerful strategy. It will align to the government's

ambitious Life Sciences Missions. We will take forward a separate Suicide Prevention Strategy this year.

Alongside work on common diseases the Department and the NHS also continue work on rare diseases, under the 2021 UK Rare Diseases Framework. All four nations of the UK have now published their first action plan, and England's second Rare Diseases Action Plan is currently being finalised.

As we develop this strategy I continue to be grateful for the thoughts and contributions from colleagues across the House, stakeholders, citizens and industry. I will set out opportunities to contribute further in due course. We also intend to publish an interim report on the strategy in the summer.

Strategies alone will not change outcomes. Delivery will require concerted effort from government and the NHS working in tandem, alongside social care, patient representatives, industry and partners across the health and care system.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly: UK Delegation

[HLWS504]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Europe) (Leo Docherty), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Hon. Member for Stirling (Alyn Smith) has been appointed as a full representative of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in place of the Hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Brendan O'Hara).

Strengthening the Response to Serious and Organised Crime

[HLWS505]

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

The Government is today launching a consultation on two proposals to strengthen the law on serious and organised crime.

Law enforcement agencies frequently encounter articles which they suspect are being used in serious crime but which they are unable to act on under existing legislation. The Government is therefore consulting on a proposal to create new offences to criminalise the making, modification, supply, offer to supply and possession of articles for use in serious crime. Such articles include, for example, vehicle concealments or 'hides' used to transport illicit commodities, sophisticated and bespoke encrypted communication devices, templates for 3D-

printing firearms components and pill presses used to make illicit drugs.

The Government is also consulting on proposals to improve and strengthen the existing powers on Serious Crime Prevention Orders under the Serious Crime Act 2007. This includes enabling a broader set of law enforcement bodies to apply for such orders, as well as strengthening their monitoring arrangements.

The consultation seeks views to inform the Government's policy development. The consultation will run for eight weeks and will close on 21st March 2023. If taken forward, both proposals would require changes in legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

A copy of the consultation document and two related impact assessments will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are available on GOV.UK.

The Government is also announcing a package of measures to strengthen how police forces in England and Wales tackle serious and organised crime and protect our communities from harm. The approach is being led jointly by the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council's Serious and Organised Crime Lead, with implementation supported by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Crime Agency, the College of Policing and the Local Government Association.

We are investing around £2million to support the roll-out of 'Clear, Hold, Build', which is an evidence-based, end-to-end local partnership approach that will reduce serious and organised crime in the highest harm hot-spot areas in England and Wales. This includes new serious and organised crime community coordinators in the Regional Organised Crime Units to support police forces to deliver the most effective and efficient partnership response and a performance management and information system to enhance police forces' ability to understand, capture and respond to their local serious and organised crime threat.

Later this year the Government also plans to publish a new strategy to update the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy which was published in 2018.

Thurrock Council: Financial Functions

[HLWS507]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My Honourable friend the Minister for Local Government and Building Safety (Lee Rowley MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 2 September 2022 my Rt Hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Greg Clark, announced that after due consideration he was using his powers under the Local Government Act 1999 to intervene at Thurrock Council ("the Authority"), in recognition of grave concerns about the scale of the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Authority. As set out in Directions made under section 15(5) and (6) of the Act, Essex County Council

were appointed to the role of Commissioner and powers granted to them to oversee the financial functions of Thurrock Council. Alongside this work Essex County Council were also appointed as a Best Value Inspector in order to assess whether there is best value failure in other functions of the Authority.

The Commissioner began their work to support the Authority with immediate effect and submitted their first report to the Secretary of State on 5 December 2022. The Best Value Inspection is ongoing, and on 13 December the inspection team provided the Secretary of State with an update letter which contained key findings and recommendations from their work so far and requested an extension to complete their final report. On 14 December it was agreed that the inspection team will have more time to complete their report and will now provide their report to the Secretary of State by 17 February 2023. The Secretary of State and I have reviewed both documents in the context of the intervention.

Taken together, the Commissioner report and update letter lay bare the profound weaknesses in this Authority's financial function, which has resulted in unmanageable budget gaps in this financial year and in future years. This situation is primarily a result of the failure of the Authority's commercial investment strategy. The Best Value Inspection update letter sets out that in order to achieve value for money going forward, the Authority will need to undertake a programme of radical transformation in relation to its service delivery. The documents also reveal significant weaknesses in The Authority's governance function and raise pressing concerns about lack of capacity at Thurrock Council. The Best Value Inspection update letter posits that the Authority's financial failings are a manifestation of deeper systemic weakness in the historic and recent running of the Council.

Having carefully considered these two documents in the context of the intervention, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the Authority is not meeting its best value duty, both in terms of its known financial issues, and in relation to its governance and staffing functions. He is therefore considering further exercising the powers of direction in the 1999 Act to expand the intervention. Whilst we have not yet received the final Best Value Inspection, the Secretary of State and I agree that the evidence and recommendations presented in the Commissioner report and update letter are serious enough to warrant taking steps to expand the intervention now, in order to prevent further best value failure.

The proposed changes centre on the need to expand the scope of Commissioner's existing powers, which are currently limited to oversight of the financial function. The proposed expansion to the intervention package would give Commissioners powers over the Authority's governance and staffing functions and would instruct the Authority to take further actions to support its recovery, and the work of Commissioners, in order to carry out the improvement and transformation work that is so urgently required.

In detail, the Secretary of State is minded to issue further Directions to permit the Commissioners to exercise powers over:

- All functions associated with the governance, scrutiny and transparency of strategic decision making by the Authority to ensure compliance with the Best Value Duty. This will include oversight of an audit of the Authority's governance.
- All functions associated with the Authority's operating model and redesign of council services to achieve value for money and financial sustainability.
- The appointment, suspension and dismissal of staff in the top three tiers of the organisation, including powers to determine the process for making these appointments and dismissals, and to design a new officer structure.
- The development, oversight and operation of an effective performance management framework for senior officers.

The Secretary of State is minded to make further Directions to the Authority, instructing Thurrock Council to undertake the following actions to the satisfaction of Commissioners:

- To prepare, produce and implement an enhanced improvement and recovery plan (building on the existing improvement plan).
- To take steps to ensure that the role of Accountable Body to the Thames Freeport is exercised to the satisfaction of the Commissioners. This should be reflected in the improvement and recovery plan.
- To undertake any action that Commissioners may reasonably require to avoid, so far as practicable, incidents of poor governance that would, in the Commissioners' reasonable opinion, give rise to the risk of the Authority failing to comply with its best value duty.

The Secretary of State has also reviewed the model of the intervention as a whole and is minded to additionally appoint a Commissioner to act as Managing Director at

the Authority. This appointment is intended to strengthen the intervention model and to increase the Authority's capacity to deliver vital improvements.

It is important to us that all interested parties, especially Thurrock residents, can express their views on these proposals before a final decision is made. We are inviting representations on the Commissioner's first report, the Best Value Inspection update letter, and the Secretary of State's proposals by 7 February 2023. In line with procedures laid down in the 1999 Act, officials in the department have written to the Authority today to notify them of the Secretary of State's proposals, and the Authority have been invited to submit representations to the same timeframe.

Should the Secretary of State decide to expand the scope of the intervention as set out in this statement, he will make the necessary statutory Directions under the Act. Pending a formal decision after the representations period, the department would issue new Directions to supersede and replace those issued on 2 September 2022, and an updated Explanatory Memorandum.

The challenges facing Thurrock Council are unprecedented and will require extensive work over many years to resolve. The Authority are at the beginning of a long journey to improve its finance and governance functions, and the department stands ready to support Commissioners in any way necessary as part of this vital work.

We look forward to receiving the Best Value Inspection report in February, which will provide an opportunity for the Secretary of State to consider if any further amendments to the Directions are needed. We also look forward to receiving the Commissioner's next report in June 2023, per the Directions issued on 2 September 2022.

A copy of the Commissioner's first report, and of the update on the Best Value Inspection, will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Advanced Research and Invention Agency: Public Appointments

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government who chairs the newly constituted Advanced Research and Invention Agency; and what is the annual payment made to them. [HL4613]

Asked by *Lord Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government who sits on the Advanced Research and Innovation Agency; and what monies they receive. [HL4614]

Lord Callanan: Dr Ilan Gur and Matt Clifford MBE took up post as the Advanced Research and Invention Agency's (ARIA) founding Chief Executive Officer and Chair, respectively, on 15 August 2022. The rest of ARIA's senior leadership team are now being appointed. As with other arm's length bodies, Board remuneration information will be published in the Agency's annual reports and accounts.

Animal Feed

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the case for using Processed Animal Protein. [HL4779]

Lord Benyon: Processed Animal Protein is currently used for a wide variety of purposes in the UK including in pet food, fish feed, organic fertilisers and anaerobic digestion plants. We recognise that there is potential value in expanding its currently permitted uses and note that the EU has recently made changes to its animal feed legislation, permitting the inclusion of insect, pig and poultry processed protein in certain non-ruminant farmed animal feeds. As an independent trading nation, we have the option to review our own animal feed legislation. To that end, the UK Government is working with the Devolved Administrations, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland to assess the implications of permitting the inclusion of Processed Animal Protein in animal feed in the UK. This work has included Government scientists at APHA undertaking two risk assessments of the impact allowing the inclusion of Processed Animal Protein would have on animal health. The FSA is currently considering the conclusions of APHA's risk assessments to determine whether a public health risk assessment is additionally required.

Asylum: Hotels

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many hotels in England are under contract to provide accommodation for immigrants whose right to enter and remain in the UK are being assessed; and what is the total number of people who are currently accommodated in this way. [HL4623]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: On the 30 September 2022 there were 252 hotels used to accommodate 34,900 asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support in England.

Asylum: Housing

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consultation they undertake with (1) district councils, and (2) parish councils, in whose area it is proposed to house immigrants awaiting assessment on their right to enter and remain in the UK. [HL4624]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The record number of people that have crossed the Channel in small boats in recent years has placed the Home Office's asylum support infrastructure and accommodation services under immense pressure. Under the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999, the Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide asylum seekers, who would otherwise be destitute, with accommodation and support whilst their claim is under consideration. Eligible asylum seekers are ordinarily placed in housing accommodation; however, the unprecedented number of small boat arrivals has forced the Home Office to consider alternative accommodation options to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations, which has resulted in the temporary use of hotels.

The use of hotels is a short-term solution and we are working hard with Local Authorities and our accommodation providers to find more appropriate accommodation.

We have taken immediate steps to improve levels of engagement with key stakeholders including district and parish councils, around hotel accommodation sites to ensure colleagues are kept updated and better informed and to ensure we understand and act on any concerns appropriately and swiftly. These minimum standards will be reviewed regularly and, where possible, we will take steps to improve these standards.

We work closely with local authorities on full asylum dispersal to create a fairer distribution across the UK.

We do not routinely engage with members of the public regarding utilising hotels.

Avian Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likelihood of a vaccine for avian influenza being developed in the next 12 months. [HL4780]

Lord Benyon: It is unlikely that preventive vaccination will be authorised for widespread use in the next 12 months.

The authorised use of avian influenza vaccines is only permitted in licenced zoos in England. Currently authorised vaccines are unlikely to provide full protection for the current strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza circulating in the UK and continental Europe, or 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 and many trading partners will not accept the use of vaccination. Avian influenza vaccination is therefore prohibited in poultry and other captive birds outside licensed zoos which have received authorisation to vaccinate by the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

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 issues exporting poultry and their products to other countries.

Defra continue to invest in avian influenza research, and we continue to monitor the current situation both in Europe and globally, as well as the effectiveness of any disease control measures taken, including vaccine development. Defra, working in conjunction with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), will continue to monitor the development and availability of vaccines for their utility in preventing and responding to avian influenza outbreaks as they are put forward for market authorisation by vaccine manufacturers. Any future decisions on disease control measures, including the use of vaccination, will be based upon the latest scientific, ornithological, and veterinary advice.

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 5 December 2022 (HL3620), how much they have invested into research into an avian influenza vaccine. [HL4829]

Lord Benyon: Defra funds research directly or by leveraging funding through UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), a BEIS-funded non-governmental public body of which the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is a research council partner.

In the last five years, £4.3 million has been invested in research, funded through BBSRC, either solely focussed on avian influenza vaccines, or as part of wider projects for poultry disease control.

Bread and Flour: Additives

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to ensure that the Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Bill will not result in people in the UK being exposed to azodicarbonimide, potassium bromate, or any other flour bleaching agents or industrial bread additives banned across the EU. [HL4535]

Lord Benyon: Through the Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Bill, the Government is considering which retained European Union legislation should be repealed, reformed or preserved. The Government will continue to work with a range of organisations and stakeholders to ensure we maintain our world leading standards of food safety and quality.

Our national Bread and Flour Regulations 1998, which are not in scope of the Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Bill, do not allow the use of flour bleaching agents in the preparation of any flour or bread.

Burundi: Cholera

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent outbreak of cholera in Burundi. [HL4548]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We note reports of a recent outbreak of cholera in Burundi and urge the Government of Burundi to continue taking preventative measures to limit further risks to the population. FCDO officials have engaged with international partners to discuss how we can limit the outbreak of cholera worldwide.

Business: Energy Bills Discount Scheme

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to implement the upcoming reduction in energy bill support for businesses. [HL4639]

Lord Callanan: The Energy Bill Discount Scheme (EBDS) will go live on 1 April 2023 with support continuing to be applied directly to eligible non-domestic energy bills through energy providers.

Capital Punishment

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government with which countries that practise capital punishment the UK maintains diplomatic relations. [HL4590]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK maintains diplomatic relations with states across the world, including with those that practise capital punishment. It is our experience that engagement helps the UK to have open conversations with countries on a range of issues, including the death penalty. It is a longstanding policy of the UK Government to oppose the death penalty, in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. Through both targeted bilateral interventions and working with multilateral institutions, the UK continues to work to bring an end to the use of the death penalty.

China: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of attempts by the government of China to silence dissidents based in the UK. [HL4619]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: As a matter of longstanding policy, we do not comment on the detail of security assessments, however, we continually assess potential threats in the UK, and take protection of individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety in the UK very seriously.

As you would expect, Home Office officials work closely with the FCDO and DLUHC as well as other government departments in ensuring that the UK is a safe and welcoming place for all who choose to settle here.

Council Tax: Billing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support households facing rising council tax bills in 2023. [HL4637]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government has legislated to require councils to set up their own local support schemes for council taxpayers in financial need. Additionally, the Government is providing councils with £100 million of additional funding to support economically vulnerable households with their council tax bills.

Criminal Investigation

Asked by Lord Heseltine

To ask His Majesty's Government how many current criminal investigations by the police and HMRC began (1) more than four, and (2) more than two years ago; and of these cases how many are waiting for a charging decision by the Crown Prosecution Service. [HL4611]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office collects and publishes information on the outcomes of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, including those yet to be assigned an outcome and still under investigation, on a quarterly basis. These data do not show which cases still under investigation are awaiting a CPS decision.

These can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>.

The Home Office is working with partners across the Criminal Justice System to increase the number of cases being charged and prosecuted, and reduce the time taken to reach this point.

As of 10 January 2023, HMRC's data shows that a total of 178 individuals across 47 criminal investigation cases opened more than two (but less than four) years ago are awaiting a charging decision from a Prosecutor (CPS in England & Wales, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal in Scotland or Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland). HMRC's data shows that a total of 261 individuals across 51 criminal investigation cases opened over four years ago are awaiting a charging decision from a Prosecutor. HMRC figures reflect only cases that have been referred to a prosecutor and are not the sum total of all criminal investigations that were opened within the requested timescales.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Rwanda

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the President of the Republic of Rwanda's annual end-of-year address, broadcast on 31 December 2022, what assessment they have made of (1) relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and (2) the ongoing conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; and what steps they intend to take in response to that speech. [HL4547]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We continue to raise ongoing tensions in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the Governments of Rwanda and the DRC at the highest levels. We welcome agreement on a ceasefire as agreed at the Luanda Summit in Angola on 23 November 2022. In the week of 9 January, the Minister for Africa spoke to both the Rwandan and the DRC Foreign Ministers. He urged both parties to meet the commitments made under Nairobi and Luanda political processes. It is vital that all parties work together to secure real de-escalation on the ground and an enduring political solution. The UK has committed funding support to the East African Community Nairobi political process towards this end.

Eggs: Marketing

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the assessment they have already made on the 16-week grace period for the marketing of free-range eggs in the event of mandatory housing measures imposed by the Chief Veterinary Office, whether they plan to amend existing legislation in this area. [HL4868]

Lord Benyon: In recognition of the pressures the egg sector is currently facing, particularly rising input costs alongside the impacts of Avian Influenza, Defra has granted a concession which will apply if the housing orders that are currently in place in England exceed the 16-week derogation period. This concession will allow producers and packers, on a one-off basis, the option to use either direct print to pack or an affixed label on free-range boxes. Accompanying clear and transparent point of sale signage should also be in place to ensure consumers are not misled and to avoid undermining consumer confidence in the free-range industry.

We are aware that there are proposals in the EU to amend the derogation period. We are closely following the negotiations on this proposal. We are under no obligation to align with the EU and Defra currently has no plans to amend the 16-week derogation period. We are keen to ensure we retain consumer confidence in our free-range brand and the need therefore to act in the interests of both UK producers and consumers.

Egg Marketing Standards are a devolved matter, and so, any review of or changes to the standards would be a matter for each of the administrations in Great Britain.

Eggs: Production

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make an "exceptional market conditions" direction under the Agriculture Act 2020, given the disruption being experienced by egg producers and consumers. [HL4869]

Lord Benyon: Defra has no plans to recommend that a declaration of exceptional market conditions be made for the egg sector under Section 20 of the Agriculture Act 2020. Other sectors have experienced similar problems and supply chains have themselves adjusted to address the challenges related to rising input costs, which the egg sector has started to do.

The UK egg industry operates in an open market and the value of egg commodities, including the farm gate egg price, is established by those in the supply chain including farmers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers. While government may act in exceptional circumstances, we do not set retail food prices nor comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by companies. In the event of exceptional circumstances, the Government has powers in the Agriculture Act 2020 to act to support farmers. The Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries hosted a roundtable on 6 December 2022 which brought together representatives from across the UK egg supply chain to discuss the challenges the egg industry is facing. The meeting was productive and conducted in a constructive manner with a clear willingness from all parties to address issues affecting the supply chain.

We are keeping the egg situation under close review, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which was set up by Defra and the Devolved Administrations to monitor the UK market situation across all key agricultural commodities.

Fish Farming: Animal Welfare

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 27 April 2022 (HL7869), when they expect to receive the Animal Welfare Committee's updated opinion on the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing. [HL4659]

Lord Benyon: We expect to receive the Animal Welfare Committee's updated opinion on the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing by the end of March this year.

Fishing Vessels: Migrant Workers

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Minister for Immigration will meet fishing industry representatives in Scotland and Northern Ireland to discuss migrant crewing issues for UK registered fishing vessels; and if so, when. [HL4630]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Minister for Immigration regularly meets various stakeholders to discuss a wide range of matters relating to immigration.

On 11 January 2023 the Minister for Immigration met with elected and industry representatives from Northern Ireland to discuss the UK's immigration system and the use of it by the fishing industry.

Gambling: Crime

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of the cost to the state of gambling-driven crime. [HL4633]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office does not hold the information which you have requested on the estimates for state costs arising from gambling-driven crime.

The Home Office holds information on the value of assets recovered under POCA 2002 from offenders who committed other types of offences including fraud and money laundering. This data is included in the Asset Recovery Statistical Bulletin which is published every year. Its latest release was in September 2022, covering the period between financial year 2016 to 2017 and 2021 to 2022. The total value of proceeds of crime recovered under POCA from fraud related offences over the last six financial years, is £388m as shown in [Table 11](#).

Housing: Construction

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) one, and (2) two, bedroom homes have been built in (a) urban, and (b) rural, areas in each of the last three years in England. [HL4785]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) publishes annual statistics on the stock of domestic properties in the council taxbase in England which does contain information on the number of bedrooms. These statistics can be found [here](#). This information covers all housing stock, not just newly built properties.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

VOA Council Tax Statistics [HL4785 - Valuation Office Agency_Council Tax statistics - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-16/HL4785>

Hydrogen: Heating

Asked by *Lord Teverson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they will provide to residents of areas covered by the hydrogen heating pilot who decide to opt out of the programme and operate on electric power. [HL4640]

Lord Callanan: Last year the Government published a framework of consumer protections for those in the village trial area, with which the Gas Distribution Networks must comply. This sets out that the GDNs must treat all residents in the hydrogen village trial area fairly, including those who choose an alternative heating technology. No one will be expected to pay for the installation or maintenance of appliances or pay more for heating than they would if they remained on natural gas.

Iron and Steel: UK Internal Trade

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to secure tariff-free movement of steel from the UK to Northern Ireland, given the recent application of tariff on such movements. [HL4626]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: In January 2021, the Government implemented measures to ensure UK traders could move steel products captured by the EU's steel safeguard quota, tariff-free, to Northern Ireland while the quota was open. Since July 2022, the quota for certain steel product categories has been filling up rapidly due to changes to the quota allocation by the EU. Where a tariff is due, traders may be able to use the [Customs Duty Waiver Scheme](#).

The Government continues to engage with the EU to find a solution to ensure that trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland can take place without undue disruption.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by *Baroness Janke*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli officials prevented Palestinian Christians in the occupied territories from accessing Christmas festivals in other occupied territories in December 2022. [HL4574]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of Palestinians as well as the impact on religious harmony. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution, as I made clear during my visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January.

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the historic status quo governing Jerusalem's holy sites including Al-Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount. [HL4593]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK recognises that Jerusalem's holy sites hold particular significance for all Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world. As set out to the UN Security Council on 5 January, the UK is committed to working with all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the status quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Aqsa Mosque / Al Haram Al Sharif / Temple Mount and all who worship there. I emphasised the UK's unwavering support for Jordanian custodianship during my visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount on 12 January.

Kickstart Scheme

Asked by *Lord Leong*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) rate, and (2) value, of losses since the launch of the Kickstart Scheme in 2020. [HL4620]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Kickstart Scheme has not declared any losses.

The National Audit Office (NAO) report on the Kickstart Scheme was published in November 2021. This report contains details on spend as of the end of September 2021. You can access the NAO report [here](#).

Music

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will list the specific benefits that have accrued to (1) the UK music industry, and (2) musicians, as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [HL4817]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: HM Government is working with every sector to seize the economic and political opportunities arising from our departure from the European Union – ensuring that our laws, regulations, and policies are helping to boost growth, drive innovation, and increase the competitiveness of the United Kingdom. We are developing trade deals with priority markets – something we could not do while a member of the European Union – focusing on alleviating trade barriers to enhance the movement of goods, global sales of services, and a forward-thinking intellectual property framework.

We are already delivering on some of the key opportunities for the UK music industry and musicians. Recent analysis shows that the fastest-growing recorded music markets are outside the EU, in Latin America and Asia – driven by the rapid growth of streaming. The Department for International Trade delivers an export programme for music, focusing on these priority markets, with upcoming trade missions to the USA, Australia, India, China and Japan, and the British Music Embassy at 'South by Southwest' in Austin, Texas.

The Government recognises that the way musicians work in and with the European Union has changed that now we are no longer a member of it. The Government is committed to supporting the sector to adapt to these new arrangements, and has worked with sector representatives and directly with Member States to clarify what this entails.

In addition, the Government continues to provide export support for the UK's creative industries through a range of export support programmes, including the successful Music Export Growth Scheme and the International Showcase Fund, designed to introduce successful UK music projects across the globe, in Europe and beyond.

Pigs: Animal Breeding

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decline in the UK's breeding pig population; and what steps they are taking to support British pig farmers. [HL4831]

Lord Benyon: There has been a 15% decrease in the pig breeding herd in 2022, but this should be seen alongside a 10% increase in 2021. The number of fattening pigs has remained fairly constant over the past decade due to productivity improvements in the sector so this has masked the steadily falling number of breeding pigs. A number of factors, including high feed and energy costs, have led some producers to not put breeding pigs

back into production. This is a commercial decision for producers. In July 2022, Defra launched a UK-wide review of supply chain fairness in the pig sector seeking views on potential improvements that could be made to ensure a profitable and productive future for the industry. The consultation was carried out in response to recent challenges experienced by the sector, due to global pressures including rising costs and labour shortages, which raised questions about the functioning of the supply chain. The consultation closed on 7th October, and we are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a Summary of Responses, outlining the main findings, in early 2023. To further support the sector Defra is working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education on addressing recruitment and retention of domestic workers in the pig sector. Defra continues to keep the pigmeat market under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group. UKAMMG monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade, and recent developments.

Police: Vetting

Asked by Lord Hamilton of Epsom

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 17 November 2022 (HL3192), what assessment they have made of the reported involvement of the Police Federation in the transfer of police officers suspected of links to organised crime, or found guilty of sexual crimes to other police forces without vetting. [HL4610]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The government expects police forces to carry out their vetting in line with the College of Policing's vetting statutory code of practice and vetting authorised professional practice (APP) guidance.

With regards to transferees, the APP states that the receiving force must request the full complaint and misconduct history of the officer or staff member from the parent force and from any other forces where they have served. Other relevant information such as corruption intelligence and notifiable associations should also be collated. The APP does not provide for the Police Federation to have any influence over this process.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS') report of 2nd November into vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service recognised that the inspected forces were complying with the APP in respect of transferees but recommended inserting further safeguards into the vetting process. All of the relevant bodies have committed to addressing the recommendations from the report in full.

Private Rented Housing

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will undertake a formal assessment of the extent of supply problems in the private rented sector. [HL4641]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the impact of tax changes on (1) the private rental market, and (2) the supply of homes to rent. [HL4642]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Since 2010, there have been a range of policy changes affecting private landlords. These include tax changes for buy-to-let landlords, changes to the Stamp Duty Land Tax, and the growing role of the build-to-rent sector.

The English Housing Survey provides information on households and housing stock. The proportion of Private Rented Sector (PRS) households has remained relatively stable for nearly a decade. The PRS was 19% of households in 2013-14 and continues to be at 19% according to the latest data for 2021-22, collected during the pandemic.

The department also continues to monitor key sources of market data as an indicator of supply and demand. Rightmove's Rental Trends Tracker reported that in Q3 of 2022, tenant demand had increased by 20% while available properties to rent had decreased by 9% compared to Q3 of 2021. The department will continue to follow these statistics closely including to examine the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

Private Rented Housing: Energy

Asked by Baroness Redfern

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will respond to the Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes consultation, which ran from 30 September 2020 to 8 January 2021. [HL4629]

Lord Callanan: The Government has carefully analysed the responses received and is considering how best to ensure the cost relating to energy efficiency improvement are fair and proportionate to landlords and tenants. The Government will publish a response in due course.

Regional Planning and Development

Asked by Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) inflation, and (2) increased prices, on levelling-up projects being funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and what assessment they have made of the likelihood of any such projects being cancelled. [HL4782]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The department continues to monitor the impact of inflation and increased prices through both formal reporting mechanisms and on the ground relationships. We have put reasonable adjustments and flexibilities in place to mitigate pressures, giving places greater autonomy to manage projects facing rising

costs whilst maintaining value for money. We have also agreed a £65 million package of support for local authorities delivering Levelling Up Fund projects.

Research: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the total government spend in (1) 2018, and (2) 2019, on research and development. [HL4615]

Lord Callanan: The Office for National Statistics publishes annual data on research and development expenditure by the UK government. Their latest data up to 2020, released in April 2022, is available on the ONS website.

Worksheet 3 of that publication gives total figures of £12,765 million in 2018, £13,542 million in 2019 and £15,266 million in 2020. These figures include indicative UK contributions to EU R&D expenditure but exclude expenditure on knowledge transfer.

Research: Finance

Asked by Lord Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government what amount was provided in research and development grants to (1) the steel industry, (2) the ship building industry, (3) the aerospace industry, and (4) the building and construction industries, in (a) 2018, and (b) 2019. [HL4616]

Lord Callanan: I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave him on 2nd November 2022 to Question HL2736. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold the requested information. Government innovation funding is generally not allocated on a sector-by-sector basis but is instead targeted towards specific research questions. Many research, development and innovation programmes support multiple sectors. For example, the Government invested £22.25m in 2018/19 and £28.34m in 2019/20 through the Transforming Construction Challenge (TCC), which supported energy, digital and manufacturing innovators to work with the construction sector.

Roads: Cameras

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask His Majesty's Government whether recordings from road traffic cameras can be used by the police in investigating all types of crime. [HL4622]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, evidence from a road traffic enforcement device is obtained for certain motoring offences and used in court proceedings without the need for other corroborative evidence. Therefore, the use of road traffic cameras does not extend to all crime types.

Saudi Arabia: Slavery

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what specific representations they have made to the government of Saudi Arabia over the continuance of modern slavery and other reported human rights abuses of expatriate workers in that country, particularly domestic workers, farmers and drivers. [HL4537]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: His Majesty's Government has regular discussions with Saudi Arabia about modern slavery and labour laws. I last discussed these matters on 21 December with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission. We welcome the labour law reforms for migrant workers that were announced in 2021 and have encouraged the Kingdom to expand these to include domestic workers. We also welcome progress in implementing the Saudi National Action Plan to combat human trafficking, including recent agreements with the International Organisation for Migration and the UN.

Sleeping Rough

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the number of people sleeping rough. [HL4653]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We have made good progress towards our goal to end rough sleeping. Since the peak in 2017 we have seen a sustained decrease in rough sleeping numbers, with rough sleeping on a single night 49% lower in 2021 than in 2017, according to the official snapshot. However we are not complacent and recognise that times are tough for many people.

Our latest published management information, which provides more timely but unverified data on rough sleeping, shows that there were 2,900 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in September 2022 - up 20% since the same period since last year. We know based on previous trends that rough sleeping figures increase during the summer months and decrease during the winter months, so some seasonal fluctuation is anticipated.

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what lessons they have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic period in their approach to rough sleeping. [HL4654]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The pandemic response, including 'Everyone In', saved hundreds of lives - an estimated 266 Covid-19-related deaths were avoided in 2020. By March 2022, we had helped over 43,000 people into settled accommodation or supported housing pathway as part of our response to the pandemic. We continue to support all local areas across England to promote vaccination amongst people sleeping rough. The pandemic response made clear the powerful impact that

can be achieved when government, local government, and the voluntary and community sector work together with health and housing partners.

South Sudan: Journalism

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of South Sudan regarding the reported arrest of six journalists in that country. [HL4636]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Charge d'Affaires in Juba met with the Chair of the Union of Journalists for South Sudan and has publicly called for due process to be followed in the case of six members of South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation staff being detained. We consistently raise the importance of freedom of expression and of the media, and the need to adhere to fair legal processes, with the Government of South Sudan.

Sustainable Farming Incentive

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they assess and determine the financial surplus required to induce farmers to participate in schemes under the Sustainable Farming Incentive. [HL4621]

Lord Benyon: The SFI standards payment rates have been set to balance good value for money for the taxpayer and delivery of ambitious environmental outcomes.

Defra sets payment rates based on the net income the farmer would forgo on their land and the net costs of delivering the action for the average (median) farm eligible for the action, which is the methodology used in our environmental schemes such as Countryside Stewardship. These rates are independently verified by evidence from specialist consultancies.

Typhoon Aircraft

Asked by *Lord Goddard of Stockport*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to upgrade the Royal Air Force Typhoon aircraft; and how many of those aircraft left service in each of the past five years. [HL4609]

Baroness Goldie: In July 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced a further £2.35 billion investment in Typhoon, including fitting an electronically scanned radar, the European Common Radar System (ECRS) Mk2, as well as other improvements under the Phase 4 Enhancement aircraft upgrade package.

On current planning the bulk of the Typhoon Tranche 1 aircraft will go out of service on 31 March 2025, whilst four will be retained until 2027. As the Tranche 1 fleet draws down, aircraft will undergo a Reduce to Produce programme to strip them of useable parts after which they will be sent for disposal action.

The retirement of Typhoon Tranche 1 will enable further investment in Typhoon Tranche 2 and 3.

UK Research and Innovation: Finance

Asked by Lord Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the annual budget for UK Research and Innovation. [HL4617]

Lord Callanan: UKRI's allocations were published on 30th May 2022. This details UKRI's budget for the for the financial years 2022-2023 to 2024-2025, as set out below:

UKRI Allocation Plans 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 (£m)

2022-23	2022-24	2024-25	Total over SR21 (2022-2023 to 2024-2025)
7,904	8,373	8,874	25,151

At the 2022 Autumn Statement, my Rt Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer reaffirmed the R&D budget for the 2021 Spending Review period, including a commitment to increasing public expenditure on R&D to £20 billion per annum by 2024/2025.

Wagner Group

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to amend their list of proscribed terrorist organisations to include the Wagner Group. [HL4701]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Whilst the Government keeps the list of proscribed organisations under review, we do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription.

The Government remains concerned about Russia's use of private military companies such as the Wagner Group. We take the provision of mercenaries and other military support to parties in conflicts such as Libya, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere very seriously. We continue to work closely with our international partners to counter Russian malign activity and respond to actions that undermine the rules based international system.

Our package of sanctions in support of Ukraine targets those aiding Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This includes the Wagner Group and on 24 March 2022 the UK designated Wagner Group under our autonomous sanctions regime.

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