

**Session 2022-23  
No. 103**



**Thursday  
26 January 2023**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 26 January 2023

## Agricultural Transition Plan

[HLWS517]

**Lord Benyon:** My Right Honourable friend the Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mark Spencer) has made the following Statement:

We are undertaking the most significant reform of agricultural policy and spending in England in decades as we take England out of the EU's bureaucratic and damaging Common Agricultural Policy. Today I am setting out detailed plans for the nation's farming sector, supporting farmers to be profitable and resilient as they produce food sustainably while protecting nature and enhancing the environment.

These plans build on the announcements made at the Oxford Farming Conference earlier this month. They provide clarity and certainty to farmers, allowing them to make business decisions and cover costs as direct payments are phased out whilst getting involved in Environmental Land Management schemes.

The roll out of the Sustainable Farming Incentive will be accelerated, with six additional standards added this year, meaning farmers can receive payment for actions on hedgerows, grassland, arable and horticultural land, integrated pest management and nutrient management. They build on the three existing standards to improve soil health and moorlands introduced in 2022 – which nearly 1,900 farmers already have in agreements.

Farmers will also be paid to deliver more through an enhanced version of the Countryside Stewardship scheme, which will see around 30 additional actions available to farmers by the end of 2024. The expansion builds on the more than 250 actions farmers can take at present. The scheme has seen a 94% increase in uptake since 2020 and is now part of thousands of farm businesses. The next round of Countryside Stewardship Higher-Tier will open in February, with Mid-Tier following in March.

Countryside Stewardship Plus will reward farmers for taking coordinated action, working with neighbouring farms and landowners to support climate and nature aims. The Countryside Stewardship scheme will also be improved so farmers benefit from greater flexibility over when they can apply and how they manage their agreements, with improved access for tenant farmers and increased access to Higher Tier options and agreements.

Applications for the second round of the Landscape Recovery scheme will open in the spring to support ambitious large-scale nature recovery projects, focusing on net zero, protected sites and habitat creation. We will take on up to 25 projects which could include projects creating and enhancing woodlands, peatland, nature reserves and protected sites such as ancient woodlands, wetlands and salt marshes.

Taken together, the Environmental Land Management schemes will offer something for every type of farmer. This includes tenant farmers, with a range of actions relevant to their holding, especially through the Sustainable Farming Incentive which has been designed with them in mind. The schemes will make food production more resilient and efficient over the longer term whilst contributing towards the UK's environmental goals on climate adaptation, biodiversity, water quality and net zero. Together this will safeguard the long-term prosperity of the farming industry and protect the environment for future generations.

## Automatic Enrolment Earnings Trigger and Qualifying Earnings Band Review 2023-24

[HLWS511]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions (Laura Trott MP) has made the following Written Statement:

Automatic enrolment into workplace pensions (AE) has been a great success to date, with over 10.8 million people having been automatically enrolled and more than 2.1 million employers meeting their duties. Since the introduction of AE in 2012, total annual pension saving by eligible employees has increased by £33 billion in real terms. The Government remains committed to building on this achievement and to transforming the retirement prospects for millions of workers.

The main focus of this year's annual review of the AE earnings trigger and lower and upper earnings limits of the qualifying earnings band (the AE thresholds) has been to ensure the continued stability of the policy in light of the impact of Covid-19 and prevailing economic factors. We want to ensure that our approach continues to enable individuals, for whom it makes economic sense, to save towards their pensions whilst also ensuring affordability for employers and taxpayers. The review has concluded that all AE thresholds for 2023-24 will be maintained at their 2022-23 levels. This is consistent with our ambitions to build a stronger, more inclusive savings culture. The Government are considering what more can be done to enable people to have greater financial security in retirement.

### *The 2023-24 Annual Thresholds*

The automatic enrolment earnings trigger will remain at £10,000.

The lower earnings limit of the qualifying earnings band will remain at £6,240.

The upper earnings limit of the qualifying earnings band will remain at £50,270.

The analysis supporting the review will be published and a copy placed in the Library of the House. It will be available on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website, following publication.

## Conflict, Stability and Security Fund Allocations 2022-23

[HLWS516]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Rt. Hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, Jeremy Quin MP, has today made the following statement:

I wish to update the House on the publication of the Annual Report of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) for Financial Year 2021/22, as well as to announce the initial regional and thematic allocations for this Financial Year (2022/23).

The CSSF is a cross-government fund which uses Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA funding to enable the integrated delivery of National Security Council priorities. In 2021/22, the CSSF spent £858.7 million against a final cross-government allocation of £864.2 million, representing 99.4% spend. A further breakdown of spend against regional and thematic allocation, by department and by discretionary and non-discretionary spend is included in the FY21/22 Annual Report.

The report outlines how the Fund evolved to deliver against the priorities set out in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, including through the introduction of two new portfolios: International State Threats which aims to improve the UK's ability to detect and deter hostile state activity; and the Gender Peace and Security Portfolio, which seeks to use innovative approaches to addressing gender in post-conflict reconstruction work.

The Report further demonstrates how CSSF programmes have delivered against the Fund's core principles, including through further improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of results to ensure value for money and effective delivery.

During this reporting period, the Fund continued to adapt to address the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and played an important role in the UK's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A copy of this document will be deposited in the libraries of both Houses in Parliament and published on GOV.UK.

The CSSF has allocated £889 million to portfolios for financial year 2022/23. This includes some over-allocation, following best practice, to ensure full spend by the end of the financial year.

*FY 2022/23 Allocations (millions)*

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Non-ODA</i>	<i>ODA</i>	<i>Total</i>
Middle East North Africa	33.327	56.894	90.221

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Non-ODA</i>	<i>ODA</i>	<i>Total</i>
Eastern Europe, Central Asia	43.765	45.1	88.865
Africa (sub-Saharan)	34.759	37	71.759
Western Balkans	11.097	29.4	40.497
Overseas Territories	21.289	4.869	26.158
South Asia	10.172	30.145	40.317
Asia Pacific	3.526	11.2	14.726
Americas	0	8	8
REGIONAL TOTAL	157.936	222.608	380.544
Counter Extremism	14.674	20.526	35.2
Serious and Organised Crime	8.531	12.62	21.151
Cyber	14.531	11.55	26.081
Multilateral Strategy	3.581	4.387	7.968
Gender, Peace and Security	0.578	5	5.578
Migration	1.156	5	6.156
International State Threats	11.56	2	13.56
National Security Communications Team	3.581	0	3.581
THEMATIC TOTAL	58.192	61.083	119.275
Peacekeeping	234.159	76.466	310.625
AMISOM	30	0	30

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Non-ODA</i>	<i>ODA</i>	<i>Total</i>
MOD UN Ops Africa	28.617	0	28.617
MOD UNFICYP	6.263	0	6.263
Non-Discretionary TOTAL	299.039	76.466	375.505
Corporate Delivery Support & Other (this includes Joint Funds Unit and pilot activities)	6.936	6.934	13.87
TOTAL CSSF	522.103	367.091	889.194

## Food and Drink Export Council

[HLWS515]

**Lord Johnson of Lainston:** My Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Exports) (Andrew Bowie MP) has today made the following statement:

Today I am providing an update on the establishment of the Food and Drink Export Council (FDEC).

I am pleased to announce that the inaugural meeting of the FDEC took place on Wednesday 25 January 2023.

The UK Government previously announced its intention to establish the new FDEC in response to recommendation 13 of the Trade and Agriculture Commission. The Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have worked in partnership with the devolved administrations and industry to develop the remit and membership of the FDEC.

The FDEC is a collaborative expert committee which I co-chair alongside Ian Wright CBE, a leading figure in the industry.

British food and drink are among the best in the world and renowned for their quality and provenance. Exporting supports higher pay and more productive jobs. We are helping our farmers and food producers to seize the opportunity of the enormous global demand for British food and drink. The Council has an 18-month term with a focus on harnessing the expertise and resource from government and industry across the UK in a collective endeavour to increase agriculture, food, and drink exports. It brings together dynamic agriculture, food, and drink sector experts from across the UK with an onus on sharing knowledge, raising ambition, building capability, and effective collaboration. The full membership is listed below:

- i) Ian Wright CBE (Co-chair)
- ii) Andy Richardson, Volac
- iii) Anthony Mulley, Quorn
- iv) Dominic Goudie, Food and Drink Federation
- v) Donna Fordyce, Seafood Scotland
- vi) Ewen Cameron, Scottish Development International
- vii) Grainne Moody, Invest NI
- viii) Helen Dallimore, Coombe Castle
- ix) Iain Baxter, Scotland Food and Drink
- x) Keith Smyton, Welsh Government
- xi) Lee Hemmings, Belvoir Farm
- xii) Margaret Boanas, International Meat Trade Association
- xiii) Michael Bell OBE, Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association
- xiv) Nick von Westenholz, National Farmers Union
- xv) Patricia Dillon, Speyside Distillers
- xvi) Phil Hadley, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
- xvii) Rachel Gwyon, DIT
- xviii) Sandra Sullivan MBE, Food and Drink Exporters Association
- xix) Tee Sandhu, SamosaCo
- xx) Tim Brooks, DEFRA.

The launch of the FDEC reflects the UK Government's strategy to promote exports from all parts of the UK and level up the country. It is a genuine partnership which recognises and respects the unique and different approaches to supporting exports that have evolved across the whole of the UK. The FDEC has no remit to discuss strategic trade policy, negotiations of free trade agreements, or areas of devolved or reserved competence.

You can find out more about the FDEC here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/food-and-drink-export-council>

## Proceeds of Crime Act 2002: Appointed Person Report 2021-22

[HLWS513]

**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:

I am today laying before Parliament the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) Appointed Person report covering England and Wales for the period 2021-22. The Appointed Person is independent of Government and scrutinises the circumstances and manner in which search and seizure powers conferred by the Act are exercised under particular circumstances.

I am pleased that we are now able to publish the Appointed Person's latest report. Having considered the circumstances in which the relevant powers were used, the Appointed Person is satisfied that the criteria required for justifying the searches without prior judicial approval were met and that the powers of search were exercised appropriately.

In 2021-22, there has been a decrease in the number of cases where search and seizure powers are used without prior approval, although we are seeing a number of new agencies report across the country who have not submitted reports previously. Notably, three separate cases related to the seizure of cryptoassets. Seizing cryptoassets without judicial approval is largely due to agencies having to move quickly before the assets are accessed from another device and moved elsewhere. Proposed reforms in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill are designed to enable the seizure of cryptoassets in more circumstances than at present.

The Appointed person has also recognised our progress against previous recommendations and has made no new recommendations for the period. This suggests that the powers are being used in accordance with the Act. These powers are important for agencies to act quickly in live operation to search and seize potential criminal assets, so we are pleased to see that they are being used appropriately. We will continue to monitor the way that the powers have been used closely.

Copies of the report will be available in the Vote Office.

## Union and Devolution Policy

[HLWS514]

**Lord True:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

It was announced on 11 October 2022 that responsibility for Union and Devolution policy would move from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to the Cabinet Office under the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

On 25 October, I appointed the Secretary of State for Levelling Up as Minister for Intergovernmental Relations. This means that day to day responsibility for the Union and Devolution Policy will remain in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Union and Constitution Group will also have a presence in the Cabinet Office to support me in my role as Minister for the Union.

Strengthening the Union and delivering for all people and communities across the UK is a priority for all of UK Government. This change will allow the Levelling Up Secretary to lead the Government's day to day engagement with the Devolved Administrations and drive forward cross-Government efforts towards delivering tangible improvements for people across the UK, including through levelling up.

## Windrush: Lessons Learned Review Recommendations

[HLWS512]

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

Today I am updating Parliament on Home Office delivery of the recommendations set out in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review (WLLR), published in March 2020.

Since my appointment as Home Secretary, I have made a commitment to resolve the outstanding issues related to Windrush and have met with members of the Windrush Working Group both to hear their feedback and more formally at the most recent Cross Government Windrush Working Group where I was honoured to co-chair with Bishop Derek Webley.

Since the injustices of Windrush came to light, there has been a concerted effort across the Home Office to right the wrongs suffered by those affected. This work continues and we are making sustained progress delivering on the recommendations and the commitments made in our Comprehensive Improvement Plan.

In her report last year, Wendy Williams concluded that 21 out of 30 of her recommendations have been met or partially met. She acknowledged that the scale of the challenge she set the department was significant and that change on this scale takes time.

Since then, we have made further progress in delivering against Wendy Williams' recommendations.

For example, in June 2022, the 'Serving Diverse Communities – Acting on Our Values' learning package was launched across the Home Office, starting with Recommendations 24 (learning for Senior Civil Servants) and 29 (diversity and inclusion). The learning package for Recommendation 6 – The History of the UK and its Relationship with the Rest of the World, will be launched in the coming weeks.

The department continues to make progress on compensating those unfairly impacted. As of December 2022, the Windrush Compensation scheme paid out or offered £64.08m in compensation to Windrush victims across 1,417 claims. £53.98m of this has been paid and over 59% of claims (3,025) have received a final decision.

The Home Office regularly reviews the best way to deliver against the intent of Wendy Williams' Windrush Lessons Learned review. As such, after considering officials advice, I have decided not to proceed with Recommendations 3 (Run Reconciliation Events), 9 (Introduce Migrants' Commissioner) and 10 (Review the remit and role of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI)) in their original format.

Extensive consideration has been given to how to deliver these recommendations in appropriate and meaningful ways: ensuring that individuals have opportunities to tell their stories; amplifying the voices of



individuals engaging with the immigration system; and driving scrutiny of the department.

On reconciliation events specifically, on the balance of expert advice received on how to approach this incredibly sensitive subject, I am persuaded that there are more effective ways of engaging with those impacted.

The department has undertaken a significant programme of face-to-face engagement with the communities impacted by the Windrush scandal since 2018. Surgeries were held in community halls and places such as churches, mosques and care homes, as and where the need was identified. The engagement events were held in most major cities across the UK and including regions such as the West Midlands, London and South West. The events were hosted by senior members of the Windrush Programme and provided individuals with the opportunity to speak to them about the impact the scandal had had on their and their family's lives. Over 3,000 people were reached through these events. This engagement with communities is further supported by the £500,000 Windrush Community Fund which was launched in 2020 and provided funding to grassroots organisations and charities with grants of up to £25,000 each to promote the Windrush Schemes in innovative ways. Regular dialogue hosted by senior officials are held in forums with external stakeholders from Windrush communities who provide feedback and scrutiny of our engagement and communication efforts.

This type of engagement will remain an important part of our work. Further, I look forward to celebrating the contribution that the Windrush community has made to our country in the upcoming 75th anniversary celebrations.

Recommendations 9 and 10 relate to the establishment of a Migrants Commissioner and a review of the role of the ICIBI. As Home Secretary, I remain committed to the importance of scrutiny, both internal and external. There are a number of ways in which we are inviting this challenge and scrutiny in a more efficient way. In October 2022, the department established the Independent Examiner for Complaints (IEC). This office will ensure that customers who are not satisfied with the final response to their complaints have an opportunity to have their case reviewed independently by the IEC, helping the

Home Office to identify learning and wider lessons from complaints to improve its service.

The IEC provides scrutiny of the department's complaints procedure. Beyond this, I remain committed to the importance of scrutiny. I welcome the insight and challenge that I and the wider department have received from our colleagues in the Windrush Working Group. Professor Martin Levermore, in his role as Independent Advisor, has been constructively challenging and very supportive in the development of the Windrush Compensation Scheme. This has included proactively providing suggestions on improvements to the Scheme, such as enhancing linkages between the Compensation Scheme and the Windrush Status Scheme, which the department is now actively working on delivering.

External bodies are not the only source of scrutiny. As Wendy Williams identified, the very culture of the department needed a fundamental shift, bringing policy development and service delivery into contact with those who are impacted by it, including those who might not agree with it. This is how we shift culture and subject ourselves to scrutiny and this is how we are changing.

I am proud of the efforts made by teams across the Home Office, but we know there is more to do. Many people suffered terrible injustices and the department will continue working hard to deliver a Home Office worthy of every community served. Wendy Williams acknowledged that our ambition to achieve genuine cultural change requires ongoing reflection and a commitment to constant improvement. She acknowledged that the scale of the challenge she set the department was significant and that change on this scale takes time. The Home Office keeps the Home Affairs Select Committee updated on progress against the recommendations and will continue to do so.

An update on each of the recommendations is provided in the attached table.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Table [Windrush Recommendation Update.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2023-01-26/HLWS512/>

# Written Answers

Thursday, 26 January 2023

## Accident and Emergency Departments and Ambulance Services: Standards

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the NHS to take forward plans related to the performance of A&E departments and ambulance services. [HL4773]

**Lord Markham:** Ministers and officials at the Department meet with senior National Health Service leaders on a regular basis to discuss NHS performance, including accident and emergency and ambulance services. As announced at the Autumn Statement, plans for the recovery of urgent and emergency care services will be published in early 2023.

## Africa: Visits Abroad

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government when a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office minister last (1) visited the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, and (2) addressed the Pan-African Parliament in Pretoria; and on how many occasions in the last three years ministers have made such visits. [HL4706]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK enjoys a strong relationship with the African Union (AU), collaborating effectively across a range of shared priorities such as peace and security, climate change, women and girls, food security, health and trade. The UK maintains regular ministerial engagement with counterparts in the AU and its institutions. The former Minister for Development, Rt Hon. Vicky Ford MP, visited the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa most recently on 20 October 2022, where she met the AU's Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). We look forward to more high-level engagement with the African Union in 2023.

## African Union

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contribution of the African Union and its institutions on (1) peace keeping and conflict resolution, (2) progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by its member states, (3) global health and the global response to pandemics, and (4) combatting climate change. [HL4704]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The African Union (AU) is Africa's foremost multilateral body and a key strategic partner for many UK priorities. The AU

plays an important role in regional stability and the UK has worked closely on ATMIS, the reconfigured AU Transition Mission in Somalia. The AU drives the continental response to COVID-19 and we have provided £20 million to support the AU's Covid-19 Response Fund. The UK is supporting the AU's Green Recovery Action Plan for Africa, which will help deliver a clean, sustainable recovery that builds a prosperous and secure future for all African nations. This support will help drive forward the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the AU's Agenda 2063.

## African Union: China and Russia

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level, focus, and impact of support provided to the African Union and its institutions by (1) the government of China, and (2) by the government of Russia. [HL4707]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The African Union (AU) maintains external partnerships with many organisations, regional bodies and countries:

(1) China is one of those countries. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) occurs every three years and China funded the construction of the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Chinese Foreign Minister visited Addis Ababa in January 2023 and was present at the opening of the new Chinese-built Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters.

(2) Russia has a lesser profile presence at the AU. The Russian Foreign Minister visited Addis Ababa in July 2022 but did not visit the AU headquarters.

The UK enjoys a strong relationship with the AU, collaborating effectively across a range of issues such as peace and security, climate change, global health and trade.

## African Union: Development Aid

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the total sum of (1) Official Development Assistance, and (2) technical or other assistance, to the African Union and its institutions in each of the last three years for which records exist; and what proportion of this assistance has been delivered (a) bilaterally through direct budgetary support, and (b) through programmatic support. [HL4705]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK and the African Union (AU) enjoy a strong relationship, collaborating effectively across a range of shared priorities. Between April 2018 and September 2022, the UK has provided the AU with £31.88 million of Official Development Assistance (ODA), supporting the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area, elections monitoring, conflict mediation, the AU's Green Recovery Action Plan and other priority issues for both



the UK and Africa. This ODA spend includes provision of technical assistance, £21.1 million of which has been provided directly to the AU, while the remainder has been channelled through third-party organisations with significant experience of working with the AU to address capacity and capability gaps.

### **Alireza Akbari**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what update they can provide on the case of British-Iranian national, Alireza Akbari, currently detained in Iran on charges of spying and sentenced to death. [HL4721]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The execution of Mr Alireza Akbari, a British-Iranian national, was a barbaric act which deserves condemnation in the strongest possible terms. His execution was a politically-motivated act - showing us the Iranian regime's complete disregard for human life. The UK will not allow this to stand unchallenged. When we were notified of the execution on Saturday 14 January, the Foreign Secretary ordered the summoning of Iran's chargé d'affaires to explain the behaviour of the Iranian Government.

The Foreign Secretary has also temporarily recalled the UK's Ambassador to Tehran for consultations. Iran must be in no doubt about how seriously we view their actions. We also sanctioned Iran's Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri on 14 January - one of the most powerful figures in Iran's judiciary, and responsible for Iran's unacceptable use of the death penalty. We will continue our work, alongside partners, to hold the regime to account.

### **Asylum: Rwanda**

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership on (1) the reduction in the number of individuals illegally trafficked to the UK, and (2) the reduction in the number of criminal gangs involved in human trafficking; and whether they have annual targets for each of these. [HL4736]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office is committed to ending people smuggling. The Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) between the UK and Rwanda is part of a suite of measures aimed at dismantling the business model of organised crime gangs.

The Secretary of State has received advice on all aspects of the policy and its impact. This will include evidence of reduced people smuggling and attempted re-entry.

To date, legal proceedings have prevented relocations to Rwanda taking place. Until relocations are operational, we would not expect to achieve any sustained deterrent impact from the policy.

Once operational, we will carefully monitor the impacts of the MEDP.

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether under their current immigration policy Ukrainian nationals could be removed from the UK to Rwanda for Rwanda to assess asylum applications. [HL4737]

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether under their current immigration policy (1) Afghan nationals, and (2) Syrian nationals, could be removed from the UK to Rwanda for Rwanda to assess those individuals' asylum applications. [HL4738]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** With the exception of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, any individual who has arrived in the UK through dangerous, illegal and unnecessary methods since 1 January 2022 may be considered for relocation to Rwanda. Decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis, and nobody will be relocated if it is unsafe or inappropriate for them. Everyone considered for relocation will be screened and have access to legal advice.

### **Committee of Privileges**

*Asked by Lord Howard of Rising*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 29 November (HL3547) concerning the legal opinion by Lord Pannick published by the Government on 2 September, whether professional legal privilege was waived in relation to the (1) commissioning, and (2) intended publication, of the (a) first, and (b) second, legal opinion by Lord Pannick; and whether any waiving of legal privilege has any implications for (i) their policy of not commenting on legal advice, or (ii) their publishing obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [HL4767]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** Legal professional privilege was waived to the extent necessary to allow publication of Lord Pannick's legal opinion on 2 September 2022. As set out in HL354, given the exceptional circumstances, the Government at the time determined it was in the public interest for Lord Pannick's legal opinion to be published. It remains the case that the Government does not comment on legal advice that may or may not have been sought or received. This is in line with the long-standing policy under successive administrations.

The government's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 remain unchanged. Every request made under the Act is considered on a case by case basis.

## Convention on Biological Diversity

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decisions of UN Biodiversity Conference 2022 for protecting wildlife; and what steps they will take as a result of those decisions. [HL4778]

**Lord Benyon:** The package agreed at COP15, including the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, represent a historic step forward towards addressing the biodiversity crisis. Setting a clear mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, the commitments expected under its 23 targets, notably to protect 30% of global land and 30% of global ocean by 2030, to end human induced-species extinctions of known threatened species by 2030, alongside the package of international nature finance agreed to support its implementation – put us on the path to nature recovery. The key is now to fully implement this ambitious framework across all Parties.

In England, we are setting four legally binding targets for biodiversity: to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030; then to reverse declines by 2042; to reduce the risk of species extinction by 2042; and restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat, also by 2042. We will set out our plan to deliver on these ambitious targets, along with our other environmental targets, in the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). We will publish the EIP and lay it in Parliament by the end of January. Here we will link the different objectives, plans and mechanisms for recovering nature.

## Disability Living Allowance: Invalid Vehicles

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many people have directed the mobility component of their Disability Living Allowance to the purchase of a vehicle in each of the last three years, broken down by regions of the UK. [HL4812]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Claimants who receive the higher rate mobility component for Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the enhanced rate of the mobility component for Personal Independence Payment, Armed Forces Independence Payment or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement can exchange part or all of their mobility component for a leased car, wheelchair or powered chair/scooter through the Motability scheme regardless of their income.

The Department directly transfers the mobility allowance to Motability on behalf of the eligible claimant once they elect to join the Scheme.

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost. The latest Motability annual report published on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 does show that over 650,000 people use the scheme.

## Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the guidance issued on 29 December 2022 by the Environment Agency on the disposal of Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDS) containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), why this legislation was not issued with more notice, given that it affects all councils that collect bulky upholstered domestic waste; what assessment they made of the amount of time that local councils and their Household Recycling Centres would need to make alternative arrangements for such items with their waste disposal partners; and what measures they have put in place to ensure that there is no increase in public fly-tipping and illegal dumping of bulky domestic waste items as a result. [HL4718]

**Lord Benyon:** The Environment Agency (EA) is working to tackle the illegal disposal of waste domestic seating containing large quantities of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Guidance on how to comply with this legislation was published on GOV.UK when this legislation was introduced in 2016 and 2019 explaining the core requirements that apply to any waste containing POPs. Additional guidance was developed, with stakeholders, in winter 2021 to help provide more practical advice and issued to local authorities and their contractors in August 2022 regarding waste domestic seating containing POPs. The guidance was further updated before publishing on GOV.UK on 19th December 2022. The EA will continue to maintain and update this guidance as needed.

The EA and Defra have been working with stakeholders, including local authority representatives, from early 2021, to help them prepare to comply and to understand where changes to waste management arrangements would be required and the impact this would have on local authorities and their contractors. Engagement continued through guidance development and technical resolver groups. The EA attended local authority meetings during the second half of 2022 and has worked with individual local authorities to support them as needed.

The EA has provided three Regulatory Positions designed to help local authorities dispose of this waste appropriately, published in December 2022.

A large minority of local authorities were already incinerating this waste, and our understanding is that many more are now successfully doing so. All waste disposal authorities have household waste recycling centres with environmental permits which permit this waste, and therefore residents should have an outlet to dispose of it. Fly tipping is an offence which all local authorities treat seriously.

The Government recognises that this is particularly challenging for some local authorities due to their geography and infrastructure. Local authorities and their

contractors have a duty of care to understand the nature of the waste they are responsible for and to manage it appropriately. Officials are monitoring a number of risks, including a risk of increased fly-tipping of waste domestic seating. The EA will continue to support local authorities as they take action to comply.

### Energy Bills Discount Scheme: Leisure and Swimming Pools

*Asked by Lord Addington*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have received from organisations about the energy usage in (1) leisure centres, and (2) swimming pools, ahead of the announcement of the Energy Bills Discount Scheme. [HL4693]

*Asked by Lord Addington*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the new Energy Bills Discount Scheme on the number of public swimming pools that will remain open. [HL4694]

*Asked by Lord Addington*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have undertaken an impact assessment on the effect of energy prices on (1) leisure centres, and (2) swimming pools, and their ability to remain open. [HL4695]

**Lord Callanan:** During the review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, analysis of a large number of contributions from different individual companies in the private sector in addition to trade associations, the voluntary sector and other types of organisations were assessed. These included leisure centres and swimming pools.

### Energy: Prices

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made as to whether a mix of energy sources, including renewables, could facilitate a reduction in energy prices for consumers. [HL4749]

**Lord Callanan:** The BEIS "Electricity Generation Costs" report shows that on a levelised cost basis, wind and solar are amongst the cheapest forms of electricity generation in the UK. More low-cost renewables like wind and solar will ensure Britain is less affected by fluctuations in volatile global gas prices.

BEIS's "Modelling 2050 – electricity system analysis" also shows that low-cost future electricity systems require a mix of technologies to balance demand and supply. Highly renewable systems have the lowest overall costs and lowest carbon emissions.

### Environment Protection: Standards

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure that the legal duty on Ministers of the Crown to have due regard to the Environmental Principles policy statement when making policy, required under the Environment Act 2021, will be upheld across government departments once it is implemented. [HL4575]

**Lord Benyon:** Defra is supporting departments with a toolkit of resources that brings together information, examples, case studies and an optional template to help policymakers effectively implement the duty.

Individual Government Departments will determine the best way to integrate the new duty with their existing policymaking processes.

The OEP has committed in its Corporate Plan 2022/23 to "Monitor implementation of the Environmental Principles Policy Statement across UK government departments and publish an evaluation of its implementation in a future year".

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Environmental Principles required under the Environment Act 2021 will be incorporated into the Treasury Green Book. [HL4576]

**Lord Benyon:** We remain committed to updating HM Treasury's Green Book after the final policy statement has been published.

### Environmental Land Management Schemes

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government how tenant farms will benefit under the Environmental Land Management Schemes. [HL4724]

**Lord Benyon:** As we said in response to Baroness McIntosh of Pickering's question HL4012 on 30 December 2022, we are designing the schemes to be simple, flexible, fair and accessible to as many types of farmers and land managers as possible, including tenant farmers. We are aiming to remove barriers to tenants entering schemes where possible, and have done this already in the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Landscape Recovery schemes. Ensuring tenants can benefit from the scheme is one of our design criteria for evolving the existing Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme. We will say more about how tenants can benefit from the evolved Countryside Stewardship scheme in due course.

Like all farmers, tenant farmers in SFI will benefit from the new payment of £20/hectare for the first 50 hectares,

in addition to the payments farmers will receive for delivering SFI standards, to cover the costs of taking part in this scheme. Tenant farmers will also benefit from the updated payment rates for CS for ongoing activities, and for one-off grants for new agreements. The median increase to the value of a CS agreement will be about 10%.

### Farms: Tenants

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many farms were in tenanted occupation in each of the last five years. [HL4723]

**Lord Benyon:** Statistical estimates of the number of commercial agricultural holdings in England in each of the last five years are shown in the table below, split by tenure type (solely owned, solely rented or mixed).

Commercial holdings are those registered with the Rural Payments Agency for payments or livestock purposes and with significant levels of farming activity (as recorded in responses to the Defra June Survey of Agriculture or the Cattle Tracing System). Holdings are only included if they have more than five hectares of agricultural land, one hectare of orchards, 0.5 hectares of vegetables or 0.1 hectares of protected crops, or more than 10 cows, 50 pigs, 20 sheep, 20 goats or 1,000 poultry.

Number of commercial holdings in England by tenure type

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (c)	2021
Solely owned	56,446	54,495	54,923	55,750	:	57,081
Solely rented	14,125	14,536	14,630	14,527	:	14,562
Mixed tenure (a)	35,249	35,954	35,625	34,777	:	32,371
Tenure not declared (b)	1,033	940	857	1,046	:	1,206
Total	106,853	105,925	106,035	106,100	107,079	105,220

: represents data that are not available or have not been collected.

(a) Mixed tenure - includes farms with land both rented and owned.

(b) Tenure not declared - a very small number of holdings provide farmed areas but no detail on ownership. Assumption of tenure cannot be made.

(c) It was not possible to run a full-scale June Survey in 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak. A small-scale survey was run instead to allow us to produce national estimates of key crop areas and livestock populations. As a result, detailed breakdowns are not available

A longer data series is available for England at Agricultural land ownership in England ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

### Flood Control: Somerset Levels

Asked by **Lord Patten**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the resilience of flood protection measures on the Somerset levels during the winter of 2022–23. [HL4790]

**Lord Benyon:** The Somerset Levels and Moors are designed to flood and the moors store flood water when

the rivers flowing through them overtop. The recent heavy rain has caused spillways on the Rivers Tone and Parrett to flow and there is now water stored on the moors. This water can only be pumped back into the rivers when river levels and tides allow. It will therefore never be possible to prevent some properties from flooding occasionally, especially those that are at or below sea level.

Since the flood event in 2013/14, £80 million has been invested in flood risk interventions, which will help the Environment Agency (EA), working with its partners, to reduce flood risk to properties and infrastructure. Interventions include road raising and new control structures to ensure access, dredging of the Rivers Parrett and Tone to ensure maximum conveyance, new flood alleviation schemes, more efficient deployment of temporary pumps at pumping stations, repairs to existing defences, and construction of new schemes. Further details of these interventions can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/somerset-levels-and-moors-reducing-the-risk-of-flooding/somerset-levels-and-moors-reducing-the-risk-of-flooding> (copy attached to this answer).

Asset management is also an integral part of the EA's incident response and recovery function. This includes proactive, preventative maintenance and replacement to



ensure that flood risk management assets operate as and when required. During the current flood incident in this area, the EA has used drones to augment its on-the-ground inspections and check that all its assets are fit for purpose.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Attachment for HL4790 [Somerset Levels and Moors\_ reducing the risk of flooding - 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/HL4790>

## Forests

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of woodland that will be lost by (1) 2030, and (2) 2050, in terms of (a) hectares, and (b) percentage. [HL4552]

**Lord Benyon:** A small amount of woodland is lost each year to development and for the restoration of priority habitat from woodland. We have taken this into account in estimating the area of new tree canopy and woodland cover that will need to be planted to meet the statutory target. The tree and woodland cover target is a net target and our pathway assumes that new planting will need to account for around 9,000 hectares of woodland loss by 2030 and a total of around 20,000 hectares by 2050, based on trends over recent years. This is equivalent to 0.7% and 1.5% of current woodland cover in England.

## Freeports: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Hoey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the reasons for the delay in establishing a freeport in Northern Ireland. [HL4711]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Freeport delivery in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland relies on a partnership between the UK Government and the devolved governments to maximise the incentives and benefits a Freeport can offer.

We continue to work stakeholders from sectors and places across Northern Ireland on how best to deliver the benefits associated with Freeports. We are also discussing the potential for Investment Zones.

## Furniture: Chemicals

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Environment Agency guidance directing that waste upholstered domestic seating containing persistent organic pollutants (POPs) must be destroyed through

incineration, on (1) the capacity of local authorities to provide waste collections, and (2) fly tipping. [HL4538]

**Lord Benyon:** The Environment Agency (EA) is working to tackle the illegal disposal of waste domestic seating containing large quantities of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). It has issued additional guidance to help waste holders comply with important, existing, legal requirements, which minimise the environmental impacts of POPs.

We have been working with both local authority and waste industry representatives since early 2021 to understand the impacts where changes to waste management arrangements are required and help them prepare to comply.

Many local authorities were incinerating waste upholstered domestic seating before the EA guidance was published and others took steps to do so once they became aware of the issue. This has minimised the impact on their waste collections. We expect local authorities to continue to accept waste upholstered domestic seating and to ensure they are disposing of it appropriately.

The Government recognises that this is particularly challenging for some local authorities and is currently aware of three examples of local disruption to waste collections. Officials are monitoring a number of risks, including a risk of increased fly-tipping of waste domestic seating. The EA will continue to support local authorities as they take action to comply.

## Game: Birds

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the avian flu risk presented by the carcasses of shot game birds being dumped in the environment, as occurred in the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on or about 25 December 2022. [HL4536]

**Lord Benyon:** The events that led to the dead pheasants being found in the river in the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are unknown. However, pheasants which are killed during a game shoot, where the birds are shot with the intention of using them for human consumption and which are then collected would be classified as animal by products. Disposal of animal by products is regulated and dumping such game carcasses would be an offence. Anyone concerned about the appropriate disposal of dead animals or non-compliance with avian influenza controls, should contact their local Trading Standards office in the first instance.

Once game birds have been released, they are considered to be wild birds under avian influenza rules. The risk of incursion of highly pathogenic (HPAI) avian influenza H5 in wild birds in Great Britain is currently assessed as very high (i.e. event occurs almost certainly). The risk of wildfowling, driven game shooting and pigeon shooting activities are not considered to significantly increase the risk for long distance dispersal beyond that of



routine movement of infected wild birds. Further details on the evidence which supports this risk level can be found in the Animal and Plant Health Agency Rapid Risk Assessment for spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 from wild birds to poultry from the shooting of wild waterfowl and wild game (including formerly captive) birds.

Members of the public should use either the online reporting system to report findings of dead wild birds or call the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77). Reports to the Defra Helpline of found dead wild birds are triaged and not all birds will be collected.

## Health Services and Social Services

*Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have consulted (1) professional, and (2) unpaid, dementia carers regarding strategic decisions around integrated social care; and if so, how. [HL4751]

**Lord Markham:** The Government will continue to engage stakeholders across the system on the development of approaches to integration. We are engaging with a wide range of voices from across adult social care to ensure that those who experience the system on the ground have an active and influential voice in shaping it. This includes working with people with lived experience of providing care, with our Lived Experience Reference Group including individuals who provide unpaid, dementia care. It also includes leaders from across the system, including the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector and care providers.

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to prioritise funding for public health and primary, community, and social care, in order to resolve capacity problems in A&E and hospital trusts. [HL4772]

**Lord Markham:** The '2023/24 priorities and operational planning guidance', published on 23 December 2022, sets out the action and funding agreed with NHS England to begin recovering National Health Service core services and productivity, including additional capacity for Urgent and Emergency Care. A copy of the guidance is attached.

There will be £1 billion of funding through system allocations to increase capacity based on agreed system plans. It is anticipated that capacity will be focused on increasing General & Acute capacity, intermediate and step-down care and community beds with an expectation of an increase in the utilisation of virtual wards. £600 million will be distributed in 2023/24 and £1 billion in 2024/25 through the Better Care Fund to get people out of hospital on time into care settings, freeing up NHS beds for those that need them. In addition, a £400 million ring-fenced local authority grant for adult social care will support discharge among other goals. There will also be

an increase in allocations for systems that host ambulance services to increase ambulance capacity.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

2023/24 priorities & operational planning guidance [2023-24 planning guidance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-16/HL4772>

## Health Services: Veterans

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the quality of NHS care for veterans and their families. [HL4860]

**Lord Markham:** We have no current plans to make a specific assessment. NHS England regularly review their service provision. This is done through a range of key performance indicators including waiting times and number of referrals and through engagement exercises when procuring new services. As health is a devolved matter, it will be for the devolved administrations in conjunction with the National Health Service to determine which services and the quality of those services, should be assessed in their jurisdiction.

## Heart Diseases and Strokes: Preventive Medicine

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to NICE's recommendation to broaden access to statins for the prevention of strokes and heart attacks, what plans they have, if any, to ask NICE whether this approach could be extended to low-dose blood pressure drugs combined into a single formulation. [HL4823]

**Lord Markham:** We have no current plans to ask the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to develop any such recommendation. NICE is responsible for developing its guidelines independently in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders based on a broad remit referred to it by either the Department or NHS England.

## High Speed 2 Line: Colne Valley

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government how untreated HS2 waste water entered a winterbourne stream in the Colne Valley; and what the chromium levels are in this runoff. [HL4864]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** HS2 Ltd is not aware of any untreated HS2 waste water entering a winterbourne stream in the Colne Valley. HS2 Ltd closely monitors the River Colne catchment area.

## Honey: Imports

Asked by *Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking to stop (1) the importation, and (2) the sale, of adulterated honey. [HL4883]

**Lord Benyon:** This Government takes any type of food fraud very seriously, including honey adulteration. Defra works closely with enforcement authorities who are responsible for enforcing our honey laws, the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) National Food Crime Unit, Food Standards Scotland's (FSS) Food Crime and Incidents Unit, local and port health authorities, industry and others on investigating any potential fraud issues raised, to ensure honey sold in the UK is not subject to adulteration, meets our high standards and maintains a level playing field between honey producers. Imported honey is subject to additional checks as a product of animal origin and routine testing is carried out to ensure that honey entering the UK meets the required rules.

The Government has a programme of research dedicated to honey authenticity where it is actively working to provide information and guidance to those carrying out monitoring and enforcement checks on honey, to protect consumers and legitimate businesses. This programme focuses on disseminating information on honey authenticity, supporting work on analytical testing methods, ensuring their fitness for purpose and standardising approaches.

Asked by *Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what tests government agencies conduct on imported honey. [HL4884]

**Lord Benyon:** Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for enforcement of the honey regulations, including in relation to honey imported into the UK. Honey is considered a product of animal origin and is also subject to additional checks and testing by Port Health Authorities on entry into the UK.

Honey is a complex natural product, meaning analysis can often be challenging. No single test can definitively determine a honey's authenticity, but there are a range of different analytical methods and techniques available to help ensure compliance with the Honey (England) Regulations 2015. By law public analysts are responsible for deciding which tests to use but honey importers and packers will also use a range of testing methods themselves to ensure what they are buying is authentic and complies with UK rules. Tests range from simple chemical testing to isotope ratio analysis and pollen analysis to more complex techniques using nuclear magnetic resonance and mass spectroscopy. Wherever possible any method used to determine honey authenticity should be internationally recognised and validated.

In some instances, LAs will use a weight of evidence approach when assessing if honey is compliant with UK rules ensuring a robust opinion that is not simply based on

the result of one test but on a toolbox of multiple analytical tools, input data, product traceability and record reviews.

## Honey: Origin Marking

Asked by *Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of requiring honey labels to reflect all the countries of origin of the honey. [HL4882]

**Lord Benyon:** All honey on sale in England, regardless of where it comes from, must comply with the Honey (England) Regulations 2015. The general requirement in regulation 17 of the Honey (England) Regulations 2015 is that honey cannot be sold in England unless the country of origin where the honey has been harvested is indicated on the label.

However, for reasons of practicality special provisions apply to 'blended' honeys where honey producers can opt for alternative wording indicating that the honey is a blend from more than one country. The mix of different honeys in blended honeys may change frequently throughout the year, depending on availability, price, and seasonality of the various types of honey. Requiring producers to change their labels for every alteration would place additional burdens and likely lead to increased prices and packaging waste.

The Government keeps all its laws under constant review as part of its commitment to carry out post implementation reviews. We will consider the need for further labelling measures as part of the next review of the honey regulations which is due by 2025.

## Hong Kong: Courts

Asked by *Lord Leong*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China regarding allowing British lawyers to represent British citizens in Hong Kong courts. [HL4783]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Foreign Lawyers are permitted to practice in Hong Kong, provided they complete the relevant registration and entrance requirements. We are watching closely how the Chief Executive and Hong Kong authorities act to implement the 30 December interpretation of the National Security Law.

## House of Lords: Air Pollution

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether the air handling units in the House of Lords have had electrostatic precipitators installed for the purposes of air filtration, particularly for viruses and bacteria. [HL4930]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** There are no electrostatic filters in the air handling units (AHUs) in the House of Lords areas of the parliamentary estate. There are electrostatic filters in two AHUs in other parts of the parliamentary estate. They were installed in 2014-16 to act as a general particulate arrest system and were not installed to deal with viruses and bacteria.

### Immigration Controls: France

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the number of potential migrants who will be prevented from reaching the UK as a result of the terms and provisions of the UK–France Joint Statement of 14 November 2022. [HL4735]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The department does not publish modelling of small boats controls.

The Joint Statement deepens the UK's partnership with France and is an important step to deter dangerous journeys across the Channel and break the business model of people smugglers. In 2022, our joint activity with the French saw nearly 33,000 of these dangerous, illegal and unnecessary crossings prevented.

### Iran: Sanctions

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose further sanctions, including to their families, on those Iranian individuals sanctioned on (1) 10 October 2022, (2) 14 November 2022, and (3) 9 December 2022. [HL4729]

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to expel Iran's most senior diplomat in the UK, the Chargé d'Affaires. [HL4730]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has designated over 300 Iranian individuals and entities including in relation to their roles in human rights abuses, weapons proliferation and terrorism. This includes over 40 new designations under the UK's Iran Human Rights regime since October 2022, on political, security and judiciary figures responsible for the regime's violent crackdown on protestors. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations, nor would we comment on potential expulsions. The UK's position is clear: through our words and actions, we will hold the Iranian authorities to account for their callous disregard for their citizens' lives.

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to increase sanctions on the government of Iran to reflect that government's support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine through the supply of weapons. [HL4731]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In recent months we have designated 2 entities and 6 individuals involved in supplying kamikaze drones for Russia to use in Ukraine. These add to the over 300 UK designations of Iranian individuals and entities for their role in weapons proliferation, human rights abuses and terrorism, which include those involved in Iran's drone programme. The UK will continue to hold Iran to account, but the Government does not speculate on specific future sanctions, as to do so could reduce their impact.

### Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by Baroness Janke*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of lethal force by Israeli forces in occupied territories to dispel civilian demonstrations. [HL4572]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding opposition about the manner in which the Israel Defence Forces use lethal force, particularly in the policing of non-violent protests and the border areas. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We will continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, as I made clear during my visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January.

### Israel: Religious Freedom

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representation they have made to the government of Israel to safeguard and protect religious minorities in that country following the desecration of graves at the Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion, Jerusalem. [HL4594]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As a defender of freedom of religion or belief for all, the UK urges respect for all burial and holy sites, which must be treated with dignity. The UK is committed to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities and condemns all attacks on the right to freedom of religion or belief. Israel has made clear its commitment to freedom of religion and we are grateful for the Israeli authority's swift condemnation of these acts. As Minister for the Middle East, I reinforced this message during a visit to a UK donor funded school facing demolition on 12 January, in Masafer Yatta.

### Labour Market: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Coaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government why they announced that they are no longer going to create a

single enforcement body overseeing conditions in the labour market. [HL4710]

**Lord Callanan:** This Government remains committed to workers' rights and enforcement but there is also real pressure on parliamentary time. We are reviewing what this means for the creation of the Single Enforcement Body which would be a significant organisational change and requires primary legislation. In the meantime, we continue to invest significantly in the existing labour market enforcement bodies and are working with the Director of Labour Market Enforcement to provide strategic oversight of the system as a whole.

The Government is supporting legislation to enhance workers' rights. This includes backing five Private Members' Bills on neonatal leave and pay, pregnancy and maternity discrimination, flexible working, carers' leave, and tipping.

### Landfill: Coastal Areas

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to respond to the issues raised by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group's Coastal Landfill Survey Report, published on 30 November 2022, which found that in 26 councils coastal landfill sites are spilling waste into the sea. [HL4756]

**Lord Benyon:** I very much welcome the work that this group has and continues to do. The findings from the Local Government Association coastal special interest group survey will help to inform our planned evidence-based national assessment on the issues regarding these historic coastal landfill sites, which are varied and complex. This, together with a full review of previous and other current activity in this space, will enable us to consolidate and provide a true and accurate picture of the issue, and assist those local authorities who have the responsibility for managing these sites to identify the most effective and cost beneficial way forward.

My officials will continue to work closely with our LGA colleagues as this work progresses, and we value their continued insight and support.

### Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, following the blocking of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan-backed protesters. [HL4722]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government has made clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. Officials have met with humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, to discuss the situation. The Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty issued a statement

highlighting the importance of re-opening the Lachin corridor on 13 December and our ambassadors in the region and other senior UK officials have reinforced this message with key interlocutors. We also called for an early resolution to this issue in our interventions in Vienna at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 15 December and in New York at the UN Security Council on 20 December.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the blockade of the Lachin corridor since 12 December 2022 on the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh; and what humanitarian assistance they are providing in response. [HL4743]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK Government has made clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. Officials have met with humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, to discuss the situation. The START FUND, to which the UK is a significant donor, has allocated £350,000 to support those affected by the closure of the Lachin Corridor. UK officials remain in touch with humanitarian partners to monitor the situation. The Minister for Europe issued a statement highlighting the importance of re-opening the Lachin corridor on 13 December and our ambassadors in the region and other senior UK officials have reinforced this message with key interlocutors. We also called for an early resolution to this issue in our interventions in Vienna at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 15 December and in New York at the UN Security Council on 20 December.

### Natural Gas: Prices

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mitigate the impact of volatile gas prices. [HL4748]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government has announced unprecedented support to protect households and businesses from rising energy costs, including volatile gas prices. The Energy Price Guarantee and Energy Bill Relief Scheme are supporting millions of households and businesses by reducing the amount suppliers can charge per unit of energy used.

The Government is additionally providing a £400 discount off energy bills under the Energy Bills Support Scheme to households across the UK.

### NHS: Databases

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Kamall on 2 August 2022 (HL1602), how many users of NHS England's



installation of Palantir Foundry software currently have access to data or dashboards for each purpose listed. [HL4712]

**Lord Markham:** A copy of a spreadsheet which lists how many users there are for each individual purpose is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

NHS England Palantir Foundry users and purposes [Purpose user count with groupings and type.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-12/HL4712>

### NHS: Per Capita Costs

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much the NHS costs each household in England per year. [HL4643]

**Lord Markham:** The National Health Service is funded through general taxation and not as a discrete charge to individual households.

A hypothetical calculation can be done to estimate the average cost of the NHS per household using two statistics: the NHS resource (revenue) budget 2021/22, which is £150.6 billion, and the Office for National Statistics housing count for England, which is 23.4 million (at Census 2021).

Based on a division of these statistics, in 2021/22, the average cost per household computes to approximately £6,430.

### Northern Ireland Protocol

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have committed to abandon the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and if so, why this has not happened. [HL4728]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Northern Ireland Protocol is imposing unnecessary bureaucracy and checks, including full customs processes and onerous SPS import requirements for goods staying in the UK. Our overriding priority is preserving political stability in Northern Ireland. The situation as it stands is undermining the balance established by the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and power sharing, and with it political stability in Northern Ireland. It has always been our preference to resolve this through talks. The Foreign Secretary and Vice President Maroš Šefčovič are speaking regularly and officials continue to remain in touch.

### Plastics: Waste

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the operative date for the implementation of the ban on the use of single use plastic plates and cutlery. [HL4578]

**Lord Benyon:** The Government response to the consultation was published on 14 January 2022.

Following overwhelming support from respondents, from October 2023 we will introduce legislation banning the supply to the end user of single-use plastic plates, trays, bowls, except when used as packaging, and banning the supply of single-use plastic cutlery and balloon sticks, and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers, in England.

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to a ban on the use of all non-medical single use plastics. [HL4579]

**Lord Benyon:** Where the evidence supports the case, we will not hesitate to introduce measures to limit the use of single-use plastics, as we have done with single-use plastic straws, stirrers, and cotton buds. Such an approach will continue to be applied to our upcoming policy measures, like our proposed ban of single-use plastic plates, cutlery and polystyrene food and drinks containers, to make sure we have the best overall impact on our natural environment.

We prefer to help people and companies make the right choice, rather than banning items outright. It is ultimately for businesses to decide what materials they use to supply products to customers.

### Poisoning: Nature Conservation

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) proactive, and (2) reactive, steps they are taking to (a) prevent, and (b) end, the sale of (i) poison, and (ii) other products, being promoted for the killing of protected animals in the UK. [HL4697]

**Lord Benyon:** The Government strongly condemns the use of any poisons targeted at our protected species. Those found guilty of such illegal activities can expect to face the full force of the law, including potentially severe fines and custodial sentences.

All vertebrate wildlife is subject to general welfare protection under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Methods of killing or taking not involving poisons are also regulated by legislation; for example, the Pests Act 1954 prohibits the approval of any type of leghold trap or the use of unapproved spring traps.

There are strict regulations in place in Great Britain (GB) to ensure that when chemical products for pest control are used properly, they do not harm people, pets or the wider environment, including protected species. Products must be authorised before they can be made available on the market and must be used in accordance with the conditions of that authorisation.

It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with the laws that regulate the supply of chemicals in GB, or to use chemicals in a way which harms people, pets, protected



species or the wider environment, with penalties that may lead to unlimited fines or imprisonment.

There are robust, multi-agency arrangements in place for enforcing the illegal supply and use of chemicals which include the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, the police and local authorities, with the illegal poisoning of protected species investigated by a dedicated Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme.

### Refugees: Afghanistan

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made over the last 12 months on the Home Office's Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) towards their pledge to resettle up to 20,000 Afghans, including an aim to settle 5,000 people in its first year; how many Afghans have been resettled in the UK through the scheme since 6 January 2022, particularly those in Pathway 3; and what information they hold on the situation of those eligible at-risk Afghans who have applied under the scheme, but who have not yet been resettled. [HL4720]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** To date the government has issued Indefinite Leave to Remain to over 6,300 individuals under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and we continue to welcome arrivals under this pathway who were called forward during the evacuation but were not able to travel.

Since September 2022, we are pleased to have welcomed the first families under Pathway 2.

Under Pathway 3, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office received over 11,400 Expressions of Interest (EOIs). They are in the process of assessing their eligibility and have started notifying individuals of the outcome.

We recognise that there are many vulnerable people who remain in Afghanistan and the wider region, including those who submitted EOIs under Pathway 3. We are working hard to progress cases and to deliver on our commitment to offer up to 1,500 resettlement places in the first phase of Pathway 3.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and ACRS on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each scheme - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

More information on arrivals is available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data>.

### Rented Housing: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to regulate the build-to-rent sector. [HL4750]

**Baroness Scott of Bybrook:** Build to Rent can boost supply and drive-up standards while increasing choice for tenants. We have encouraged longer, family-friendly tenancies (of three or more years) to be offered in Build to Rent schemes and revised the National Planning Policy Framework and issued a new chapter of planning guidance to support the delivery of more Build to Rent homes, including affordable rental homes. Build to Rent homes are subject to our reforms of the wider Private Rented Sector, as laid out in our White Paper from June last year, which will fundamentally reform the sector and level up housing quality in this country.

### River Tees: Pyridine

*Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will ensure that no dredging will take place in the River Tees until after (1) publication, and (2) consideration, of the expert panel report. [HL4531]

**Lord Benyon:** The MMO uses a weight of evidence approach to inform its decision making and, to date, there is no robust scientific evidence to suspend the marine licences for this work. The MMO have conducted marine licence inspections on the dredging works in question and following this they remain satisfied that the works are being conducted in line with the relevant marine licence(s). Inspections on the licenced activities will continue on a periodic basis throughout the length of the licence. The findings of the Expert Panel will steer consideration of further action.

Capital and maintenance dredging are common activities around the coast of England and have taken place on the Tees for many decades. The decisions on dredging methodologies and disposal of dredge material are fundamental to the continued operation of ports and associated industries. Requirements of dredging techniques may be entirely dependent on local conditions, and an assessment is made pre-determination as a part of the licensing process as to the type of dredging allowed to take place and any mitigation required is included as licence conditions.

*Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to monitor pyridine in the River Tees; and what assessment they have made of whether preparation for the Teesside Freeport is safe to fishing interests. [HL4532]

**Lord Benyon:** The Environment Agency carries out routine monitoring of water quality in the River Tees, which includes testing for Pyridine. Monthly samples are taken at 10 locations within the Tees Estuary and adjacent coastal waters.

The Tees South Bank Quay licence application required a full Environmental Impact Assessment under the Marine Work (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017) and Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009), which included an assessment of likely significant effects to fish ecology and fishery receptors. Various mitigation measures were stipulated on the licence and the full detail of the licensing and consultation process can be found on the MMO Public Register.

Meanwhile, the Marine Management Organisation uses internationally accepted guidelines including from The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic 1992 (OSPAR) to help inform its licensing decisions.

The UK is a contracting party to OSPAR, and OSPAR guidance is used to identify chemicals for testing. Pyridine is not routinely measured in sediment, and there are currently no plans to monitor for pyridine in sediments generally, including for dredge and disposal applications. Pyridine is not listed as a Chemical for Priority Action (contaminant of concern, based on persistency, liability to bioaccumulate, and toxicity) by either OSPAR (<https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/hasec/hazardous-substances/priority-action>) [copy attached to this answer] or the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

OSPAR [OSPAR Commission \_ Protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic and its resources.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-09/HL4532>

## Russia: Ukraine

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made any assessment of the recent destruction of buildings and targeting of civilians in Ukraine by Russian forces; and what steps they are taking, if any, in response to these actions based on the UK's statutory obligations concerning alleged instances of war crimes. [HL4758]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We condemn Russia's inhumane assault against Ukraine's civilian population and infrastructure. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians constitutes war crimes. We will continue to support the investigations, by the International Criminal Court and the Ukrainian authorities, of allegations of war crimes committed in Ukraine. The Metropolitan Police will also investigate such allegations when they fall under UK jurisdiction and are already gathering evidence on atrocities in Ukraine in support of the ICC investigation.

## Salmon: Fish Farming

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reverse the increased use of antibiotics in farmed salmon. [HL4577]

**Lord Benyon:** We are working with the salmon sector to better understand the reasons underlying this increase in antibiotic use and to promote responsible antibiotic use. The salmon sector have indicated that this increase can be attributed to a rise in bacterial infections for which no vaccines are available. They have suggested that the reasons for this bacterial infection can include difficult environmental conditions, with increased water temperatures and variations in the quality and composition of the water, including the presence of potentially harmful organisms in the water (algae, plankton and micro jellyfish) which can compromise fish health.

The Salmon sector practice a high level of preventative medicine (including vaccination) and only use antibiotics in response to clinical bacterial disease, with use of antibiotics supported by culture and sensitivity testing. It is also a requirement of membership of the producers organisation Salmon Scotland that companies adhere to the Code of Good Practice for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture and, under this, all farms must have a veterinary health plan which covers the responsible use of medicines. All antibiotics are prescribed by a Veterinary Surgeon and antibiotic use and stewardship are routinely discussed within a dedicated prescribing vets forum.

## Sewage: Coastal Areas

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to coastal communities dealing with the clean up of raw sewage spills. [HL4826]

**Lord Benyon:** It is the responsibility of the water and sewerage companies to ensure they clean up any sewage following pollution incidents, including in coastal areas. This is enforced by the Environmental Agency as part of their standard incident response procedures.

## Slavery

*Asked by Lord Coaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will publish their Modern Slavery Bill. [HL4709]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** As the Prime Minister set out in his statement to the House of Commons on 13 December, the Government is determined to tackle the misuse of our modern slavery system. We continue to examine the case for legislative changes to improve the operation of the system and we will make a further announcement in due course.

## Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the procedure and available time for the ratification of the Australia and New Zealand free trade agreement allows for sufficient parliamentary scrutiny. [HL4739]

**Lord Johnson of Lainston:** The Government has committed to additional measures for new free trade agreements which go beyond our statutory scrutiny requirements.

The Australia and New Zealand agreements were made available for scrutiny for an additional six months before commencement of the statutory period under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG). We have made additional reporting commitments to support scrutiny, including publishing the advice of the independent Trade and Agriculture Commission.

The Trade (Australian and New Zealand) Bill is currently being scrutinised by Parliament. The agreements cannot be brought into force until the legislation has been passed by Parliament.

## Trade Agreements: Impact Assessments

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to conduct an economic impact assessment on the free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand. [HL4685]

**Lord Johnson of Lainston:** The Department's impact assessments of the UK-Australia and UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreements were published on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 respectively.

The full impact assessments are available on gov.uk.

## Transcaucasus: Roads

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan regarding ending the blockade of the Lachin corridor that links Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. [HL4744]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty MP, issued a statement highlighting the importance of re-opening the Lachin corridor on 13 December and our Ambassadors in the region and other senior UK officials have reinforced this message with key interlocutors, including representatives of the Azerbaijani Government. The United Kingdom also called for early resolution of this issue in our interventions in Vienna at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 15 December and in New York at the UN Security Council on 20 December.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have undertaken, or plan to undertake, a Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) assessment of the blockade of the Lachin corridor to underpin the UK National Security Council Strategy for Nagorno-Karabakh. [HL4745]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** A Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) for the South Caucasus region completed in early 2022. It recommended that the UK Government act, where it can, to address regional drivers of conflict in the South Caucasus and exploit opportunities for greater regional dialogue and cooperation. In line with this recommendation, the UK is spending £1 million on conflict-related programming in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2022-23 through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has no plans to undertake a new JACS for the region in the near future, but we continue to monitor the situation closely.

## Tree Planting

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Benyon on 16 December 2022 (HLWS449) regarding the target to "increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050", how many hectares that two per cent increase will involve; and how much of that increase will be completed by 2030. [HL4551]

**Lord Benyon:** Increasing tree and woodland canopy cover from 14.5% to 16.5% of land area would mean increasing cover by around quarter of a million hectares, an area the size of Derbyshire, although the precise figure will be dependent on the revised baseline which will be published later this year. We will publish an interim woodland cover target, to be achieved in 2028, in the Environmental Improvement Plan.

## UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement has introduced a border for the transit of goods between Greater Britain and Northern Ireland; whether Northern Ireland is effectively in the EU in respect of goods; and if so, why. [HL4725]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Protocol is causing real problems for business and society in Northern Ireland. The Foreign Secretary and Vice President Maroš Šefčovič are speaking regularly and the two sides are exploring solutions to tackle the real-life concerns of all communities in Northern Ireland. This includes protecting Northern Ireland's place in the UK.

It has always been our preference to resolve issues through talks, but we have introduced the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill to fix these issues if this isn't possible in the interests of Northern Ireland.

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the agreement between the UK and the EU regarding sharing live data on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, announced on 9 January, gives the EU access to UK IT systems; if so, whether this includes access to sensitive UK economic and commercial information; and if so, what are their reasons for providing such access. [HL4727]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The EU Access System provides EU officials the goods data they need to monitor GB-NI sea crossings and reassure the EU that the Single Market is protected. HMRC has delivered the system which provides real-time data from five different HMRC systems in one place for EU officials. We have been working with data protection experts and legal colleagues to ensure that the EU will be fully accountable for the protection and storing of this sensitive data, contained in the EU Access System. The system provides information about goods movements to NI in advance of those goods reaching Northern Ireland. Providing data in 'real-time' is a critical element of any solution to the Protocol.

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 19 December 2022 (HL4032) stating "there have been fatalities, including the Purfleet incident in 2019 when 39 Vietnamese nationals sadly lost their lives", how many such fatalities took place in each year since 2010. [HL4733]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Official records of deaths are not held on any data base within Border Force.

These dangerous concealments are facilitated by people smugglers, putting profits above the lives of vulnerable people. The Government is determined to prevent further loss of life and break the business model of dangerous criminal people smugglers.

*Asked by Lord Rosser*

To ask His Majesty's Government what forecast they have made of the expected number of individuals crossing the English Channel by small boat to the UK each month in (1) 2023, and (2) 2024. [HL4734]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office has modelled various scenarios which inform planning on how to handle small boats and ensure the system is resilient. However, these are planning scenarios, not forecasts or predictions, and there are no plans to publish them. In 2022, over 45,000 people arrived in the UK as a result of these crossings.

### United Kingdom

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement and the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland have undermined the union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and if they have made no such assessment, why not. [HL4726]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have always been clear that Northern Ireland is an integral part of the UK. The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement requires both Unionists and Nationalists to be part of a power sharing Government, but the Protocol is acting as a barrier to the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive. Our solutions would deal with the Protocol's unequal governance and addressing the democratic deficit in Northern Ireland.

### Water: Standards

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the 3,651 water bodies in England currently have "good" chemical and ecological status; why on 22 December 2022, the Environment Agency moved the target deadline to achieve "good" chemical and ecological status for England's waterways, rivers, lakes and coastal waters back by 36 years to 2063; and what urgent steps they are taking to address the main sources of waterway pollution, including water treatment plants and agriculture. [HL4719]

**Lord Benyon:** There are over 4000 surface water bodies in England. The last classification results showed that 16% of surface water bodies are currently at Good Ecological Status or Potential. About 97% of all surface water bodies would be at Good Chemical Status were it not for the presence of a some uPBT (ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic) substances. The uPBTs are mainly legacy chemicals used all over the world in fire retardant, non-stick and water repellent commercial products. These chemicals are barely detectable in the water but can accumulate in the flesh of aquatic animals (biota). The Environment Agency's move to biota monitoring has provided a more accurate picture of these chemicals. The three uPBTs (mercury, PFOS and PBDE) are generally causing water body failure out of around 50 priority chemical substances tested for chemical status.

Action has been taken on these small number of uPBT substances including national and international restrictions and bans on their use but there is no feasible way to remove them from the water. They will take an extended time frame to dissipate, which is allowed under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) natural conditions extension. The WFD 'one out all out' rule, however, means a water body must be at Good for all elements, and will fail overall if just one element fails. In all the water bodies which are less than 'good' overall, 79% of tests of



the individual elements that make up ecological status return a 'good' or 'high' result.

There have been inaccurate claims in the media that the target for good ecological status has been moved back to 2063. This is not true. The updated river basin management plans published in December 2022 set objectives of good ecological status or potential for most water bodies by 2027 as required by the Water Framework Directive Regulations. Although action has already been taken on uPBTs, 2063 is a modelling prediction by the Environment Agency of when these chemicals will have naturally reduced, rather than a target.

### **Windrush Lessons Learned Review**

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Southwark***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Secretary of State for the Home Department on 23 June 2020 (HC Deb col. 1193), what progress they have made towards implementing recommendations 9 and 10 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review (HC 93) to create a Migrants Commissioner and to give more powers to the Independent Chief Inspector for Borders and Immigration. [[HL4746](#)]

**Lord Murray of Blidworth:** In March 2020 the then Home Secretary published Wendy Williams's Windrush Lessons Learned Review, which set out 30 recommendations for the department.

A range of options have been considered for delivering these recommendations, which have been discussed with external stakeholders. The Home Office is taking steps to be more transparent to ensure that the department is as open as possible to all types of scrutiny, both internal and external.

We committed to working with the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) to deliver an internal review of our complaint's procedures, and we delivered by establishing the Office for the Independent Examiner of Complaints on the 17 October 2022. Furthermore, the Home Office has established the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Hub which has supported colleagues across the Department to deliver on improvements to engagement. This includes improvements in terms of accessibility and involving stakeholders in innovative ways. The aim to keep improving our engagement practices is being embedded into the Department's transformation programme.

We will keep the Home Affairs Select Committee updated on the progress of all the Wendy Williams recommendations.



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