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**Tuesday
31 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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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Lord True	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Benyon	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Spokesperson, Wales Office, Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Davies of Gower	Whip
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Harlech	Whip
Lord Johnson of Lainston	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Markham	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Murray of Blidworth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Penn	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Chief Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 31 January 2023

Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme Levy 2022-23

[HLWS525]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Tom Pursglove MP) has made the following Written Statement:

The Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme (Levy) Regulations 2014 require active employers' liability insurers to pay an annual levy, based on their relative market share, for the purpose of meeting the costs of the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme (DMPS). This is in line with the insurance industry's commitment to fund a scheme of last resort for persons diagnosed with diffuse mesothelioma who have been unable to trace their employer or their employer's insurer.

Today I can announce that the total amount of the levy to be charged for 2022-23, the ninth year of the DMPS, is £20.3 million. The amount will be payable by active insurers by the end of March 2023.

Individual active insurers will be notified in writing of their share of the levy, together with how the amount was calculated and the payment arrangements. Insurers should be aware that it is a legal requirement to pay the levy within the set timescales.

I am pleased that the DMPS has seen nine successful years of operation, assisting many hundreds of people who have been diagnosed with Diffuse Mesothelioma. The eighth Annual Report for the scheme, along with the annual statistics, were published on 22 November 2022 and is available on the gov.uk website. I hope that members of both Houses will welcome this announcement and give the DMPS their continued support.

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

[HLWS527]

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

This government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state than we found it. Five years ago, the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) set out our vision for a quarter-of-a-century of action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. We said we would refresh the plan every five years, a commitment we set into law in the Environment Act 2021.

Today I am publishing that revised plan: the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23). The 25YEP set out ten complementary goals. This improvement plan

sets out the interim targets and our plan to deliver those goals, including measures such as:

- A comprehensive delivery plan to halt the decline in nature by 2030
- A commitment to creating and restoring at least 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat, with 70 new projects including 25 new or expanded National Nature Reserves
- A new pledge on access to nature with everyone to live no more than a 15 minutes' walk from a green or blue space
- The Species Survival Fund for domestic species at risk, like the red squirrel
- Five-year interim targets to drive progress towards our long-term targets.

I will look to provide the House with further details shortly.

We also included in the Environment Act a requirement to publish a statement explaining the changes made through our review of the 25YEP.

These changes can be grouped into two themes. These are content updates where scientific understanding and new policy has developed over the last five years; and structural changes that build on the 25YEP.

Content updates:

- 1) EIP23 brings more specificity to our 25YEP goals by incorporating long-term and interim targets in the four priority areas (air quality, water, biodiversity, and resource efficiency and waste reduction), as required under the Environment Act. Also included are woodland cover and marine targets. These targets will drive environmental long-term improvement to protect and enhance our natural world.
- 2) The delivery plans for each 25YEP goal incorporate the previously published environmental land management priorities (climate change mitigation and adaptation; species abundance; water quality; and soil health).
- 3) EIP23 shows how our goals are interconnected, recognising the environment as a system. This includes cross-cutting themes such as green finance and highlighting how actions in one chapter's delivery plan drives progress towards other goals' targets.
- 4) EIP23 sets our domestic framework in the context of our wider international commitments. The 15th Conference of The Parties to The Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022 (COP15) was an important moment for progress on biodiversity. It was agreed that Parties would update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) by COP16. EIP23 fulfils that commitment for England in setting out actions we are taking nationally to contribute to our global commitments, with further detailed policy commitments published separately and in discussion with devolved colleagues.
- 5) EIP23 outlines how driving progress towards the goals will contribute to growth in green jobs, as well as

supporting employers across England to create a pipeline of skilled people to fill those jobs. Tree planting, for example, can support job creation and deliver associated economic benefits. Our new target to increase tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area in England is expected to support an additional 1,400 jobs by 2035. This equates to approximately one job being supported for every 5 ha of new woodland creation.

Structural changes:

- Each 25YEP goal has its own chapter and delivery plan in EIP23. Our Environment Act targets are linked into their relevant goal chapter, showing how they have been designed to fill gaps to complement our broader environmental commitments.
- Improving our natural environment requires action from across government and the wider public and private sector. EIP23 provides that strengthened approach to cross-government action by including specific actions and commitments across relevant government departments within the delivery plan for each goal. Implementation will continue to be managed by cross-government governance. Specific roles for the public and private sectors and the general public are also accounted for in delivering environmental improvement.

This revised Plan makes clear what the government wants to achieve; as well as when and how we will achieve it, and how we will measure progress. This sets the direction for action both in the short term and the long term.

Today I am also publishing the final Environmental Principles Policy Statement setting out how the principles are to be interpreted and proportionately applied, as well as the Significant Improvement Test review report, both on gov.uk and laid before Parliament.

Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan

[HLWS526]

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

'The Government is today publishing its Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan sets out how Government will deliver four overarching priorities to improve outcomes for women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system over the period 2022 to 2025:

- Fewer women entering the justice system and reoffending
- Fewer women serving short custodial sentences with a greater proportion managed successfully in the community
- Better conditions that support rehabilitation for women in custody
- Protecting the public through better outcomes for women on release

The Delivery Plan includes specific and measurable commitments aimed at reducing women's offending and reoffending, in turn making communities safer for the public. We will publish a one-year on progress report on implementation of our Delivery Plan.

Effective community support is essential for women in or at risk of contact with the justice system and the Government recognises the vital role played by the women's community sector in supporting vulnerable women and helping to reduce their reoffending. On 1 September, we announced that up to £24m will be invested in women's community services until 2025 through multi-year grant competitions. These grants will allow us to improve the sustainability of women's services by meeting organisations' core costs such as rent and utility bills, to improve the join up of local services and to test and build our evidence base by investing in new or additional services or interventions.

The Government recognises that community sentences also play an important role in supporting women with complex needs, which often underlie their offending behaviour. While women who commit the most serious crimes will always be sent to prison, custody should be a last resort. A robust and effective community sentence delivers benefits to wider society as well as the individual. An effective community sentence means women will be less likely to lose their accommodation and employment, making it less likely they will have to call on statutory services. An effective community sentence will enable them to receive targeted support to address their individual needs, reducing the likelihood of reoffending. Targeted community sentences can help to limit the disruption to women's families, particularly their children, in turn helping to address the cycle of intergenerational offending. We are working with courts to raise awareness and increase understanding of the specific issues faced by women who offend, including piloting a women's specific Problem-Solving Court.

Although the number of women in custody reduced by 24% between 2011 and 2021, we are committed to improving conditions for those women who do need to be in custody. We will be funding measures such as family engagement workers, additional support for women in their early days in custody and a social workers pilot with up to £14m between 2022 and 2025 to improve outcomes, including reducing self-harm. The Delivery Plan will also highlight wider government work on reducing reoffending through effective resettlement by focusing on what we know works: a home, a job and access to treatment for substance misuse, focusing on the particular issues that women face when seeking to address the causes of their offending.

Alongside this Delivery Plan we are publishing two related progress reports on the Farmer Review for Women and on the National Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. Outstanding commitments from both the Farmer Review and the Concordat will be taken forward under this Delivery Plan.'

Police Funding Settlement 2023-24

[HLWS528]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Rt Hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon Friend, the Home Secretary, has today laid before the House the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2023-24 (HC 1066). The Report sets out the Home Secretary's determination for 2023-24 of the aggregate amount of grants that she proposes to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996. Copies of the Report are available from the Vote Office.

The allocations that have been laid before the House today are as set out in my Statement and the provisional Police Grant Report of 14 December 2022.

In 2023-24 the overall funding settlement for the policing system will total up to £17.2 billion, a £287 million increase on the 2022-23 funding settlement. Available funding to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will increase next year by up to an additional £523 million, assuming full take-up of precept flexibility and using latest forecasts.

This would represent an increase to PCC funding in cash terms of 3.6% on the 2022-23 police funding settlement. This settlement demonstrates how the government is honouring the commitments set out at Spending Review 2021 to provide additional funding to maintain the Police Uplift Programme and to provide additional support for the recent pay award.

The attached table documents funding to PCCs for 2023-24, including precept.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

table [Total Police Funding to Police Forces 2023-24.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2023-01-31/HLWS528/>

Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation

[HLWS524]

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:

In accordance with section 36 of the Terrorism Act 2006, Jonathan Hall KC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, has prepared a report on the operation in 2020 of the Terrorism Acts, which was laid before the House on 28 April 2022.

I am grateful to Mr Hall KC for his report and have carefully considered the recommendations and observations included within. I am today laying before the House the Government's response to the report (CP 788). Copies will be available in the Vote Office and it will also be published on GOV.UK.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 31 January 2023

Bus Services: Rural Areas

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the closure of rural bus routes. [HL4876]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has provided nearly £2 billion of support since March 2020 through emergency and recovery grants to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the bus sector. This includes a six-month extension to the Bus Recovery Grant to provide up to £130 million to continue supporting bus services in England outside London until the end of March of this year.

The Government is also providing £60 million to help bus operators cap single fares at £2 on services in England outside London from 1 January to 31 March 2023. Over 130 operators covering more than 4,600 routes throughout England are participating in the scheme, including in rural areas, which will help increase patronage on buses and help millions save on their regular travel costs.

Our £20 million Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) is supporting 16 innovative, demand-led minibus trials in rural and suburban areas across 15 local authorities in England. These pilots are exploring whether Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) can serve these communities more effectively than traditional public transport solutions alone.

We have engaged extensively with rural stakeholders on how new transport modes can benefit rural communities in developing the soon to be published Future of Transport: Rural Strategy.

Carillion: Insolvency

Asked by *Lord Naseby*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the audit reforms they committed to introduce after the collapse of the construction firm Carillion five years ago. [HL4867]

Lord Callanan: The Government's response to consultation on its reform proposals was published on 31 May 2022. This set out that reforms will be delivered by a variety of mechanisms, including changes already made by the regulator and by Ministerial Direction. The Government is committed to legislating when Parliamentary time allows.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance [restoring-trust-in-audit-and-corporate-governance-govt-response.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-18/HL4867>

China: Belt and Road Initiative

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Somalia regarding their involvement in China's Belt and Road initiative. [HL4833]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: China is a significant partner for many countries, including through the Belt and Road Initiative. The Somali Government pursues its international trading, development and political relations as it chooses. The UK's focus is on working closely with the Somali Government to support its ambitious programme for a more stable and peaceful Somalia. This includes the provision of humanitarian relief and crucial support for the fight against Al-Shabaab.

Construction: Standards

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve standards within the construction industry. [HL4836]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: A programme of work to improve the competence of the construction sector and to strengthen guidance in building safety is ongoing.

The Building Safety Act 2022 establishes the new Building Safety Regulator which will enforce a stringent new regulatory regime for high-rise residential and other in scope buildings, oversee the safety and standard of all buildings, and facilitate improvement in the competence of industry and building inspectors. We will use powers within the Act to develop regulations that place duties on those who procure, plan, manage and undertake building work in all buildings. Anyone undertaking design work or building work will need to ensure that they, and those they appoint, have the skills or competence for the work they are engaged to undertake.

Crofting: Environmental Land Management Schemes

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support crofters to increase their participation in agri-environmental climate funding schemes. [HL4887]

Lord Benyon: Agriculture is a devolved issue which is the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

Development Aid

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what development programmes they are considering as part of their Official Development Assistance spending. [HL4888]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO's Official Development Assistance spending will be focused according to the priorities set out in the International Development Strategy, while closely taking into account the needs of our partner countries. Individual programme funding decisions will be made by our experts on the ground, guided by our approach to prioritisation.

We will provide an update on Official Development Assistance allocations in due course.

Fires: Sky Lanterns

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 13 December 2022 (HL3856), whether they can provide an itemised table from the Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) that details how many incidents where sky lanterns have been confirmed as the source of a fire. [HL4830]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Data collected through the Fire and Rescue Service Incident Recording System (IRS) does not include data on whether fire incidents attended were caused by or involved sky lanterns.

The Home Office collects data on incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), with this data including the cause of the fire and the source of ignition. However, the answer categories for cause of fire and source of ignition do not specifically provide sky lanterns as an option. This data is published in a variety of publications, available at Gov.UK.

Furs

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to publish an analysis of the responses to their Call for Evidence on the Fur Market in Great Britain, and (2) to ban the import and sale of fur in Great Britain. [HL5097]

Lord Benyon: We are carefully reviewing the evidence gathered both from our Call for Evidence and wider engagement with the fur trade and stakeholders, and a summary of responses will be published in due course.

We will use the evidence gathered to inform any future action on the fur trade in Great Britain, in line with HM Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards.

Gambling: Education

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Barran on 9 January (HL4502 and HL4503), what current research informs their statutory curriculum for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) with regard to gambling education. [HL4834]

Baroness Barran: The current statutory guidance for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) was informed by a stakeholder engagement process in 2017, including a public call for evidence that received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts.

The department has worked closely with subject experts Parent Zone and Childnet to develop the Internet Safety and Harms training module, which includes content on gambling and was published in September 2020, alongside modules on all aspects of the RSHE curriculum.

The department is also working closely with Gambling with Lives and the Department of Health and Social Care to review the ongoing evidence around gambling to help inform future policy. The research currently being undertaken for the department by IFF Research will test whether schools are teaching RSHE effectively, including about the risks of gambling, and will provide emerging findings to inform decisions regarding the department's review of the RSHE statutory guidance which is anticipated to start this year.

Hospitals: Discharges

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) identify, and (2) address, the needs of patients who are medically fit to be discharged from hospital but are unable to leave because of delays in transfers of care. [HL4768]

Lord Markham: We are making available £500 million to support safe and timely discharges from hospital. We committed a further £200 million to fund short term National Health Service step-down care packages and wrap-around primary and community health services to support patients' recovery. The Government has also provided an extra £50 million in capital funding to expand ambulance hubs and hospital discharge lounges, designed to accommodate patients waiting for short term delays to transfers of care.

Imperial College London

Asked by *Lord Farmer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the guidance 'How to be a white ally', published by Imperial College London; and whether they intend to take steps in response to review that institution's funding. [HL4658]

Baroness Barran: Universities are autonomous institutions and as such have control over what they publish on their own websites.

Decisions about funding for individual higher education providers are made by the Office for Students, rather than the department.

Jimmy Lai

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to (1) the government of China, and (2) the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, about Jimmy Lai, including (a) securing consular access, (b) ensuring his right to a defence counsel of his choice, (c) ensuring he receives a fair trial, and (c) securing his release on bail while awaiting trial. [HL4845]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are actively monitoring the targeting of pro-democracy figures, journalists and publishers in Hong Kong, and are following these cases, including Mr Lai's carefully.

Accredited diplomats at our Consulate-General in Hong Kong will continue to attend Mr Lai's court proceedings. We have requested consular access to Mr Lai. Mr Lai was sentenced to 5 years and 9 months for a charge of fraud on 10 December and is not currently eligible for bail.

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. As we have said, the National Security Law is being used to curtail freedoms, punish dissent and shrink the space for opposition, and we consider it to represent a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Leisure and Swimming Pools: Rural Areas

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the provision of (1) swimming pools, and (2) leisure centres, in rural areas. [HL4881]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: HM Government recognises the importance of ensuring public access to swimming pools across the country, including in rural areas. Swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The responsibility for providing this access lies with local authorities, and the Government continues to encourage them to support swimming facilities.

We appreciate the impact that rising energy prices are having on organisations of all sizes, including on operators of swimming pools. That is why we announced the £18 billion Energy Bill Relief Scheme in September last year. The scheme was always time-limited, and has now been succeeded by the Energy Bills Discount

Scheme. Under the new scheme, swimming pools will continue to receive discounts on their gas and electricity bills during the 12-month period from April 2023 to March 2024.

Officials in my Department are in regular contact with representatives from the sector to assess the impact of rising energy costs, including monitoring how operators and local authorities are responding to them.

Sport England has invested £12,775,274 of public money in swimming and diving projects since April 2019, which includes £9,360,002 to Swim England. This is in addition to the Government's £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund, which supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country after the pandemic.

Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the inclusion of Northern Ireland infrastructure projects in the Levelling Up Fund. [HL4859]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer the noble Lord to the answer given by my Hon Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up (Dehenna Davison) to Question UIN 129836 on 26 January 2023.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UIN 129836 [129836- Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-18/HL4859>

Metropolitan Police: Violent and Sex Offender Register

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask His Majesty's Government how many Metropolitan Police (1) officers, and (2) staff, are currently on the sex offenders register, broken down by rank. [HL4837]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office does not collect data on the number of police officers or staff who are registered sex offenders.

The statutory Vetting Code of Practice 2017 stipulates that all applications for a position of police officer or member of police staff must be rejected, where the applicant is a registered sex offender.

The Government has asked the College of Policing to strengthen the statutory code of practice for vetting, making the obligations all forces must legally follow stricter and clearer.

The Home Secretary has also now launched a review into the process of police officer dismissals, ensuring that the system is fair and effective at removing those officers

who are not fit to serve their communities. The Terms of Reference for this review have now been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-officer-dismissals-review-terms-of-reference>.

Myanmar: Fuels

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to investigate British companies involved in supplying aviation fuel to the armed forces of the government of Myanmar; and what sanctions, if any, they are considering for such companies. [HL4857]

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking to prevent British companies from providing insurance services to vessels delivering aviation fuel to the government of Myanmar. [HL4858]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 28 February 2022, the UK updated its Overseas Business Risk Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-myanmar-burma/overseas-business-risk-myanmar-burma> to make it clear UK businesses should conduct thorough supply chain due diligence to ensure that commodities, such as aviation fuel do not reach the Myanmar military. Amnesty International's thorough report on the aviation fuel supply chain in Myanmar indicates that no British companies are involved in supplying aviation fuel to the armed forces. The UK has been clear that we oppose the provision of jet fuel, arms, military equipment, and dual use items to Myanmar which are used to facilitate human rights violations. We cannot speculate on future sanctions designations but we are looking at a range of further targets and other measures.

Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to provide humanitarian support, including the provision of (1) food, and (2) medical supplies, to the Armenian population living in the city of Stepanakert. [HL4816]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has been clear that the closure of the Lachin corridor risks severe humanitarian consequences, particularly during winter. Officials are in contact with humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC most recently on 18 January, about their assessment of the impact of the closure and 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.

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), whether they will (1) publish, or (2) place in the Library of the House, copies of the specifications for any dashboards for the purposes listed, in the manner NHS England expect to make available similar specifications for interoperability with the Federated Data Platform, if the Palantir Procurement were to be successful. [HL4714]

Lord Markham: It is expected that all existing dashboards within Foundry will be interoperable. Over the coming months, an assessment will be undertaken to determine which dashboards will be migrated to the new Federated Data Platform and which will be decommissioned. The format of the specifications for these dashboards will be developed as part of the planned transition activities of the programme.

Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the government of Pakistan (1) to protect the Jewish community in that country, and (2) to support freedom of worship and belief. [HL4818]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Protecting freedom of religion or belief for minority communities is central to the UK Government's human rights engagement in Pakistan. We regularly raise the treatment of minority communities at a senior level with the Government of Pakistan. On 30 January, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, discussed the need to protect religious minorities with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada. Lord Ahmad also discussed the importance of promoting respect for all religions during his meeting with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on 14 December 2022.

Protective Clothing: Storage

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the amount of PPE purchased for the UK that is being stored in China, and (2) the cost of such storage. [HL4648]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have for the disposal or continued storage of PPE purchased for the UK and stored in China. [HL4649]

Lord Markham: As of 28 November 2022, the Department had 118 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) stored in China at an average weekly cost of £260,000.

We have no plans to store PPE in China in future and are working to rapidly reduce our existing holding to zero.

Public Buildings: CCTV

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their timetable for the removal of Hikvision cameras from all buildings in public ownership in the UK. [HL4954]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: On 24 November 2022, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster laid a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) instructing departments to cease deployment of surveillance equipment on sensitive sites on the government estate, where such equipment is produced by companies subject to the National Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China. Departments have been advised to consider whether there are sites outside the definition of sensitive sites to which they would wish to extend the same risk mitigation.

Wider public bodies generally operate with some independence from central government and are free to make their own choices around purchasing and contracting. We encourage all organisations to follow NCSC supply chain security guidance when selecting a technology supplier. This guidance clearly sets the security standards that suppliers should meet and the considerations that organisations should be making during the procurement process.

Specific details regarding the use of security systems by government departments are withheld on national security grounds. This has been the case under successive administrations. Government keeps the security of our personnel, information, assets, and estate under constant review.

Pupils: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding they have provided to target educational underachievement in each of the last five years. [HL4753]

Baroness Barran: Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The great majority of school funding in England is allocated through the National Funding Formula (NFF).

The NFF allocates 17.4% of all funding in 2022/23 through additional needs factors to target pupils most likely to fall behind and need extra support. Alongside the NFF, the Pupil Premium provides additional funding to help schools tackle educational underachievement by children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The total funding directed through the NFF's additional needs

factors and through the Pupil Premium over the last five years is shown in the attached table.

Within the figures attached, the low prior attainment factor (LPA) in the NFF specifically targets pupils who did not reach the expected standard at the previous stage. The table attached also shows the amount of funding provided to schools in England through the LPA factor in the schools NFF over the last five years.

The department is also focusing on recovering from the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic through an ambitious multi-year programme and has made available almost £5 billion for recovery since 2020.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

total_NFF_and_pupil_premium_funding [HL4753 funding table.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-01-12/HL4753>

River Tees: Pyridine

Asked by Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in their investigation into pyridine in the River Tees. [HL4529]

Lord Benyon: Defra is not progressing any further investigative work into the presence of pyridine in the River Tees at this time. We are however finalising the development and validation of a detection method to reliably quantify the amounts of pyridine in crab tissues. Once completed, we will use this test to assess the levels of pyridine in environmental crab tissues associated with the impacted and non-impacted areas, to better understand the significance of pyridine in crustacea, including the potential for its endogenous production post-mortem.

The Government Chief Scientific Adviser has conveyed an independent external expert panel to review all the scientific evidence relating to this issue and report published on Friday 20 January.

Defra scientists continue to engage with the wider academic community with regard to ongoing research and development work into the ecological status of the Tees and the wider North Sea.

Russia: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what response they have had, if any, to their request of the government of Russia for full access by the International Committee of the Red Cross to (1) civilian detainees, and (2) prisoners of war, held in Ukraine and Russia; and if none, whether they will publicise this matter. [HL5078]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK routinely calls for full compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including granting humanitarian access to prisoners of

war and civilian detainees. As set out in the Third Geneva Convention, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has the mandate to go wherever prisoners of war and civilian detainees are held and monitor their conditions of detention, their treatment, and share news with their families. ICRC has an ongoing confidential dialogue with Russia and Ukraine on this matter.

Schools: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what contingency planning and preparation they have undertaken in the event of a further pandemic to ensure that schools are able to remain open to educate all pupils. [HL4838]

Baroness Barran: The department's priority remains for education and care settings to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education and care to all children and young people.

The department has updated the Emergency Planning and Response guidance for settings to reflect what has been learned over the past two years, and this sets out how schools should plan for and deal with emergencies, including the possibility of future significant public health incidents. This guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings>.

Most infectious diseases in schools can be managed by following the advice in the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA's) updated health protection in children and young people settings, including education guidance. The department also encourages pupils and staff to follow the UKHSA's guidance for those who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19. This guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>.

Schools should also have baseline infection prevention and control measures in place that will help to manage the spread of infection. These include ventilation, cleaning, and supporting routine immunisations for those eligible.

If a school suspects an incident or outbreak, steps should be taken to review and reinforce existing baseline infection prevention and control measures. The UKHSA guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>.

The department will continue to review any emerging evidence, public health guidance and advice to help ensure that schools remain as safe as possible.

Trade Agreements: India

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they are making in regard to a free trade agreement with India. [HL4886]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: On 12-13 December 2022 the Secretary of State for International Trade visited India to meet the Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, and to initiate the sixth round of the UK-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations. A written ministerial statement on the latest negotiation round can be found [here](#).

Transcaucasus: Roads

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ask the government of Azerbaijan to lift the blockade in the Lachin Corridor in the interests of regional security in the South Caucasus; and what assessment they have made of the steps that could be taken to prevent an increase in conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region as a result of the blockade. [HL4815]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 30 January, the Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty MP, met with the Azerbaijan ambassador to highlight the importance of re-opening the Lachin corridor. 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 the corridor to be re-opened in interventions at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 15 December and at the UN Security Council on 20 December. This is consistent with our long-standing support for internationally facilitated negotiations as the most effective way to facilitate a sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Ukraine: Ambulance Services

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take, together with other countries, to increase the amount of armoured ambulances available to Ukraine, given the current danger faced by hospitals in that country. [HL4847]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In response to the Government of Ukraine's requests for assistance, the UK has provided 96 non-armoured ambulances (20 NHS and 76 new). The ambulances selected are in line with the priorities and specifications set out by Ukraine's Ministry of Health in their dialogue with officials in the FCDO.

Ukraine: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take, together with other countries, to assist Ukrainian (1) civilians, and (2) soldiers, suffering from trauma and stress. [HL4846]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are working with the Ukrainian Armed Forces and our international partners and allies to best understand how we can support

Ukraine's needs as part of international efforts. Mental health experts from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) have offered advice and support to Ukrainian colleagues on ways to further develop their mental health services.

To support civilians suffering from trauma and stress, the UK has funded the British NGO UK-Med (£300,000) to train 1363 first responders in advanced trauma and psychological first aid. Our funding to UNICEF (£15 million) is supporting them to provide specialist trauma and gender-based violence services.

Ukraine: Paramedical Staff

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take, together with other countries, to provide more

paramedics to Ukraine, given the current short supply in that country. [[HL4848](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has provided £300,000 to the British NGO UK-Med, who specialise in the provision of medical services and training. As a result of our support, UK-Med has trained a total of 1363 participants (civilian, pre-hospital, clinical and non-clinical staff and surgeons) across Ukraine in advanced trauma and psychological first aid. The UK has also provided 11 million medical items to assist the health services of Ukraine, including wound care packs and medicine for pain management. We coordinate our support in regular dialogue with other countries and the UN.

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