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**Thursday
23 March 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, Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Davies of Gower	Whip
Lord Evans of Rainow	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 Business and 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 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 Camrose	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Thursday, 23 March 2023

Family Law: Dispute Resolution and Mediation

[HLWS655]

Lord Bellamy: My Right Honourable Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice has made the following statement:

"Today, the Government is launching a consultation that will inform proposals to support more families, in appropriate cases, to agree their children and financial arrangements without court involvement.

Family courts are under unprecedented pressure. In recent years, more families than ever before are applying to the court to resolve their disputes about children and financial matters, and once at court their cases are taking longer to be resolved. We believe that many of these disputes can be successfully resolved outside of court, and in supporting this we can spare families and especially children the anguish of protracted litigation. Resolving more disputes outside of court will also help enable the courts to focus available resource on the cases which need to be there, including where domestic abuse is evidenced or there are urgent issues, and ensure these are resolved swiftly. This will help us to deliver on the Levelling Up agenda by ensuring we improve the experience of parents across the country, including the most deprived areas.

Key proposals in the consultation include:

- Supporting parents to resolve their children and financial arrangements without court involvement: we propose to strengthen access to resources and guidance for parents/carers and separating couples, and seek views on requiring parents/carers, in appropriate cases, to attend a co-parenting programme alongside mediation to help them better understand their family's options.
- Resolving private family law arrangements through mediation: we propose to introduce a requirement, in appropriate cases, to make a reasonable attempt to mediate before applying to court. We are seeking views on how this could operate, and the circumstances which should make an individual or family exempt from the requirement. We propose that government would fund the cost of this mediation for child arrangement cases and seek views on the funding of mediation for finance cases.
- Accountability and costs in court proceedings: We are also consulting on how costs orders could be used by the family courts to enforce requirements to mediate and discourage unnecessary prolonging of court proceedings.

The consultation also seeks views on the impact these proposals may have on the mediation sector, and the role of other forms of dispute resolution in family cases.

We want to hear from a range of people with experience of the Private Family Law system, including families with experience of family courts, the organisations that work to support them, and the professionals who work within the system sector. We will be holding a number of stakeholder engagement events to ensure we receive detailed responses from a wide range of people and organisations.

The consultation is available at: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/>.

The consultation closes on 15 June 2023.

Freeports: Wales

[HLWS653]

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

Today the UK and Welsh governments have jointly announced that there will be two new Freeports in Wales: Celtic Freeport and Anglesey Freeport.

This is an important moment for people across Wales. Freeport status will support the creation of high skilled jobs, drive growth and level up parts of our great country that have been previously overlooked. Each Freeport, subject to business case, will be backed by up to £26 million in UK Government funding, and a range of tax incentives, including locally retained business rates to upgrade local infrastructure and stimulate regeneration. This is alongside a generous package of trade and innovation support for businesses locating there.

These two new Freeports will unlock significant funding for Wales, helping to boost the economy and ensuring the benefits are felt from Anglesey to Port Talbot and Milford Haven. They will help to create tens of thousands of new jobs, boost business, and unleash potentially billions of pounds of investment in the local areas and beyond. The strong bids from the Celtic and Anglesey sites compellingly demonstrated how they will use Freeport status to regenerate their local communities, establish hubs for global trade, and foster an innovative environment.

Freeports are at the vanguard of Levelling Up: driving growth and bringing opportunity and prosperity to the communities that surround them. The new Freeports in Wales will build on the UK Government's successful Freeport programme in England, where all eight Freeports are open for business, and in Scotland where two new Green Freeports have recently been announced.

This Government remains committed to ensuring that the whole of the UK can reap the benefits of our Freeports programme. As well as Freeports being set up in England, Scotland and Wales, we also continue discussions with stakeholders in Northern Ireland about how best to deliver the benefits associated with Freeports there.

Incomes and Living Conditions: 2021-22 Statistics

[HLWS652]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Right Honourable Friend, The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride MP) has made the following Written Statement:

The Department for Work and Pensions has today published its annual statistics on incomes and living standards covering 2021/22. This includes Households Below Average Income (HBAI), which contains estimates of household incomes and a range of low-income indicators for 2021/22, derived from the Family Resources Survey. Further publications in today's release are: Income Dynamics, Pensioners' Income Series, Children in Low Income Families, Improving Lives Indicators, Separated Families Statistics and the Family Resources Survey. These publications cover the four statutory measures of child poverty required to be published by DWP under the 2010 Child Poverty Act.

This Government has overseen significant falls in absolute poverty since 2009/10, largely driven by increases in labour market participation, with 3.8 million more people currently in employment and sustained improvements to the National Living Wage which will increase to £10.42 per hour from April. There were 1.7 million fewer people in absolute low income and the rate has fallen by 4 per cent after housing costs in 2021/22 compared to 2009/10. This includes 400,000 fewer children, 1 million fewer working age adults and 200,000 fewer pensioners.

Between 2020/21 and 2021/22, median income grew by £8 per week in real terms but there was a slight increase in the number of people in absolute low income. This was driven by increases in the numbers of pensioners in absolute low income, due to lower occupational pension income and higher inflation than in the previous year, impacting the value of the State Pension. For working age people, absolute poverty rates were unchanged, with strong earnings growth offsetting the impact of the withdrawal of the unprecedented levels of Government support to protect incomes and jobs during the pandemic.

Building on the food insecurity data which this Government first published in 2019/20, we are publishing official estimates of foodbank use for the first time. In 2021/22, 3% (0.8m households) had used a food bank on at least one occasion in the past year. HBAI recorded that less than 0.1m pensioner households used a food bank in the past year. In 2021/22 7% of individuals, or 4.7m people, were living in households classed as food insecure, down from 8% in 2019/20.

These statistics are for 2021/22 so do not reflect the impact of the cost of living challenges caused by Putin's illegal war and global supply chain pressures. We recognised the pressures households faced as a result and acted, providing substantial cost of living support in 2022-23 including Cost of Living payments worth up to £650 for those on means-tested benefits, £150 for eligible

disabled people and £300 for Pensioner households. At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced benefits and pensions uprating of 10.1%, the largest ever cash increase to the National Living Wage and generous cost of living support for 2023-24. This included additional Cost of Living Payments for more than 8 million households on means-tested benefits, 6 million people on disability benefits, and 8 million pensioner households across the UK. It also included an additional £1 billion, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England, to help households with the cost of essentials. As announced at the Spring Budget, to further support households with the cost of living, the Government is maintaining the Energy Price Guarantee at £2,500 for a further three months, from April 2023.

This Government is committed to obtaining the best evidence to ensure policies are targeted at helping the most vulnerable in our society. Last year a suite of further material deprivation measures were published. To further improve the evidence base, the Government is resuming work to develop experimental statistics based on the Social Metrics Commission's innovative work on poverty measurement.

Post Office: Horizon Compensation

[HLWS654]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: My Hon Friend the Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business (Kevin Hollinrake MP) has today made the following statement:

The Post Office Horizon scandal, which began over 20 years ago, has had a devastating impact on the lives of many postmasters. Starting in the late 1990s, the Post Office began installing Horizon accounting software, but faults in the software led to shortfalls in branches' accounts. The Post Office demanded sub-postmasters cover the shortfalls, and in many cases wrongfully prosecuted them for false accounting or theft.

The High Court Group Litigation Order case against the Post Office brought by 555 postmasters exposed the scandal. The House will know that Sir Wyn Williams is now chairing a statutory Inquiry to establish what went wrong and identify those who were responsible for what has happened.

The settlement of the High Court case ensured that postmasters who had not been party to it would receive proper compensation through what is now the Historical Shortfall Scheme. However, Group Litigation Order postmasters had much of their compensation taken up by the associated costs of funding their case and they were ineligible to access further compensation through the Historical Shortfall Scheme. This meant that they received less than those in similar circumstances who were not party to the case. Government has agreed to run an additional compensation scheme to put this right and to allow Group Litigation Order postmasters to access

similar compensation as that available to their Historical Shortfall Scheme peers in similar circumstances.

On 7 December the then Secretary of State announced the outline of the scheme. Since then, a great deal of work has been done to finalise the details, drawing on helpful input from the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance and claimants' legal representatives as well as utilising lessons learned from the Historical Shortfall Scheme and compensation for those with Overturned Historical Convictions. On 10 February the Government published a tariff (agreed with claimants' lawyers) for reasonable legal fees and a registration form.

In December we announced an independent Advisory Board on the scheme chaired by Professor Christopher Hodges and includes Lord Arbuthnot, Professor Richard Moorhead and the Rt Hon Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones MP), all of whom have long been distinguished campaigners for postmasters. I am pleased to report that the Advisory Board has met three times: reports of its meetings are on gov.uk.

We also said that we would follow an alternative dispute resolution model delivered by the Government. I can report today that we have appointed Dentons as our independent claims facilitators. Their role will be to promote fair and prompt resolutions of each case. We have also appointed Addleshaw Goddard to act as my Department's external legal advisors on the scheme. They will take a collaborative approach ensuring there is no place for aggressive litigation in resolving claims.

I am delighted to tell the House that the scheme is open to receive claims from today. Details of how to submit claims can be found on gov.uk. Our legal powers to pay compensation run out in August 2024, but we certainly hope to make payments much faster than that: as the then Secretary of State told the House in December, we hope that most cases can be resolved before the end of 2023. I am placing in the Library of the House documentation on the scheme.

I am further pleased to report that the Statutory Instrument exempting Group Litigation Order compensation from income tax, National Insurance contributions and Capital Gains Tax was laid before the

Commons on 23 February and came into force on 16 March.

Historical Shortfall Scheme

I am also pleased to provide an update on Post Office's progress in delivering compensation to those in the Historical Shortfall Scheme. I am pleased to see the progress that Post Office has made in delivering compensation to postmasters. As of 21 March, 98% of eligible claimants have been issued offers of compensation, totalling £90.2m. Post Office are working to issue offers to remaining claimants as soon as possible.

Post Office has also received 231 late claims to date, with 15 offers issued so far.

I also recognise the concerns that have been raised in recent weeks around the tax position of claimants in the Historical Shortfall Scheme. It has always been the intention of the scheme to return postmasters to the position they should have been had they not been affected by the Horizon issues. The Government wants to see fair compensation for all victims and my Department is working urgently to address this issue with the Post Office, HM Treasury and HMRC.

Overturned Historical Convictions

I am also pleased to provide an update on Post Office's progress in delivering compensation to those with overturned historical convictions.

As of 20 March, Post Office had paid out over £17.6m in compensation. 79 of the 84 postmasters with overturned historical convictions had received interim payments, totalling over £10.2m. Post Office has reached full and final settlement with 4 postmasters. In order to deliver compensation as quickly as possible, Post Office is handling non-pecuniary and pecuniary claims separately.

A further 63 non-pecuniary claims had been received, of which all but three had received offers. 49 of these had been paid and settled, with one more claim paid, subject to settlement paperwork, which will bring the total to 50, once received.

In addition to the 4 full and final settlements, Post Office had made pecuniary settlement offers to 4 of the 9 postmasters who had submitted a pecuniary claim.

Written Answers

Thursday, 23 March 2023

Apprentices: Taxation

Asked by *Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much money was raised by the apprenticeship levy in each of the financial years (1) 2016–17, (2) 2017–18, (3) 2018–19, (4) 2019–20, (5) 2020–21, and (6) 2021–22. [HL6343]

Baroness Penn: The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017 and so there are no receipts for the 2016–2017 financial year. Monthly and Annual receipts data for the Apprenticeship Levy are published by HM Revenue and Customs in their Tax Receipts and National Insurance Contribution publication. ^[1]

A condensed version of the table of interest has been copied below, which shows how much funding has been raised by the Apprenticeship Levy in each year since it was introduced in financial year 2017–18:

Table: HMRC Receipts for Apprenticeship Levy by Financial Year

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Apprenticeship Levy (£ million)</i>
2017 -18	2,271
2018 -19	2,713
2019 -20	2,798
2020 -21	2,910
2021 -22	3,213

[1] HMRC tax receipts and National Insurance contributions for the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

BBC World Service: Finance

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding they provided for the BBC World Service in (1) 2019, (2) 2020, (3) 2021, and (4) 2022. [HL6581]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Since 2016, the FCDO has provided over £468 million to the World Service through the World2020 programme, funding 12 language services and enhancements to services in Arabic, Russian, Thai and English, to enable digital transformation and counter disinformation.

At last year's Spending Review, we agreed to provide the World Service with a flat-cash funding settlement of £283 million over 2022–2025. The FCDO also provided an additional £1.44 million in financial year 2022–23 for countering disinformation in Russia and Ukraine, alongside a £2.66 million contribution from the DCMS in 2021–22.

As part of the Integrated Review Refresh, the Government announced it would provide a one-off uplift

of £20 million over two years to the BBC to protect all 42 World Service languages, in recognition of the crucial role the World Service plays in supporting UK soft power, projecting UK culture and values overseas and in countering harmful disinformation.

BGI Group: Hacking

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (HC Deb col 121WH) where he stated that Genomics England “was suffering several hack attacks from BGI each week”, what steps they are taking, if any, against that company; and what steps they will take to scrutinise other Chinese genomic companies. [HL6289]

Viscount Camrose: There is no recorded evidence of BGI attempting to hack Genomics England in 2014, and the Minister has amended the Hansard record accordingly. However, like most organisations they do receive regular attempts to access their systems, for which there are appropriate defences in place and no successful breaches have occurred.

Our current protocols allow Genomics England, UK Biobank and NIHR BioResource to consider national security in decision making about partnerships with companies overseas. These organisations have consulted with security personnel in the past to ensure partnerships are aligned with our national security interests.

As part of the new UK Biological Security Strategy, the Government is undertaking a full programme of work to assess how we can minimise the risks from biological data to protect our burgeoning bioeconomy, shape global norms and standards, without stifling innovation, and build confidence in sharing personal data to improve health outcomes in the UK and across the world.

We will conduct this work in conjunction with our partners at home, including Genomics England, the NHS and UK Biobank, and with our partners and allies around the world. The new UK Biological Security Strategy, to be published in the coming months, is part of the wider strategic direction of the Integrated Review, under which we are reviewing our policies on export controls and addressing potential vendors of concern across the economy.

Climate Change

Asked by *Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Callanan (HL5765 and HL3971), whether the World Climate Declaration has been taken into account in Government policy, whether in the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or otherwise. [HL6316]

Lord Callanan: The Government has not made a specific assessment of the World Climate Declaration but

uses a range of scientific evidence to inform government policy, in particular the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which is the global authority on climate science. The World Climate Declaration will not have been assessed as part of the latest IPCC report, as it was published after the literature cut-off date of October 2021, the time by which literature must have been published to be included in the assessment. In addition, the IPCC primarily assesses peer reviewed literature from scientific journals.

Confederation of British Industry and Trades Union Congress

Asked by Baroness O'Grady of Upper Holloway

To ask His Majesty's Government how many times (1) the Prime Minister, (2) the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and (3) the Secretary of State for Business and Trade have each met (a) the General Secretary of the TUC, and (b) the Director-General of the CBI, since 1 January. [HL6057]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available here: former [Department for International Trade](#), [HM Treasury](#), [Cabinet Office](#).

Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hospice and End of Life Care *The Lasting Impact of COVID-19 on Death, Dying and Bereavement*, published on 1 March, what steps they will take to address the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on (1) the workforce in the health and social care sector, (2) families and unpaid carers, and (3) communities. [HL6337]

Lord Markham: The Government has commissioned NHS England to develop a Long Term Workforce Plan for the National Health Service. Additionally, steps have been taken to deliver the 50,000 nurses commitment by providing a financial support package.

To reduce waiting lists in community health, the Government is allocating core funding growth for community health services, investing £8 million this financial year to provide training to support community staff, and on track to reach our commitment of 200,000 personal health budgets by March 2024. Furthermore, the publication of the Urgent and Emergency Care Plan will work to scale up community teams.

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to deliver a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support

services, including support for unpaid carers. Additionally, funding for respite and short breaks for carers is included in the NHS contribution to the Better Care Fund.

Coronavirus: Databases

Asked by Lord Allan of Hallam

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will publish the data schema for each of the datasets listed in the NHS COVID-19 Data Reference Library. [HL6440]

Lord Markham: The information is not available in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

EU Law: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government whether UK producers and manufacturers will be able to disregard EU laws and rules in the production and manufacture of goods and products for (1) the Northern Ireland market, and (2) the Great Britain market, under the Windsor Framework. [HL6396]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we said explicitly in the Government's Command Paper on the Windsor Framework, in order to maintain maximum market access for Northern Ireland traders, those EU rules which do apply under the Windsor Framework apply to goods produced in Northern Ireland. But this reflects what we have heard time and again is the balance businesses want in order to prosper:

Companies producing for their most important market in Great Britain will retain completely unfettered access. That means a permanent guarantee of being able to place goods on the UK market in all scenarios.

There are many areas of goods rules within the scope of the old Protocol where no international or EU standards apply - covering a quarter of Northern Ireland manufacturers. In those cases UK national rules set the standards for goods on the market in Northern Ireland.

Elsewhere in manufacturing, international standards apply in practice. Of the nearly 3,600 international goods standards in place, there are differences between the UK and EU in only 11 of them (0.3 percent of standards overall). These reflect minor differences in practice, where the UK has applied higher standards (which Northern Ireland traders can still choose to meet).

In agrifood, the rules in place reflect longstanding arrangements, protecting the integrated supply chains on which many industries rely. But through this agreement they now do so within a dual regime - with retail trade into Northern Ireland able to use UK food safety standards and flow smoothly; Northern Ireland farmers outside of the Common Agricultural Policy; and the Northern Ireland Executive given the flexibility

to decide its own approach locally on agricultural subsidies.

This dual regime is also consistent with existing devolution arrangements and the market access principles in the UK Internal Market Act, which mean it is entirely possible constitutionally to have different standards across the UK.

European Court of Justice: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government what changes to the role of the European Court of Justice in Northern Ireland will be made as a result of the Windsor Framework; and how any such change be implemented in law. [HL6397]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Windsor Framework removes 1,700 pages of EU law, and with them any European Court of Justice (ECJ) interpretation and oversight in those areas. Furthermore, the Stormont Brake would enable a sovereign UK Government decision to veto the application of new EU laws and accompanying ECJ oversight within Northern Ireland. This safeguard in the treaty itself is not subject to ECJ oversight, and any dispute on this issue would be resolved through subsequent independent arbitration according to international, not EU law.

In the limited circumstances in which EU rules do continue to apply, the UK and EU are clear that political routes should be used to seek to resolve issues before resorting to formal dispute settlement and that the fundamental underpinning of this arrangement is in international law, not EU law and the EU institutions.

Free School Meals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government how many children are in receipt of Universal Credit but are not eligible for free school meals. [HL6305]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the earnings threshold for those eligible for free school meals given the increased cost of living. [HL6306]

Baroness Barran: Since 2010, the number of children receiving a free meal at school has increased by more than two million. This is thanks to the introduction of universal infant free school meals, alongside protections put in place as benefit recipients move across to Universal Credit. Over a third of pupils in England now receive Free School Meals (FSM) in education, compared with one in six in 2010.

The department believes that the current eligibility threshold level, which enables children in low-income households to benefit from FSM, while remaining

affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right one. The department does not have plans to change the current eligibility conditions for FSM, but we will continue to keep eligibility under review to ensure that these meals are supporting those who need them most. The department continues to monitor the consequences of the rising cost of living and is working with other government departments to provide support to disadvantaged families.

Government Departments: CCTV

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the security cameras installed in the combined government offices at Quay House in Peterborough, which includes the offices of the Passport Office, Natural England and Joint Nature Conservation Committee, are supplied by Hikvision. [I] [HL6293]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: As has been the case under successive administrations, it is not government policy to comment on the security arrangements of government departments. Specific details regarding the security systems used by departments are withheld on national security grounds.

Illegal Migration Bill

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 8 March (HL Deb col 847) concerning the legality of the new Illegal Migration Bill, what plans they have to address the legal complexities of that Bill. [HL6290]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: In preparing the Bill our aim has been to ensure that it is legally robust to achieve the Bill's core purpose as set out in clause 1(1). Namely to prevent and deter unlawful migration, and in particular migration by unsafe and illegal routes, by requiring the removal from the United Kingdom of certain persons who enter or arrive in the UK in breach of immigration control.

The Government continues to examine ways to further strengthen the Bill, including by bringing forward amendments to make substantive provision (in place of clause 49) as to the effect of interim measures indicated by the European Court of Human Rights.

Import Controls: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask His Majesty's Government where they propose to erect border inspection posts in Northern Ireland; when will they be implemented; and what will be the cost of implementation. [HL6400]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Work is ongoing regarding the next steps following the passage of the Official Controls (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2023.

We will set out further updates on those next in due course.

Imports: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask His Majesty's Government which products from Great Britain, if any, will not be able to be imported to Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework. [HL6407]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have removed bans on previously prohibited goods like chilled meats and seed potatoes, and paved the way to remove bans on 11 native British and other commercially important plant species by the next planting season, as industry has called for - including those trees that were prevented from moving to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

There have always been goods subject to prohibition or that are heavily restricted when moving within the UK. As is the case elsewhere for movements within the UK, some goods remain banned by operators, such as flick knives banned under UK law, firearms, furs and ivory.

Kashmir: Reserve Forces

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of India concerning the rearming of the Village Defence Group in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in light of the previous revocation of the region's semi-autonomous status. [HL6361]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made representations to the Government of India regarding Village Defence Groups in Jammu and Kashmir. The UK Government's position on Kashmir is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, considering the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Life Sciences: Drugs

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 February (HL5233), what assessment they have made of the reports by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (1) False economy? How NHS medicine procurement threatens the UK's Life Sciences growth engine, published on 23 February, and (2) At the crossroads: how a new UK medicines deal can deliver for patients, the NHS and the economy, published on 1 March; and what assessment they have made of the findings of those reports that the present NHS medicine procurement system threatens the growth of the UK Life Sciences sector. [HL6285]

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the report by The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry False economy? How NHS medicine procurement threatens the UK's Life Sciences growth engine, published on 23 February, that the continued current high rebate rates under the voluntary and statutory schemes for branded medicines during the next five years would mean foregoing £50 billion in GDP and £17.9 billion in tax revenues as a result of lost research and development investment; and what are their estimates of the value of the potential lost investment in this sector. [HL6287]

Lord Markham: The Department carefully considers all evidence in the public domain on matters relating to the growth and competitiveness of the United Kingdom's life science sector, including the recent report by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. This occurs in combination with broad engagement with individual companies, the National Health Service and with charities and patient representatives and will continue moving forward as part of the delivery of the Government's Life Science Vision.

Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 8 March (HL5866), how the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel will engage with local councillors now that its first meeting has taken place; and whether its meetings will be open to public scrutiny. [HL6322]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Officers and Members of Liverpool City Council will be engaged as core partners throughout our work on the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel. The Meetings will be held in private and final reports to the Secretary of State will be published.

Moldova: Russia

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current situation in Moldova and the reported activities of the Russian Federation in that country; and what assistance they are providing to Moldova to support its ambition to join the EU. [HL6394]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Other than Ukraine, no other country has felt the impact of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine more deeply than Moldova. On 16 March, the Foreign Secretary met Moldovan President Maia Sandu and Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu in Chisinau. He reiterated the UK's steadfast support for sovereign Moldova as it pursues a path of freedom and

independence. He also committed a further £10 million of support towards economic and governance reforms. This is in addition to £12 million over three years pledged last year to strengthen Moldova's defences against cyberattack, counter Russian disinformation, reform armed forces and tackle corruption.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask His Majesty's Government what amount they have spent so far on the proposed Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens; and what estimate they have made of the final cost of preparing the Holocaust Memorial Bill for introduction in Parliament. [HL6311]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Spend to date on the Holocaust Memorial programme is set out in the table below. No separate estimate has been made of the administrative cost of preparing the Holocaust Memorial Bill.

<i>Figures in £m inc VAT Numbers may not sum due to rounding</i>	<i>Spend to Date</i>
Client	
Staff	3.6
Contractors	1.1
Programme	1
Early programme expenditure	0.6
Total Client	6.3
Content Research and Development	2
Design	
Architect	3.5
Design engineer	1.4
Project and cost management	1.2
Technical support	0.5
Planning app and conditions	0.5
Peer Reviews and technical reports	0.1
Professional advice	0.3
Total Design	7.4
Exhibition Delivery	
Consultants	0.2
Designers	0.2
Total Exhibition Delivery	0.4
Construction	
Enabling works	0.2
Basement Box (pre-construction)	0.1
Total Construction	0.3
Planning Inquiry	1.4
Totals	17.8

Nord Stream 2 Pipeline

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of who was behind the attack on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline; and what evidence they have for that assessment. [HL6330]

Lord Callanan: The Government takes the protection and resilience of subsea and offshore infrastructure seriously. Departments work together to protect it from malicious and other hazards such as accidental damage. The Department awaits the findings of the ongoing investigations into the deliberate damage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines. It would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

Offenders: Rehabilitation

Asked by **The Earl of Dundee**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of increased deployment of halfway houses both pre-trial and post-custodial sentence on (1) the amount of people in custody, (2) levels of recidivism, and (3) levels of offender reintegration into society. [HL6302]

Lord Bellamy: Effective resettlement of prison leavers is a core part of our efforts to reduce re-offending. Evidence shows that prison leavers who are without settled accommodation are almost 50 percent more likely to reoffend than those who have stable accommodation on release.

Our Prisons Strategy White Paper set out our plans to reduce reoffending, including improving prison leavers' access to accommodation. This includes delivering our transitional accommodation service, known as Community Accommodation Service-Tier 3 (CAS3).

CAS3 was launched July 2021 in five probation regions, providing up to 12 weeks accommodation on release with support to move to settled accommodation. Between 1 July 2021 and 17 June 2022, 2,396 individuals, who would have otherwise been homeless, were accepted on to CAS3. We expanded the service to Wales in June 2022, and we will continue to rollout, to support the thousands of offenders who leave prison homeless.

Our CAS 2 service provides accommodation for people on bail who would otherwise be remanded in custody. The service has recently been reprocedured and learning from the previous contract informed the design of the current provision, increasing the level of support for those living there.

As part of the investment approach, we will be undertaking an impact evaluation of accommodation provision where suitable, starting with an impact evaluation of CAS3 which we hope to publish in 2024.

Party Wall etc Act 1996

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have conducted any post legislative review of the Party Wall Act 1996. [[HL6677](#)]

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to carry out a consultation on the effects of the Party Wall Act 1996. [[HL6678](#)]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department has not conducted any post legislative review of the Party Wall Act 1996 and does not intend to consult on its effects.

Private Rented Housing: Shortages

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to avert any impending shortage of private rental accommodation. [[HL6329](#)]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: According to the English Housing Survey, the proportion of Private Rented Sector (PRS) households has remained relatively stable for nearly a decade. The PRS was 19% of households in 2013-14 and continues to be at 19% according to the latest data for 2022. We also recognise, however, that there is pressure on the PRS.

Generally, the Government is firmly committed to driving up the supply of new homes and working towards its ambition of delivering 300,000 homes per year to help create a more sustainable and affordable housing market.

Schools: Sports

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to give girls equal access to sport in schools, particularly football. [[HL6327](#)]

Baroness Barran: On 8 March 2023 the government announced funding to support PE and Sport during the school day and after school, encouraging all schools to provide sports equally for girls and boys. The department is working with the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the Youth Sport Trust, the Football Association, and other governing bodies to add equality criteria to the School Games Mark which would cover curricular and extracurricular sport provision. The department will identify schools that deliver equal provision of PE and Sport and will disseminate how they are making this practice available, to inform all schools on how they can achieve it.

The department is also funding the Your:Time programme, which trains teenage girls to be able to coach their peers and improve their participation in competitive sport, including football.

Small Businesses: Government Assistance

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what business expansion grants are available for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). [[HL6227](#)]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: Businesses of all sizes can access government-backed finance from the British Business Bank. The Start Up Loans Company provides loans and pre- and post-application support to new entrepreneurs, including a year of free business mentoring for successful applicants. The Recovery Loan Scheme helps smaller businesses access loans and other kinds of finance up to £2 million per business group so they can grow and invest. Additionally, SMEs seeking to grow through exports can access the Export Academy and UK Export Finance.

The newly launched Help to Grow website contains links to the full range of government funding available to small businesses.

Social Services and Voluntary Organisations: Finance

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what further financial support they will provide to (1) voluntary care organisations, and (2) social care workers; and what plans they have to align the pay progression of social care workers to NHS pay scales. [[HL6371](#)]

Lord Markham: The Government is making available up to £7.5 billion in additional funding over two years to support adult social care and discharge with up to £2.8 billion available in 2023/24 and up to £4.7 billion in 2024/25. This funding will put the adult social care system on a stronger financial footing and help local authorities address waiting lists, low fee rates, and workforce pressures in the sector.

The Department has no plans to align the pay progression of adult social care workers to National Health Service pay scales. The adult social care sector is primarily a private and independent sector, and most care workers are employed by private sector providers who set their pay and terms and conditions.

Social Services: Labour Turnover

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to increase staff retention in the social care sector. [[HL6417](#)]

Lord Markham: We fund a range of training opportunities for social care staff, including the £8.1 million Think Ahead graduate programme and around £12 million a year, 2020-21, for the Workforce Development Fund.

In spring 2023, we will publish a plan for adult social care system reform. This will set out how we will build on the progress so far to implement the vision for adult social care set out in the People at the Heart of Care white paper, including our plans for recognising the adult social care workforce as the profession that it is and for supporting the development and progression of members of the workforce.

We also fund partners such as Skills for Care to work directly with care employers and commissioners to help improve staff retention in the sector.

Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that relief supplies, particularly for women and children, reach the whole of northern Syria, including the region known as Rojava. [HL6346]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to tackling the challenge of increased insecurity and rising humanitarian needs across northern Syria. In north-east Syria the UK is providing assistance via the UN and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) partners and supports all available access modalities. Those include cross-border and cross-line assistance to reach those most in need across Syria, including women and children. In the first half of financial year 2022/23, the UK provided over 360,000 medical consultations, ensured 157,000 pupils received access to formal education, provided 32,000 people with sexual and reproductive services and provided 28,000 people with sexual and gender-based violence services.

Syria: International Assistance

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what relief and development aid they are providing in Syria through the (1) indigenous, and (2) external, faith authorities. [HL6347]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We do not publicly disclose the names of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) partners in Syria for the interests of security. The UK works closely with UN, Syrian and International NGO partners to ensure aid reaches those in need within Syria. Since 2012 the UK has provided over £3.8 billion to the Syria crisis, our largest response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Syria: Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they intend to have with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees regarding (1) the need for food and medical supplies for, and (2) the plans for resettlement of, the approximately 7,500 internally

displaced people in the Rukban Camp on the Syria/Jordan border. [HL6348]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The situation in Rukban is an issue the UK Government continues to discuss with the UN as well as raising in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council and the Humanitarian Task Force in Geneva. We will continue to advocate for unimpeded, unfettered aid access across the whole of Syria including Rukban and remain grateful for the UN's continued work to find a solution to an extremely challenging situation. We will continue to engage with the UN to ensure that any movement of camp residents to other parts of Syria is safe, voluntary and informed.

Tax Evasion: Prosecutions

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prosecutions were brought by HMRC against the enablers of tax evasion in each year for the last 10 years; for each year, how many penalties were secured as a result of successful prosecutions; and what was the value of those penalties. [HL6278]

Baroness Penn: Tackling enablers of tax fraud is a top priority for HMRC. HMRC is working with partners across the World to take action against enablers.

Criminal investigation is only one route that HMRC pursues when it identifies serious non-compliance. The Department uses its full range of powers to tackle these abuses, including civil tax investigation methods which can result in punitive fines and penalties.

Prosecutions of Professional Enablers of Tax Evasion

Financial Year Prosecutions

2017-18 15

2018-19 29

2019-20 14

2020-21 4

2021-22 4

Since the launch of our Fraud Investigation Service in 2015/16, we have launched over 80,000 civil cases and more than 3,600 criminal investigations, securing and protecting £25.5bn for our vital public services and securing 3,200 criminal convictions. We have in excess of 100 enablers currently under investigation.

Information relating to earlier years is not available. HMRC officials are unable to provide data on civil penalties raised as a result of civil investigations into professional enablers of tax evasion as this cannot be extracted from management information held.

UK Infrastructure Bank

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government what projects have been (1) considered, and (2) financed, by the UK

Infrastructure Bank in the past 12 months in each region of the UK. [HL6556]

Baroness Penn: The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) was launched in June 2021 to provide infrastructure finance to tackle climate change and support regional and local economic growth across the UK.

The Bank is an operationally independent institution and responsible for making its own investment decisions within the scope of its remit. The disclosure of information related to the projects the Bank has considered is market sensitive and therefore not shared publicly.

UKIB publishes on its website all announcements on deals it has financed. In the last 12 months UKIB have announced 8 deals, committing nearly £0.9 billion of investment across the UK. This includes funding the expansion of fibre rollout across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government what projects the UK Infrastructure Bank is currently considering in each region of the UK. [HL6557]

Baroness Penn: The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) was launched in June 2021 to provide infrastructure finance to tackle climate change and support regional and local economic growth across the UK.

The Bank is an operationally independent institution and responsible for making its own investment decisions within the scope of its remit. The disclosure of information related to the projects the Bank is currently considering is market sensitive and therefore not shared publicly.

UKIB publishes on its website all announcements on deals it has financed. In the last 12 months UKIB have announced 8 deals, committing nearly £0.9 billion of investment across the UK. This includes funding the expansion of fibre rollout across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the mandate in the UK Infrastructure Bank's Annual Report for it to "bolster the government's lending to local government for large and complex projects", what financing the Bank has provided for such projects in the past 12 months. [HL6558]

Baroness Penn: Since the UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) launched in June 2021 it has announced 12 deals in total. Over the past 12 months, the UKIB has announced 8 investments, committing £0.9 billion and estimated to mobilise over £5 billion of private investment.

The UKIB has made two local government investments since 2021, including a £107 million loan to Tees Valley

Combined Authority for the construction of the South Bank Quay and a £10 million loan to the West Midlands Combined Authority for green sprint bus infrastructure.

Through these investments the UKIB is supporting projects which contribute to meeting net zero targets as well as driving regional and local economic growth. The UKIB also supports local authorities through the continued rollout of its advisory service which has pilots underway in Bristol, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire.

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the UK Infrastructure Bank's Framework Document that it is "yet to be administratively classified", what classification the Bank has since been given. [HL6559]

Baroness Penn: The UK Infrastructure Bank was launched in 2021 to increase investment into UK infrastructure with a mandate to help tackle climate change and support regional and local economic growth.

In April 2022 the Cabinet Office approved the administrative classification of UKIB as a Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by HM Treasury, with effect from June 2021. The UKIB Framework Document will be updated to reflect this classification after the UKIB Bill receives Royal Assent.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there will be any change in the text of (1) the Withdrawal Agreement, or (2) the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, on the description of Great Britain as a "third country" for certain purposes relating to the movement of goods and agri-food products to Northern Ireland, as a result of the Windsor Framework. [HL6395]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Windsor Framework delivers a fundamental new framework which ensures the smooth flow of internal UK trade and safeguards Northern Ireland's place in our Union. The legal texts published online set out how this will be delivered.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government which Government agency will have responsibility for staffing and operating the green and red lanes for goods entering Northern Ireland; and to whom that agency will be accountable. [HL6497]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Authorities in the United Kingdom will, as they do today, administer all arrangements under the Windsor Framework, with the relevant UK authority as specified within the relevant regulations.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether Northern Ireland will remain part of the EU Single Market and subject to the rules thereof in the event that the Windsor Framework is implemented. [HL6398]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Northern Ireland is not part of the EU Single Market, it is part of the United Kingdom and its internal market. An absolute minimum (less than 3 percent) of EU law continues to apply in Northern Ireland, to avoid a hard border and maintain Northern Ireland's unique access to the EU market. But alongside this Northern Ireland has full unfettered access to the UK internal market. And under the Windsor Framework, more than 1,700 pages of EU law will be disapplied for UK internal trade. The rules that are disapplied are set out in the legal instruments giving effect to the Windsor Framework.

Universal Credit

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Trussell Trust report *An Essentials Guarantee: Reforming Universal Credit* to ensure we can all afford the essentials in hard times, published on 27 February, what assessment they made of the recommendation contained in that report to "introduce an Essentials Guarantee" to ensure those on Universal Credit are not going without essential items. [HL6307]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes. As seen in measures announced by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement, the Government have committed to a series of measures to ensure support for UK citizens. Raising the Universal Credit award by 10.1% to bring rates in-line with national inflation and ensure claimants are supported.

The current rates of income-related benefits such as Universal Credit do not represent a minimum requirement, and are not described as such in legislation or Government literature. The Government specifies the rates which are applicable to different benefits, and these may vary according to claimants' circumstances.

There is no objective way of deciding what an adequate level of benefit should be as every person has different requirements. Income-related benefit rates are not made up of separate amounts for specific items of expenditure such as food or fuel charges, and beneficiaries are free to spend their benefit as they see fit, in the light of their individual commitments, needs and preferences.

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living, which is why, in addition to the £37 billion of support we have provided for cost-of-

living pressures in 2022/23, we are acting now to ensure support continues throughout 2023/24.

We will be delivering further cost of living payments, worth up to £900 for claimants on means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioner households and £150 for those on disability benefits.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. In England this will be delivered through an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842 million, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which local authorities use to help households with the cost of essentials. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

Visas and Work Permits: Social Services

Asked by **Lord Willis of Knaresborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many visas and work permits have been granted under the Health and Social Care scheme since February 2022. [HL6333]

Asked by **Lord Willis of Knaresborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government which countries those granted Health and Social Care visas and work permits have come from. [HL6334]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office publishes data on Entry clearance visas in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on granted 'Skilled Worker – Health and Care' visas, by nationality, are published in table Vis_D02 of the 'Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes detailed datasets'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to Q4 2022 (October to December).

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

table Vis_D02 [entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2022
(1) - table Vis_D02.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-09/HL6333>

Windsor Framework

Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn**

To ask His Majesty's Government what powers, beyond monitoring, will be given to the Office of the Internal Market under paragraph 52 of the Windsor Framework. [HL6297]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: As set out in paragraph 52 of the Windsor Framework the Office of the Internal Market (OIM) will make full use of its remit by specifically monitoring any impacts for Northern Ireland arising from relevant future regulatory changes.

Furthermore, the Government has committed that, in cases where Northern Ireland authorities request that the OIM specifically investigate a concern about a future UK regulatory change, we will provide a full response to any OIM report, taking into account the real-world impacts the report raises.

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