

**Session 2022-23
No. 140**



**Monday
17 April 2023**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers..... 10

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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
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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
Earl of Minto	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade
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 Dirlerton	Advocate-General for Scotland
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Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Monday, 17 April 2023

Achieving Smokefree 2030: Cutting Smoking and Stopping Kids Vaping

[HLWS703]

Lord Markham: My Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Primary Care and Public Health) (Neil O'Brien) has made the following written statement:

In 2019, this Government set the bold ambition for England to be Smokefree by 2030 – reducing smoking rates to 5% or less. To support this, the Government commissioned Dr Javed Khan OBE to undertake an Independent Review which was published in June 2022.

As I set out in a letter to colleagues on 11 April, I am pleased to be able to update the House on new action we have announced to help more people in England to quit smoking in order to meet our Smokefree 2030 ambition. We also announced further measures to protect children from the use of vaping products, in recognition of the sharp increase in vaping among children in recent years.

One in seven adults (5.4 million people) still smoke in England, and tobacco remains the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death. Up to two out of three lifelong smokers will die from smoking, and smoking substantially increases the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Smoking also causes 7 out of 10 cases of lung cancer. Tackling smoking is one of the most evidence-based and effective interventions that we can take to prevent ill health. It will improve public health, reduce the burden on the NHS, and provides substantial benefits to our workforce and the economy.

Across the country, people are concerned by the increases in youth vaping among children. It is illegal to sell vapes to under 18s and this Government wants to clamp down on those businesses who rely on children buying vapes and getting them hooked on nicotine. To help combat rising levels of youth vaping, the Government has now published a youth vaping call for evidence. The call for evidence aims to identify opportunities to reduce the number of children accessing and using vapes, exploring issues such as regulatory compliance, the marketing and promotion of vape products and the environmental impact of disposable vapes. We will explore where the Government can go further, beyond what the EU's Tobacco Products Directive allowed us to. I encourage colleagues from across the House to contribute and help inform our next steps. The call for evidence is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/youth-vaping-call-for-evidence/youth-vaping-call-for-evidence>.

While we want to ensure children do not take up vaping, we would also like to exploit the potential of vaping as a powerful tool to stop adults smoking. Vaping

is substantially less harmful than smoking and our most effective quit aid – particularly when provided alongside behavioural support. That is why last week I announced that we will be supporting a million smokers to 'swap to stop', with free vaping kit – the first national scheme of its kind in the world. The scheme will run over two years initially and will be targeted at the most at-risk communities first - focusing on settings such as job centres, homeless centres, and social housing providers.

I was also pleased to announce new action to tackle illicit tobacco and vaping, as well as underage sales. Later this year, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs and Border Force will publish an updated strategy to tackle illicit tobacco. It will set out how we will continue to target, catch, and punish those involved in the illicit market. This Government has also committed £3 million of new funding to create a specialised "illicit vapes enforcement squad" to enforce the rules on the sale of vapes, tackling illicit vapes and underage sales. This national programme will gather intelligence, coordinate efforts across the country, undertake test purchasing and develop guidance to build regulatory compliance.

Across England, nearly 9% of women still smoke in pregnancy. To tackle this, by next year we will offer a financial incentive to all pregnant women who smoke to support them to quit. In pilot projects these evidence-based schemes have already proven their value with a return on investment of £4 for every £1 invested. Most importantly, they unlock a lifetime of benefits for the child and their mother.

I also announced that the Government will consult this year on introducing mandatory cigarette pack inserts, to refresh the health messaging on cigarette packets with positive messages and information to help people to quit smoking. We are exploring how best we can use modern approaches within this, such as the use of QR codes, to make it as easy as possible to get help to quit.

On 24 January, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced our intention to develop a Major Conditions Strategy. Our plan to tackle preventable ill-health and mortality in England. It will focus on tackling the most prevalent conditions that contribute to morbidity and mortality in our population – cancers, cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, dementia, mental ill health, and musculoskeletal conditions. Tackling smoking will be central to this strategy.

Through these actions, we have set out the Government plan to meeting our bold ambition to be Smokefree by 2030 and respond to The Khan Review. We are committed to doing all we can to give people the support they need to quit smoking, tackling the damage from the illicit market and minimising the growing threat of vaping by children.

However, we cannot do this alone. A close collaboration is needed right across the health system – including the NHS, Local Authorities, and a range of public health stakeholders. We hope that together our efforts will act as a powerful catalyst to reduce health

disparities and prevent smoking-related death, disease, and despair.

Canada Trade Negotiations: Update

[HLWS699]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Kemi Badenoch MP) has today made the following statement:

The fifth round of UK-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations began on 20 March and concluded on 24 March. Similar to previous rounds, this was conducted in a hybrid fashion – Canadian officials travelled to London for negotiations and others attended virtually.

Technical discussions were held across 29 policy areas over 78 separate sessions. They included detailed discussions on treaty text.

Prior to the round, my counterpart Minister Mary Ng visited London, with a women-owned business delegation. We discussed the negotiations and the wider UK and Canada trade relationship, including the CPTPP negotiations. Discussions covered our respective ambitions for the deal, and we welcomed the progress made so far.

The negotiations continue to reflect our shared ambition to secure a progressive deal which strengthens our existing trading relationship, already worth over £24.8 billion in the year to Q3 2022.

The Government remains clear that any deal we sign will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy. We will not compromise on our high environmental, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and we will maintain our right to regulate in the public interest. We are also clear that during these negotiations, the National Health Service and the services it provides is not on the table.

The sixth round of official-level negotiations is due to take place in June 2023.

The Government will continue to keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Conclusion of Substantive Negotiations

[HLWS705]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Kemi Badenoch MP) has today made the following statement:

The Department for Business and Trade is delighted to announce the conclusion of substantive negotiations to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). After over 21 months of intense talks with members the UK has successfully concluded negotiations to join CPTPP, including finalising bilateral market access negotiations with all ratified Parties, and successfully demonstrating our compliance with the agreement's high standards. We

have taken our time to negotiate a deal that will bring significant benefits to the UK, creating opportunities for our businesses while deepening our global trading links.

Geostrategic Aspects of CPTPP

Joining will cement deeper multilateral relations with CPTPP Parties while strengthening international trade. It will see us build closer ties with CPTPP nations as the world economy increasingly focuses on the dynamic Indo-Pacific region, taking the agreement from regional to truly global. This is a key aim of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and will help the UK engage further with the region, both on trade and from a wider foreign policy perspective.

CPTPP membership offers the opportunity to work with Parties to advance our mutual ambitions. It will allow us to further promote the rules based international system and set high standards. The potential expansion of the agreement will increase the UK's reach and influence on global trade.

Benefits for UK Business

CPTPP membership will create exciting new opportunities for UK businesses in key sectors. UK companies will enjoy enhanced market access to a market of over 500 million people, with a GDP of £9 trillion.

More than 99% of current UK goods exports to CPTPP members will be eligible for tariff-free trade once we have joined. Our agricultural producers stand to benefit as joining could see the UK's world class food and drink industry exporting more of their high-quality produce to some of the world's biggest markets. Our exporters will also benefit from customs facilitation provisions. These will enable closer cooperation between border authorities. This will result in faster and more efficient processes for moving goods between the UK and CPTPP members.

Beyond tariffs and customs procedures, CPTPP will offer opportunities to firms for the diversification of supply chains and allow them to trade more easily across the Indo-Pacific region. Provisions within the agreement rules will allow our companies to take advantage of ambitious commitments on tariff liberalisation. It is not just goods exporters who will gain from CPTPP membership. The UK's world-leading services firms will be able to make the most of CPTPP's ambitious digital provisions. The modern rules in the agreement will ensure greater levels of transparency in the sector while reducing barriers for UK companies looking to maximise their opportunities for growth in the Indo-Pacific region.

Protecting UK Interests

Over the course of negotiations, the Government has taken important steps to protect our key interests. The NHS, its services and the price it pays for medicines were never on the table at any point throughout talks. Protecting the NHS is a fundamental principle of UK trade policy to which the Government is committed throughout its programme of Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

The UK has also negotiated appropriate protections for our farmers. We have arranged staged tariff reductions

over a significant period of time for sensitive agricultural goods to give producers time to adjust. We have also guaranteed permanent annual limits on tariff free imports of beef, pork, chicken, sugar and milled rice. The UK will not compromise its food standards by joining CPTPP. Our import requirements for food and drink will not be affected by joining the agreement and there will be no requirement to change our standards to accept products which do not conform with our current food standards, including chlorine washed chicken or hormone-fed beef.

Next Steps

The agreed text will now undergo legal review before signature of the agreement. Once the agreement is signed the Government will present an informational copy of the agreement to Parliament. As well as the text of the treaty, the Government will also provide explanatory material including an Impact Assessment of the deal. This approach is part of the extensive package of transparency and scrutiny measures that the Government has put in place for new trade agreements.

Once the treaty has been published the independent Trade and Agriculture Commission will prepare its advice on the agreement.

After the Trade and Agriculture Commission report has been published, and the Government has published its own report under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020, the agreement will be laid before Parliament for 21 sitting days of formal scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG). There will be at least three months between publication of the agreement and the commencement of the scrutiny period under CRaG.

Any legislation required to implement the agreement will need to be scrutinised and passed by Parliament in the usual ways.

Consultation on a Registration Scheme for Short-term Lets in England

[HLWS701]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Minister for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries, Julia Lopez MP:

The Government has published a consultation on a registration scheme for short-term lets in England, accompanied by the findings of a Call for Evidence held in 2022 on the development of a registration scheme.

The short-term let sector has grown significantly over the last 10 to 15 years, with the emergence of the sharing economy and the growth of digital platforms at the heart of this change. Short-term lets are now a significant part of the UK's visitor economy. They provide increased choice and flexibility for tourists and business travellers, and also those attending major sporting and cultural events.

The Government recognises that this has brought a range of benefits, such as increased choice for consumers,

and increased income for individual homeowners and to local economies through increased visitor spend.

The Government wants to ensure the country reaps these benefits and supports the visitor economy, while also protecting local communities and ensuring the availability of affordable housing to rent or buy.

The Government has heard the concerns of local people in tourist hotspots that they are priced out of homes to rent or to buy and need housing that is more affordable so they can continue to work and live in the place they call home. The proposed planning changes would support sustainable communities, supporting local people and businesses and local services.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) committed to consult on a registration scheme for tourist accommodation in the Tourism Recovery Plan, published in June 2021. However, given the lack of available data on short-term lets in England, it was decided to first carry out a Call for Evidence to gather more information on the growth of the market and its impact, in order to inform the development of options for a public consultation.

The Call for Evidence received almost 4,000 responses. Analysis of these responses showed that there is a need for a more consistent source of data on the number and location of short-term lets in England; that while short term lets create many benefits for a range of people and stakeholders, they also pose challenges for communities, particularly those located in tourism hotspots. The findings also indicated that there is broad support from across the sector for a registration scheme of short-term lets in England.

Therefore, in December 2022, the Government committed to introduce a registration scheme in England via an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which is currently going through Parliament. This included holding a public consultation which would explore the options for how such a scheme would operate, which we have now published. Alongside the registration scheme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has also published a separate consultation on the introduction of a planning use class for short-term lets and potential associated permitted development rights. We are also seeking views on whether it would be helpful to expressly provide a degree of flexibility for dwelling houses to be let out for 30, 60, or 90 nights in a calendar year before planning permission could be required. These changes will give local areas greater control where short term lets are an issue and support sustainable communities. We have worked across government to ensure that the proposals are complementary and proportionate.

The Government is consulting on three possible approaches for a registration scheme, as well as a range of more detailed questions on the design of the scheme:

- 1) an opt-in scheme for local authorities, with the framework set nationally: this option is a targeted approach, recognising that any negative housing and

community effects of short-term lets are felt more in some localities than others;

2) an opt-in scheme for local authorities with the framework set nationally, and a review point to determine whether to expand the scheme to mandatory: as above, but with the flexibility to expand the scheme to cover all of England if there is a case to do so following an evaluation; and

3) a mandatory national scheme, administered by one of: the English Tourist Board (VisitEngland), local authorities, or another competent authority: this option recognises the need for a level playing field in the guest accommodation sector across England.

The registration scheme is intended to improve consistency in the application of health and safety regulations, helping to boost our international reputation and attract more international visitors by giving visible assurance that we have a high quality and safe guest accommodation offer. It will also provide valuable data which will give local authorities information about which premises are being let out in their area, and help them to manage the housing market impact of high numbers of short-term lets, where this is an issue. This could help local authorities to apply and enforce the changes.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the planning changes would be introduced through secondary legislation later in the year and would apply in England only. Both of these measures are focussed on short term lets, and therefore the planning changes and the register would not impact on hotels, hostels or B&Bs.

The Government's ambition has been, and will continue to be, to ensure that we reap the benefits of short-term and holiday lets sustainably, whilst also protecting the long-term interests of local communities and holidaymakers in England. The publication of the consultation on a registration scheme and the analysis of the Call for Evidence shows our commitment to this ambition, and our progress towards developing an effective and proportionate response to the sector's concerns.

I will place a copy of the Call for Evidence report and the consultation document in the Libraries of both Houses.

Correction to Written Parliamentary Questions

[HLWS704]

Lord Markham: My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Health and Secondary Care) (Will Quince) has made the following written statement:

Between May and June 2022, 13 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) were answered regarding the UK Health Security Agency testing Covid-19 variants for a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis antibody therapy (tixagevimab and cilgavimab), known by the brand name Evusheld. The PQs are: PQ3627; PQ2654; HL215; HL219; PQ1507; PQ3710; PQ11547; PQ14599; HL157; PQ17128; PQ15321; HL653; and PQ691.

In simplifying the technical language, the responses to these PQs incorrectly indicated that testing was ongoing. During June, the UK Health Security Agency carried out isolation and characterisation of the BA.4 Omicron variant in preparation for testing it against various compounds, which could potentially have included Evusheld. However, in the PQ responses, these activities were incorrectly interpreted as testing and the language was simplified. No further testing of Evusheld including against BA.4 Omicron variant took place after 26 May 2022.

The table below summarises the testing UKHSA carried out on Evusheld.

<i>Run Number</i>	<i>Test Week</i>	<i>Date Analysed</i>	<i>Variant/Comments</i>
CVA00056	25 April 2022	3 May 2022	Omicron BA.2
CVA00057	3 May 2022	11 May 2022	Omicron BA.2
CVA00058	9 May 2022	15 May 2022	Omicron BA.2
CVA00059	16 May 2022	22 May 2022	Omicron BA.2
CVA00060	23 May 2022	No analysis required because previous data captured on CVA00059 was sufficient.	Testing ceased 26 May 2022.

Through this WMS I am apologising for these errors and clarifying the situation with regards to the testing of Evusheld. The department takes its responsibility for parliamentary accountability very seriously and has reviewed and amended. The process for checking responses to Parliamentary Questions to ensure future accuracy. The table below sets out the PQ reference, the member or peer who asked the question and the date it was published.

<i>PQ reference</i>	<i>Member/Peer</i>	<i>Date published</i>
PQ3627	Chris Green MP (Bolton West & Atherton)	24-May-22
PQ2654	Amy Callaghan MP (East Dunbartonshire)	24-May-22
HL215	Lord Mendelsohn	25-May-22
HL219	Lord Mendelsohn	25-May-22
PQ1507	Alex Cunningham MP (Stockton North)	07-Jun-22
PQ3710	Alex Sobel MP (Leeds North West)	07-Jun-22
PQ11547	Christopher Chope MP (Christchurch & East Dorset)	14-Jun-22
PQ14599	Dan Carden MP (Liverpool Walton)	14-Jun-22
HL157	Lord Mendelsohn	16-Jun-22

<i>PQ reference</i>	<i>Member/Peer</i>	<i>Date published</i>
PQ17128	Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP (Streatham)	17-Jun-22
PQ15321	Catherine West MP (Hornsey and Wood Green)	21-Jun-22
HL653	Lord Mendelsohn	20-Jun-22
PQ691	Henry Smith MP (Crawley)	21-Jun-22

Covid-19 Vaccine Update

[HLWS702]

Lord Markham: My Hon friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy) and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Women) (Maria Caulfield) has made the following Written Statement:

His Majesty's Government (HMG) is committed to protecting people most vulnerable to Covid-19 through vaccination as guided by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

On the 6 April 2023, HMG accepted advice from the JCVI that clinically vulnerable children in England aged 6 months to 4 years should be offered a Covid-19 vaccine. I am informed that all four parts of the UK intend to follow the JCVI's advice.

Although young children are generally at low risk of developing severe illness from Covid-19, infants and young children who have underlying medical conditions are over seven times more likely to be admitted to Paediatric Intensive Care Units compared to those without underlying medical conditions.

Over one million children aged 6 months to 4 years in the US have received at least one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine since June 2022. Data from the US showed no new safety concerns and the most common side effects reported were similar to those seen with other vaccines given in this age group, such as irritability or crying, sleepiness, and fever.

The UK's independent medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), approved the Pfizer-BioNTech infant vaccine for children aged 6 months to 4 years on 6 December 2022 after assessing the safety, quality, and effectiveness of the vaccine against MHRA's robust standards.

Following this authorisation, the JCVI advised that children aged 6 months to 4 years who are in a clinical risk group (as defined in the UK Health Security Agency Green Book, which sets out information for public health professionals on immunisation) should be offered the vaccine. The JCVI does not currently advise offering Covid-19 vaccination to children aged 6 months to 4 years who are not in a clinical risk group.

The JCVI has advised that eligible children should be offered two doses of the vaccine, with an interval of 8 to 12 weeks between the first and second doses. The NHS in

England will begin offering vaccinations to those eligible in England from mid-June.

I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine deployment via this statement and accompanying Departmental Minutes laid in Parliament containing a description of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further doses increases the contingent liability of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The extension to this cohort of children aged 6 months to 4 years creates a new contingent liability under the indemnities in the existing vaccine supply agreement between HMG and Pfizer.

Deployment of effective vaccines to eligible groups has been and remains a key part of the Government's strategy to manage Covid-19. Given the terms on which developers have been willing to supply a Covid-19 vaccine, we, along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

Even though the Covid-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. These vaccines have satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality.

We are providing indemnities in the very unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other Covid-19 vaccines or additional doses of vaccines already in use in the UK are deployed.

Draft Border Target Operating Model

[HLWS695]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: An important follow-up to Brexit is border controls on goods, including sanitary & phytosanitary checks critical to the protection of animal and plant health and potentially even human health. On 28 April 2022, the Rt Hon Member for North East Somerset announced that the UK Government decided to delay the introduction of the final set of planned controls on EU imports. We have instead worked with industry to develop a new model for imports into Great Britain. On Wednesday 5 April 2023 we published the draft 'Border Target Operating Model'. We have also started a period of engagement with stakeholders across all affected sectors and all parts of the United Kingdom, and the EU, to ensure that they understand the coming changes and are ready to continue to move goods across the border on that basis.

The Model sets out the rules and processes that will apply to the importation of all goods into Great Britain. It will, for the first time, implement security and biosecurity controls on imports from the EU. These controls will ensure our environment is protected, deliver food that is safe to eat whilst maintaining security of supply for

consumers, and disrupt criminal activity before it can harm our communities.

The Model will fulfil the UK's domestic and international obligations with regard to biosecurity and public health, upholding our reputation for high regulatory standards that underpin our agri-food trading relationships. Through the UK Single Trade Window, we will simplify the way importers provide information to government. This is significantly less burdensome than our original plans, and it supports our wider efforts to drive UK exports.

The gradual roll-out of controls will ensure impacts and costs are managed: we will implement the Model through three major milestones, the first of which importers and their suppliers should begin to prepare for now:

- 31 October 2023 - The introduction of health certification on imports of medium risk animal products, plants, plant products and high risk food (and feed) of non-animal origin from the EU.
- 31 January 2024 - The introduction of documentary and risk-based identity and physical checks on medium risk animal products, plants, plant products and high risk food (and feed) of non-animal origin from the EU. At this point imports of Sanitary and Phytosanitary goods from the rest of the world will begin to benefit from the new risk based model.
- 31 October 2024 - Safety and Security declarations for EU imports will come into force from 31 October 2024. Alongside this, we will introduce a reduced dataset for imports and use of the UK Single Trade Window will remove duplication where possible across different pre-arrival datasets.

We will phase in controls on the west coast for Irish goods from October 2023, whilst ensuring that Northern Ireland businesses have unfettered access to their most important market in Great Britain, whether they move goods directly or indirectly through Ireland to Great Britain. Further to the Windsor Framework, this will entrench a significant competitive advantage for NI business on the island of Ireland, reflecting Northern Ireland's integral place in the United Kingdom's internal market.

Following the engagement period we will publish a final version of the Target Operating Model later this year.

Inclusive Britain Progress Report

[HLWS694]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister for Women and Equalities (Kemi Badenoch), has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 17 March 2022 we published Inclusive Britain, our response to the report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. It sets out a ground-breaking two year plan to tackle entrenched disparities, level up communities and promote unity. It contains 74 tailored

actions to tackle long-standing disparities in education, health, criminal justice and in the workplace. I committed to reporting back to Parliament on progress after 12 months.

I am publishing today an update on the substantial progress we have made in delivering the Inclusive Britain action plan. This report is based around the three ambitious aims of Inclusive Britain: building a stronger sense of trust and fairness in our institutions; promoting equality of opportunity, encouraging aspiration and empowering individuals; and fostering and instilling a sense of belonging in the UK.

I am pleased to report that we have, to date, completed 32 of the actions and continue to make good progress in delivering the remainder. Particular highlights include:

- Publishing today new guidance for employers on how to measure, report on and address any ethnicity pay gaps within their workforce;
- Funding a national recruitment campaign to find more adoptive parents, including those from an ethnic minority background, to improve adoption rates for ethnic minority children;
- Supporting a number of police forces to trial the effect of an automatic 'opt-in' for young people to receive independent legal advice in police custody, which we hope will lead to better outcomes for young people;
- Publishing our ambitious schools white paper and providing targeted support for those pupils who need it, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged; and
- Publishing today updated guidance on positive action so employers who use this measure to widen opportunities can do so in a way that is consistent with equalities legislation.

The recent Casey Review and the Children's Commissioner's report on the strip-search of children have shown that there is more to be done to tackle disparities and to build trust in our institutions. We will continue our work to deliver the remaining actions in Inclusive Britain over the next 12 months. We will also tie this into some major landmarks this year, including the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush, in order to further promote and celebrate our diversity as a nation.

A copy of the report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and I will report back to Parliament in 12 months' time on the further progress we have made in implementing this ambitious action plan and our work to build a stronger, fairer, more united society.

Maths Teaching

[HLWS697]

Baroness Barran: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education (Gillian Keegan) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Prime Minister has set out a campaign to transform our national approach to maths. We are one of the few countries in the OECD where young people do not

routinely study some form of maths up to the age of 18. Without a solid foundation in this subject, our young people risk being left behind and shut out of the careers to which they aspire and the lives they want to lead. We plan to change the way our system works so that everyone will study some form of maths to 18.

So, today I am announcing an Expert Advisory Group to advise the Prime Minister and me on the essential maths knowledge and skills young people need to study. To support the group, the Government will commission research on post-16 maths provision around the world, ensuring the curriculum in this country rivals that of the highest performing countries. Alongside this, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education will work with employers to review the maths content in apprenticeships.

Since 2010, the Government has transformed the way maths is taught in schools based on the best available international evidence, including approaches from the highest performing countries in the world. Supported by 40 Maths Hubs (exemplary schools in the teaching of maths) and the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, mastery-based pedagogy from southeast Asia has been adopted by more than half of England's primary schools. In the 2019 TIMSS international survey, Year 5 pupils in England achieved their highest ever maths score.

To complement evidence-based approaches to maths teaching and content, the Government introduced more challenging assessments at both primary and secondary schools, including the times tables check in Year 4, new Key Stage 2 maths tests, and reformed GCSEs and A levels. These assessments ensure children are taught and master the basics of mathematics, before tackling more demanding content. The success of these approaches was reflected in England's highest mathematics PISA results for 15-year-olds in 2019.

To continue this progress, the Government is today also announcing:

- An increase in the number of schools supported by the Maths Hubs Teaching for Mastery programme to reach 75% of primary schools and 65% of secondary schools by 2025. We will introduce intensive Maths Hubs support for the schools that need it most. We will also provide further support for teachers of 16–19 year olds who are resitting their maths GCSE or Functional Skills Qualifications.
- An expansion of the Mastering Number programme, which helps children in the first years of primary school master the basics of arithmetic, including number bonds and times tables. This programme will be delivered by Maths Hubs, reaching over 8,000 schools by 2024. We will also expand the programme into Years 4 and 5 to bolster fluency in times tables.
- An expansion of the Taking Teaching Further programme, delivering funding for Further Education (FE) colleges to recruit and offer early career support to those with the relevant knowledge and industry

experience to retrain as FE teachers. We will launch a financial incentive pilot this year for up to 355 teachers, targeted at some of the hardest-to-fill subjects, including maths.

- A new fully funded maths National Professional Qualification for those leading maths in primary schools, teaching participants how to train other teachers to embed mastery pedagogy. We expect to make this available to all primary schools from February 2024. We will offer an updated Targeted Support Fund for the 2023-24 academic year, providing additional funding to incentivise primary school teachers and leaders, including in the smallest schools.

Today's announcement sets out how we will deliver the Prime Minister's ambition to see all young people study maths to the age of 18 and ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the modern economy.

NatWest Group: Government Shares

[HLWS706]

Baroness Penn: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Andrew Griffith) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Government's shares in NatWest Group plc

I can inform the House that the government has announced an extension to its existing trading plan to sell part of the government's shareholding in NatWest Group (NWG, formerly Royal Bank of Scotland, RBS). The current trading plan was due to end in August 2023. Following its strong progress to date in reducing the government's shareholding in NWG, the trading plan has been extended for a further two years, allowing sales to continue under the plan until August 2025. This announcement demonstrates continued progress towards the government's intention to return its NWG shareholding to private ownership by 2025-26.

Policy rationale

It is government policy that where a government asset no longer serves a public policy purpose, the government may choose to sell that asset, subject to being able to achieve value for money. This frees up public resource which can be deployed to achieve other public policy objectives.

The government is committed to returning NWG to full private ownership, given that the original policy objective for the intervention in NWG – to preserve financial and economic stability at a time of crisis – has long been achieved. At Spring Budget 2023, the Chancellor reiterated the government's intention to fully dispose of its NWG shareholding by 2025-26.

Trading plan detail

A trading plan involves selling shares in the market through an appointed broker at market value over the duration of the plan. Trading plans are an established method of returning government-owned shares to private ownership, while protecting value for the taxpayer. This

method was used in the sale of the government's stake in Lloyds Banking Group.

The trading plan for the government's NWG shareholding will be extended for two years, terminating no later than 11 August 2025. Shares are only sold at a price that represents fair value and delivers value for money for the taxpayer. The final number of shares sold will depend on, amongst other factors, the share price and market conditions throughout the duration of the trading plan. Since the NWG trading plan was established in August 2021 it has made significant progress in reducing the government's shareholding, with over £3.7 billion in proceeds raised from sales that have delivered value for money for the taxpayer.

UKGI and HMT will keep other disposal options under active consideration. The decision to extend the trading plan does not preclude the government from using other disposal options to execute further transactions that achieve value for money for taxpayers.

Reforms to the Process of Certifying Claims as Clearly Unfounded

[HLWS700]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: My right hon Friend the Minister of State for Immigration (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 13 December 2022, my right hon Friend the Prime Minister made a statement on tackling illegal migration and a clear plan to bring the system back into balance.

Under our immigration system, where we refuse an asylum or human rights claim which is so clearly without substance that it is bound to fail, we can certify it as clearly unfounded under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Where the claimant is from a designated safe country the claim must be certified as clearly unfounded unless the decision maker is satisfied it is not clearly unfounded. Following the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, cases certified as clearly unfounded do not have a right of appeal.

When the power under section 94 was introduced in 2002, the then Labour Government gave an undertaking to Parliament that every case certified as clearly unfounded would be looked at by two specially trained officials, with additional quality checks on top of that.

This Government believes it is important to have procedures in place to ensure that those who make clearly unfounded human rights and asylum claims are quickly removed from the UK. That is why only specially trained caseworkers can decide that a claim should be certified. However, the current requirement for a second check to be conducted by a different Home Office official on every certified decision is delaying the conclusion of claims which are bound to fail. We must maximise our capacity to progress clearly unfounded cases in a more efficient way.

For these reasons, protection and human rights claims which are certified under section 94 as clearly unfounded

will no longer have to be checked by a second specially trained official. This change will help ensure that the Home Office can certify unfounded cases more efficiently under section 94, so that those who have no basis to be in the UK can be swiftly removed.

The Home Office already operates a robust quality assurance framework for non-certified decisions which helps to maintain the quality of case-work decisions and expertise. The specific quality check undertaken for section 94 decisions is no longer necessary, therefore we are improving the assurance process and aligning it with checks adopted on other decisions. Claims certified under section 94 will be regularly reviewed which will ensure that the certification process continues to be applied with careful scrutiny.

Smart Motorway Schemes: Cancellation

[HLWS698]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Mark Harper), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

The Government has announced that all plans for new smart motorways have been cancelled.

This will mean that the 11 schemes already paused from the second Road Investment Strategy (2020-25) and the three earmarked for construction during the third Road Investment Strategy (2025-30) will be removed from the Government's road building plans in recognition of the current lack of public confidence felt by drivers and cost pressures.

While no new stretches will be converted, work on the M56 J6-8 and M6 J21a-26 will go ahead as planned given they are already over three quarters constructed.

The Government and National Highways will continue to invest £900 million in further safety improvements on existing smart motorways. This includes installing stopped vehicle detection technology on every all lane running smart motorway which has now been completed, adding an additional 150 emergency areas across the network by 2025, and investing in giving motorists clear advice when using existing smart motorways.

The Government will also continue to deliver against its other commitments as set out in its response to the Transport Select Committee in January 2022.

This Government will continue to ensure that our roads remain among the safest in the world – helping drivers not just to be safe, but crucially, to feel safe and confident when driving.

The following schemes have been cancelled.

RIS2 (2020-2025) paused schemes

New all lane running smart motorways:

M3 J9–14

M40/M42 interchange

M62 J20–25

M25 J10–16

Dynamic hard shoulder to all lane running conversions:
M1 Junction 10 - 13
M4 - M5 interchange (M4 Junction 19 - 20 and M5 Junction 15 - 17)
M6 Junction 4 - 5
M6 Junction 5 - 8
M6 Junction 8 - 10a
M42 Junction 3a - 7
M62 Junction 25 - 30
RIS3 (2025-30) pipeline schemes
M1 North Leicestershire
M1 junctions 35A - 39 Sheffield to Wakefield
M6 junctions 19 - 21A Knutsford to Croft

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Tackling Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland

[HLWS696]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: My Honourable friend the Minister for Levelling Up (Dehenna Davison MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 31 March, my department announced the outcome of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to Tackle Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland, which ran from December 2022 to January 2023.

This competition is a cornerstone of the £127 million UK Shared Prosperity Fund Northern Ireland Investment Plan, launched in December 2022, in which my department outlined the ambition of the Fund to invest in Northern Ireland's priorities, target funding where it is needed most: building pride in place; supporting pay,

employment and productivity growth; supporting high quality skills training; and increasing life chances.

I am pleased to confirm that we have committed over £57 million to projects over the next two years from the Northern Ireland allocation, in excess of the £42 million set out in December, reflecting this Government's commitment to support many more people to move from economic inactivity into sustainable employment.

My department has recognised the high prevalence of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland compared with other parts of the UK. It is a significant barrier to a well-functioning labour market; it dampens growth, aggravates the shortage of workers in key sectors, and negatively impacts the quality of life of those who are economically inactive. That is why we made the Tackling Economic Inactivity competition our leading priority.

This funding from the UK Government will support 18 projects to provide specialist support to over 25,000 people right across Northern Ireland to help them address their barriers and move closer to securing sustainable and life-enhancing employment.

This will include bespoke support for people with disabilities, young people who aren't in education, employment, or training, and others from all walks of life, who want to return to the labour market but have barriers preventing them from doing so.

By providing holistic support for the hardest to reach in the Northern Ireland labour market, the successful projects announced today will help tackle some of the most intractable barriers to finding a job and sustaining employment, and encourage growth in local economies right across Northern Ireland.

Full details of the successful projects can be found [here](#).

Written Answers

Monday, 17 April 2023

A14: Tree Planting

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the cost to public funds of the failure of 630,000 tree saplings planted along the A14 by National Highways; and whether any lessons have been learned for future tree planting schemes. [HL6757]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: A total of c.860,000 trees have been planted across the mainline scheme and National Highways have spent c.£2m to date. There is a further c.£2m within the original budget to undertake the necessary work and bring the planting on the scheme into a better condition.

National Highways conducted a review in the Autumn 2022 to analyse reasons for tree failures and inform a replanting strategy. This included analysing soil samples taken along the route to better understand the reasons for failure.

Based on the lessons learned, National Highways has produced a replanting strategy which includes:

- i) Replanting with cell grown trees which have a higher success rate than bare root trees.
- ii) Replanting between October 2023 and March 2024 which is the optimum planting season and avoids potentially very dry summer periods.
- iii) Planting the optimum species for the local soil conditions as soil conditions vary across the scale of the scheme.

Active Travel

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the changes made to their second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy on 10 March, whether it is still their aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked by 2030. [HL6997]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Yes. The changes simply corrected a data error in a funding table and in no way affect the Government's aim.

Advanced Research and Invention Agency: Environmental Protection

Asked by Lord Ravensdale

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Callanan on 14 December 2021 (HL Deb col 205) that an obligation on the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) would "have regard to its projects contributing to our climate change targets and environmental goals", why the ARIA

framework agreement, published on 17 February, does not include their aforementioned commitment; and when they plan to edit the framework agreement to include it. [HL6642]

Viscount Camrose: I thank the noble Lord for raising this matter. The ARIA Framework Agreement will be updated as soon as possible to include this commitment, without prejudice to ARIA's freedom to have maximum autonomy over its research and project choices.

Afghanistan: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken (1) to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan, (2) to prevent future atrocities in that country, and (3) to collect and safeguard evidence of current atrocities with a view to future prosecutions. [HL6663]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO continues to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan. On 7 October 2022, we co-sponsored a Human Rights Council resolution to extend the UN Special Rapporteur's, Richard Bennett, mandate to monitor Human Rights in Afghanistan.

Based on the UN Framework, we assess the risk of atrocity crimes taking place in Afghanistan to be very high. We use a range of internal and external sources to provide evidence-based analysis of the risks, and are using this to inform our programming activity, including incorporating atrocity prevention interventions into existing programmes.

Afghanistan: Journalism

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of Afghan journalists currently at risk of persecution in (1) Afghanistan, (2) Pakistan, and (3) Iran, for their professional activities. [HL6980]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a champion of media freedom and a proud member of the Media Freedom Coalition. Defending media freedom at home and abroad is a priority for the UK. In Afghanistan, we understand that around 40 per cent of media outlets have ceased to operate and that 60 per cent of journalists have lost their jobs since August 2021. We continue to address the issue of media freedom in our discussions with the Taliban. We regularly raise media freedom at a senior level with the Government of Pakistan, most recently in January 2023. We condemn the Iranian authorities' crackdown on journalists and continue to raise the Iranian peoples' right to access independent media. The UK regularly engages countries on the need to respect human rights, including on freedom of expression and media freedom.

Afghanistan: Refugees

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the situation of (a) Afghan refugees who lack identification documents, and (b) those from Hazara backgrounds, living in Pakistan, and (2) reports that those groups lack access to the services of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, including medical treatment, accommodation, education and documentation, especially in the city of Islamabad. [HL6658]

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Hazara refugees in Pakistan have been denied legal refugee status by the government of Pakistan. [HL6659]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a member of Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, a group established in 2019 to bring together regional governments, the United Nations and donors to support long-term solutions for Afghan refugees. We encourage Pakistan to include all refugees in services provided to the wider population. We regularly raise the mistreatment and exclusion of minority religious and ethnic groups with the Government at a senior level. The Foreign Secretary raised Afghanistan, including the relocation of eligible Afghans, when he spoke to Foreign Minister Bhutto-Zardari on 20 December 2022. The UK has provided £6.5 million to support refugee preparedness in Pakistan and offer vital health services and additional nutritional support to communities hosting refugees.

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether Afghan refugees from Christian, Ahmadi, Baha'i, and atheist backgrounds have their freedom of religion or belief protected in (1) Afghanistan and (2) Iran. [HL6660]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In Afghanistan, since the Taliban took control, the marginalisation of minorities has increased. Religious minorities are often victims of targeted attacks. FCDO officials regularly press the Taliban to protect religious minorities.

Iran hosts around 4.5 million Afghans from different backgrounds almost all of whom live side by side with Iranians in their host communities. Nonetheless, Iran has a track record of systematic discrimination, harassment, and targeting of minority religious and ethnic communities. We continue to raise human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, with Iran at all appropriate opportunities. The UK is committed to working with our partners to hold Iran to account for its dire human rights record.

Afghanistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any efforts by the Taliban to protect religious or belief minorities from attacks by the Islamic State–Khorasan Province; whether since September 2021 they have made any representations to the Taliban on the importance of protecting the rights of religious or belief minority groups; and if not, whether they intend to do so. [HL6661]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Since the Taliban took control, the marginalisation of minority groups has increased. Religious minorities are often victims of targeted attacks. FCDO officials regularly press the Taliban to protect religious minorities. We are working with international partners to urge the Taliban to act on their commitments on counter terrorism and ensure the safety of all Afghans.

Agriculture: Government Assistance

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much they have spent on supporting vertical farming in each year since 2018. [HL6878]

Lord Benyon: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) investments related to vertical farming are £29,540,441 since 2018.

In each year investments were:

2018 - £873,534

2019 - £1,437,232

2020 - £8,826,509

2021 - £16,744,316

2022 - £1,589,016

2023 - £49,834 (to date)

The Science and Technology Facilities Council has also invested £20,000 since 2018.

Al-Aqsa Mosque

Asked by *Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of (1) Israel, and (2) Jordan, regarding access to the Al-Aqsa mosque for Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank during Ramadan. [HL6866]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK recognises that Jerusalem's holy sites hold particular significance for all Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world. The UK is committed to working with all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the status quo to ensure the

safety and the security of the Al Aqsa Mosque and all who worship there. I [Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon] emphasised the UK's unwavering support for Jordanian custodianship of the holy sites in East Jerusalem during my visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque on 12 January. The Foreign Secretary and I reaffirmed this in our meetings with Jordanian Foreign Minister Safadi on 22 March. British Embassy Tel Aviv also raises the matter of permits for Palestinians regularly as we approach Ramadan and Easter.

Animal Welfare and Environment Protection: Standards

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the differences in environmental and animal welfare standards in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, and the impact of these differences on British farmers, given the UK–Australia and UK–New Zealand free trade agreements. [HL6851]

Lord Benyon: The Government has been clear that any access to UK markets agreed through trade agreements will be fair and reciprocal, taking into account sectoral sensitivities and differences in food production standards. For example, within the UK–Australia Free Trade Agreement we secured the exclusion of pork, chicken and eggs from tariff liberalisation reflecting the importance of animal welfare to the UK and the level of trade between Australia and the UK on these products.

In both our negotiations with Australia and with New Zealand, we carefully considered the potential impacts on British farmers and secured a range of different measures to protect them. These measures include tariff rate quotas for several sensitive agricultural products, product specific safeguards and a general bilateral safeguard mechanism providing a temporary safety net for all products.

The Government has published full impact assessments for the UK–Australia and UK–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement's, which include impacts on the agricultural sector.

We remain committed to upholding the UK's high environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards through trade. The independent Trade & Agriculture Commission concluded that our agreements with Australia and New Zealand do not undermine the UK's robust domestic protections. Neither agreement creates any new permissions or authorisations for imports from Australia or New Zealand. All products imported into the UK will, as they do now, have to comply with our import requirements.

Armed Forces

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Integrated Review Refresh 2023, whether the UK army,

the Royal Air Force, and most of the Royal Navy will remain in Europe so that the UK's defence and security efforts remain focused on the Euro-Atlantic through NATO. [HL6889]

Baroness Goldie: As set out in the Integrated Review Refresh 2023, the Euro-Atlantic will remain the UK's priority theatre of focus. NATO will remain the cornerstone of UK security, with the UK at the heart of the Alliance and offering the full spectrum of Defence capabilities.

Any specific policy changes or updates required related to Defence capability and force design will be determined following the publication of the Defence Command Paper.

Armenia: Azerbaijan

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan in respect of reports of open fire from Azerbaijani combat positions on Armenian civilians completing agricultural work in the villages of Sos, Tagavard, and Machkalashen on 23, 24 and 26 March. [HL6848]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK government has not made representations to the Azerbaijani government on this specific matter. However, during his visit to Baku on 22 February, the Minister for Europe met with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister and other government officials, and called for the immediate re-opening of the Lachin Corridor and urgent re-engagement with international efforts aimed at securing stability and peace in the region. The UK Government will continue to emphasise this message in further official engagement with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments in the coming months.

Armenia: Prisoners of War

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make, if any, to the government of Azerbaijan for the immediate release of all Armenian Prisoners of War. [HL7060]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to request that the UN send a fact-finding mission (1) to determine, and (2) to report on, the detention conditions of Armenian Prisoners of War in Azerbaijan. [HL7061]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomed the most recent return of prisoners of war in November 2022 and return of remains of the deceased in December 2022. The Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty MP, continues to urge both parties to settle all outstanding

matters related to the conflict, noting that diplomacy remains the only way to secure stability and peace in the region. He did so most recently during his visit to Baku on 22 February and during a call on 18 January to Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan. The UK Government continues to urge both parties to use existing channels, including talks facilitated by the EU and US, to settle all outstanding matters including the returns of prisoners of war and remains of the deceased and as such has no plans to request a United Nations fact-finding mission at this time.

Army: Defence Equipment

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the equipment spend planned for the army over the next five years is the largest of all the services. [HL6887]

Baroness Goldie: Equipment spend forecasts are published in the annual Defence Equipment Plan and the supplementary data tables published alongside show the planned yearly spend for each Front-Line Command. Some equipment budgets are held outside the Front-Line Commands. These include Strategic Programmes (including Complex Weapons and the Global Combat Air Programme) and the Defence Nuclear Organisation. Army Command does not have the largest spend over the next five years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-defence-equipment-plan-2022-to-2032>

Army: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any immediate plans to increase the overall size of the British Army. [HL6711]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence is reviewing whether it is now right to reduce the Regular Army to 73,000, as planned under Future Soldier. That process is ongoing.

Defence's plans to modernise the force will be outlined in an update to the Defence Command Paper to be published before the summer.

Any specific policy changes or updates required related to defence capability and force design will be determined following the publication of the Defence Command Paper.

Artificial Intelligence

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter published by the Future of Life Institute Pause Giant AI Experiments: An Open

Letter, published on 29 March; and what steps they intend to take in response to the recommendation in that letter that there should be "shared safety protocols for AI" which are audited and overseen by independent outside experts". [HL7070]

Viscount Camrose: It is important that industry voices are actively engaged in the discourse around responsible AI. British based companies, like Deepmind, are at the forefront of responsible innovation. However, it should be noted that questions have been raised regarding the veracity of some of the signatures of the open letter on Artificial Intelligence published by the Future of Life Institute (FLI). Some of the researchers whose work was cited in the letter have also apparently raised concerns. It is also important to note that the letter is not expressly targeted towards the UK or any other government. Nevertheless,

Government recognises the need to act to adapt the way in which we regulate AI as systems become more powerful, and are put to different use. As Sir Patrick Vallance highlighted in his recent regulatory review, there is a small window of opportunity to get this right and build a regulatory regime that enables innovation while addressing the risks. Government agrees that a collaborative approach is fundamental to addressing AI risk and supporting responsible AI development and use for the benefit of society. The AI Regulation White Paper we published on 29 March identifies "trustworthy", "proportionate" and "collaborative" as key characteristics of the proposed AI regulation framework.

The AI Regulation White Paper sets out principles for the responsible development of AI in the UK. These principles such as safety, fairness, and accountability are at the very heart of our approach to ensuring the responsible development and use of AI. We will also establish a central risk function to bring together cutting-edge knowledge from industry, regulators, academia and civil society – including skilled computer scientists with a deep technical understanding of AI - to monitor future risks and adapt our approach if necessary. This is aligned with the calls to action in FLI's letter.

In addition, our recently announced Foundation Model Taskforce has been established to strengthen UK capability - in a way that is aligned with the UK's values - as this potentially transformative technology develops.

The approach to AI regulation outlined in the AI regulation White Paper is also complemented by parallel work on AI Standards, supported by the AI Standards Hub launched in October 2022, and via the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation's AI Assurance Roadmap, published in December 2021. In concert, our holistic approach to AI governance combining regulation with an approach to standards development and AI assurance is in line with efforts to develop shared safety protocols, and will at the same time allow the UK to benefit from AI technologies while protecting people and our fundamental values.

Artificial Intelligence

Asked by *Baroness Helic*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the letter published by the Future of Life Institute Pause Giant AI Experiments: An Open Letter, published on 29 March, what plans they have to work with partners at the United Nations Security Council to pause the development of advanced AI for six months. [HL7071]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems become more powerful, and are put to different use, they will create new challenges and risks. The UK Government recognises it will need to act and adapt the way we regulate technologies like AI that are playing an increasingly vital role in our economy and society. Whilst it is important to note that the letter is not expressly targeted towards the UK or any other government, the UK Government agrees - and makes it clear in the AI Regulation White Paper - that a collaborative approach, including with our international partners, is fundamental to addressing AI risk and supporting responsible AI development and use.

Ash Dieback Disease: Disease Control

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 21 March (HL6421), how many grants they made to private landowners for support with the costs described in (1) 2022, (2) 2021, (3) 2020, and (4) 2019. [HL7088]

Lord Benyon: The Government provides grants for private landowners, to help with costs associated with ecological surveys and felling roadside ash with ash dieback, through the Tree Health Grant Pilot. This scheme provides financial and technical support to facilitators to coordinate the removal of dangerous ash trees along roads and public paths for groups of landowners. Support covers the costs and administration of ecological surveys, felling licences, protected species licences (if needed) and road closure permissions, as well as restocking.

Pilots are running in the North West, the South East, London and the West Midlands and landowners are eligible if they have ash with ash dieback along roads or paths. The pilot launched in August 2021 and the full scheme is expected to be launched Nationwide in 2025. The numbers of grants made under this pilot for ash dieback so far are:

- 2022: 4 grants, totalling £157,846.54

Following this low uptake, Defra is working with the Forestry Commission and the Tree Council to review and improve the provision for ash with ash dieback along roads and paths. Defra has also brought together local authorities in the pilot areas to provide feedback on the ash offer and how it can be improved to better suit their needs. Following an independent evaluation report, which included several recommendations from local authorities,

Defra has amended the ash offer and this improved offer will be launched across the pilot areas in April.

Local authorities can also apply for funds to restore landscapes ecologically degraded by ash dieback and other pressures through the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF), also launched in 2021. Although local authorities must lead applications to this fund, they are able to work with private landowners and other organisations to deliver recovery planting. Since 2021, over £15m has been awarded through this fund, although the number of private landowners receiving funding is determined by the local authorities administering funding, and Defra do not hold data on this. The grant is currently open for 2023 applications. The numbers of grants made to local authorities under LATF so far are:

- 2021: 42 grants, totalling £8.5m.
- 2022: 35 grants, totalling £6.7m.

Asylum

Asked by *Lord Strasburger*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the legal methods for refugees who are citizens of Somalia, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar or the Democratic Republic of the Congo to apply for asylum in the UK when they are (1) living in the country of their citizenship, (2) living in a safe third country, or (3) living in an unsafe third country. [HL6324]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Asylum is for people in danger in their home country. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

Between 2015 and December 2022, just under half a million people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK, including those from Hong Kong, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, as well as family members of refugees.

This includes over 28,200 refugees resettled through the government's refugee resettlement schemes. Our family reunion policy has also reunited many refugees with their family members; we have issued over 44,659 visas under our refugee family reunion Rules since 2015. The UK is one of the largest recipients of UNHCR referred refugees globally, second only to Sweden in Europe since 2015.

The UK continues to welcome refugees and people in need through existing resettlement schemes which include the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Further information on existing safe and legal routes is available below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-and-borders-bill-safe-and-legal-routes-factsheet/nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet-safe-and-legal-routes>.

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals have been granted temporary protection since the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 came into force; and what proportion of such individuals were under the age of 18. [HL6744]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the 'Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.uk. Data on initial decisions on asylum applications, by age, can be found in table Asy_D02 of the 'asylum and resettlement detailed datasets' on GOV.uk. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbooks. The latest data relate to the year ending December 2022. Data for the year ending March 2023 will be published on 25 May 2023.

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

Between 28 June 2022 and 31 December 2022, 56 people received grants of temporary refugee permission, of which 5 people (9%) were under the age of 18.

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 24 March (HL6373), why, over the past 13 years, they have allowed the UK to have a "broken asylum system". [HL6874]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system. Those in need of protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach rather than risking their lives or paying people smugglers to make the dangerous journey across the Channel.

The UK has a proud history of supporting refugees and since 2015, we have offered a place to just under half a million men, women and children seeking safety – including those from Hong Kong, Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, as well as family members of refugees

Our focus will remain on helping people directly from regions of conflict and instability, as the best way to help the most vulnerable who are at risk of war and persecution is through safe and legal routes.

This bypasses the evil criminal gangs and protects vulnerable people, including children.

*Asked by **Baroness Adams of Craigielea***

To ask His Majesty's Government how many asylum caseworkers were employed (1) 2021, (2) 2022, and (3) 2023; and what was the attrition rate of asylum caseworkers in each of those years. [HL6963]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The number of asylum decision makers employed by the Home Office each month from January 2020 to December 2022 can be found in the ASY_05 (M) tab of the published migration transparency data located here: Immigration and protection data: Q4 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Data for 2023 will be published in future releases.

The attrition rate of decision makers is not routinely published but have been released to the Home Affairs Select Committee. The response can be found here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31774/documents/178754/default/>

To reduce attrition rates and help maintain our decision-making experience we have also implemented a recruitment and retention allowance. We have already doubled our decision makers over the last 2 years, and we are continuing to recruit more. This will take our expected number of decision makers to 1,800 by summer 2023 and 2,500 by September 2023.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

ASY-05- M Table [Asy-05 M Table .xlsx]

Letter - HASC [letter - HASC.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL6963>

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of individuals that will arrive in the UK seeking asylum in (1) 2023, (2) 2024, (3) 2025, if the provisions of the Illegal Migration Bill are enacted. [HL7023]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: An impact assessment will be published for the Illegal Migration Bill in due course.

Asylum: Applications

*Asked by **Baroness Adams of Craigielea***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have signed agreements with any countries, other than Rwanda, to remove those seeking asylum in the UK and to process their asylum applications; and if so, what are those countries. [HL6965]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: We have not yet entered into any Third Country Asylum Processing (TCAP) agreements with any other countries.

Asylum: Children

*Asked by **Lord Touhig***

To ask His Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied migrant children placed in hotels have gone missing in each of the last five years. [HL6550]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office takes the wellbeing, welfare and security of children and minors in our care extremely seriously. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with local authorities.

As of 28.02.23 there were 410 missing episodes and on 224 of these occasions the young person was subsequently located.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government who has statutory responsibility for unaccompanied children seeking asylum who are in interim accommodation provided by the Home Office before they are placed under the care of a local authority. [HL6875]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Whilst an unaccompanied child is in interim accommodation provided by the department, the Home Office will do whatever is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. However, this does not impact the statutory duties owed to unaccompanied children by local authorities at this or any other time. It is for the relevant local authority to consider its duties under the Children Act 1989. The Home Office does not have, and therefore cannot discharge, duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989.

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what evidence they have regarding unaccompanied children seeking asylum that have gone missing while in temporary hotel accommodation; and what assessment they have made of any evidence of organised crime involvement in those disappearances. [HL6961]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in emergency interim hotels are safe and supported whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of specialist social workers and nurses.

We have no power to detain UASC in hotels and we know some do go missing. Many of those who have gone missing are subsequently traced and located. Children's movements in and out of hotels are monitored and recorded and they are accompanied by support workers when attending organised activities and social excursions off-site, or where specific vulnerabilities are identified.

There are many reasons why children go missing from care. This is also true of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It would be wrong to make generalisations regarding the reasons for this.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government what provisions are in place to ensure each hotel that is accommodating

unaccompanied children seeking asylum has a safeguarding lead; and what percentage of hotels have in place a safeguarding lead. [HL7025]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office takes the wellbeing, welfare and security of children and minors in our care extremely seriously. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with local authorities.

Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of specialist social workers and nurses, with additional support provided by two professional safeguarding advisors from Safeguarding Advice and Children's Champion Unit.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government, of the unaccompanied children seeking asylum who were housed in hotels and went missing but were subsequently found, how many were reported to, or were found to, have been involved in (1) organised crime, and (2) county lines drug activity, during the period they were missing. [HL7024]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office takes the wellbeing, welfare and security of children and minors in our care extremely seriously. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with local authorities.

This information is not held centrally but is held by the encountering police forces. When a young person who has previously gone missing from a hotel housing unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) is encountered or located we engage with statutory partners, including the police who will identify whether there are any concerns regarding possible trafficking; exploitation or other potential criminal activities that may require investigation.

Asylum: Deportation

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government which safe countries individuals have been returned to when they have been removed due to an inadmissibility decision on their asylum application. [HL6745]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: We are clear that those who fear persecution should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach and not put their lives at risk by making unnecessary and dangerous journeys to the UK. Controlled resettlement via safe and legal routes is the best way to protect such people and disrupt the organised crime groups that exploit migrants and refugees.

Inadmissibility is a longstanding process, intended to support the first safe country principle and is an established part of international asylum procedures. Those who choose to travel from a safe third country and then

claim asylum in the UK may find their asylum claim treated as inadmissible to the asylum process. That means that the UK will not consider the substance of the person's claim and will seek their return to a safe third country.

Since 1 January 2021 returns have been made to Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Information on the return of those who claims are deemed inadmissible is routinely published and can be found online at: [How many people do we grant protection to? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/answers/how-many-people-do-we-grant-protection-to?).

Asylum: Housing

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of Clearsprings Ready Homes' provision of basic humanitarian services to the asylum seekers housed in properties they manage. [HL6817]

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask His Majesty's Government what regulatory oversight is in place to ensure Clearsprings Ready Homes accommodation complies with its contractual obligations for the health and safety of the asylum seekers they house. [HL6818]

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask His Majesty's Government what regulatory oversight has been implemented to ensure that Clearsprings Ready Homes does not take financial advantage of asylum seekers housed in the accommodation they manage. [HL6819]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: It would be inappropriate to comment on commercial arrangements with suppliers. All Home Office commercial contracts are designed to ensure the best value for tax payers and the Home Office closely monitors its contractors performance, including financial results. Any profits above the agreed contractual margins comes back to the Home Office.

The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. Accommodation for supported asylum seekers is arranged by private sector providers through contractual arrangements with the Home Office. We expect high standards from all our providers across all of the services they are contractually obligated to provide and performance against delivery is managed robustly. The Statement of Requirements for what is to be delivered and to what standard is available for the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts is widely available in the public domain. The Statement of Requirements provides specific details on providers obligations to adhere to legislation such as the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 as well as duties imposed on them by section 55 of the Border, Citizenship and Immigration

Act 2009, and the children's duty, to safeguard children from harm and promote their welfare.

The provision of healthcare for asylum-seekers is the statutory responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Care. However, there is funding available for local NHS Systems through Integrated Care Boards to assist with delivering health assessments to asylum seekers in contingency accommodation. Asylum Accommodation Providers signpost the people they accommodate to register with local GP Practices to access healthcare and work closely with local health teams to ensure that signposting is clear and those who want to register are able to do so. All supported asylum-seekers are given an induction briefing when they arrive at initial or dispersal accommodation. Performance against this is captured in Key Performance Indicators and reported on via Monthly and Quarterly reporting. In the event that people are not given appropriate induction briefings and this is reported via the AIRE service, the Home Office will take action. We expect high standards from all of our providers, and we have a robust governance framework in place to manage service delivery of the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC). Details of the AASC can be found. Alongside this, asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can raise any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information on how to obtain further support.

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with local councils regarding their plans to house refugees and asylum seekers at former military bases announced on 29 March [HL7066]

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government how the quality of accommodation for housing refugees and asylum seekers will be monitored, following the announcement on 29 March of plans to use former military bases to house refugees and asylum seekers. [HL7067]

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to support vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, including those who are children and those with mental health needs, following the announcement on 29 March of plans to use former military bases to house refugees and asylum seekers. [HL7068]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office are engaged with a number of Local Authorities and key stakeholders on sourcing appropriate accommodation for asylum seekers including those announced on 29th March 2023. We are committed to engaging with local authorities and local partners to support successful delivery.

For any large sites the Home Office are exploring use, Multi-Agency Forums are being held with the Local

Authority and other key stakeholders before implementation. Any concerns relating to the Local Authority's ability to meet statutory requirements can be raised and discussed in that forum. We are committed to continuous engagement with local authorities and local partners to understand and mitigate identified risks, including impact on local services.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to assess the ability of Rwanda to accommodate asylum seekers under the age of 18; and whether a safeguarding review will be undertaken. [HL6746]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will not be considered for relocation to Rwanda. We will thoroughly consider the circumstances of cases involving families with children according to our policy, statutory and international obligations. A full equality impact assessment has been published on gov.uk.

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the publication by the US Department of State 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda which deemed conditions at detention centres in Rwanda as "harsh and life-threatening", what steps they are taking to ensure that any migrant sent to Rwanda is (1) housed in adequate accommodation, and (2) has their human rights protected. [HL6915]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP), relocated individuals will not be detained. They will be housed in appropriate accommodation and provided with support in accordance with the standards and assurances set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and *Notes Verbale*.

An independent Monitoring Committee will monitor the entire relocation process and compliance with assurances in the MoU, including the processing of asylum claims and provision of accommodation and support in Rwanda.

Our own comprehensive assessment as set out in the relevant country policy and information notes (CPINs) assesses that Rwanda is a safe and secure country. Our CPINs are kept under constant review and are published on the Gov.UK website.

AUKUS: Nuclear Reactors

Asked by *Baroness Adams of Craigielea*

To ask His Majesty's Government where the nuclear reactors for the SSN-AUKUS submarines will be built. [HL7049]

Baroness Goldie: As the Minister for Defence Procurement (Alex Chalk) highlighted in his Oral

Statement to the Commons on 14 March, all nuclear reactors for the SSN-AUKUS Class submarines will be built by Rolls Royce in Derby.

Azerbaijan: Sanctions

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to reported violations of human rights in Azerbaijan recorded by Amnesty International and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), what plans they have, if any, to introduce more comprehensive sanctions on Azerbaijan than the 1992 OSCE arms embargo, refined in 2014. [HL7064]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government will not speculate on future sanctions designations. During his recent visit to Baku on 22 February the Minister for Europe, Leo Docherty MP, raised concerns over human rights in Azerbaijan with Foreign Minister Bayramov. This followed previous engagements by the UK's Ambassador to Baku and diplomats in London. The UK Government will continue to raise allegations of human rights violations directly with the Government of Azerbaijan.

BBC Arabic Service

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they had any metrics in place to quantify the soft power advantage of the BBC Arabic radio service during its 85 years of broadcasting; what assessment they have made of any loss of soft power to the UK following its closure on 27 January; and whether they have had any discussions on the matter with the BBC in 2023. [HL6799]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO strongly values the important work of the BBC World Service in providing accurate and impartial news to 365 million people globally each week.

The FCDO engages regularly with the BBC. The BBC and the Foreign Secretary periodically agree objectives, priorities and targets, which include audience reach metrics. However, the BBC remains operationally and editorially independent of Government and service delivery decisions are for them to take. Though BBC Arabic radio broadcasting has ceased, the service remains available via TV and digital platforms, reflecting audience trends. BBC Arabic is funded by the Licence Fee, with some additional support via the FCDO-funded 'World2020 programme'.

As stated in the Integrated Review Refresh, the UK Government is working to bring soft power into its broader foreign policy approach. This includes providing a one-off £20 million uplift to the World Service to protect all 42 language services, recognising its crucial

role in supporting UK soft power and countering harmful disinformation.

Beef: Origin Marking

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Food Standards Agency's investigation into the mislabelling of the country of origin on pre-packaged sliced beef. [HL7086]

Lord Markham: The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) National Food Crime Unit is carrying out an investigation into a meat supplier. The investigation commenced in August 2021 and is pursuing allegations that the supplier fraudulently provided products labelled as British that were sourced from other countries. As this is a complex criminal investigation which must be carried out with due process and fairness, it is important that the investigation continues to adhere to the highest possible professional standards so that justice can be served.

In recent weeks allegations have been made regarding potential hygiene and food safety breaches, with the FSA currently exploring these allegations. No current food safety risks have been identified. The Chief Executive has recently made a statement about the investigation.

The FSA is held to account by its independent Board, which was set up in the 1999 Food Standards Act. The Board meets in public on a quarterly basis and next meets on 21 June 2023, in Belfast.

British Overseas Territories

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 28 March (HL6679), whether they will (1) break down Governors' reserved powers in each of the Overseas Territories, and (2) identify which government department is responsible for supporting the Governors in exercising each of these powers. [HL7000]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Inhabited Territories have varying powers and responsibilities devolved to them which are set out in their constitutions. In most Overseas Territories the Governor retains responsibility for external affairs, defence, and internal security. Governors work closely with the elected leaders of the Territories to discharge reserved powers. Each UK government Department has responsibility for supporting the Territories within their areas of competence, including supporting the Governors in exercising reserve powers.

BRIXMIS: General Service Medal

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider the decision not to award a clasp to

the General Service Medal for service in BRIXMIS. [HL6933]

Baroness Goldie: Cases regarding historic medallic recognition are a matter for the independent Advisory Military Sub-Committee (AMSC) to consider.

In 2020, the AMSC considered the issue of awarding a clasp to the General Service Medal for service on the British Commander-in-Chief's Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany (BRIXMIS), and the recommendation of the Sub-Committee was that BRIXMIS did not meet the criteria for medallic recognition. This recommendation was accepted by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals. Any review of this issue would be for the AMSC to consider in the first instance.

Broadband: Rural Areas

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 9 February (HL4988), how many rural premises have 4G coverage from more than one operator; and what assessment they have made of (1) consumer choice, and (2) higher costs, for broadband users in rural areas. [HL6873]

Viscount Camrose: Ofcom publishes 4G coverage data in its Connected Nations Report. As of September 2022, 4,544,995 (99%) rural premises have outdoor 4G premises coverage from at least one mobile network operator (MNO), with 4,042,465 (88%) having coverage from all 4 MNOs. The Shared Rural Network programme will help provide 4G coverage to 280,000 rural premises and provide consumers with more choice of provider.

Geographically differentiated pricing is not allowed in the UK. Internet Service Providers should therefore not charge differential prices to consumers in rural locations and Ofcom has prohibited Openreach from introducing geographical pricing on its network. Ofcom's Connected Nation report also shows that 97% of UK homes have access to superfast broadband with gigabit capable infrastructure services available to 70% of premises - which means consumers have a choice of services depending on their area.

Buildings: Energy

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that older buildings, which may be subject to stricter planning regulations, can become energy neutral. [HL6957]

Lord Callanan: There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to tackle the UK's diverse building stock. Changes need to be sensitive to the character, appearance and specific characteristics of a listed building

Statutory guidance has been published for minimum energy efficiency standards for carrying out building work to existing homes (Part L1B of the Building Regulations), including guidance for listed buildings.

Work is currently ongoing to meet the commitment in the British Energy Security Strategy to review the planning barriers households face when installing energy efficiency measures in conservation areas and listed buildings.

Burkina Faso: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the threat of Al-Qaeda in the Sahel region; and what steps they intend to take to counter that threat. [HL6977]

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government when they last made representations to the government of Burkina Faso about (1) the humanitarian situation in that country, (2) the threat posed by Al-Qaeda in the region; and what assistance they have provided to the people of that country in tackling hunger and terrorism. [HL6979]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is closely monitoring events in Burkina Faso and the wider Sahel region including the worsening security and humanitarian situation. The UK is committed to supporting stability and development in Burkina Faso. During a visit to Niger in February, the Minister for Development and Africa, Minister Mitchell, announced a new Sahel Regional Fund which will provide urgent life-saving aid and lasting, dignified solutions to people displaced by conflict and violence in hotspots of humanitarian need in the Sahel region, including Burkina Faso. The UK has committed £33 million to this fund up to 2026. Officials also visited Burkina Faso in January and raised concerns about the security and humanitarian situation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The UK continues to monitor closely the terrorist threat from the Sahel, including from Al Qaeda, and has proscribed the organisation and its associated groups such as Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM).

Burkina Faso: Russia

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Russian influence in Burkina Faso, and the role of the Wagner Group in that country. [HL6975]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Instability in Burkina Faso and the wider Sahel region is rising. Partnerships with Wagner Group are counterproductive to long-term stability and we know Wagner Group commits human rights abuses. We are working closely with international partners to counter the malign use of such

proxies by Russia and have designated the Wagner Group, and its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, under the Russia Sanctions Regime. The UK remains committed to supporting regional security through our humanitarian, development, and stabilisation programmes.

Burundi: Freedom of Expression

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support (1) freedom of speech, and (2) freedom of the press, in Burundi. [HL6918]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government welcomes the Government of Burundi's stated commitment to improving the human rights situation and the recent steps taken which demonstrate progress in this regard. We note reports of human rights violations and abuses being committed against the political opposition and critical voices, which we regularly discuss at a senior level with the Government of Burundi. We continue to call on the Government of Burundi to ensure that Burundi develops along a positive trajectory and look forward to Burundi's Universal Periodic Review this year. We urge the Government of Burundi to fully implement the recommendations made in the last review.

Burundi: Polio

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help prevent the polio virus outbreak in Burundi from spreading. [HL6917]

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

Cancer: Health Services

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government why they have discarded the NHS England 10 Year Cancer Strategy for a combined 5 Year Major Conditions Strategy. [HL7094]

Lord Markham: The Major Conditions Strategy will look at the treatment and prevention of cancer in people of all ages, covering the patient pathway. The strategy will look at a wide range of interventions and enablers to improve outcomes and experience for cancer patients.

Many patients experience major conditions as part of a wider set of illnesses or needs. The aim is to support individuals by diagnosing them earlier, helping them to manage their conditions better and improving the overall co-ordination of their treatment and care. By bringing

cancer and the other major conditions together into a single strategy, we will be able to ensure care is better centred around the patient.

This Strategy will draw on previous work on cancer, including over 5,000 submissions provided to the Department as part of our Call for Evidence last year.

Carbon Emissions

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to update their policy paper Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, published on 19 October 2021, and (2) to bring forward the timetables for their net zero plans, given the International Panel on Climate Change's Synthesis Report, published on 20 March. [HL6664]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to its Net Zero target. The Net Zero Growth Plan and Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, published in March, set out the package of policies and proposals to meet the UK's carbon budgets.

The Government has already come a long way to meet that target. The UK has cut emissions faster than any other G7 country, through deployment of low-carbon sources, such as renewables and nuclear, which provide half of the UK's electricity generation.

The Government's target is in line with the advice of the UK's independent Climate Change Committee and is consistent with the recommendations in the IPCC report.

Asked by Baroness Boycott

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Net zero policy tracker: March 2023 update, published by Green Alliance on 17 March; and in particular, the finding that only 28 per cent of emissions reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050 are covered by confirmed policies. [HL6986]

Lord Callanan: The Net Zero Growth Plan sets out the package that will meet carbon budgets. The Government has met every Carbon Budget to date and through the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan has set out quantified proposals and policies to exceed Carbon Budgets 4 and 5 and 97% of Carbon Budget 6.

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the report Mission Zero: Independent Review of Net Zero by the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP, published on 26 September 2022, what plans they have to implement the strategy proposed in the report and its recommendation that the Zero Emission Vehicle mandate is introduced by 2024. [HL7020]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As set out in the Government's response to the Independent Review of Net Zero, the Government has published a consultation on the final proposals for the ZEV mandate regulations, to apply

from 2024, to support the delivery of the commitments made to phase out the sale of new non-zero emission vehicles.

Carbon emissions

Asked by Baroness Boycott

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Net zero policy tracker: March 2023 update by Green Alliance, published on 17 March; and in particular, what assessment they have made of the finding that only 28 per cent of emissions reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050 are covered by confirmed policies. [HL7057]

Lord Callanan: The Net Zero Growth Plan sets out the package that will meet carbon budgets. The Government has met every Carbon Budget to date and through the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan has set out quantified proposals and policies to exceed Carbon Budgets 4 and 5 and 97% of Carbon Budget 6.

Carbon Emissions: Public Sector

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards reducing emissions from public sector buildings by 75 per cent by 2037, as set out in their Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, published on 19 October 2021. [HL6649]

Lord Callanan: The most recent published national statistics on greenhouse gas emissions are for the year 2021. These show a 2% reduction in public sector emissions against a 2017 baseline. More detail on progress against Net Zero Strategy commitments will be published shortly.

We are supporting the public sector to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of their buildings through:

- Committing £2.5 billion between 2020/21 and 2024/25 to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures;
- Enabling the public sector to access the skills and expertise needed to plan heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects through the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund; and
- Producing guidance such as that published by the Modern Energy Partners programme led by Energy Systems Catapult.

Carer's Allowance

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have commissioned research on people's experiences of claiming and receiving Carer's Allowance; if so, whether they will publish this research; and if so, when. [HL6636]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The department commissioned research on experiences of claiming and receiving Carer's Allowance; and is reviewing the research results as part of our wider policy development and thinking around Carer's Allowance. We need to ensure that policy makers and Ministers are able to do so based on the evidence and without fear of premature disclosure. Therefore, we will not publish the report while this process is ongoing. If Ministers decide to publish its findings, they will be made available to Parliament and online.

Cats and Dogs: Animal Welfare

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, what assessment they have made of the necessity of considering cats and dogs together for the purposes of that legislation given the lack of danger to the public caused by cats. [HL7081]

Lord Benyon: The introduction of compulsory cat microchipping in England is intended to increase the likelihood that lost or stolen pet cats can be reunited with their keeper, benefitting cat welfare.

The extension of compulsory microchipping to pet cats was supported by 99% of respondents to the public consultation exercise.

Cats: Animal Welfare

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, what consideration they have given to the possibility of that legislation causing further welfare problems through the abandonment of cats caused by people being either (1) unwilling, or (2) unable, (a) to microchip, or (b) to pay fines. [HL7079]

Lord Benyon: The introduction of compulsory cat microchipping in England is intended to increase the likelihood that lost or stolen pet cats can be reunited with their keeper, benefitting cat welfare.

The cost of microchipping is around £25. Cat keepers will have until 10 June 2024 to comply with the requirements before they come into force.

If a keeper is served with a notice, they will have 21 days to microchip their cat and register their details with a compliant database to avoid any fines.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, what consideration they have given to the possibility of that legislation causing further welfare problems through the stress to cats caused by (1) trapping, (2) confinement, and (3) euthanasia. [HL7080]

Lord Benyon: Under the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, only owned cats are required to be microchipped. The Regulations will not apply to free living cats that live with little or no human interaction or dependency, such as farm, feral or community cats.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, what consideration they have given to the issues surrounding the data privacy of cat owners in relation to that legislation. [HL7082]

Lord Benyon: The draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023 will require cat keepers to register their details with a database operator which holds itself out as compliant with these Regulations. These operators are all commercial enterprises independent of Government and they have a duty to comply with data protection requirements.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023, what consideration they have given to providing exemptions for (1) older cats, (2) cats with long-term health issues, and (3) cats fitted with collar trackers. [HL7083]

Lord Benyon: The draft Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023 permit an exemption from the requirement to be microchipped where a veterinary surgeon certifies that the procedure should not be carried out for animal health reasons.

Cereals

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to adopt the definition of "wholegrain" developed by the Whole Grain Initiative. [HL6804]

Lord Benyon: There are no immediate plans to adopt a definition of wholegrain into law. Work to consider a definition for wholegrain has been added as part of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) future work programme. Existing food labelling legislation ensures that the labelling and marketing of food does not mislead consumers.

Child Trust Fund

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to ensure that young people do not lose track of their investments in Child Trust Funds. [HL7006]

Baroness Penn: HMRC has worked closely with Child Trust Fund (CTF) providers, the wider industry and the

Money and Pensions Service to ensure that young people are aware of, and can access, their CTFs.

HMRC has:

- worked closely with CTF providers to ensure they are meeting regulatory requirements to communicate with CTF customers approaching and reaching maturity.
- developed and improved the 'Find my CTF' service on GOV.uk to help customers locate their account.
- added information to the National Insurance Notification (NINO) letter, which is sent out prior to a child's 16th birthday, to raise awareness of the CTF scheme with children in the appropriate age bracket.
- required CTF providers to write to their customers informing them of their options in their 17th year and to provide statements annually after the account holder turns 18.
- issued a range of communications through regular press releases and social media posts

Children with maturing CTFs also receive a significant amount of written information pertaining to their account directly from their account provider.

The government is committed to helping people access the savings and money they are entitled to and continues to explore new routes to reunite young people with their Child Trust Funds.

Childcare: Finance

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capacity challenges the childcare sector will face in implementing the increase in childcare provision as announced in the Spring Budget on 15 March; and what financial support they will provide to help the sector meet these capacity challenges. [HL6590]

Baroness Barran: In the Spring Budget announcement of 15 March 2023, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children, and the economy. By 2027/28, the government will expect to be spending in excess of £8 billion every year on free hours and early education, helping working families with their childcare costs. This represents the single biggest investment in childcare in England ever.

Our reforms include:

- Providing over £4.1 billion by 2027/28 to fund 30 hours of free childcare for children over the age of nine months.
- Investing £204 million from September 2023, rising to £288 million in 2024/25 to uplift the rates for existing entitlements.
- Increasing the supply of wraparound care through £289 million start up funding.
- Attracting more people to childminding through an up to £7.2 million start up grant fund.

- Giving providers more flexibility by changing staff-to-child ratios to 1:5 for two year olds in England.

- Launching a consultation on further measures to support reform of the childcare market, to explore further flexibilities for providers.

The department regularly survey a representative sample of over 10,000 providers to gain insights into how they run their provision and the challenges they face. We also regularly survey over 6,000 parents to understand their usage of childcare.

This data was used to inform our methodology and the uplift required to meet the pressures providers face, and to evaluate the impact this will have on settings, staff and the sufficiency of childcare.

The department will work closely with local authorities, providers and the sector to identify what needs to be in place to support the expansion in childcare provision including capital requirements as well as workforce, and will share further details in due course.

We are also ensuring a phased implementation of the expansion to the 30 hours offer to allow the sector to develop the necessary capacity.

Childcare: Staff

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of expansion of the childcare sector workforce necessary to implement the expansion of childcare provision as announced in the Spring Budget on 15 March. [HL6591]

Baroness Barran: The department regularly survey a representative sample of over 10,000 childcare providers to gain insights into how they run their provision and the challenges that they face. This includes data on the workforce. This survey can be found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2022>. The department also regularly survey over 6,000 parents to understand their usage of childcare, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2021>.

This data was used to inform our methodology and the uplift required to meet the pressures that providers face, and to evaluate the impact this will have on early years settings, early years staff and the sufficiency of childcare. The department is planning to share further details in due course.

China and India: Pollution Control

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage a dialogue between China and India on reducing the pollution of waterways by industrial antibiotic residues. [HL6903]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK engages with both China and India bilaterally together on global issues such as health and climate. For example, 'Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has supported five projects directly relevant to anti-microbial resistance through the 'India-UK: Tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the environment from antimicrobial manufacturing waste' call. Recognising that these are transnational issues, the UK continues to emphasise the need for countries to work together to find solutions.

China: Russia

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination in the New Era, dated 21 March. [HL6846]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Addressing the threat from Russia to European security is the most pressing security and foreign policy priority in the short to medium term. China poses an epoch-defining and systemic challenge. We are therefore concerned by the deepening strategic partnership between China and Russia and the implications for an open and stable international order. Putin's war in Ukraine is a breach of international law, a violation of the UN Charter, and was condemned by an overwhelming majority of 141 member nations in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on 23 February 2023 - a resolution we were disappointed China chose to abstain on. As a P5 member, we expect China to stand up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and uphold its commitment to the principles of UN Charter - principles that underpin Zelenskyy's peace plan.

Climate Change

Asked by Baroness Boycott

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in adapting England to climate change; and what assessment they have made of the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee's report Investment for a well-adapted UK, published on 1 February. [HL6845]

Lord Benyon: The Government welcomes the Climate Change Committee's recent adaptation progress report for England. We will consider the report's findings as we develop a third National Adaptation Programme which addresses all 61 risks and opportunities identified in the Government's third Climate Change Risk Assessment. Climate adaptation is mainstreamed across Government, which means that all Government policies and programmes need to consider the risks that climate change poses to their successful delivery and outcomes.

We also welcome the Climate Change Committee's latest report "investment for a well-adapted UK", and the

Government assessed the recommendations. The recently published Green Finance Strategy sets out plans to build a launchpad for private and public collaboration over the next 5 years to overcome barriers to investment and assist in the functioning of new markets. We will announce our approach alongside our climate adaptation finance deliverables and action plan by end of 2024.

Commonhold Council

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask His Majesty's Government how many meetings of the Commonhold Council there have been since its formation; and how many scheduled meetings of the Council were cancelled. [HL6860]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Commonhold Council has met regularly since it was convened in 2021 and no meetings have been cancelled.

Commonwealth: Foreign Relations

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will publish (1) details, and (2) minutes, of the meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in March. [HL6962]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) was organised and hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat on 15 March 2023. The Foreign Secretary made clear the UK's desire to work with partner nations to deliver tangible benefits for Commonwealth countries and citizens, in particular on trade and investment, climate and values. The Commonwealth Secretariat published details of the meeting on their website: <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-foreign-affairs-ministers-meet-discuss-responses-global-crises>.

Community Orders

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the use of community sentencing. [HL7093]

Lord Bellamy: Sentencing is a matter for the independent judiciary and it is right that they have a broad range of sentencing powers, including discharges, fines, community sentences, suspended sentences and custodial sentences, to deal effectively and appropriately with offenders based on the circumstances of the case.

To strengthen the option of community sentences for sentencers, this Government introduced reforms through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 to make them tougher, better monitored, and more effective for punishing offenders, tackling the underlying drivers of offending, and providing support for those who want to turn their lives around.

This includes the option for tougher and more flexible use of electronically monitored curfews to better reflect the punishment intended, better support rehabilitation, and better protect victims. The Government is also piloting Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) for specific cohorts with underlying needs through robust supervision and interventions delivered by a multi-agency team with judicial oversight.

Beyond the Act, we are: increasing the use of community sentence treatment requirements which require offenders to engage with mental health, drug/alcohol treatment as part of their community sentence; investing up to £120m to get more offenders engaged in treatment; completing and evaluating the Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) Pilots to continue the development of higher quality and timely PSRs to support judicial decision making; implementing our refreshed Integrated Offender Management Strategy to align police and probation in rigorous supervision of specific offenders within the community; and exploring options to increase the availability of robust residential requirements for women.

Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla

Asked by Lord James of Blackheath

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they expect the Coronation Oath to be sworn by His Majesty King Charles III to differ from that sworn by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; if so, (1) in what ways, and (2) whether an amendment to the Coronation Oath Act 1688 will be required; and whether they will publish the wording of the Oath to be sworn by King Charles. [HL7075]

Asked by Lord James of Blackheath

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Coronation Oath to be sworn by His Majesty King Charles III will require him to promise and swear to govern according to statute and custom. [HL7076]

Asked by Lord James of Blackheath

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Coronation Oath to be sworn by His Majesty King Charles III will require him to use his power to cause law and justice in mercy to be executed in all his judgments. [HL7077]

Asked by Lord James of Blackheath

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Coronation Oath to be sworn by His Majesty King Charles III will require him to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion established by law, and to preserve the rights and privileges of the Church and clergy. [HL7078]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Coronation Oath Act 1688 requires that the Sovereign take the oath at his or her

Coronation, and the text of the oath is set out in the Act. The precise form of words has been varied over successive coronations to reflect changes to the constitutional position. Except for one instance, the changes to the oath have been made without primary legislation - see the [statement](#) [1] of Sir Winston Churchill to the House of Commons in February 1953 (HC Deb 25 February 1953 vol 511 cc2091-3).

The text of the Oath will be published in due course and Parliament will be updated on any changes to the wording.

[1] CORONATION OATH CHANGES HC Deb 25 February 1953 vol 511 cc2091-3 [2091](#)

The Prime Minister: I should now like to make my statement in reply to Question No. 45. The terms of the Coronation Oath were first prescribed by the Act 1 William and Mary, chapter 6. Since then its terms have been changed at least five times. On one occasion only has the change had legislative sanction, namely the change which was introduced as a result of the Act of Union with Scotland. The Treaty of Union had provided that in Scotland the religion professed by the people of Scotland should be preserved to them and confirmed by every King on his accession, and it was thought proper that similar provision should be made for the protection of the English Church in England. The Coronation Oath was altered and enlarged accordingly. For the many subsequent changes, large or small, which have been made in the terms of the Oath there was no legislative sanction. They were made at various times, and, in particular, after the Act of Union with Ireland, after the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and also after the passing of the Statute of Westminster. On the last occasion the question whether the changes that were necessary to meet the new constitutional position could be made without an Act of Parliament was carefully considered. and the Lord Chancellor and the Law Officers of the day advised that they could. I am advised by my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor that this opinion was clearly correct, and that the changes now proposed, which are, perhaps, less substantial than those made in 1937, but are required to meet the new constitutional position created by the Indian Independence Act, 1947, and other statutes, can also be made without legislative sanction. Her Majesty's Government propose to follow this long line of precedents. To accept the view that changes in the terms of the Oath which are necessary to reconcile it with a changed constitutional 2092 position cannot be made except with the authority of an Act of Parliament would be to cast doubt upon the validity of the Oath administered to every Sovereign of this country since George I. If, as I am advised, the Coronation Oath can be lawfully administered in the terms now proposed, no useful purpose would be served by legislation. It must be remembered that at Westminster the Queen will be crowned Queen not only of the United Kingdom, but also of other self-governing countries of the Commonwealth. The form of Oath now proposed has been put to each of these countries and none has raised any objection, or has

suggested that it is necessary to pass legislation in its own Parliament or in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Indeed, it would not be possible in the time now remaining before the Coronation to arrange for legislation to be passed by the Commonwealth countries concerned.

Mr. Attlee: May I say, having had some experience of these difficulties, that I think it is extremely satisfactory that agreement has been obtained throughout the Commonwealth on this Oath, and that we should be well advised to allow this to proceed without legislation?

Mr. E. Fletcher: May I, with respect, put this to the Prime Minister? While no one would wish to throw doubt on the validity of the Coronation Oaths in the past, in view of the fact that the Coronation Oath is a Parliamentary creation, and is intended as a limitation on the Prerogative, is it not desirable, though it may be inconvenient, that any changes that are proposed this year should have legislative sanction, for which, I am sure, there would be no difficulty in making the appropriate arrangements on a non-controversial basis? It is a matter which affects the rights of Parliament, and not merely the rights of the Executive.

The Prime Minister: I think those important and weighty points have been covered by the answer which I have given to the House.

Mr. Healy: Could the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether he has considered the speech of an important member of the Irish Government in regard to this matter?

2093

The Prime Minister: is the hon. Gentleman speaking for the Irish Government of Northern Ireland or for the Eire Government, I believe it is—the Government of the Republic?

Mr. Healy: The official name is the Government of Ireland, not the Government of Northern Ireland, which is a very small part of Ireland.

Mr. Emrys Hughes: Is the Prime Minister aware that there is a strong feeling in Scotland about the Oath being taken to a Queen Elizabeth II on the ground of historical inaccuracy? In view of his great claim to historical accuracy himself, will he not do something to meet this very strong resentment in Scotland?

The Prime Minister: I shall be very glad to hear from the hon. Member if he will put his question in the pillar box.

Coronavirus and Influenza

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask His Majesty's Government why COVID-19 has been placed in the same Office for National Statistics reporting group as influenza; and, given that decision, why the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations is being treated differently to the provision of influenza vaccinations. [HL7017]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Noble Peer's Parliamentary Question of 29 March is attached in the answer.

The Rt Hon. the Lord Mendelsohn

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

31 March 2023

Dear Lord Mendelsohn,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking why COVID-19 has been placed in the same Office for National Statistics reporting group as influenza; and, given that decision, why the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations is being treated differently to the provision of influenza vaccinations (HL7017).

In answering this Parliamentary Question, we have answered under the assumption that you are referring to our *Influenza and other respiratory viruses pilot study, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: October 2022 to February 2023* [1] release of 27 March 2023.

The Covid-19 Infection Survey published its final release on 24 March 2023 as the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) works to confirm its approach to infection surveillance. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) plans to work with existing survey participants to continue gathering valuable insight into the experiences of COVID-19, long-COVID and other respiratory infections. In the immediate future this will gather data such as symptoms that people are experiencing but will not include testing for infectious diseases.

From October 2022 to February 2023, the ONS used a small sample from the Covid-19 Infection Survey to pilot the feasibility of testing participants for other respiratory infections and its report was published on 27 March 2023. This pilot study separately reported experimental results on the number of participants who tested positive for influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) while the latest Covid-19 infection results were reported in the regular statistical bulletin (released on Fridays at noon) [2].

The ONS has announced no plans on the future reporting of data on respiratory infections. In terms of the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations, this would fall under the remit of the UKHSA who are responsible for vaccination policy in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/articles/influenzaandotherrespiratoryvirusespilostudyandcoronaviruscovid19infectionsurveyuk/october2022tofebruary2023>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/>

healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirus/covid19infectionsurvey/pilot/24march2023

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UK Statistics Authority [PQHL7017.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7017>

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the decision by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation that family members of, and carers for, people in the clinical risk groups are not recommended to receive COVID-19 booster vaccinations, what steps they are taking to protect people in clinical risk groups from contracting COVID-19. [HL6941]

Lord Markham: As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement titled 'Approach to Managing Covid-19' on 30 March 2023, in 2023/24 the Government will maintain a range of capabilities to protect those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Given the continued effectiveness of vaccines and improved treatments, for most people there is a much lower risk of severe illness compared to earlier in the pandemic.

We will therefore continue to encourage people to take up the vaccines to which they are entitled, and we will continue to fund and provide COVID-19 testing, to manage outbreaks in some high-risk settings and to enable access to treatments for those who are eligible. We will also maintain essential COVID-19 surveillance activities in the community, primary and secondary care, and in high-risk settings. Additionally, we will retain proportionate capability for testing in the event of a COVID-19 wave or variant that results in a significant increase in pressure on the National Health Service.

Vaccination does not significantly limit transmission, so there is no strong reason to prioritise vaccination for carers of those who are at high risk of severe illness.

Coronavirus: Immunosuppression

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 1 March (HL5824), which body will assume responsibility for ensuring that the immunocompromised will continue to be treated as a priority after the disbanding of the Antivirus and Therapeutics Taskforce, and its related programme and strategy boards. [HL6530]

Lord Markham: In line with the Government's strategy of living with COVID-19, as of 31 March 2023 the Antiviral and Therapeutics Taskforce has been stood down. The treatment of COVID-19 patients will continue to be overseen by National Health Service and will operate in line with evidence-based recommendations

from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, following the established processes in this area.

The welfare of immunocompromised patients remains a priority, hence the enhanced protections we continue to offer, including the recently announced spring booster vaccinations, free lateral flow tests and guidance in addition to COVID-19 treatments.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 14 March (HL5699), and as set out in the attachment to the Written Answer NICE nMABs appraisal committee paper, what assessment they have made of the finding that the prioritised list of people with conditions for which it may be clinically advantageous to receive neutralising monoclonal antibodies prophylaxis numbers 1.8 million. [HL6532]

Lord Markham: The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) chaired by Prof. Iain McInnes was commissioned by the Department to consider which cohorts should be eligible for treatment for COVID-19. The report was published on 30 May 2022 and has defined the cohort of patient eligible for neutralising monoclonal antibodies and antiviral treatments for COVID-19. In May, our estimate was that this cohort totals around 1.8 million patients in England. The IAG was also commissioned to consider the cohorts that would potentially be eligible for COVID-19 prophylaxis (PrEP). This report formed part of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Single Technology Appraisal considerations into Evusheld as prophylaxis. Whilst estimates have been made as to the total size of this cohort, it is unclear who would be prioritised within these groups should a prophylactic treatment become available. An update to this PrEP IAG report will be published on GOV.UK in due course.

Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 March 2023 (HL5695), to which body the recommendations on the relevant cohorts for COVID-19 therapeutics are to be made, as discussed by the Chair of the Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel on 2 February; and whether the preparation of these recommendations included reviewing details within the report Qcovid 4 - Predicting risk of death or hospitalisation from COVID-19, published in August 2022. [HL6529]

Lord Markham: The Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel met on 31 January 2023 to review most recent evidence on COVID-19 risk, including the National Institute for Health and Care Research rapid study on those who remain vulnerable to poor outcomes from COVID-19 despite vaccination. Advice is then provided to the four United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers. The

evidence considered by the Panel was also shared with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Strathcarron

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 8 February (HL5061), when data for April 2022 and beyond will be validated for release; and on what grounds this information is commercially sensitive. [HL6542]

Lord Markham: The data relating to the number of lateral flow device (LFD) tests purchased between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 will be available in late 2023 on completion of the National Audit Office audit on financial year 2022/23. The timescales of the audit are currently being discussed and agreed.

The UK Health Security Agency consider that releasing the information on the total costs of LFD tests would not be in the public interest as it could prejudice future commercial relations with suppliers if this information were to be disclosed in the public domain.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) evidential basis, and (2) rationale, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation used to determine that family members of, and carers for, people in the clinical risk groups identified in the Green Book are not recommended to receive COVID-19 booster vaccinations. [HL6940]

Lord Markham: In November 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) provided interim advice which indicated that in autumn 2023, persons at higher risk of severe COVID-19 could be offered a booster vaccine dose in preparation for winter 2023 to 2024. As it was interim advice, the JCVI report does not contain any evidential basis for proposed cohorts. Final advice on who will be advised to receive COVID-19 boosters in autumn 2023 will be provided in due course. The considerations for any future decisions will be referenced in JCVI reports and meeting minutes.

In February 2023, JCVI provided advice for the spring 2023 COVID-19 vaccination programme. As a precautionary measure, JCVI advised a spring booster dose for the most vulnerable in the population, as a proportionate response: those over the age of 75 years, residents in a care home for older adults, and those over five years of age who are immunosuppressed. These groups were chosen as they continue to be at highest risk of severe COVID-19.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government what are their reasons for implementing restrictions on the spring 2023 COVID-19 booster programme; and what

factors were considered in determining the eligibility criteria for the booster programme. [HL6944]

Lord Markham: As with all vaccination programmes in the United Kingdom, the decision on which groups are eligible for a particular vaccination programme is only made following careful consideration of the groups most at risk of illness, severe illness, or death because of infection. For COVID-19, the primary aim of the vaccination programme continues to be the prevention of severe disease, both in hospitalisation and mortality, arising from COVID-19.

Therefore, in February 2023, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) provided advice for the spring 2023 COVID-19 vaccination programme. As a precautionary measure, JCVI advised a spring booster dose for the most vulnerable in the population, as a proportionate response: those over the age of 75 years, residents in a care home for older adults, and those over five years of age who are immunosuppressed.

Cost of Living: Women

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support vulnerable girls and young women given the increased cost of living. [HL7037]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government understands the pressures people, including vulnerable women and girls, are facing with the cost of living and is taking action to help.

Everyone who receives a state benefit or pension will have seen their benefit rates increase by 10.1% this month. In order to increase the number of households who can benefit from these uprating decisions, the benefit cap levels have also increased by the same amount.

To further support those who are in work, from 1 April, the National Living Wage (NLW) increased by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over - the largest ever cash increase for the NLW.

Households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to £900 in Cost of Living Payments, paid in three separate payments of £301, £300 and £299 across the 2023/24 financial year. The first payment of £301 will be paid to the majority of those eligible between 25 April and 17 May. In addition, people on qualifying disability benefits will receive a separate Disability Cost of Living payment of £150 in the summer.

For people who require additional support, whether they receive benefits or not, the Household Support Fund will continue until March 2024. This year long extension allows Local Authorities in England to continue to provide discretionary support to those most in need with the significantly rising cost of living. The guidance for Local Authorities for this next iteration has now been published and can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/1April_2023_to_31_March_2024:Household_Support_Fund_guidance_for

county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). This sets out that the fund should be used to support households in the most need, particularly those who are not eligible for other cost of living support such as Cost of Living Payments. The Devolved Administrations will receive consequential funding as usual to spend at their discretion.

More broadly, tackling violence against women and girls is a Government priority. The Government is committed to ensuring victims have the support they need and we are conscious that the cost of living may generate additional challenges for victims and survivors.

Our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan invests over £230 million of cross-Government funding into tackling this crime, including over £140 million to support victims and over £81 million to tackle perpetrators. This includes trialling a £300,000 'flexible fund', that could make direct payments to domestic abuse victims.

In addition to the direct impact on victims, the Government also acknowledges the cost of living will have an impact on charitable organisations who work to support them. To help mitigate these challenges, where possible the Home Office has provided multi-year grants to support organisations to make maximum use of their funding, by providing greater stability and predictability on their budgets.

Councillors: Carer's Allowance

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the total cost of dependent carer's allowance payments to councillors who serve on local authorities in England. [HL6766]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Publishing councillor allowances is a matter for local authorities.

Individual authorities are required to publish the total sum of all councillor allowances, which includes the dependents' carers' allowance, every year as set out in The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Counter-terrorism: Public Places

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed Protect Duty on parish and town councils in England; and what new funding they intend to provide to local authorities to support their compliance with that legislation. [HL6764]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Martyn's Law, formerly known as the Protect Duty, will be published as a draft Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny this Spring. The Home Office is acutely conscious that this Bill must be proportionate, ensuring not to place undue burdens on local authorities, including parish and town councils,

whilst balancing against the threat the UK faces from terrorism.

Alongside the draft Bill, the Home Office will publish an impact assessment. A further, updated, impact assessment will be completed prior to any formal introduction of the Bill. The Home Office will also undertake a new burdens assessment and assess any requirements arising from it.

Crime: Rural Areas

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of installing tracking devices on farm machinery to reduce rural crime. [HL7087]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Government is committed to driving down rural crime. Whether someone lives in the countryside or a town or city they should get the same high-quality service from the police if they fall victim to a crime.

To help prevent the theft of agricultural machinery the Government is supporting the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill which will require immobilisers and forensic marking to be fitted as standard to all new All-Terrain Vehicles and quad bikes. These measures are designed to prevent theft of agricultural equipment subject to the legislation. The Bill does not include a requirement for tracking devices to be installed, as these assist with recovering vehicles rather than preventing theft.

The Bill also provides a power for the Secretary of State to extend the legislation to other equipment designed or adapted primarily for use in agricultural or commercial settings. We are intending to consult on extending the legislation to other agricultural machinery and handheld power tools.

The Bill has completed its passage through the House of Commons and was introduced in the House of Lords on 6 March

Crimes Outside National Territories

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK's law on universal jurisdiction; what challenges any such assessment identified; and how they are planning to address those challenges to ensure that the UK can play a proactive role on ensuring justice and accountability for international crimes. [HL6967]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Applying universal jurisdiction in respect of certain offences helps to ensure that the UK does not provide a safe haven for war criminals or those who commit other serious violations of international law. The Crown Prosecution Service, as the agency responsible, will continue to bring individuals to justice wherever possible. Any decision to prosecute

offences of universal jurisdiction in England and Wales is governed by the same principles that apply to any other prosecution and must be in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the law on universal jurisdiction; and in particular, what plans they have to expand the scope of section 51 of the International Criminal Court Act 2001, namely the group of perpetrators who can be tried for international crimes in domestic courts. [HL6968]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The criminal law of England and Wales provides for universal jurisdiction over the crimes of torture and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, allowing national authorities to investigate and prosecute these offences under certain conditions when they were committed abroad by foreign nationals. The International Criminal Court Act 2001 allows jurisdiction over the offences of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed abroad by any person who: (i) is/was a UK national or UK resident at the time of the crime; or (ii) became a UK national or UK resident after the crime and still resides in the UK when proceedings are brought. There are no plans to reform the law on universal jurisdiction.

Croxteth Hall: Plants

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the long-term and secure future of the Roscoe Botanical Garden. [HL6971]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Government recognises the importance of Liverpool's Botanical Collection as one of the oldest such collections in the world.

The medical, scientific, educational, and horticultural importance of these rare plants is significant, as well as the benefits they can have for health and wellbeing in the local community and more widely.

We support the steps that Liverpool City Council is making to secure the future of the gardens and encourage it to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Customs

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government what were the construction costs of each of the seven Inland Border Facilities; and for what purposes each of them have been used in the last year. [HL6831]

Baroness Penn: HMRC work to ensure all build costs associated with inland border facilities represent value for money. Under the bounds of the Public Procurement Regulations, HMRC undertake a stringent tender process within a competitive environment.

The total construction cost for the six Inland Border Facilities developed by HMRC is £42 million. This is broken down as follows:

- Birmingham - £11 million
- Dover - £3 million
- Ebbsfleet - £4 million
- North Weald - £3 million
- Warrington - £9 million
- Holyhead - £12 million

Holyhead remains under construction. The costs detailed reflect the spend on the facility to 28 February 2023.

The facilities act as a government office of departure and destination, where hauliers can start and end journeys under the Common Transit Convention.

Sevington Inland Border Facility was constructed by the Department for Transport. The total costs were £154 million. It includes £70 million on the Border Control Post (BCP), which is capable of carrying out biosecurity checks on sanitary and phytosanitary goods (SPS).

Cybersecurity

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of current statutory cyber and digital risk reporting requirements. [HL6923]

Viscount Camrose: Reporting of cyber and digital risks and incidents is critical to the UK's cyber resilience, supporting our ability to monitor, mitigate, and respond to threats to our economy and society. Reporting is also important in helping businesses and organisations adequately understand the broader threat and assess the risks to their own operations.

Statutory incident reporting requirements vary across sectors, depending on the applicable legislation. For example, organisations which process personal data for general purposes must comply with the breach reporting requirements in the UK GDPR. In the telecoms sector, the Telecommunications (Security) Act introduced a new telecoms security framework, and includes detailed requirements for public telecoms providers to identify and reduce the risks of security compromises, including cyber attacks.

Organisations which provide services that are critical for the provision of essential services (such as transport, energy, water, health, and digital infrastructure services) must comply with the Network and Information Systems (NIS) Regulations 2018. In November 2022 the government also announced its intention to strengthen the NIS Regulations, including requiring essential and digital services to report a wider range of cyber incidents to regulators.

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide an update on the implementation of the Cyber Security Strategy. [HL6927]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The National Cyber Strategy 2022 sets out how we will ensure that the UK continues to be a leading, responsible and democratic cyber power, able to protect and promote our interests in the rapidly evolving online world. We plan to publish the first of our annual progress reports this summer.

Dairy Farming: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Exeter

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage dairy farmers to undertake a Greenhouse Gas Protocol audit. [HL6922]

Lord Benyon: In the Net Zero Growth Plan, we have committed to developing a harmonised approach to measuring carbon on farms and will set out how we will support farmers to undertake carbon audits by 2024.

Debts: Advisory Services

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote debt (1) advice, and (2) management, services across public services. [HL7091]

Baroness Penn: The Government recognises the vital role that debt advice and management services play in helping people in financial difficulty and vulnerable circumstances.

The Government Debt Management Function (GDMF) works closely with the debt advice sector through the Fairness Group to improve the way vulnerable debtors are identified and supported. This includes through improved signposting / referrals to the advice sector.

The GDMF has published the Debt Functional Standard, Vulnerability Toolkit and Economic Abuse Toolkit. These set expectations for government organisations to, where appropriate, signpost to external support services and debt advice.

To help people access debt advice, the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) launched MoneyHelper in 2021, a consumer-facing service which provides free online guidance for people dealing with money worries and debt and connects people to free advice through its debt advice locator tool.

This year, MoneyHelper undertook a cost-of-living promotional campaign to increase awareness of its content for those struggling with rising cost of living pressures, including tools to support people with prioritising bills, talking to creditors and budget planning. As of the end of March, the campaign had generated around 85,000 additional online sessions.

MaPS also promotes the Money Adviser Network (MAN), a free partnership opportunity for organisations having conversations with people in financial difficulty. The MAN seeks to simplify how people access regulated debt advice, providing a single point of entry to a panel of free, high quality debt advice agencies. It now comprises more than 500 referral partners including DWP's Debt Management and Universal Credit Service Centre, HMRC, Crown Commercial Services and the Child Maintenance Service.

MaPS also engages with the GDMF's Fairness Group, supporting improvements to the government's debt management practices including promoting the use of the Standard Financial Statement (SFS).

Defence Equipment

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the UK's tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region described in the Integrated Review Refresh 2023, whether (1) they will speed up the order for F35B fighter aircraft, (2) Crowsnest will be fully accepted into service, (3) the successor to Crowsnest will be expedited, and (4) the planned deployment of HMS Prince of Wales will be brought forward to 2024. [HL6886]

Baroness Goldie: The Department has announced the intention to buy a further tranche of Lightning. However, details including the delivery profile remain subject to negotiation.

Turning to the CROWSNEST programme, which delivers Merlin Mk2 Airborne Surveillance and Control to the Royal Navy (RN), I can confirm that the capability was accepted into service in February 2021. CROWSNEST will fulfil the RN's organic Airborne Surveillance and Control capability until its current out-of-service date in 2029, to be replaced by a follow-on capability.

The Department continually assesses and reviews the effectiveness of its capabilities to inform decisions about where resources should be committed to treat the most pressing risks. The development of a successor to CROWSNEST is designed to ensure the continued delivery of Airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and Airborne Early Warning to the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) beyond its planned out of service date, and will be coherent with both developments in Uncrewed Air Systems, and other technologies maturing through the Future Combat Air System and the RN's Future Air Dominance System.

Finally, regarding HMS PRINCE OF WALES (PWLS), the UK maintains a Very High Readiness CSG whose planned and reactive deployments can be adjusted to achieve His Majesty's Government's objectives. The department does not comment on the detail or evolution of those plans, however, I can confirm that we remain committed to ensuring PWLS commences her operational programme, as planned, in Autumn 2023.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Development Aid

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in the province of Kasai, in order (1) to strengthen its health system, and (2) to reduce the frequency of preventable deaths of mothers and children. [HL6666]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK has supported the health sector in Kasai province since 2013. Minister Mitchell visited the UK's bilateral health programme in Kasai on March 19. The programme supports implementation of The Democratic Republic of the Congo's policy on Universal Health Coverage by strengthening pillars of the national health system and increasing access to lifesaving reproductive, maternal and child health services (including nutrition and family planning).

From 2017 to 2022 UK supported provinces increased childhood immunisation coverage from 63 percent to 90 percent, and the proportion of births attended by a skilled attendant from 83 percent to 99 percent. The prevalence of child malnutrition was halved over the same period.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Rwanda

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda; and what assessment they have made of the impact of Rwanda's backing of the M23 rebels on the UK's agreements with Rwanda. [HL6916]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK, alongside international partners, continues to raise the ongoing conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo with the Government of Rwanda and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo at the highest levels. We condemn the continuing advance of M23, a UN-sanctioned armed group. On 13 March, the Foreign Secretary and the Rwandan Foreign Minister discussed the importance of meeting commitments made under the Nairobi and Luanda political processes. It is vital that all parties work together to secure real de-escalation on the ground and an enduring political solution.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Unit for Future Skills

Asked by *Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government what meetings (1) ministers, and (2) senior officials, at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have had with the Unit for Future Skills. [HL6820]

Lord Benyon: There have been no ministerial level meetings to date, but the Unit for Future Skills (UFS) has met Defra officials at a working level. The UFS also recently joined Government's Green Jobs Delivery Group and will look to support this group to access data and insights on skills needs across green sectors.

Developing Countries: Education

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their reduction in UK Overseas Development Assistance to 0.5 per cent of gross national income, how they intend to achieve their target of having 40 million girls in primary and secondary school in low and middle income countries by 2026. [HL6608]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The FCDO is committed to ensuring 40 million more girls are in school and learning by 2026. Currently there is a global education crisis with 244 million children out of school. We therefore make significant investments through global funds to support delivery at scale to reach the 40 million target. We pledged £430 million to the Global Partnership for Education in 2021, and £80 million to Education Cannot Wait in February 2023. We run bilateral education programmes in 19 countries and our Girls' Education Challenge programme has given 1.6 million marginalised girls access to quality education.

Development Aid

Asked by *Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask His Majesty's Government what were the outcomes of the first Saudi Arabia-UK Strategic Aid Dialogue, held in London on 15 March. [HL6667]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Aid Dialogue between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia took place on 15-16 March. Discussions highlighted how the UK and Saudi Arabia can work together to address global food insecurity, delivering humanitarian aid including in areas of conflict, targeting support where it is most needed across Africa and enhancing the effectiveness of aid. As major global aid donors, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia are committed to partnering together to tackle global challenges and support those most in need.

Asked by *Lord Londesborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 15 December 2022 (HL Deb cols 807-11), what level the next funding round of UK Aid Match will be set at; and what proportion of Overseas Aid this will represent. [HL7007]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Grants under Round 5 of UK Aid Match are due to begin from April 2023 and will have a total value of £13 million over 3 years.

We also use UK Aid Match to support emergency humanitarian responses, including £25 million of match funding to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

We are currently considering future models for central FCDO funding for civil society and we will draw on the successes of the current UK Aid Match programme.

Development Plans

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government how many conflicts between local development plans and national development management policies have arisen in each of the last five years; and how many were resolved by the national development management policies taking precedence. [HL6949]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: National Development Management Policies are proposed to be introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which is before Parliament at present. Therefore no conflicts have arisen between National Development Management Policies as they have yet to be introduced. Further details of how National Development Management Policies would operate are set out in the consultation document 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy' published in December 2022.

Digital Technology: Taxation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a new digital services tax. [HL7030]

Baroness Penn: The UK introduced a 2 per cent Digital Services Tax (DST) in April 2020 to ensure that providers of search engines, social media platforms, and online marketplaces pay UK tax on digital services that reflects the value they derive from UK users.

The UK remains committed to reaching a global solution on reallocation of taxing rights under Pillar One of the G20-OECD Inclusive Framework project. It has always been our intention to remove the DST once this global solution is in place.

The UK continues multi-lateral discussions to reach that global solution.

Domestic Abuse

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to publish their response to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report Safety before status: the solutions, which was due in February. [HL6672]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment has been made of the recommendations in the Domestic

Abuse Commissioner's second report into migrant survivors, Safety before status: the solutions, published on 13 December 2022. [HL6673]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Tackling violence against women and girls is a government priority. We are committed to supporting victims of abuse, regardless of their immigration status.

The Home Office is grateful to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for publishing the 'Safety Before Status: The Solutions' report and to the Commissioner's team and external partners for researching the vital issue of support for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

We will continue to engage with the Commissioner's office on recommendations set out in the report, and across government. We have already begun to take forward work that stems from some of the recommendations.

We are giving detailed consideration to the findings of this research in conjunction with the external evaluation of the Home Office funded Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot (SMV) and considering the wider policies affecting migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Our official response will be published as soon as is practicable. In the meantime, we continue to provide £1.4 million per annum to fund support for all migrant victims of domestic abuse.

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 14 March (HL5987), what assessment they have made of the impact of the difficulty of assessing bruises on darker skin on (1) documenting and prosecuting cases of domestic violence, and (2) providing treatment and support to victims of domestic violence. [HL6674]

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of disparities in the response to, and treatment of, domestic abuse and domestic violence on the basis of race or ethnicity. [HL6676]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: This Government recognises that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including domestic abuse, affects a wide range of people. Some victims, especially those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including ethnic minority victims, may experience additional barriers to identifying, disclosing, seeking help or reporting abuse.

That is why in tackling domestic abuse a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate to support all victims. We also understand the importance of specialist and 'by and for' services in providing tailored support and understanding that ethnic minority victims and survivors of VAWG offences and domestic abuse need. These are services that are led, designed and delivered 'by and for' the users and communities they aim to serve. As a result,

these organisations have the necessary skills and experience to provide appropriate support.

On 22 November 2022, we commenced an open commercial competition (VAWG Specialist and Support Services Fund) for ‘by and for’ and specialist services. This will enable vital services, who are based in the communities they serve, to support victims often facing the greatest barriers to getting the help they need. We are able to fund this competition with up to £8.4 million (in total) to run over financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, with up to £6 million ring-fenced grant funding for ‘by and for’ services over the two years.

Whilst there is current international research on how colorimetry can assist the assessment of bruising in adults and children with darker skin this has yet to impact on NICE Guidance on bruising as of March 2021, or contemporary Royal College of Emergency Medicine Guidance.

Domestic Abuse: Older People

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect a report from the Office for National Statistics on the number of victims of domestic abuse of those over the age of 74. [HL6995]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Noble Peer's Parliamentary Question of 29 March is attached in the answer. It should be noted that these estimates are not National Statistics and caution should be taken when using this, data due to the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

The Rt Hon. Baroness Gale

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

31 March 2023

Dear Lady Gale,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking when to expect a report from the Office for National Statistics on the number of victims of domestic abuse of those over the age of 74 (HL6995).

Data collection for the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) resumed on 4 October 2021, with the upper age limit for the self-completion modules on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking removed. Data based on six months of CSEW interviews between October 2021 and March 2022 were used in our domestic abuse articles for the year ending March 2022 [1].

The CSEW estimated that 2.1% of adults aged 75 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022. These data, as well as prevalence rates for

other personal characteristics can be found in Table 6 of our *Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics* tables [2]. Estimates for numbers of victims are only produced for our headline domestic abuse measures. It should be noted that these estimates are not National Statistics and caution should be taken when using these data due to the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

We plan to release domestic abuse data for those aged 75 years and over for the year ending March 2023 in late November 2023 and will share this with you once published.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenlandandwalesoverview/latest>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsappendixtables>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UK Statistics Authority [PQHL6995.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL6995>

Drugs: Advertising

Asked by Lord Strathcarron

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 21 March (HL5868), what steps they will take to uphold the provisions of Chapter 4 of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's Blue Guide, which sets out the general rules for advertising medicines to both healthcare workers and the public, and states there is a requirement not to exaggerate the benefits of medicines; and whether the reference in Chapter 4 to section 6.6 “for more information on safety claims” implies that the rules around the use of the word “safe” are applicable to advertising aimed at the general public. [HL6877]

Lord Markham: The Department is committed to following the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Blue book and Advertising Standards Agency guidelines. Careful consideration is given to what guidance is applicable to the campaigns that are run. Government campaigns to encourage routine vaccination uptake are considered as public health interventions and therefore sit outside the scope of United Kingdom advertising regulations, which are interpreted in the MHRA Blue Guide. Whether or not specific guidance applies, all campaign messaging is subject to rigorous

clinical and policy approvals, to ensure information is communicated accurately.

Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Penn on 22 March (HL6248), what is the reason why duty-free purchases cannot be made when flying from Belfast to EU countries. [HL6859]

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask His Majesty's Government why citizens of Northern Ireland are not able to buy duty free products when travelling from Belfast to the EU. [HL7072]

Baroness Penn: The government is committed to preserving frictionless movement of people and goods between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which is important to communities across Northern Ireland and would otherwise undermine the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

Enabling duty-free shopping between Ireland, which is a member of the EU, and Northern Ireland without also introducing border controls would lead to significant distortions of trade on the island of Ireland as well as a significant revenue loss for both UK and Ireland by creating a legal route for unlimited amounts of alcohol and tobacco to flow into the UK market duty-free.

Education: Girls and Women

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support and protect at-risk girls and young women in education settings, including against poor mental health and sexual harassment. [HL7033]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to helping education settings provide the safe, calm, and supportive learning environments that promote good wellbeing and reduce risk of harm. This includes considering how we can best support girls and young women who may be at higher risk of sexual harassment or poor mental health.

The government's Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy sets out the actions that we are taking and the progress that we have made to prevent violence and harassment and protect victims. It includes the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Enough communications campaign, and changes to the law to introduce new criminal offences, including up-skirting and revenge porn. We will also be publishing non-statutory guidance specifically focused on teaching about sexual harassment and sexual violence.

As part of the strategy, we are determined to make sure the right resources and processes are in place across the education system to support any victims of abuse who come forward. The department published strengthened

statutory school safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education in September 2021. The guidance has been further strengthened for 2022, ensuring schools have even clearer guidance on how to deal with reports of sexual abuse. Revised guidance includes the 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment advice', putting this on a statutory footing to give the issue the prominence it deserves. The department is also trialling the impact of supervision for designated safeguarding leads, with a particular focus on supporting them to respond to sexual abuse issues.

As well as supporting pupils to understand their mental health, the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum in schools ensures all pupils are taught about respectful relationships. This includes learning that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable. The department has started a review of the RSHE statutory guidance and continues to develop standalone non statutory guidance to support schools to teach about these issues effectively.

Further education providers also have flexibility to offer aspects of RSHE. Providers should support students to access the support they need to have healthy relationships. The Ofsted Further Education and Skills inspection handbook includes personal development in its judgements, including students' understanding of healthy relationships and how to keep themselves mentally healthy.

In higher education (HE), the department expects all providers to have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, including the Equality Act 2010, and to swiftly address reports of harassment and sexual misconduct. The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill includes a clause banning the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements to silence victims in cases of sexual misconduct in HE. The Office for Students (OfS) has also launched a consultation to make mandatory measures that will require providers to address student harassment.

The department supports education settings to take effective approaches to supporting wellbeing and mental health. In schools and colleges, we are providing grants to train Senior Mental Health Leads and rolling out Mental Health Support Teams which can improve access to support. In HE, we have an ambition for all providers to sign up to Student Minds' University Mental Health Charter by 2026. The OfS have funded the online platform Student Space. The department has asked them to allocate £15 million to establishing better partnerships between universities and local NHS service and support transitions into university.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 29 March (HL6769), how many electric vehicle charging

points have been installed on public roads or footpaths, including on lamp-posts, in England in each year since 2010. [HL7054]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The information requested is not held by the Department for Transport.

Electronic Cigarettes: Waste

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 27 February 2022 (38774), when they intend to make an assessment of the environmental cost of single-use batteries in disposable vapes being improperly disposed. [HL6784]

Lord Benyon: We are aware that the use of disposable vaping products which contain batteries has increased substantially in recent years and are considering the implications for the environment. As part of the review of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations, we will consult on policies aimed at driving up levels of separate collection of electric and electronic waste, including vaping devices, later this year. A separate consultation on batteries is also scheduled for later this year and is similarly looking to strengthen the collection of portable batteries, including those contained in vapes.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the environmental hazard posed by discarded disposable vapes; and what consideration they have given to banning the sale of these products. [HL6785]

Lord Benyon: There are no immediate plans to ban disposable vapes. However, as part of the review of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations, we will consult on policies aimed at driving up levels of separate collection of electric and electronic waste, including vaping devices, later this year.

Asked by Baroness Taylor of Bolton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the damage to the marine environment caused by the disposal of single use vapes. [HL6813]

Lord Benyon: We have not made an assessment of the environmental impacts of disposable vapes. However, as part of the review of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations, we will consult on policies aimed at driving up levels of separate collection of electric and electronic waste, including vaping devices, later this year.

Employment Tribunals Service

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) warning notices, and (2) financial penalty notices, were issued to respondent employers under section 150 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 for failure to pay an employment tribunal award in each year since 2016–17, including 2022–23 to date; how many of those financial penalties (a) have been paid, and (b) remain unpaid; how many previously unpaid awards have been recovered following (i) the issuing of a warning notice only, and (ii) the issuing of both a warning notice and a financial penalty notice; and how much money has been recovered for claimants in total in each category. [HL6685]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: While we do hold data on Employment Tribunal Penalties, this is derived from a live case management system and has not been subject to sufficient validation that would be required for us to release this to Parliament at this time. We will give consideration to what data we may be able to publish on this subject in the future.

Employment: Disability

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to publish their employment action plan for disabled people. [HL6880]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government will consult on the Disability Action Plan over the summer and will publish it at the end of 2023.

Energy Bills Rebate: Boats

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Manchester

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will provide fuel support to those living on licensed boats with no permanent mooring, many of whom are on low incomes or pensioners. [HL6686]

Lord Callanan: The Government is keen to support these households living on licensed boats with no permanent mooring and to ensure that they can receive the Alternative Fuel Payment via the Alternative Fund where eligible. We are currently working to find an acceptable method for these households to provide proof of eligibility, whilst protecting public funds, so they can claim the Alternative Fuel Payment via the Alternative Fund.

Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 17 March (HL6130), what assessment they have made of the research conducted by CarbonLaces which found that Energy Performance Certificates overestimate energy use by 344 per cent. [HL6710]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: As set out previously, ministers keep the EPC system under review.

Energy: Business

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide energy bill relief for businesses. [HL6806]

Lord Callanan: The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), worth £7.3billion, provides a discount on the wholesale element of gas and electricity bills to ensure that all eligible businesses are protected from high energy costs this winter period.

Following a review of the EBRS, a new Energy Bill Discount Scheme (EBDS) starts on 1 April 2023, and all eligible non-domestic customers, except for those experiencing low energy costs, will automatically receive a per unit discount on their bills of up to £19.61/MW for electricity, and £6.97/MW for gas.

Energy: Prices

Asked by *Baroness Adams of Craigielea*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide access to affordable domestic energy for low-income customers. [HL6594]

Lord Callanan: The Government has set up a number of Energy Affordability Schemes to support low-income customers with energy prices such as Energy Bills Support Scheme and the Energy Price Guarantee which all households will benefit from.

As announced in the Spring Budget, the Energy Price Guarantee has been extended at £2,500 for an additional three months to the end of June 2023 to further support households with energy bills.

The Autumn Statement set out a commitment to work with consumer groups and industry to consider the best approach to consumer protection from April 2024.

In addition, for 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to £900 in Cost of Living payments. Pensioners will receive a £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment alongside their Winter Fuel Payment. The Warm Home Discount will also provide £150 per eligible household for the financial year 2023/24.

Energy: Rented Housing

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that home energy efficiency targets are delivered in both the (1) private, and (2) social, rented sectors. [HL6650]

Lord Callanan: The Government is investing £6.6 billion over this Parliament on clean heat and improving energy efficiency in buildings, reducing our reliance on fossil fuel heating. In addition, £6 billion of new Government funding will be made available from 2025 to 2028.

On 22 March, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 awarded £778 million of funding to support the installation of energy performance measures in social homes in England below EPC C, improving them up to that standard.

Up to £630 million of grant funding will be awarded to local authorities for Phase 2 of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG 2) to be delivered from April 2023 to March 2025. HUG 2 provides energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating measures to low-income households living in the worst performing, off gas grid homes in England.

EU Law: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 March (HL6299), what are the (1) names, and (2) titles, of the EU rules for internal UK trade which are disapplied by the operation of the Windsor Framework; and which customs provisions are removed. [HL6788]

Asked by *Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 March (HL6296), what are the (1) names, and (2) titles, of the EU laws which will remain in force in Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework, which would otherwise be subject to removal under the provisions of the Retained EU Law Bill. [HL6790]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is committed to taking the necessary steps to uphold the UK's international obligations, including the Withdrawal Agreement and the Windsor Framework, as set out in the previous answer. As also set out, all of the rules disapplied are set out in the legal texts published as part of the Windsor Framework. By the EU's own calculations, less than 3 percent of EU rules apply - with those that remain only applying to secure maximum free trade and market access for Northern Ireland firms. It should also be recognised that this is not a straightforward list, as some of those rules will be applied in part for the red lane but not applied in the green lane, for example. But, for example:

- Annex 1 of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary legal text shows that 67 rules on food and drink do not apply in the green lane - covering issues like marketing standards, food supplements and additives, and the production of organic products. It also disapplies the certification requirements in the EU Official Controls Regulation, as well as the prohibitions on various movements set out therein.

- Requirements in the Union Customs Code (UCC) for rules of origin certificates, tariffs, and commodity codes for each movement do not apply for internal UK trade; nor are there any requirements for customs declarations for consumer parcels, which are classified automatically as "not at risk". And we have secured unfettered access by removing any need for export declarations or equivalent information for goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain as would otherwise have been set out in the UCC.

- In a similar vein, and as noted previously, the requirements in the VAT Directive which prevented the zero-rating of energy-saving materials has been disapplied, enabling the changes we brought forward in Parliament this week; as have limits on alcohol duty structures in EU rules harmonising excise duty structures.

- And for medicines we have disapplied any role for the European Medicines Agency in authorising medicines for the UK market, as otherwise set out in EU rules on the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products; and removed packaging any other requirements in the Falsified Medicines Directive.

These changes have safeguarded Northern Ireland's place in the Union and our internal market, while continuing to support Northern Ireland's businesses by providing them access to the whole UK market as well as the EU market.

Evusheld

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 February (HL4942) which confirmed that the expert working group established specifically to review Evusheld pre-exposure prophylaxis only met twice, the last meeting being on 19 May 2022, why the parliamentary Written Answers provided from that date until 4 July 2022 refer to asking clinicians to advise on the most appropriate option; and what other advice was being received during this period. [HL5936]

Lord Markham: The National Expert Working Group is one of the sources of clinical opinion to develop clinical policies. During this period the RAPID C-19 cross-agency group was also set up to review COVID-19 therapies in response to the pandemic. They would consider evidence and analysis from a number of sources, including the Prophylaxis Oversight Group and the UK Health Security Agency. In addition, the Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel considered evidence for COVID-19 risk to help

prioritise cohorts for prophylaxis. This informed thinking within the Department and was subsequently shared with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. These groups continued to consider emerging evidence, including published evidence from independent researchers and evidence from the company, after the last meeting of the Expert Working Group.

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 6 March (HL5937), why the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) request for referral of 8 June is described as for "referral of Evusheld for treatment of COVID-19" but, as confirmed in a NICE freedom of information response, the request was for "referral of tixagevimab-cilgavimab for preventing COVID-19 [ID6136] on 8 June 2022", causing delay to the possibility of a decision at a time when the preventative prophylaxis Evusheld was highly efficacious. [HL6531]

Lord Markham: The request made by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to the Department on 8 June 2022 was for the referral of Evusheld for the treatment of COVID-19 for inclusion into its multiple technology appraisal on therapeutics for COVID-19, not Evusheld for prevention. I understand from NICE that an error was made in its response to the freedom of information request, and that a correction will be issued accordingly. I apologise that this happened.

Falkland Islands: Fossil Fuels

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with the government of the Falkland Islands to complete an emissions inventory for any potential future fossil fuel development there. [HL6972]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As a self-governing Overseas Territory, economic development, including the development and exploitation of hydrocarbons, is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government, in accordance with all relevant laws. The UK Government supports the right of the Falkland Islanders to develop their natural resources for their own economic benefit. This is an integral part of their right of self-determination. The UK Government is working closely with the Falkland Islands Government to support their right to develop its hydrocarbons resources and we are ready to offer UK expertise on how to mitigate environmental impacts, including emissions.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with the government of the Falkland Islands to assess (1) the biodiversity, and (2) other environmental, risks of any fossil fuel development there. [HL6973]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government regularly discusses development of a Falkland Islands hydrocarbons industry with the Falkland Islands Government and is working with the Falkland Islanders to ensure they can access UK expertise. Policy on hydrocarbons development in the Falkland Islands is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government. With UK Government support, the Falkland Islands Government is ensuring they are able to identify, assess and manage risks, including environmental risks.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government, given their policy of not using UK export credits to fund fossil fuel projects, what (1) diplomatic, or (2) other activities, they are planning to ensure other countries do not offer this type of funding for the Falkland Islands. [HL6974]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As the Falkland Islands Government is a self-governing Overseas Territory, hydrocarbons development in the Falkland Islands is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government, in accordance with all relevant laws. There is no change to His Majesty's Government's policy of not using UK export credits to fund fossil fuel projects and the financing of a future production phase is a commercial decision for the Falkland Islands Government and the companies involved. We continue to engage internationally in pursuit of global environmental targets.

Financial Services: Education

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote financial literacy in schools. [HL6647]

Baroness Barran: Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

Finance education forms part of the citizenship National Curriculum, at Key Stages 3 and 4, but can be taught by all schools at all Key Stages. The subject covers the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management, and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught about income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

The mathematics curriculum includes a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic that primary pupils should be taught. A strong grasp of mathematics will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, using percentages. The secondary mathematics curriculum develops pupils' understanding in relation to more complex personal finance issues such as calculating loan repayments, interest rates and compound interest.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has set out a new mission to ensure all pupils study some form of mathematics to 18. Studying mathematics to 18 will equip young people with the quantitative and statistical skills that they will need for the jobs of today and the future. This includes having the knowledge to feel confident with finances in later life, including things like finding the best mortgage deal or savings rate.

The Department works with the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) and HM Treasury to support the effective teaching of financial education. MaPS has published financial education guidance for primary and secondary schools, and we will deliver a series of webinars in due course. The MaPS financial education guidance for primary and secondary schools can be found in the attached documents.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

MaPS Primary school financial education
[HL6647_primary_school_financial_education.pdf]

MaPS Secondary school financial education
[HL6647_secondary_school_financial_education.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-20/HL6647>

First-tier Tribunal: Land and Property

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) process (1) better known, and (2) easier for people to understand. [HL6862]

Lord Bellamy: In dealing with applications, appeals and references relating to disputes over property and land and as part of the Unified Tribunal System, the Property Chamber has been specifically designed to provide a more effective, accessible and lower cost alternative to court. The procedural rules, which govern how cases are handled, require that the Tribunal deals with cases proportionately and that all parties are able to fully participate in the proceedings.

Information about the Property Chamber, including guidance on how to make an appeal or reference, is available on the GOV.UK website. All tribunal processes are kept under review, but there are no current plans to revise those of the Property Chamber.

Fishing Vessels: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether fishing vessels from (1) Great Britain, and (2) Northern Ireland, landing fishing catches at Northern Ireland, will be treated as vessels from third countries following the provisions of the Windsor Framework. [HL7041]

Lord Benyon: There is no change to the requirements that apply regarding the landing of fish into ports in NI. Vessels should continue to operate in line with the status quo.

Freeports

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the governance arrangements they require from the freeports established in the UK. [HL6928]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the governance boards of freeports publish the agendas and minutes of meetings on their websites on a regular basis. [HL6929]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to require the Governance Boards of (1) Plymouth and South Devon Freeport, (2) Freeport East, and (3) Liverpool City Region freeports, to publish the agendas and minutes of their meetings on their websites on a regular basis. [HL6930]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Teeside Freeport Governance Board about ensuring that all details of the agenda and minutes of board meetings are published on its website. [HL6931]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: English Freeports are required to have robust and effective governance structures in place to manage their operations and deliver on the policy objectives. These requirements are set out in the [Full Business Case guidance](#) on Gov.uk and following the submission of a full business case were subject to a thorough appraisal process by government. As part of full government approval, Freeports are required commit to these structures through the agreement of an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and provide evidence of their implementation and good functioning.

Freeports governing bodies must adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the [Nolan principles](#)) and commit to appropriate levels of transparency, propriety, and inclusivity with respect to governance. This includes but is not limited to the publication of board papers, minutes, and register of members' interests to ensure any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are recorded and managed appropriately.

Government will monitor this through its performance management and assurance processes, formally set out in a document known as the Freeports Framework. This document sets out what is expected of local authorities and Freeport governing bodies in receipt of government funding and other support to provide UK government, stakeholders, and the public, with assurance that Freeports

will be subject to vigorous stewardship and their benefits will be fully realised. More detail on this can be found in the Freeports [Annual Report](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Annual Report [UK Freeports Programme Annual Report 2022 - GOV.UK.pdf]

Business Case guidance [English Freeports Full business case guidance.pdf]

The Nolan principles [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-28/HL6928>

Freeports: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Adams of Craigielea*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Windsor Framework will allow the establishment of freeports in Northern Ireland. [HL7051]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are committed to extending the benefits of our Freeports programme across the UK and to working with stakeholders from sectors and places across Northern Ireland on how best to do so. Of course we need to see a restored Northern Ireland Executive before those discussions can be progressed further, similar to our engagements with Scottish and Welsh governments on proposals there.

Freight: Windsor Framework

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government what proposals they have made for groupage haulage under the Windsor Framework. [HL6884]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The agreement establishes a new UK internal trade scheme based on commercial data-sharing, not international customs processes, for the movement of goods. This new scheme will significantly expand the range of businesses who can benefit; end the requirement for traders to provide customs commodity codes for each movement; scrap burdensome supplementary declarations and ensure that businesses can therefore move their goods using the same type of commercial information as they already hold when moving goods to the Isle of Wight.

We will continue to engage closely with industry and broader stakeholders on the operational arrangements of the new scheme, including the haulage sector.

Fruit and Vegetables: Imports

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the resilience of the supply chain for imports of fruit and vegetables. [HL6824]

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of levels of food security in England; and, in particular, of self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetables. [HL6825]

Lord Benyon: The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain. It is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources; strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. Domestic food production, coupled with international trade, gives us national resilience. When it comes to food we can produce here, we are 74% self-sufficient. Our aim is to broadly maintain the current level of food that we produce domestically and boost production in sectors where there are the biggest opportunities. Defra has a collaborative relationship with industry which allows us to effectively respond to disruption, should it occur.

Some supermarkets applied item limits to a small number of fruit and vegetables due to poor weather affecting the harvest in Spain and North Africa, where a high proportion of produce consumed in UK at this time of year is grown. However, with the exception of one retailer, these limits have now been removed, reflecting that fact that supply is returning to normal levels.

Recognising the importance of food security, in the Agriculture Act 2020, the Government made a commitment to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report was published in December 2021. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work. Defra publishes annual statistics on horticulture, including some self-sufficiency statistics here: [Latest horticulture statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/latest-horticulture-statistics).

Fuel Oil: Rural Areas*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help people with oil-based heating systems, who primarily live in rural areas without main gas supplies, with the cost of energy. [HL7092]

Lord Callanan: The Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) scheme provides a £200 grant payment to UK households that use alternative fuels for heating instead of mains gas. Most households received the payment automatically through their electricity supplier, who were obliged to pay customers during February. Traditional prepayment customers may receive a voucher which they can redeem within 3 months. For the small proportion of households who could not be paid automatically, the online portal to apply for the support is open on gov.uk now. A small proportion of households will need to apply for the AFP, for example because they do not have a relationship with an electricity supplier. Applications for this Alternative Fund opened on 6 March through a GOV.UK portal

which includes an overview of eligibility and what steps households need to take to apply for support.

Further Education: Care Leavers and Children in Care*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) looked-after children, and (2) care leavers, went on to Key Stage 5 in (a) the latest year for which figures are available, and (b) the three preceding years. [HL6747]

Baroness Barran: The department does not hold information on the numbers of all care leavers who went on to key stage 5. The department does hold and publish information on the activities of care leavers aged 17 to 21 who had been looked after by local authorities in England. This includes information on care leavers in education, but not specifically at key stage 5. The latest statistics are available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/1db542fc-b38b-4dd6-c132-08daa787e284>.

The department also publishes information on pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 in 2018/19 and reports on their destinations in the 2019/20 academic year. The figures show in 2019/20, 5,010 looked after children were in a sustained education destination in the year following the end of key stage 4. Of these, 2,910 were in further education, 860 were in a school sixth form or sixth form college and 1,240 were in some other form of education. They may not necessarily be studying key stage 5 learning aims. This data can be found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/271af2fd-b022-402a-076f-08db29e96c41>.

The latest information on attainment for looked after children is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england>.

Information on pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 in 2019/20 and their destinations in the 2020/21 academic year was published on 30 March 2023 on the GOV.UK website.

Further Education: T-levels*Asked by Lord Baker of Dorking*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of entrants for T Level examinations in 2022 were studying in FE colleges. [HL6599]

Baroness Barran: The department does not have available data on how many students sat T Level assessments in 2022 at institutional level. The department expects T Levels to be included in school and college performance tables from 2024 which should include student numbers.

Of the 164 providers that are currently delivering T Levels, 105 are Further Education (FE) colleges. The department has selected a relatively small number of high performing providers for the first years of T Level delivery to ensure T Levels are high quality courses from the very start.

The number of FE providers delivering T Levels is increasing year on year, and the department expects student numbers to grow significantly over the next few years.

General Practitioners: Complaints

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many patients used the complaints procedure of their local GP surgery in England in each of the last five years; and what was the average length of time GP surgeries in England to investigate patient complaints and to provide a response. [HL7012]

Lord Markham: The following table shows the number of complaints received by general practitioners (GPs) in the past five years, and is derived from the document, 'Data on Written Complaints in the NHS 2021-22'. A copy of this document is attached.

Year	Number of complaints
2021/22	99,459
2020/21	72,087
2019/20	Not available
2018/19	72,356
2017/18	75,782

The data collection for GP practices was suspended in 2019/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so data for that year is unavailable. Data on the length of time that it took GP surgeries to investigate and provide a response to complainants is not collected centrally.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Data on Written Complaints in the NHS 2021-22 [Data on Written Complaints in the NHS 2021-22 Tables.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7012>

General Practitioners: Pharmacy

Asked by *Baroness Cumberlege*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Evans of Rainow on 20 March (HL Deb col 1529), what is the source of their data for saying that six percent of GP services could be provided by pharmacies; and what is the evidence base for those data. [HL6849]

Lord Markham: The source of the data that 6% of general practitioner (GP) services could be provided by pharmacies, as referenced by Lord Evans of Rainow on 20 March, is the report *Making Time in General Practice*, published by the Primary Care Foundation and NHS Alliance in October 2015. This research found that 5.5% of GP appointments were potentially avoidable by being directed instead to self-care/pharmacy. These findings were referenced in the later report *General Practice Forward View*, published by NHS England in April 2016. In this report the figure was rounded to 6%.

Copies of both reports are attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

General Practice Forward View report [General Practice Forward View.pdf]

Making Time in General Practice report [Making-Time-in-General-Practice_FULL_REPORT_28_10_15.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-27/HL6849>

Genito-urinary Medicine: HIV Infection

Asked by *Baroness Merron*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of HIV prevalence on the difficulties in booking a sexual health clinic appointment online or by telephone; and what steps they are taking to improve ease of access. [HL6575]

Lord Markham: No formal assessment has been made of linkages between the availability of sexual health service appointments and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevalence in local areas.

As part of the HIV Action Plan, the Government and NHS England committed £20 million over three years in 2022 to 2025, to expand HIV opt-out testing in emergency departments in areas with extremely high HIV prevalence. In the first 100 days of opt out HIV testing, NHS England found nearly 200 people with undiagnosed or untreated HIV.

Local authorities in England are responsible for commissioning open access sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV testing, through the Public Health Grant, funded at £3.5 billion in 2023/24. It is for individual local authorities to decide their spending priorities based on an assessment of local need and to commission the service lines that best suit their population, including access to HIV testing.

Gonorrhoea

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to limit the spread of extensively antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea (1) in the general population, (2) in vulnerable populations, and (3) among elderly populations. [HL6904]

Lord Markham: The effectiveness of treatment for gonorrhoea continues to be threatened by the development of resistance to the last-line treatment, ceftriaxone. The UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Gonococcal Resistance to Antimicrobials Surveillance Programme (GRASP) includes a suite of testing and surveillance systems to detect and monitor antimicrobial resistance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and potential treatment failures. GRASP reports annually on drug resistance in *N. gonorrhoeae* in England and Wales and has directly influenced changes in treatment guidelines on three occasions.

Additionally, all primary diagnostic laboratories test gonococcal isolates for susceptibility to ceftriaxone and refer suspected resistant isolates to the UKHSA national reference laboratory for confirmatory testing and follow-up in real-time. UKHSA has published guidance on managing cases of ceftriaxone-resistant gonorrhoea and performs a risk assessment for each case. If there is a risk of transmission within England, UKHSA instigates an Incident Response to contain spread.

This applies to all population groups, including vulnerable and elderly populations, as the approach to tackling antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea is universal across England.

Government Departments: Cybersecurity

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the progress in the adoption of the Cyber Assessment Framework across all government bodies. [HL6924]

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the cyber audits of all government departments. [HL6925]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Government Cyber Security Strategy, published in January 2022, sets out how we will build and maintain our cyber defences; by building greater cyber resilience across all government organisations, and working together to 'defend as one' - exerting a defensive force greater than the sum of our parts.

The strategy sets a clear target for government's most critical functions to be appropriately resilient by 2025, with all government organisations being resilient to known vulnerabilities and common attack methods by 2030.

The strategy will see us roll out GovAssure in April as the foundation of a new, more robust independent assurance regime for the whole of government. With its foundations in the National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Assessment Framework, it will help us to understand our risk at scale and put us on the pathway to reducing it, as well as aligning Government with the best practice in management of wider UK Critical National

Infrastructure sectors. Results of these reviews will not be published publicly for reasons of security. The progress on adopting the Cyber Assessment Framework across HMG is that pilots have been conducted with 3 government departments, and the wider scheme will launch in April.

Government Departments: Procurement

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government how many suppliers to government departments have been excluded from subsequent procurement processes on the grounds of either fraud or corruption. [HL7048]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The grounds for the exclusion of bidders from public procurement procedures are set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These rules set out the circumstances in which bidders must, or may, be excluded from a public procurement process.

In all cases, individual departments and other public sector bodies are responsible for their own decisions on these matters, and will hold their own records. This information is not held centrally.

Groceries Code Adjudicator

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the timetable for the review of the role of the Grocery Code adjudicator; and how Parliament will be notified of the outcome. [HL6526]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: The Government is currently considering responses to the public consultation and other evidence to inform the third statutory review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. A report on the findings of the statutory review will be published and laid before Parliament in due course.

Health: Women

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the particular mental health and wellbeing of ethnic minority girls and young women. [HL7035]

Lord Markham: Whilst we are not taking steps nationally to address specifically the particular mental health and wellbeing of ethnic minority girls and young women, we are expanding access to mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan, which commits to investing an additional £2.3 billion a year for mental health services by 2023/24, so that an additional two million people, including girls and young women from minority ethnic groups, can access National Health Service-funded mental health support.

NHS England launched its first *Advancing mental health equalities strategy* in October 2020 to support the

ambition of reducing mental health inequalities outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan. The strategy summarises the core actions that NHS England will take to bridge the gaps for communities faring worse than others in mental health services, including black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, and women in secure care settings. A copy of the strategy is attached.

The Government and NHS England are also taking forward non-legislative work to address racial disparities, including the piloting of Culturally Appropriate Advocacy services by the Department. These are exploring approaches to identifying, supporting, and advocating for the specific cultural needs of people from ethnic minority groups.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Advancing mental health equalities strategy [00159-advancing-mental-health-equalities-strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7035>

Heat Pumps

Asked by Lord Dobbs

To ask His Majesty's Government whether their target remains to install 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028; and what estimate they have made of how many heat pumps have been installed (1) in total so far, and (2) in the past 12 months. [HL6738]

Lord Callanan: Our target remains to install 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028 and we are putting in place an ambitious package of policies to achieve this.

From 2008 up to the end of February 2023, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Installations Database shows that 184,065 heat pump installations were registered. The number of heat pump installations in the 12 months to the end of February 2023 were 32,234. However, heat pumps installed without Government funding support and those in new buildings are not typically recorded in the database, with industry sources suggesting installations in new homes could make up a significant fraction of overall heat pump deployment.

Heat Pumps: Housing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government how much they plan to invest in the installation of energy efficient heat pumps in homes as a replacement for gas boilers. [HL7032]

Lord Callanan: The Government is putting in place a combination of regulatory and public spending measures to achieve at least 600,000 heat pump installations a year by 2028.

Support for Heat Pumps is available under a range of government schemes including, the Home Upgrade Scheme, Social Housing Decarbonisation scheme and Boiler Upgrade Scheme.

The Government has announced we are extending the Boiler Upgrade Scheme until 2028, to support the installation of heat pumps, in domestic and small non-domestic buildings. This builds on £450 million of funding we have already committed between 2022 and 2025.

Heat Pumps: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by Lord Dobbs

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made (1) of the proportion of heat pumps installed in the UK that have been manufactured in the UK, and (2) of these, the proportion that contain microchips manufactured in China. [HL6739]

Lord Callanan: In 2020, the Government published research that showed that around 30 per cent of the heat pumps installed domestically were manufactured in the UK. This research did not consider the proportion of those heat pumps that contain microchips manufactured in China.

However, industry data shows that there are a range of manufacturers from different countries that supply electronic circuit boards and semiconductors to the UK consumer appliance market, and the supply chain is not reliant on manufacturers from any one country.

Heating: Renewable Energy

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the percentage of non-electrical heat demand that is met by renewable technologies. [HL6879]

Lord Callanan: There are a number of options that have the potential to play an important role in decarbonising heat alongside electrification.

Increasing the proportion of green gas in the grid is a practical, established, and cost-effective way of reducing carbon emissions. The Green Gas Support Scheme supports injection of biomethane into the gas grid.

The £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme in limited circumstances supports the installation of biomass boilers in domestic and small non-domestic buildings with grants up to £5,000.

The Government is supporting industry to deliver a neighbourhood trial by 2024 and a village scale trial of hydrogen heating by 2025 to take decisions in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising heating, and consulting on the case for enabling or requiring hydrogen-ready boilers and broader heating system efficiencies.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Asked by *The Earl of Lytton*

To ask His Majesty's Government why they made provision for an 18-month relaxation period in relation to non-combustible cavity barriers in external walls of buildings when making the Building etc. (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2022 (SI 2022/603) and publishing the Approved Document B 2019 edition incorporating 2020 and 2022 amendments, given that at the date of laying the regulations there were suitable non-combustible products readily available. [HL6637]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: On 1 June 2022, the Government published a response to a consultation following the review of the ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings. The consultation proposed a temporary 18-month relaxation of the ban as it relates to cavity trays. This followed from issues highlighted to officials on the excessive cost, supply (including of trained professional able to install these products) and installation of products on the market at the time. At the time we brought in the changes we considered it appropriate, on balance, to allow for a short-term exemption for combustible cavity trays as the risk they pose remains relatively low while providing temporary flexibility.

The consultation response is available [here](#).

We will continue to review the impact of the ban including this short-term exemption and to work with industry to understand new products available on the market.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Consultation response [Consultation response.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-20/HL6637>

Asked by *The Earl of Lytton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the impact of defining 'defect' in the Developer Remediation Contract, published on 17 February, differently from 'relevant defect', in the Building Safety Act 2022; and what effect this will have on ensuring buildings are adequately remediated. [HL6638]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The definition of 'Defect' in the developer remediation contract and the definition of 'Relevant Defect' in the Building Safety Act were drafted for different purposes.

The definition of 'Relevant Defect' in the Building Safety Act 2022 is used in relation to a wider range of actors, defect types and circumstances.

The definition of 'Defect' in the developer remediation contract was drafted to match the wording of a public pledge signed by 49 developers. Under the developer pledge and the contract which codifies the pledge commitments, developers commit to addressing life-

critical fire safety defects arising from the original design, construction or refurbishment of the building, and to do so in line with relevant standards.

High Speed 2 Line

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the current HS2 rolling stock will be leased or purchased; what loading gauge(s) it will be built to; and on which routes a train of greater gauge than W6 will be capable or operating. [HL6905]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd is purchasing the rolling stock from a Joint Venture of Hitachi and Alstom. The purchased HS2 rolling stock will be gauge-compatible with its operational routes.

Higher Education: Care Leavers

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many care leavers made applications to higher education institutions in each of the last three years for which data are available, broken down by individual institution. [HL6919]

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many care leavers were made offers to attend a higher education institution in each of the last three years for which data are available, broken down by individual institution. [HL6920]

Asked by *Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many care leavers were accepted onto undergraduate courses at higher education institutions in each of the last three years for which data are available, broken down by institution. [HL6921]

Baroness Barran: Data on applications, offers, and acceptances for care leavers by institution is not held by the department. This information may be available from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Higher Education: Research

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any UK academic institutions have been notified that they will lose access to research databases provided by the China National Knowledge Infrastructure platform; and what assessment they have made of extent to which academic institutions in China currently have access to academic research databases funded by UK research councils [HL7052]

Viscount Camrose: The Department does not collect data on institutional subscriptions to the China National Knowledge Infrastructure platform.

The UK is a global leader in open research. UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) support the principle that research data and publications are as open as possible and as secure as necessary. Responsible and trusted research requires a balance of considerations which are expressed in the UK Research and Innovation Trusted Research and Innovation Principles, published in 2021. Science outcomes published in Research Councils' open research databases are available to all subscribers.

HIV Infection: Prescription Drugs

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to introducing a national online pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) service to make it easier for HIV negative people at risk of getting HIV to obtain repeat prescriptions. [HL6573]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will publish their pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Action Plan. [HL6574]

Lord Markham: As part of the implementation of the HIV Action Plan, we are developing a plan to improve equitable access to human immunodeficiency (HIV) virus pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for key population groups and in settings outside of specialist sexual health services. Recommendations of the PrEP Access and Equity Task and Finish Group, including key stakeholder and delivery partners, are being considered by the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group, and the plan will be made available in 2023.

HM Passport Office: Labour Turnover

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the attrition rate for caseworkers at the Passport Office in 2022. [HL7047]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The attrition rate for case-working staff only is not held in a reportable format.

HMS Prince of Wales: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of repairing HMS Prince of Wales; how long it is expected to remain in dry dock; and how much of the cost will be borne by each of the members of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance. [HL6607]

Baroness Goldie: We remain committed to ensuring HMS Prince of Wales (PWLS) commences her

operational programme, as planned, in autumn 2023. This will include operational flying training and trials.

During this period the focus has been on achieving repairs whilst maximising opportunities for capability upgrades to ensure PWLS is prepared to become the UK Very High Readiness Strike Carrier in 2024. These upgrades have been conducted in parallel to ensure efficiency and value for money.

The estimated cost of repairs are expected to be approximately £25 million, however responsibility for payment has not yet been established therefore it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Goldie on 1 February (HL4865), whether they have now established the cost of the repairs to HMS Prince of Wales; who is expected to pay those costs; and what is their current estimate of the date on which HMS Prince of Wales will return to active service. [HL6632]

Baroness Goldie: We remain committed to ensuring HMS Prince of Wales (PWLS) commences her operational programme, as planned, in Autumn 2023. This will include operational flying training and trials.

During this period the focus has been on achieving repairs whilst maximising opportunities for capability upgrades to ensure PWLS is prepared to become the UK Very High Readiness Strike Carrier in 2024. These upgrades have been conducted in parallel to ensure efficiency and value for money.

The estimated cost of repairs are expected to be approximately £25 million, however responsibility for payment has not yet been established therefore it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government when HMS Prince of Wales will be operational and at sea again. [HL6891]

Baroness Goldie: We remain committed to ensuring HMS Prince of Wales commences her operational programme, as planned, in autumn 2023. This will include operational flying training and trials.

Home Care Services: Drugs

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ask NHS England to undertake a review into the safety and reliability of homecare medicines services in England. [HL6867]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made about the impact of delays, workforce shortages, and lack of e-prescribing systems, on the health and well-being of patients receiving homecare medicines services. [HL6868]

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will meet with the British Society for Rheumatology to discuss concerns about the safety and reliability of homecare medicines services in England. [HL6869]

Lord Markham: The National Homecare Medicines Committee (NHMC), managed by and including representation from NHS England, and the National Clinical Homecare Association (NCHA) have met with the British Society for Rheumatology (BSR) to discuss their concerns about the safety and reliability of homecare medicines services, including delays in treatment. The NCHA have proposed to BSR that they will repurpose their bi-annual NCHA All Members Meeting to commence the wider discussion on the main areas of concern identified. The NCHA have reported that they intend to seek a broad base of stakeholder engagement at this event which will include NCHA full and associate members, the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry, NHMC members and BSR.

This represents a high degree of commitment from the NCHA and NHMC to work actively with the BSR and other stakeholders to resolve the concerns and issues which have been raised. The BSR has written to the Department requesting a meeting and the Department will be responding to the BSR shortly.

NHMC's standardisation programme includes an NHS Digital strategy project. Within the NHMC there is a digital sub-group working closely with NHS Digital on the output-based specification for e-prescribing for homecare medicines services to use an Electronic Prescribing System. This work is at an advanced stage in preparation for consultation with NHMC during 2023.

NHS England's Commercial Medicines Unit, which manages four national framework agreements for the provision of homecare medicines services for Home Parenteral Nutrition, Lysosomal Storage Disorders, Pulmonary Hypertension and Clotting Factors, holds regular engagement meetings with providers on the framework and when appropriate will discuss recruitment and retention of staff. NHMC also holds discussions regarding recruitment, retention and vacancies during engagement meetings with providers when appropriate to do so.

Honey: Standards

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the authenticity of British honey, following the investigation by the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Office and the Joint Research Centre in which all British honey samples failed authenticity tests. [HL7085]

Lord Benyon: The UK Government takes any type of food fraud very seriously, including honey adulteration. Defra works closely with enforcement authorities, the Food Standards Agency, and the National Food Crime

Unit to ensure honey sold in the UK is not subject to adulteration, meets our high standards and maintains a level playing field between honey producers.

The UK welcomes the EU's study assessing adulteration of honey with added sugars. There is no place for adulterated honey which undermines consumer confidence and disadvantages responsible businesses acting within the law.

We are working closely with the Food Standards Agency to follow up on the small number of honey samples, exported via the UK, which were flagged as suspicious for adulteration with added sugars. We will need to await the outcome of these enquiries before drawing any definitive conclusions relating to the UK results. We will act immediately if we find any wrongdoing as part of the investigation

Honey is a complex natural and variable product, meaning analysis can often be challenging. There are a range of different techniques available to ensure compliance with the Honey (England) Regulations 2015, which are like those in place in the EU. No single test can definitively determine a honey's authenticity and a weight of evidence approach, including traceability investigation, is often needed regardless of the results of laboratory testing.

We support the EU's call for increased efforts and cooperation in developing harmonised methods for detecting added sugars in honey. The Government has an active programme of research dedicated to honey authenticity, working to support monitoring and enforcement and to protect consumers and legitimate businesses.

Horn of Africa: Migration

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent trends in population migration in the Horn of Africa, given the famine in that region. [HL6645]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Across East Africa levels of displacement are increasing due to the humanitarian impacts of conflict and climate change. For example, the International Organisation for Migration estimate that, in 2022, 2.8 million people were displaced by drought across Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Armed violence continues to cause significant displacement including of 2.2 million refugees from South Sudan who are currently hosted in the region.

Horticulture: Exports

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Exeter**

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the total amount of exports from the horticultural sector in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, (3) 2020, (4) 2021, and (5) 2022. [HL6852]

Lord Benyon: Volume of Trade:*UNITS= Thousand Tonnes*

CALENDAR YEAR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
					Provisional
VEGETABLES:					
Home Production Marketed (HPM)	2,468	2,524	2,599	2,548	2,434
Imports	2,268	2,356	2,213	1,978	2,043
Exports	145	143	108	69	96
Total Supply:	4,590.7	4,736.6	4,703.8	4,457.2	4,380.4
HPM as % of Total Supply	53.8	53.3	55.3	57.2	55.6
FRUIT:					
Home Production Marketed (HPM)	731	688	657	577	646
Imports	3661	3657	3564	3327	3277
Exports	156	162	178	37	38
Total Supply:	4,235.2	4,183.7	4,043.4	3,867.2	3,885.3
HPM as % of Total Supply	17.3	16.4	16.2	14.9	16.6

Value of Trade: UNITS = £ Million

CALENDAR YEAR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
					Provisional
TOTAL VEGETABLES:					
Veg Imports	2,467.8	2,576.2	2,552.3	2,370.0	2,736.3
Veg Exports	129.7	129.3	112.1	72.9	85.5
TOTAL FRUIT:					
Fruit Imports	3,786.3	3,899.8	3,949.6	3,733.0	3,902.1
Fruit Exports	156.2	156.3	185.4	62.6	64.1
GRAND TOTALS:					
Imports	6,254.1	6,475.9	6,501.9	6,103.0	6,638.5
Exports	286	286	297	135	150

Value of Ornamental Horticulture Exports: UNITS £ Million

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
52.7	54	57.8	60.3	56.6

Horticulture: Vacancies*Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government what skills gaps they have identified in the UK horticulture sector. [HL6821]

Lord Benyon: Whilst no specific assessment has been made of the horticulture sector's skills gaps; enabling an innovative, productive and competitive food and farming industry which invests in its people and skills to drive growth is a key priority for the Government. Attracting bright new talent that is diverse and inclusive into agricultural and horticultural careers and having a skilled workforce in place is vital for the future of UK food and farming. By raising awareness of agriculture and horticulture as an exciting and attractive career path, people will understand the opportunities available to them in the farming and land management industry.

An Independent Review of Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain began in September. The review will focus on farming, processing, and food and drink manufacturing as sectors that are critical for food production and food security. Skills in the food supply chain is a critical area that will be covered in the final report. The final report will be published by summer 2023 and the Government response will follow thereafter.

The Government is contributing towards the establishment of a new professional body for the farming industry; The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH). TIAH is aimed at removing the fragmentation that exists within current learning and skills landscape for farming businesses, enabling the industry to drive greater uptake of skills, creating clear career development pathways and promoting the sector as a progressive, professional and attractive career choice. TIAH has launched a pilot to help develop its services ahead of a general launch to wider membership.

The Government is also reforming post-16 technical education to provide clearer routes into skilled employment in agriculture and other sectors. A key part of this is the introduction of the new Technical Level programmes (T-levels) which include pathways in agriculture, environmental and animal health and care. Alongside apprenticeships this provides more opportunities and pathways for young people looking for careers in agriculture and horticulture.

Alongside training opportunities, TIAH will also provide information about apprenticeships. There are currently 40 high-quality apprenticeship standards available in the agriculture, environmental and animal care sector including *Horticulture and landscaping technical manager*.

Hospices: Hospital Beds*Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of hospice beds that have

been lost due to shortfalls in the funding through integrated care boards and where no alternative provision has been made by local NHS providers. [HL6994]

Lord Markham: No specific assessment has been made. Palliative and end of life care is commissioned at a local level by integrated care boards (ICBs) in response to the needs of their local population. NHS England has published statutory guidance and service specifications to support ICBs in commissioning a range of palliative and end of life services, including inpatient beds, that meet local needs and preferences.

In addition, NHS England has funded the establishment of a palliative and end of life care Strategic Clinical Network in every NHS England region to work closely with local commissioners on the development of accessible, high quality and sustainable services.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their proposals contained in their consultation Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy, published on 22 December 2022, on their commitment to build 300,000 new homes a year. [HL6959]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer my noble friend to the impact assessment for the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill [here](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Levelling Up Bill
[LevellingUpandRegenerationBillImpactAssessment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-28/HL6959>

Housing: Migrants

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suitability of the RAF base at Wethersfield in Essex as a site for housing migrants. [HL6985]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The United Kingdom has a legal obligation to provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation and other support whilst their claim for asylum is being considered.

Work across government was undertaken to identify and secure more appropriate, cost-effective accommodation options around the country. The site will provide basic, and functional accommodation whilst asylum seekers await a decision on their claim.

The Home Office, supported by the MoD, is working on proposals which will see the current MoD

Wethersfield site providing suitable accommodation for single adult male asylum seekers.

The site at MoD Wethersfield is designed to be as self-sufficient as possible, helping to minimise the impact on local communities and services. This includes 24/7 security to reduce the need for police patrols, on-site catering, healthcare and transport provision for those housed on site.

The safety and security of the local communities, those resident on the sites and the sites themselves are of the utmost importance. We are working closely with local police forces and other stakeholders to ensure appropriate security arrangements are in place.

Human Trafficking

Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people entered the National Referral Mechanism in January and February of (1) 2022, and (2) 2023; and of those, how many received reasonable grounds decisions. [HL6571]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office publishes quarterly and annual statistics regarding the (NRM). The 2022 statistics can be found here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1139171/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022.ods Data for Q1 2023 is due for publication on 04/05/2023. The data shows the number of NRM referrals received each quarter and the number of reasonable grounds decisions made each quarter regardless of when the referral was received.

Further disaggregated data is published via the UK Data Service.

The disaggregated data shows the year and quarter in which an NRM referral was received and the year and quarter in which a reasonable grounds decision was made.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Data for Q1 2023 [modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-16/HL6571>

Hunting Trophy Import (Prohibition) Bill: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government why Northern Ireland has been excluded from the proposed provisions of the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill, given that a number of EU countries such as France and the Netherlands have similar legislation; and what plans they have to amend the Bill to cover Northern Ireland. [HL7042]

Lord Benyon: The Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill currently going through Parliament will ban the import of hunting trophies to Great Britain from thousands of species.

Strict controls on hunting trophy imports are already in place in Northern Ireland.

No permits for importing hunting trophies to Northern Ireland have been issued in the past 5 years.

We are exploring whether current controls on imports of hunting trophies to Northern Ireland can be tightened.

Hydrogen

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they propose to take in response to the Hydrogen Champion Report: Recommendations to government and industry to accelerate the development of the UK hydrogen economy, published in March; and in particular, the recommendation that blending of hydrogen with gas of up to 20 per cent for the gas supply should proceed. [HL6756]

Lord Callanan: The Government welcomes the Hydrogen Champion Report, and I met the Hydrogen Champion, Ms Toogood, on 21 March to discuss next steps. The Government will continue to work with Ms Toogood and industry to develop the UK Hydrogen economy and realise the potential of hydrogen. The Government is planning to take a strategic policy decision in 2023 on whether to seek to enable blending of hydrogen in the existing gas distribution network. Further details will be provided this year, including through the government response to our consultation on hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure, which we aim to publish in Q2 2023.

Hydrogen: Heating

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government what alternative heating solutions will be provided to consumers who do not want to participate (1) in the hydrogen heating neighbourhood trial, and (2) in the hydrogen heating village trial. [HL6723]

Lord Callanan: In the neighbourhood trial, hydrogen will be transported through pipes laid parallel with the existing gas network, so consumers will be able to continue using natural gas if they do not wish to use hydrogen.

The gas networks have consulted local residents in potential village trial locations to develop their consumer offer. This includes alternatives for consumers who do not wish to or cannot connect to hydrogen, such as electric cookers and heating systems.

Asked by Baroness Worthington

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have approved consumer strategies and consumer communications developed by gas distribution network operators (1) as part of the neighbourhood trial, and (2) as part of the village trial. [HL6724]

Lord Callanan: The gas networks have overall responsibility for leading the delivery of the neighbourhood trial and the village trial. The Government engages with the gas networks on their consumer strategies but does not routinely approve consumer communications.

Illegal Migration Bill

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the expected impact of their Illegal Migration Bill on victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. [HL6964]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The UK government remains committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and supporting victims. The Illegal Migration Bill will prevent people who come to the UK through illegal and dangerous journeys from accessing the provisions of the National Referral Mechanism.

It is right that the government takes steps to address the threat to public order posed by individuals making dangerous journeys that cause loss of life and are inherently unsafe, both for themselves and First Responders.

We support thousands of victims each year and will continue to do so following the implementation of the Illegal Migration Bill.

We are working on developing guidance regarding the operation of these measures, including any potential impacts and how they relate to victims of Modern Slavery, to be introduced when it is appropriate to do so once the Illegal Migration Bill has progressed through Parliament.

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the report by Women for Refugee Women See Us, Believe Us, Stand with Us, published on 2 March, and (2) the implications of their Illegal Migration Bill on the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women seeking asylum in the UK. [HL7005]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: An equalities impact assessment will be published for the Illegal Migration Bill in due course.

Illegal Migration Bill: Impact Assessments

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the impact assessment for the Illegal Migration Bill. [HL6732]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: We will publish an equality impact assessment and economic impact assessment in respect of the Illegal Migration Bill in due course.

Immigration

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of climate change on the level of future immigration into the UK. [HL6643]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Department considers a wide range of factors and trends, including the effects on climate change, when developing and implementing its migration policies.

Immigration Removal Centres

Asked by *Baroness Adams of Craigielea*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many new detention centres will be required in the event that the Illegal Migration Bill is enacted; and how many sites or locations they have identified for such centres so far. [HL6595]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: An economic impact assessment will be published for the Illegal Migration Bill in due course.

India: Human Rights

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they last raised human rights issues with the government of India; and, further to the US State Department's annual country report on human rights practices in India, published on 20 March, what assessment they have made of any increase in significant human rights issues in that country, including the reported targeting of religious minorities, dissidents and journalists. [HL6801]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has a broad and deep partnership with the Government of India and we discuss all elements of our relationship. We remain committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all, media freedom and to championing democracy and human rights around the world. Where we have issues, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level. I, Lord [Tariq] Ahmad, regularly speak to the High Commissioner of India. Human rights forms part of that dialogue. Our

networks across India regularly meet civil society groups and run projects promoting human rights.

Indo-Pacific Region: Defence Equipment

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government what defence assets they are sending to the Indo-Pacific region aside from the aircraft carriers; and whether the two offshore patrol vessels stationed in the region and the AUKUS agreement on nuclear submarines are part of the UK's tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region. [HL6888]

Baroness Goldie: We will continue to utilise a variety of assets as appropriate in the Indo-Pacific, alongside other deployments, joint exercises and training programmes with partner nations to strengthen our regional defence cooperation. The forward deployment of two Offshore Patrol Vessels and the recent announcement of the AUKUS nuclear submarine programme are clear demonstrations of our increased engagement in the region. We continue to deepen and enhance our relationships in the area to place our approach to the Indo-Pacific on a long-term strategic footing.

Indo-Pacific Region: Navy

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether a Royal Navy carrier battlegroup can redeploy from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific within four weeks. [HL6890]

Baroness Goldie: It is possible to redeploy a Royal Navy Carrier Led Maritime Task Group from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific Region within four weeks.

Infrastructure: Planning

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to pursue further planning reforms to speed up approvals for infrastructure projects that are critical to the UK's economic transformation. [HL6770]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government recently published (23 February 2023) an Action Plan for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), which sets out how the consenting process for NSIPs will be reformed. This will enable the planning system to deliver the major infrastructure needed to improve energy security, achieve net zero and deliver the transport connectivity, water and waste management facilities this country needs.

Integrated Care Boards: Palliative Care

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that integrated care boards fulfil their obligations under the Health and Care Act 2022 to

provide palliative care services to meet the needs of their population. [HL6993]

Lord Markham: NHS England has actively increased its support to local commissioners to improve the accessibility, quality and sustainability of palliative and end of life care for all. This has included the publication of statutory guidance and service specifications, with further resources available on the Future NHS Collaboration Platform. Copies of these documents are attached.

In addition, NHS England has funded the establishment of a palliative and end of life care Strategic Clinical Network in every NHS England region, which work closely with local commissioners regarding the development of accessible, high quality and sustainable services.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Child Palliative and End of Life Care ICB guidance [B1675-specialist-palliative-and-end-of-life-care-services-cyp-service-spec.pdf]

Palliative and End of Life Care ICB guidance [Palliative-and-End-of-Life-Care-Statutory-Guidance-for-Integrated-Care-Boards-ICBs-September-2022.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL6993>

Integrated Care Boards: Pay

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham on 7 February (HL4741), what criteria they used to decide whether to approve the salaries for Integrated Care Boards (ICB) Chief Executives in (1) Humber Coast and Vale, (2) South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw, and (3) Cornwall and Isles of Scilly; and why these Chief Executives were thought to justify higher salaries than other ICB Chief Executives. [HL6059]

Lord Markham: The criteria, as per the agreed pay framework, used to approve the salaries for the aforementioned integrated care board Chief Executives were geographical scale and complexity; stakeholder footprint and complexity; and systems complexity, including where any associated trusts are in financial and quality special measures. For these three chief executive roles these attributes were judged to be of an exceptional nature and, therefore, higher rates of pay were supported by Ministers.

Integrated Care Systems: Finance

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government which Integrated Care Systems are forecast to be in debt at the end of the 2022–23 financial year. [HL6157]

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government which Integrated Care Systems have submitted draft operating plans forecasting that they will have no deficit at the end of the 2023–24 financial year. [HL6158]

Lord Markham: The 2022/23 year-end debt position of each individual organisation in the National Health Service will be confirmed in their individual balance sheets included in their accounts due to be published later this year. The Department does not hold in-year reporting data on debt.

The 2023/24 forecast surplus/deficit position against budget for individual integrated care systems (ICSs) will be agreed as part of the operational planning process between NHS England and ICSs which is currently ongoing. Draft plans are being resubmitted to NHS England and will be shared with the Department when they are finalised. We therefore do not currently have the information to show whether any ICS is planning to end 2023/24 with a deficit against their agreed budget.

International Relations: Women

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their policy paper Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world, published on 13 March, what steps they will take to ensure that women and women's voices are included in their work to meet the new goal contained in that paper "to manage the risks of miscalculation and escalation between major powers". [HL6568]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Integrated Review Refresh 2023 sets out the priority the UK places on providing women and girls with the freedom they need to succeed. We launched our fifth Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (2023-2027) in February which outlines in more detail our work to reduce the global impact of conflicts on women and girls, by ensuring our foreign, defence and security policy, diplomatic efforts and international development work to address their needs. The WPS National Action Plan responds to the new global context, reflecting on Ukraine and Afghanistan. It champions women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes; we know that mediation efforts, conflict prevention and resolution more broadly are more successful when they are inclusive.

International Science and Technology Center and Science and Technology Center in Ukraine

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to join (1) the International Science and

Technology Center, and (2) the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine. [HL6775]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: His Majesty's Government (HMG) already engages with the International Science and Technology Center and the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine; we have no current plans to join them. HMG aims to ensure that science and technology underpins Ukraine's recovery and is exploring ways to deepen our connections and engagement with a range of institutions in Ukraine. To date, the focus has been on supporting researchers at risk, a twinning programme for UK and Ukrainian universities and supporting the tech sector, which will be a focus for the forthcoming Ukraine Recovery Conference.

Internet: Access

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of people in the UK that do not own a smartphone in each of the following age ranges: (1) 18–24, (2) 25–44, (3) 45–64, (4) 65–74, (5) 75–84, and (6) 85 and above. [HL6838]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the proportion of people in the UK who have no internet or Wi-Fi access in the following age groups: (1) 20–39, (2) 40–59, (3) 60–79, and (4) 80 and above. [HL6839]

Viscount Camrose: Data on smartphone use, Wi-Fi and internet access is collected by the Office of Communications and the Office for National Statistics.

According to Ofcom data, in 2020, the vast majority (85%) of all adults used a smartphone. This rose to more than nine in ten for those aged 16–54. Use was lower for those aged 65+ (55%), who were more likely than average (29%) to use a mobile device that wasn't a smartphone. The smartphone was the device most likely to be used by people to go online; 85% of internet users used it for this purpose. Older internet users, aged 65+, were less likely to go online via most devices asked about, and in particular, they were less likely to have adopted smart technology, such as a smartphone.

ONS data indicates that 92% of adults in the UK were recent internet users in 2020, up from 91% in 2019. Almost all adults aged 16 to 44 years in the UK were recent internet users (99%), compared with 54% of adults aged 75 years and over. While there has been little change in internet use for adults aged 16 to 44 years in recent years, the proportion of those aged 75 years and over who are recent internet users nearly doubled since 2013, from 29%, to 54% in 2020. 6.3% of adults in the UK had never used the internet in 2020, down from 7.5% in 2019.

Internet: Satellites

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 9 February (HL4988), what estimate they have made of the number of people relying on Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites for internet access. [HL7021]

Viscount Camrose: Ofcom estimates that as of October 2022, 13,000 customers have opted for a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) broadband service from Starlink. Based on analysis of Starlink's data, at least some of these customers are based in areas which do not have access to traditional decent broadband services. Premises may also use satellite services in conjunction with other terrestrial services.

Ofcom estimated that at the end of 2021, there were 25,500 fixed broadband satellite connections. This data represents data collected from a non-exhaustive list of UK satellite service providers (excluding Starlink), and most likely to be based on Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) services.

Iran: Crimes against Humanity and Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take in response to the remarks of the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Iran at its 52nd Session regarding crimes against humanity and human rights violations in that country. [HL6731]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK welcomes the report by the UN Special Rapporteur, which provides further confirmation of the extent of the Iranian government's human rights violations. Working alongside international partners, the UK has been at the forefront of ensuring the Iranian regime pays a political and diplomatic price for its brutality. The UK announced seven rounds of human rights sanctions, totalling over 60 Iranian individuals and entities since October 2022.

The UK has raised human rights both with Iranian representatives in the UK and directly in Tehran. The UK co-sponsored the UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Iran, supported the creation of a UN Fact Finding Mission on Iran and helped ensure Iran's removal from the UN Commission on the Status of Women. We have raised human rights in both the Human Rights Council and UN Security Council. We take note of the seriousness of the report's findings, and remain committed to continue holding the Iranian regime to account for their actions.

Iran: Nuclear Power

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the outcome of the recent meeting of E3 diplomats with Iran in Oslo; and what assessment they have made of that outcome. [HL6958]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: E3 (France, Germany and the UK) Political Directors met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Ali Bagheri Kani, in Oslo on 16/17 March. The discussion covered the range of our concerns about Iran's behaviour, including its continued nuclear escalation. We have made clear to Iran that its actions over the past months have made progress towards a diplomatic solution on the nuclear issue much more difficult. This was not a negotiation on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Iran: Russia

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by US Deputy State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel to reporters at a briefing on 27 March regarding the expansion of military cooperation between Russia and Iran, including Russia's use of Iranian-manufactured drones in Ukraine, and in particular, reports that Russia is helping Iran to achieve advanced digital surveillance capabilities. [HL7013]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is clear that Russia and Iran's relationship does not just affect Ukraine. On 9 December in a statement the Foreign Secretary highlighted Russia's offer of military and technical support to the Iranian regime and the risk this poses to international security and our partners in the Middle East.

Alongside our allies the Government has introduced severe sanctions against Russia's defence industry, including prohibiting exports of defence equipment to Russia. Iran's supply of drones to Russia violates United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 and we will continue to work with the international community to hold Russia and Iran to account and deter others from supporting Russia's illegal war in Ukraine.

Israel: Bedouin

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the diplomatic visit on 30 January to the Palestinian community of Khan Al Ahmar regarding the threat of demolition facing that village, what was the outcome of their meeting in London with the Israeli Foreign Minister about the future of Khan Al Ahmar. [HL6952]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary and I (Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon) met Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in London on 21 March and emphasised the need to de-escalate the situation in Israel

and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as we approach the convergence of several religious festivals. That included asking the Israeli Government to refrain from unilateral actions, such as demolitions, that make achieving this de-escalation more difficult. I know that the Prime Minister also echoed this message of de-escalation in his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 24 March. We oppose the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar, and we continue to urge Israel to cease evictions and demolitions of Palestinian property in Area C, which cause unnecessary suffering and in all, but the most exceptional circumstances are illegal under international law.

Israel: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the actions of British diplomats stationed in Jerusalem who participated in the Palestine Marathon on 10 March, started by a Fatah official who was under investigation by FIFA for glorifying terrorism; and whether they have assessed the conduct of those diplomats in respect of Articles 13–15 of the Diplomatic Service Code. [HL6671]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: British diplomats are respected around the world because of the high standards to which they hold themselves, of which the Diplomatic Service Code is a key part. Those who participated in the marathon did so privately but we do remind staff to be mindful of their responsibilities as diplomats. The UK's position in relation to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is long-standing: we wish to see a viable two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace, prosperity and security. The Foreign Secretary and I [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon] were pleased to welcome Israeli Foreign Minister Cohen on 21 March to sign the 2030 UK-Israel Roadmap, which outlines how the UK and Israel intend to work together to strengthen our partnership and to strengthen economic security for Palestinians.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made any representations to the government of Israel following the remarks on 19 March by the Finance Minister of Israel, Bezalel Smotrich, concerning Palestinian history and culture; and whether they have made any assessment of the potential impact resulting from the Minister's remarks on peace and stability in the region. [HL6803]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemned the Israeli Finance Minister's comments calling for the Palestinian village of Huwara to be "wiped out" and his recent comments that deny the existence of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and their history

and culture. Such rhetoric serves no purpose other than to stoke tensions further.

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

To ask His Majesty's Government what response they have received from the government of Israel regarding the joint call that they and diplomatic representatives from 16 other countries made on the 13 March to reverse the eviction of six Palestinian families from Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, and the Old City of Jerusalem. [HL6950]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: No such response was received, and I [Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon] have raised this matter with the Israeli ambassador separately. Demolitions and evictions from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, demolitions by an occupying power are contrary to international humanitarian law. Officials from our embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our apprehensions about demolitions with Israeli ministers and senior officials and we continue to support Palestinians through UK funding to legal aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Foreign Secretary has reinforced this message on 7 April when he called for de-escalation and made clear the need to avoid actions which escalate tensions and violence.

Jagtar Singh Johal

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the current situation of British citizen Jagtar Singh Johal, detained in India since 2017 on charges of terrorism; and when they last raised his case with the government of that country. [HL6802]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has consistently raised Mr Johal's case with the Government of India and is committed to doing what it can to assist him. The Foreign Secretary most recently discussed Mr Johal's case with the Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, in Delhi on 1 March. Consular staff visit Mr Johal regularly to check on his welfare and did so most recently on 7 March. Consular staff also continue to attend relevant court hearings in an observer capacity.

Jimmy Lai

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

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 British citizen Jimmy Lai. [HL6872]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary set out our views regarding developments in Hong Kong with State Councillor Wang Yi last month. We continue to use our channels with the Chinese Government to make clear to the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities our strong opposition to the National Security Law. The deliberate targeting of journalists and businessmen such as Mr Lai is unacceptable. The Minister for the Indo-Pacific met representatives of Mr. Lai's international legal team on 10 January. Senior officials have and will continue to raise cases such as Mr Lai's with the Hong Kong authorities. Diplomats at our Consulate-General in Hong Kong will continue to attend Mr Lai's court proceedings.

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: Disclosure of Information

*Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the minutes of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation meeting that set out the clinical risk groups for the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Spring 2023 will be made available to the public. [HL6942]

Lord Markham: The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which discussed which groups would be eligible for the precautionary COVID-19 booster programme of spring 2023, will be made publicly available through the GOV.UK website in due course.

Kazakhstan: Politics and Government

*Asked by **Viscount Waverley***

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Kazakhstan regarding knowledge sharing and capacity building on (1) sanctions compliance, (2) anti-money laundering measures, (3) regulation of cryptocurrencies, and (4) 'Know Your Customer' compliance. [HL6773]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has recently had several high-level engagements with the Government of Kazakhstan, including hosting the UK-Kazakhstan Strategic Dialogue in December, the UK-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Investment in February and the Foreign Secretary's visit to Astana on 18 March, meeting President Tokayev and other senior Kazakhs. In our engagements, we continually emphasise the importance of developing and maintaining a quality business environment to support international investment into Kazakhstan. Although senior meetings have not covered the cryptocurrency regulations, the UK successfully ran a pilot project in 2022 on financial compliance to assess different types of training on tackling illicit finance.

Leasehold

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people in England over the age of 18 live in leasehold properties. [HL6833]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department does not hold this data.

Leasehold: Reform

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to introduce a bill to address the issue of leasehold reform. [HL6772]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: As has been the case under successive administrations, announcements about future legislation will be set out in the normal way.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to make the leasehold enfranchisement process easier for residential leaseholders. [HL6861]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government has committed to making enfranchisement cheaper for leaseholders by reforming the process of valuation they must follow to calculate the cost of extending their lease or buying their freehold. We will abolish marriage value, cap ground rents in the calculation, prescribe the rates to be used and introduce an online calculator.

Liverpool City Council: Standards

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the total financial cost to date of the Commissioners sent to Liverpool. [HL7026]

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government what other costs (i.e. travel, hotel costs etc.) have been incurred to date by the Commissioners sent to Liverpool. [HL7027]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: On 8 November 2022, my Rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities updated the House on the additional appointment of a finance Commissioner and the expansion of the intervention in Liverpool City Council to cover finance, governance, and recruitment, along with updated Directions of the intervention. Following on from the answer of Lord Greenhalgh, on 5 April 2022, the Commissioners' pay arrangements were set out in paragraph 45 of the [updated Explanatory Memorandum to the Directions](#) made under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999. The Directions provide that the Commissioners' reasonable expenses and such fees as the Secretary of State determines are to be paid to them by the Authority.

A full breakdown of the Commissioners' invoiced fees and expenses are published periodically on Liverpool City Council's [website](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

updated Explanatory Memorandum to the Directions [Liverpool City Council Explanatory Memorandum Updated November 2022.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7026>

Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government how the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel is supported by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. [HL6953]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has appointed the Mayor of Liverpool Combined Authority, Steve Rotheram, to Chair the Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel, which is supported by Baroness Judith Blake and Sir Howard Bernstein. It will work with place leaders and stakeholders from across the city region. Officials at DLUHC are providing coordination and analytical support to the Panel during its evidence collection and diagnostic phase.

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government what role they expect to play in the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel now that it is meeting. [HL7028]

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the papers and minutes of the meetings of the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel will be published. [HL7029]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel will provide reports to the Secretary of State, which will be published. The Panel is supported by officials from DLUHC and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. A wide range of stakeholders across the Liverpool City Region, including the Commissioners to Liverpool City Council, will be consulted as the Panel develops plans. Further to the answer of Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 23 March 2023, the Panel will meet monthly in private.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by The Earl of Lytton

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the diversity of councillors by encouraging and supporting more people to stand for election. [HL6752]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government believes that no one should feel deterred or excluded from standing or serving as a councillor.

The Local Authority Government Sector Support Programme 2022-23 funds the Local Government Association's delivery of an expanded 'Be a Councillor' campaign to promote a greater diversity of candidates. We also provide funding to support disabled councillors including those hoping to stand for election.

Low Incomes

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their latest estimate of the numbers of (1) men, and (2) women, employees who earn less than £12,570 per annum in (a) full-time, and (b) part-time roles. [HL6837]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Noble Peer's Parliamentary Question of 27 March is attached in the answer.

The Baroness Altmann CBE

House of Lords London SW1A 0PW

3 April 2023

Dear Lady Altmann,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what is the latest estimate of the numbers of (1) men, and (2) women, employees who earn less than £12,570 per annum in (a) full-time, and (b) part-time roles (HL6837).

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) [1], carried out in April each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. ASHE is based on a 1% sample of employee jobs taken from HM Revenue and Customs' Pay As You Earn (PAYE) records. Table 1 (below) shows the numbers of (1) men, and (2) women, employees who earn less than £12,570 per annum in (a) full-time, and (b) part-time roles for April 20221 (the latest period for which ASHE estimates are available). As with any survey, estimates from ASHE are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Estimates of the number of employee jobs with annual earnings below £12,570, UK, 2022 [1,2,3]

Table 1: Estimates of the number of employee jobs with annual earnings below £12,570, UK, 2022 [1,2,3]

Group	Number of employee jobs with annual earnings of less than £12,570 (thousands) [2,3]	Total number of employee jobs in group (thousands) [2,3]
All employees	3,346	22,363
Male	907	11,294

Group	Number of employee jobs with annual earnings of less than £12,570 (thousands) [2,3]	Total number of employee jobs in group (thousands) [2,3]
Female	2,439	11,069
Full-time	309	16,547
Part-time	3,037	5,817
Full-time male	134	9,856
Full-time female	175	6,691
Part-time male	773	1,439
Part-time female	2,264	4,378

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

[1] Estimates for 2022 are provisional

[2] Employees on adult rates who have been in the same job for more than a year

[3] Figures for Number of Jobs are for indicative purposes only and should not be considered an accurate estimate of employee job counts

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UK Statistics Authority Response [PQHL6837.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-27/HL6837>

Manufactured Goods: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of non Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) manufactured goods that are transported to Northern Ireland where (1) an end destination cannot be confirmed, and (2) the components are for companies in Northern Ireland for further processing. [HL6657]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Windsor Framework significantly expands the range of businesses who can benefit from the Green Lane. We are increasing the threshold for processing companies - quadrupling the current £500,000 limit up to £2 million, meaning four-fifths of manufacturing and processing companies in Northern Ireland who trade with Great Britain will automatically be in scope. Even if firms are above that threshold, they will be eligible to move goods under the scheme if they are for use in the animal feed, healthcare, construction and not-for-profit sectors. This includes businesses acting as intermediaries or selling on the eventual product, which is a significant improvement to the existing arrangements. And where traders cannot determine the end destination of their goods when first moving them into Northern Ireland, we will establish a new, comprehensive tariff reimbursement scheme for those who can show the goods were ultimately not destined for the EU.

Married People: Tax Allowances

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Penn on 20 February (HL5473), what estimate they have made of the total cost of marriage tax allowance; and what recent assessment they have made of raising the threshold. [HL7022]

Baroness Penn: The Marriage Allowance is estimated to cost £600 million in 2022-2023.

The Chancellor has made clear that the UK's public finances must be on a sustainable path. For this reason, the Marriage Allowance has remained targeted at basic rate taxpayers, and those who earn below the Personal Allowance.

Meals on Wheels

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of how many people used a meals on wheels service in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, (3) 2020, (4) 2021, and (5) 2022. [HL6762]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: This information is not held centrally by the Department.

Meat: Imports

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government at which point checks are carried out on meat imported into the UK; how many checks are purely on the basis of documentary evidence; and what proportion are physical checks. [HL6753]

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of imported meats were denied entry into the UK for having failed documentary or physical checks in each of the last three years. [HL6754]

Lord Markham: Documentary, identity and physical checks on imported meat and meat products from non-European Union countries are undertaken at the first point of entry into Great Britain at designated Border Controls Posts.

The frequency of checks applied to imported meat and meat products are prescribed in Commission Retained Regulation (EU) 2019/2124. Imported meat, meat preparations and meat products are subject to 100% documentary and identity checks, with the frequency of physical checks varying from 1% to 30% depending upon the type of meat product that is imported.

As our systems record all failures arising from documentary, identity, or physical checks, it may be the case that a single consignment may have failed one or all the checks. The total number of documentary, identity and

physical checks failures as a percentage of all checks carried out in 2020 was 0.36%, in 2021, 0.34% and in 2022, 0.31%.

Medicine: Higher Education

Asked by *Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of places available at UK universities to study medicine to match demand from applicants. [HL7074]

Lord Markham: The Government has funded an additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places per year for domestic students in England, which represents a 25% increase and takes the total number of medical school places in England to 7,500 each year. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and delivered five new medical schools in England.

In addition, the Government temporarily lifted the cap on medical school places for students who completed A-Levels in 2020 and in 2021 and who had an offer from a university in England to study medicine, subject to their grades. As a result of this change, the intakes for 2020/21 and 2021/22 were 8,405 and 8,460 respectively, significantly above the planned cap of 7,500.

NHS England has been commissioned to produce a Long Term Workforce Plan. The Government has committed to publishing the plan shortly, and this will include projections for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in five, 10 and 15 years' time, taking full account of improvements in retention and productivity. The workforce plan is for the whole of the National Health Service workforce.

Mental Health: Women

Asked by *Baroness Thornton*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their Women's Health Strategy for England, published on 30 August 2022, what steps they are taking to address the high rates of poor mental health amongst girls and young women. [HL7036]

Lord Markham: The NHS Long Term Plan commits an additional £2.3 billion a year for mental health services in England by 2023/24, supporting an additional two million people, including girls and young women, to get the National Health Service-funded mental health support that they need.

We also continue to make progress on rolling out mental health support teams to schools and colleges, with 287 in place in over 4,700 schools and colleges across the country, offering support to children experiencing common mental health issues. The number of teams is expected shortly to have increased to 399.

We know that girls and women are more likely to experience an eating disorder, so as part of the NHS Long Term Plan investment, we are putting an extra £1 billion into community mental health care for adults with severe

mental illness by 2023/24. This will give 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater choice and control over their care and will support them to live well in their communities.

Since 2016, extra funding is going into children and young people's community eating disorder services every year, with £54 million per year from 2022/23. This extra funding will enhance the capacity of community eating disorder teams across the country.

The NHS Long Term Plan also includes measures to improve safety, quality and continuity of care and a commitment for a further 24,000 women to be able to access specialist perinatal mental health care by 2023/24. This care will also be available from preconception to 24 months after birth, which will provide an extra year of support. This expansion includes 33 new Maternal Mental Health Services, which bring together psychological therapy, maternity services and reproductive health for women who have mental health needs following trauma or loss related to their maternity experience. These will be available across England by March 2024.

As outlined in the Women's Health Strategy, women are one of our priority groups when promoting our Every Mind Matters resource, which includes content to support issues affecting women's mental health, including life changes such as pregnancy.

Merchant Shipping: Medals

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 28 March (HL6776), why the Merchant Navy Meritorious Service medal, which is for meritorious service, has been placed in the category of "efficiency and long service". [HL7045]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service was placed in the category of Efficiency and Long Service Decorations and Medals by the Royal Household, alongside other awards of a similar nature, such as the Armed Forces Meritorious Service Medals.

Migrants: Hong Kong

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government what system they use to process advanced DBS checks for professionals newly arrived in the UK from Hong Kong and applying for jobs; and what risk assessment they have made of the consequences of seeking information from the Hong Kong Police Force when carrying out such checks. [HL6689]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The system for processing DBS checks for professionals newly arrived from Hong Kong is the same as the system used for all applicants regardless of where an individual is from. The DBS takes its information from what is held on the Police National

Computer (PNC) and does not seek information from the Hong Kong Police Force when carrying out such checks.

Information about overseas criminal records is entered on the Police National Computer (PNC) only when the British police are advised by a police force from overseas, or an agency such as Interpol.

If an employer is recruiting people from overseas and wishes to check for any foreign criminal record, a DBS check can only access criminal records from the PNC and cannot access criminal records systems in other territories.

Where overseas criminal records are held on the PNC, these would be revealed as part of a DBS check, as appropriate.

Migration

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their objective for net migration in (1) three years' time, and (2) five years' time. [HL6625]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: As the Prime Minister has said, the Government remains committed to reducing net migration over time, while ensuring we have the skills our economy needs to grow. The Government continues to keep the immigration system under review.

Our immediate priority is getting a grip on illegal migration, to stop the abuse of our system and stop the boats making illegal, dangerous and unnecessary journeys across the Channel for the profits of criminal people smuggling gangs.

Motor Vehicles: Lighting

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask His Majesty's Government what regulations cover the retrofitting of headlights to vehicles; and when those regulations were last updated. [HL6791]

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask His Majesty's Government what regulations apply to retrofitting car headlights with LED bulbs. [HL6792]

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made with international partners to develop and introduce improved headlamp aiming requirements. [HL6793]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 as amended govern the in-use fitment and maintenance of vehicle headlamps and were last updated in 2019. To minimise the risk of glare these regulations require that approved vehicle lamps are fitted only with approved light sources, including LEDs.

International activity is ongoing at the United Nations and proposals to amend headlamp aiming criteria are

expected to be agreed in April, together with requirements for mandatory automatic headlamp levelling.

Mozambique: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) famine, and (2) security situation, in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. [HL6698]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: In northern Mozambique, the UN estimates 946,000 people are displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. UK Aid has provided over £22 million in humanitarian support in Cabo Delgado, ensuring that people displaced by the crisis have access to food, water, shelter and basic health. The UK signed a Defence Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mozambique providing technical assistance and capacity building through our Defence Engagement programme. We have provided security and human rights training to over 200 Armed Forces personnel. We welcome progress by Mozambican defence and security forces to take back areas previously under insurgent control and will continue to work with the Government of Mozambique to build long term peace and stability.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to work with international partners to arrange the deployment of UN Peacekeepers in Nagorno Karabakh. [HL7062]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: If an independent mission was requested by the parties to the conflict and welcomed by them, and would contribute to a peaceful solution and resolution of all outstanding matters between them, then the UK would, in principle, support it.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 24 March (HL6409), whether they will publish a comprehensive list of the bodies and individuals from whom they have received views opposed to the planned siting of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens. [HL6863]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Those opposed to the scheme were able to submit their comments to Westminster City Council. All comments are publicly available on the planning inquiry [website](#).

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) area in square metres, and (2) proportion, of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole will be occupied by the intended UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including (a) the entrance pavilion, (b) courtyard and ramp into the Learning Centre, (c) associated hard standing, (d) service access, (e) new access paths, (f) the parts of the mound not accessible to the public, and (g) areas to be enclosed to ensure the security of the Centre. [HL6911]

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the size in square metres of (1) the current playground in Victoria Tower Gardens, (2) the intended new playground, (3) the intended new café, and (4) the part of the current playground to be occupied by UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre ticketing and associated works. [HL6912]

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) area in square metres, and (2) proportion of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole, will be enclosed to guarantee security around the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in addition to the area occupied by the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre itself. [HL6913]

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the floor area in square metres of the proposed underground construction of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and what percentage of this underground area will be used for exhibitions and public space as part of the Learning Centre. [HL6914]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Extensive information about the design of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre was considered at the Planning Inquiry in October 2020 and remains publicly available on Westminster City Council's website. The additional detail requested is set out in the table below and to provide further assistance and to illustrate the answers I am placing the three source documents in the Library:

- Gross Internal Area (GIA) & Building Area Breakdown Schedule which shows the area in square metres of every internal space within the proposed Learning Centre, the Entrance Pavilion and the Café/Kiosk.
- Park Area Diagram rev 2 which shows both the size of Victoria Tower Gardens and the area taken by the Holocaust Memorial above ground within the park.
- Playground Area Adjustment which shows the boundaries and areas of the current playground and proposed reconfigured playground. It also shows the area between the Spicer Memorial in its proposed new location and the Holocaust Memorial's entrance

pavilion. This area would provide circulation space for all park users between the boundary of the reconfigured playground and the Memorial's Entrance Pavilion.

Question	Answer	Source	
1	The floor area in square metres of the proposed underground construction of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.	3258 m2 * (includes 373m2 of unusable spaces such as voids, risers and areas with limited headroom) * all areas are gross internal floor area (GIFA) i.e. excluding external walls.	GIA & Building Area Breakdown Schedule
2	Percentage of the underground area that will be used for exhibitions and public space as part of the Learning Centre	52.85% Mezzanine Level Lobby (103m2) Learning Centre (349 m2) Basement Level Threshold (314m2) Learning Centre (956 m2) Total = 1722 m2	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule
3	Area in square metres of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole, that will be enclosed to guarantee security around the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in addition to the area occupied by the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre itself.	Zero as an addition to the 1429 m2 occupied by the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2
4	Proportion of (3)	Zero	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2
5	Size in sqm of the current playground in Victoria Tower Gardens	1010 m2	Playground Area Adjustment
6	Size in sqm of the intended new playground	945 m2	Playground Area Adjustment
7	Size in sqm of the intended new café	15 m2 Café/Kiosk 38 m2 including generator and storage	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule
8	Size in sqm of the part of the current playground to be occupied by UK Holocaust	23m2 Café/Kiosk generator and storage. Zero occupied by ticketing	GIA and Building Area Breakdown Schedule Playground Area Adjustment

Question	Answer	Source	
9	Area in square metres of Victoria Tower Gardens as a whole that will be occupied by the intended UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including (a) the entrance pavilion, (b) courtyard and ramp into the Learning Centre, (c) associated hard standing, (d) service access, (e) new access paths, (f) the parts of the mound not accessible to the public, and (g) areas to be enclosed to ensure the security of the Centre.	1429 m2	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2
10	Proportion of (9)	7.58%	NHM Park Area Diagram rev 2

NHS 111

Asked by Baroness Jolly

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of people using the NHS 111 online service have been recommended self-care in (1) all of England, (2) each NHS England region, and (3) former Clinical Commissioning Groups, in each year since that service was launched in December 2017. [HL6796]

Asked by Baroness Jolly

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people visited the NHS 111 website in each year since 2017; and of those, what proportion were to pages relating to minor ailments in each year. [HL6797]

Lord Markham: The information is not available in the format requested as NHS 111 online was not fully functional and available nationally until early 2019. A copy of information is attached that shows the proportion of people using the NHS 111 online service from 2019 to 2022 that have been recommended self-care in England, by National Health Service region, and by sub-integrated care board level correlating to former clinical commissioning group areas.

Data on the number of people visiting the NHS 111 website in each year since 2017 and the proportion that visited pages relating to minor ailments in each year is not

held centrally. NHS 111 online does not provide pages for minor ailments, but triages and directs users to appropriate services or care.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

NHS 111 online self-care recommendations [Historic self care and total sessions.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-23/HL6796>

Nurses: Migrant Workers

Asked by *Baroness Cavendish of Little Venice*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many international nurses NHS Trusts have recruited in the past 12 months; and of those, how many have been permitted to work. [HL6909]

Lord Markham: This information is not collected centrally.

Asked by *Baroness Cavendish of Little Venice*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many of the international nurses who arrived in the UK in the past 12 months have had an Objective Structured Clinical Examination; and how many have passed that examination. [HL6910]

Lord Markham: The information is not held in the format requested. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the independent regulator of nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom and nursing associates in England. It sets the standards that registrants must meet to demonstrate that they are capable of practising safely and effectively in those professions.

Information on the number of professionals sitting and passing the Objective Structured Clinical Examination is published on the NMC's website in an online-only format.

Obesity

Asked by *Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have plans to collect data on the causes of obesity; and if so, when this will start. [HL7014]

Asked by *Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to promote personal calorie control as one of the main mechanisms for preventing obesity. [HL7015]

Asked by *Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the causes of obesity; in particular, (1) food addiction, (2) genetics, and (3) other factors. [HL7016]

Lord Markham: Obesity is a complex problem, and the causes are multi-factorial, including biological; physiological; psycho-social; behavioural; and environmental factors. There are no plans to collect data on the causes of obesity and no specific assessment has been made on the causes of obesity.

Government advice on a healthy, balanced diet is encapsulated in the United Kingdom's national food model, the Eatwell Guide. The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions in which different types of foods should be consumed to have a healthy balanced diet, including average calorie intakes for men and women. The Eatwell Guide principles are communicated through a variety of channels, including the National Health Service website, Government social marketing campaigns, and guidance on healthier catering. For example, the Better Health campaign encourages adults to introduce changes that will help them work towards a healthier weight, including guidance on healthier food choices, calorie intake and portion control.

Oil: Poole

Asked by *Baroness Boycott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost to public bodies of the oil spill in Poole. [HL7058]

Lord Benyon: The Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) amongst others have been involved in responding to the oil spill in Poole Harbour. Public agencies will be monitoring their excess costs throughout the response and recovery operations following the oil spill. As these operations are on-going, final estimates are not available; however, when possible, costs will be recovered from the polluter.

Asked by *Baroness Boycott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the 'polluter pays' principle will apply to the oil spill in Poole; and if it does not, what plans they have to extend the principle to include such incidents of accidental environmental damage. [HL7059]

Lord Benyon: The polluter pays principle does apply to the oil spill in Poole. Claims by those suffering financially from this oil spill can be made to Perenco's insurers. Perenco have opened an email address which potential claimants can use.

When the law allows public bodies may be able to reclaim costs resulting from the response and recovery operations. Those agencies likely to reclaim costs include the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science. The EA has statutory powers to recover costs from an environmental incident, in line with the polluter

pays principle, and always seeks to recharge where possible.

Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: Paris

Asked by **Lord Moynihan**

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the British Olympic Association about the possibility of British athletes boycotting the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. [HL6948]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: We are currently engaged with other countries in our 'like-minded' coalition regarding the International Olympic Committee's recommendations to International Olympic Federations, published on 28 March, on neutrality conditions for Russian and Belarusian athletes.

Athlete participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games is a matter for the British Olympic and British Paralympic Associations, which operate independently of the Government. The Government's long-standing position is that a boycott would wrongly deny British athletes the chance to reach the pinnacle of their careers.

Overseas Students

Asked by **Lord Storey**

To ask His Majesty's Government which countries international students studying in the UK have come from in each of the last three years. [HL6767]

Baroness Barran: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on higher education (HE) at UK HE providers. Latest statistics refer to the 2021/22 academic year, and can be found at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-11>.

Table 11 of the HESA's Student Data includes the number of Non-UK HE enrolments broken down by country of domicile between academic years 2014/15 to 2021/22. Domicile refers to the permanent home address of the student prior to entry of the course.

Palantir: Databases

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the legal and reputational risks of NHS England's decision to instruct hospitals to use Palantir's Faster Data Flows database. [HL6826]

Lord Markham: The Faster Data Flows pilot makes use of data infrastructure (Data Management Platform Services) already procured by NHS England. The pilot aims to collect data already submitted via legacy collection systems with an aim to reduce data latency and will not collect any data from providers which they are not already asked to provide.

The General Data Protection Regulation requires a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be completed by a data controller to demonstrate how they will comply with data protection law and in doing so identify and minimise data protection risks. NHS England and NHS Digital, as they existed separately at the relevant time, have produced DPIAs for the Faster Data Flows pilot.

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to NHS England's instruction to hospitals to use Palantir's Faster Data Flows database, what categories of patient data Palantir will have access to. [HL6827]

Lord Markham: Palantir does not have access to data, identifiable or otherwise, held within the Foundry platform instances licensed to NHS England. Foundry, which is the platform used for Faster Data Flows, is a 'Software as a Service' platform licenced to NHS England as a product and integrated into NHS England systems. The National Health Service always remains the data controller and only NHS organisations have access to the data and otherwise determine access rights.

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to NHS England's instruction to hospitals to use Palantir's Faster Data Flows database, whether hospitals will be required to seek patients' consent for the sharing of their data. [HL6828]

Lord Markham: My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has directed NHS England to undertake data collections. The directions create a legal obligation for the NHS England collection and processing and as a result consent is not required.

The Faster Data Flows pilot aims to collect data already submitted via legacy collection systems with an aim to reduce data latency. The pilot will not collect any data from providers which they are not already asked to provide, as it is the collection method which is changing, not the information being collected.

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to NHS England's instruction to hospitals to use Palantir's Faster Data Flows database, what safeguards they will put in place to protect patient privacy. [HL6829]

Lord Markham: All uses of data by the National Health Service must be ethical, for the public good, and comply with data protection law. This means there must always be a valid lawful basis for the collection and processing of personal information as defined under data protection legislation. Palantir only operates under the instruction of NHS England when processing data on the Foundry platform and does not have access to data, identifiable or otherwise, held within the Foundry platform instances licensed to NHS England nor are they permitted to use or share it for their own purposes.

NHS England will only share de-identified data with internal NHS England data analysts, integrated care boards and the NHS Providers that provided the data. De-identification practices mean that personal identifiers are removed from datasets to protect patient confidentiality. This includes techniques such as aggregation, anonymisation, and pseudonymisation. The level of de-identification applied to data may vary based on user roles and requirements for accessing the data. This is in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office as well as the General Data Protection Regulation.

Asked by Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the process for selecting a company to provide the NHS England data platform; and which other companies they considered bids from before awarding the service to Palantir. [HL6830]

Lord Markham: A procurement process for the 'Provision of Data Management Platform Services' was carried out by NHS England ahead of the contract award in December 2020, with a route to market evaluation identifying the G-Cloud 11 framework as the optimal route.

In line with the G-Cloud process, selection criteria helped to identify 19 suppliers with potential solutions. A process of clarification and evaluation informed by subject matter experts (SMEs) against agreed functional, non-functional, and financial criteria was carried out. The identity of bidders is not made public as this information is commercially sensitive.

The nine suppliers who met the minimum technical threshold were invited to give demonstrations in October 2020, following which they were evaluated against a set of criteria agreed by the SMEs. Palantir was subsequently selected as the preferred supplier based on receiving the highest score in the evaluation.

Palestinians: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their state of relations with the Palestinian Authority following the recall of the Head of Mission of the Palestinian Authority to the UK in response to the 2030 roadmap for UK-Israel bilateral relations, signed on 21 March. [HL6951]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Palestinian Head of Mission Zomlot and I (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) met on 31 March to discuss this issue, and I reaffirmed the UK's long-standing commitment to a two-state solution based on 1967 lines. The UK is a friend of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian people. We support Palestinians in realising self-determination through an independent sovereign, and unified Palestinian state, in the West Bank and Gaza.

Parental Leave and Parental Pay

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 8 March (HL Deb col 793), when they expect to publish (1) the report of the evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme that they initiated in early 2018, and (2) the findings of the Parental Rights Study 2019. [HL6411]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: Evaluating Shared Parental Leave and Pay is an important part of the policymaking process. As part of the evaluation, we commissioned surveys which asked about a range of parental leave and pay entitlements as well as about Shared Parental Leave specifically. We are currently considering this information and will publish our findings in due course.

In 2019 the Government consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay. We are currently considering responses to the consultation and will respond in due course.

Parental Pay

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 8 March (HL Deb col 793), where she stated that "the number of couples taking up shared parental leave and pay is increasing year on year; last year it was at 13,000", what was the total number of claimants of Statutory Shared Parental Pay in each year since 2015–16, broken down by gender. [HL6410]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: Information provided by employers to HM Revenue and Customs show the number of individuals in receipt of Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). This data provides a broad indication of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) take-up but does not include anyone taking unpaid Shared Parental Leave.

Table 1: Individuals in receipt of ShPP by gender, 2015/16 to 2021/22

<i>Table 1: Individuals in receipt of ShPP by gender, 2015/16 to 2021/22</i>			
<i>Year (April to March)</i>	<i>No. of individuals in receipt of ShPP</i>		
	Women	Men	Total
2015-16	1,100	5,100	6,200
2016-17	1,600	7,100	8,600
2017-18	1,700	7,500	9,200
2018-19	2,200	8,500	10,700
2019-20	2,600	9,900	12,600
2020-21	2,600	8,600	11,200
2021-22	3,200	9,800	13,000

i) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

ii) Figures are based on the total number of individuals in a given year, irrespective of when the payment first started. Some individuals will be counted across two years.

iii) For 2015-16, those receiving Additional Statutory Paternity Pay cannot be distinguished from those claiming ShPP.

Parish and Town Councils

Asked by The Earl of Lytton

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to celebrate parish and town councils that have received an award through the Local Council Award Scheme. [HL6749]

Asked by The Earl of Lytton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Local Government Association's report Local service delivery and place-shaping: A framework to support parish and town councils, published on 11 August 2021; and what plans they have to raise awareness of the report in central and local government. [HL6750]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government recognise that parish and town councils play an important role in improving the quality of life and well-being of their communities. Parish and town councils often have a close understanding of what their communities want and that is why we fully encourage schemes that support their achievements and frameworks that help improve local service delivery.

Parish and Town Councils: Elections

Asked by The Earl of Lytton

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to raise public awareness of parish and town council elections taking place on 4 May. [HL6751]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: As has been the case under successive administrations, Principal Councils have the responsibility to post notices and deliver elections locally. [The Electoral Commission](#) also provides information and guidance to voters.

Passport Office: Industrial Disputes

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that people have access to a (1) new, or (2) renewed, passport during the period of five weeks of industrial action by Passport Office workers. [HL6597]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: His Majesty's Passport Office are working to manage the impact of strike action, whilst ensuring they can continue to deliver vital services

to the public, with comprehensive contingency plans in place.

There are currently no plans to change our guidance which states that it takes up to ten weeks to get a passport.

Physical Education

Asked by The Earl of Effingham

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their response to the House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee's report, A national plan for sport, health, and wellbeing, where they note the average time teaching PE in primary schools was 90 minutes per week in 2016, what plans they have to increase the average time spent teaching PE in (1) primary schools, and (2) secondary schools. [HL7065]

Baroness Barran: The government is prohibited by law in prescribing the exact time a school should allocate to individual subjects in the curriculum. On 8 March, the government made an announcement on physical education (PE) and school sport which included an expectation for both primary and secondary schools to strive for a minimum of two hours of PE and sport in the curriculum time every week.

Phytophthora Ramorum: Disease Control

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 21 March (HL6420), what steps they are taking to provide financial (1) assistance, or (2) compensation, to those carrying out Statutory Plant Health Notices. [HL7084]

Lord Benyon: Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs), requiring the felling and/or destruction of infected trees or the containment of susceptible material, are issued to prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases.

It has been the policy of successive governments not to pay compensation for plant health measures, as we believe that resources should be directed at the detection of pests and diseases, risk management and research. Protecting plant health is not an issue for the Government alone. The current arrangements ensure that everyone shares a common understanding of biosecurity and their role and responsibilities.

Individual landowners are responsible for the care and management of trees on their land; however, Government advice and financial support is available. Detailed case-specific advice is available from Forestry Commission Woodland Officers, who can support landowners with undertaking SPHN actions, and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme provides financial support for those affected by certain tree diseases. This includes support for the removal of *Phytophthora ramorum* infected trees and rhododendron, and grants for restocking following clearance because of this and other diseases (e.g. ash dieback and sweet chestnut blight).

In 2021, we launched a series of pilot grant schemes for land managers, which test and refine different ways to slow the spread of tree pests and diseases and build the resilience of our treescape in the North West, the South East (including London) and the West Midlands. The Forestry Commission will support the felling and restocking of trees as well as providing maintenance payments for restock sites. Land managers are eligible if they have:

- Ash with ash dieback.
- Larch with *Phytophthora ramorum*.
- Spruce growing in the high-risk spruce bark beetle area.
- Sweet chestnut with either Sweet Chestnut Blight or *Phytophthora ramorum*.
- Oak infested with Oak Processionary Moth.

In 2023 we introduced the tree health advice package for all SPHN holders[1], which aims to build land managers knowledge and awareness of tree health issues and woodland management, through providing funding for forestry/land agent advice and consultation to assist in creating a biosecurity management plan, and funding for biosecurity training and a personal biosecurity kit.

[1] [Statutory Plant Health Notice \(SPHN\) advice package - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-plant-health-notice-sphn-advice-package)

Plants: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government which species of (1) plants, and (2) trees, will still be prohibited from import into Northern Ireland from Great Britain after the implementation of the Windsor Framework. [HL6652]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have paved the way to remove bans on 11 native British and other commercially important plant species by the next planting season. These are the highest priority cases identified by industry itself, and we will begin to progress a further tranche of cases imminently, reflecting industry views. We will continue to engage intensively with industry to progress further cases wherever there is industry appetite, as the Windsor Framework has enabled.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what processes will be required to enable (1) plants, and (2) trees, that are allowed to be transported to Northern Ireland for end use to qualify for Green Lane movement under the Windsor Framework. [HL6654]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government will set out further details of the specific operational arrangements under the Windsor Framework in due course. But as set out in the Command Paper, instead of full EU certification, all plants and seeds, including seed

potatoes, will move under the framework of the UK-wide plant passport scheme, in line with traders throughout the UK. That means rather than paying £150 per movement into Northern Ireland, growers and businesses serving Northern Irish consumers can pay £120 a year to be part of the UK scheme.

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any plant in Great Britain may be brought legally into Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework, including those with soil from Great Britain remaining on the roots. [HL6740]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have removed the requirement for a phytosanitary certificate on the movement of plants and seeds, meaning there will be no bar to plants with soil attached being able to move between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Plants will move under the framework of the £120 a year UK-wide plant passport regime.

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any plants or trees will be banned from being brought into Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework. [HL6741]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government which genera of plants that are banned from being brought into Northern Ireland will remain banned after the implementation of the Windsor Framework; and which will no longer be banned. [HL6742]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have paved the way to allow 11 banned plant species to move again by the time of the next planting season. Those were priority cases identified by industry itself, and we will progress further cases wherever there is industry appetite. These have not been able to move from Great Britain to Northern Ireland since the Protocol came into force. Two species - *Ligustrum japonicum* and *L. delavayanum* - are already able to move following the Windsor Framework.

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government whether a private individual in Northern Ireland can legally be sent plants or trees from Great Britain, under the Windsor Framework, without the need for professional registration. [HL6743]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Plants and seeds will be able to once again move easily within the UK. Plants will now move within the same plant passport regime as applies throughout the UK. As we put these arrangements into practice we will work closely with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure gardeners, farmers and growers can access plants and seeds from a wide variety of sources.

Police: Misconduct

Asked by **Lord Lexden**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to (1) the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 22 February (HL5554) where he stated that "there are no provisions in legislation which entitle legally qualified chairs to remain anonymous", and (2) the remarks by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 20 March (HL Deb col 1531), when the name of the legally qualified chair appointed to hear a police gross misconduct case in Cleveland will be published. [HL6680]

Asked by **Lord Lexden**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 20 March (HL Deb col 1532) where he stated "I am delighted to say that Cleveland is starting to make serious progress on the engagement front", how that progress is being made; and what have been the results in relation to the gross misconduct hearing at which Mr Mike Veale is due to appear. [HL6681]

Asked by **Lord Lexden**

To ask His Majesty's Government, what plans they have to provide a briefing to Privy Counsellors in respect of the police gross misconduct hearing pending in Cleveland. [HL6682]

Asked by **Lord Lexden**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many police misconduct proceedings in England and Wales have not been started 18 months after their announcement. [HL6683]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office collects and publishes data on police misconduct cases finalised during a financial year period in the 'Police misconduct, England and Wales' statistical bulletin. It does not therefore include cases which have been referred to misconduct proceedings, where those proceedings have not yet concluded. The Government is unable to comment on on-going misconduct proceedings, which are rightly conducted independently of government. There are therefore no plans to provide briefing on this or any specific misconduct hearing, nor is the Government able to provide any details relating to legally qualified chairs (LQC), who are appointed to both their role and individual panels by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). Any decision concerning publication of an LQC's name is a matter for the relevant PCC

Cleveland's most recent Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy report, published by His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), showed positive improvement in a number of key areas, including its crime recording and treatment of the public. However, it still has further to go to meet acceptable performance standards in respect of preventing crime and understanding and addressing its demand. As such

HMICFRS have confirmed it will continue to be engaged. It remains PCC Turner's responsibility to ensure that Chief Constable Webster takes effective action to address the inspectorate's recommendations. We will continue to take a close interest in the force's progress as a member of the HMICFRS-chaired Police Performance Oversight Group.

Police: Vetting

Asked by **Lord Blencathra**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce regulations to permit police forces to dismiss officers who have failed vetting procedures. [HL6908]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Secretary has 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. Part 8 of the Terms of Reference sets out that this review will consider the performance system and its effectiveness with regards to dismissals, including where officers have failed to maintain their vetting status. Further details, including the full Terms of Reference, have been published on Gov.UK.

The Review is expected to conclude in May. The Government is committed to making changes necessary following the conclusion of the Review, including legislative changes where appropriate.

Pre-school Education: Qualifications

Asked by **Lord Blunkett**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many students aged 16 to 19 are currently studying for Early Years qualifications. [HL6614]

Baroness Barran: During the 2021/22 academic year, the latest year of available data, there were 28,100 students aged 16 to 19 studying Early Years qualifications. This included 27,400 learners studying Early Years qualifications at English further education (FE) providers, and 700 full-person-equivalent entrants to Early Years subject areas at higher education (HE) level at English HE providers.

For FE, Early Years qualifications were defined as those on the 'Early Years qualifications achieved in the United Kingdom' published list, which is attached. For HE, Early Years subjects were defined as HECOS codes '100463 early years education' and '100510 early years teaching'.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Early Years Qualifications Table
[HL6614_table_early_years_qualifications.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-20/HL6614>

Prison Sentences

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask His Majesty's Government what emotional support and spiritual provision is available to prisoners under Imprisonment for Public Protection. [HL6853]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the increase in the numbers of prisoners under Imprisonment for Public Protection serving ten or more years beyond their original tariff. [HL6855]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the number of women serving sentences under Imprisonment for Public Protection. [HL6856]

Lord Bellamy: The Government is committed to the protection of the public and the effective management of offenders. By law, prisoners serving indeterminate sentences who have completed their tariff will be released only when the Parole Board concludes that it is no longer necessary on the grounds of public protection for them to remain confined.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) continues to work closely with Samaritans for the delivery of the Listener Scheme, through which selected prisoners are trained to provide support to fellow prisoners in emotional distress. It is important to highlight that Prison Chaplaincy provides not only faith and belief advice but pastoral care to prisoners of all faiths, beliefs and of none, irrespective of sentence type or length, in support of HMPPS' commitment to decency, safety and rehabilitation.

As the number of those serving IPP sentences in prison who have never been released reduces, the proportion of cases which are the most complex and high risk increases. This does mean that we should expect that the number of first releases will continue to slow and the time spent past tariff will increase. However, the IPP Action Plan is focused on, firstly, ensuring each IPP prisoner has a sentence plan, regularly reviewed, with clear objectives as to what the prisoner has to do to reduce risk and, secondly, that the prisoner is held in a prison with an opportunity to achieve those objectives.

In the Government response to the Justice Select Committee's IPP report, we committed to refreshing the IPP Action Plan, focusing not only on important changes to improve the prospects of IPP offenders making progress towards a prospective safe and sustainable release, but also to ensure there are robust processes to drive effective monitoring and accountability for delivery of that plan.

The Women's Estate Psychology Service (WEPS) have implemented a National IPP strategy which takes a bespoke case management approach to each woman

servicing an IPP sentence. The overarching goal of the strategy is to ensure that all are proactively supported to progress through their prison sentences as quickly as possible. Psychologists regularly review cases and jointly work with prison and probation colleagues to remove barriers to progression and expedite completion of interventions and services. There are, as of end December 2022, 40 women in custody serving an IPP sentence, 12 of whom have never been released.

Prisoners' Release: Temporary Accommodation

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide accommodation for prisoners for the first week and weekend after release in instances where the prisoner has lost their home after being remanded in custody for sentence. [HL6835]

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to require the Probation Service to arrange accommodation for prisoners for the first week and weekend after release in instances where the prisoner has lost their home after being remanded in custody for sentence; and what steps they will take to ensure the Probation Service is sufficiently resourced to do so. [HL6836]

Lord Bellamy: HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has a range of interventions available to support those on remand when they are released to ensure that they are not homeless.

All resettlement prisons have an embedded pre-release resettlement function. These pre-release teams identify and address immediate resettlement needs when the individual arrives. This accommodation support, delivered through Commissioned Rehabilitative Services contracts, includes support and guidance to ensure continuation of an existing tenancy, applications for housing benefit, assistance to access rent deposit and rent advance schemes and compliance with any tenancy obligations to avoid or manage accommodation arrears. We are currently working on extending all Commissioned Rehabilitative Services contracts for accommodation to unsentenced people in prison.

Additionally, in accordance with relevant housing legislation in both England and in Wales, HMPPS has a duty to refer anyone at risk of becoming homeless on release from prison to a local authority for housing assistance.

In relation to prisoners who have been on remand, subsequently convicted and released as time served they can be referred to our Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS-3), which provides up to 12 weeks of temporary housing, providing that they are subject to probation supervision.

Prisoners: Self-harm

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask His Majesty's Government what were the rates of self-harm by prisoners under Imprisonment for Public Protection in the last five years. [HL6854]

Lord Bellamy: Please see the attached table showing the rates of self-harm by prisoners under Imprisonment for Public Protection^{1,2,3,4,5} for the last five years that data is available.

The numbers used to derive the rates of self-harm for this PQ are published. The quarterly population figures are taken from the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publication and then averaged across the calendar year. The self-harm incidents are taken from the annual self-harm in prison custody tables from the Safety in Custody Quarterly publication. The rates are calculated using these figures, and the methodology described in footnote 5 below.

Imprisonment for public protection (IPP)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	895.0	1129.5	1271.2	1095.5	1108.0

(1) Figures include incidents during contracted out escorts. Figures do not include incidents at Medway STC.

(2) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self-harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

(3) A new sentence - Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) - was introduced in 2005.

(4) The definition of IPP prisoners included in this analysis only includes unreleased prisoners. IPP prisoners who have been recalled to prison after a release are not included.

(5) Self-harm incident rates are derived by $1,000 \times (\text{number of incidents in year}) / (\text{average population for year})$. Prison population figures are from the Offender Management Statistics quarterly bulletin and are averaged across the four quarterly population figures for each year.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table [2023-04-12 HL6854_final.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-27/HL6854>

Private Rented Housing

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the report by Zoopla that the number of homes available to rent in the UK has fallen by a third over the past 18 months; and what steps they are taking to deal with the declining availability of rental properties. [HL7039]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government recognises that demand is currently outstripping the supply of properties available to let. The reasons for this are difficult to disentangle, but we believe it is due to a mixture of demographic changes, including domestic and international migration, and pent-up demand following the pandemic.

The number of rented properties has doubled since 2004 – peaking in 2016 and remaining roughly stable since.

We are driving up the supply of new homes by diversifying the market, investing in affordable housing, and increasing land supply for new homes by investing in infrastructure. We also remain committed to continue working towards our ambition of delivering 300,000 homes per year to help create a more sustainable and affordable housing market.

Private Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that landlords undertake the necessary repairs to their properties when problems are identified by their tenants. [HL6708]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government has set a mission to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill currently in parliament will introduce measures to improve the quality of social housing, including a new, proactive consumer regulation regime. Recent amendments to the Bill introduced 'Awaab's Law', which will introduce new requirements for social landlords to address hazards in the home within a fixed time period.

Our forthcoming reforms to private renting will improve conditions more broadly for properties in the sector.

Probate

Asked by *Lord Blackwell*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the average time taken for His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to process probate applications. [HL6906]

Asked by **Lord Blackwell**

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of probate applications to His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) exceed their target time of 16 weeks for processing. [HL6907]

Lord Bellamy: Despite record level of receipts in 2022 the average length of time taken for a grant of probate following receipt of the documents required has been maintained at 6 weeks.

8.8% of Probate applications exceeded 16 weeks processing time following receipt of the documents required. Cases can be delayed where more information is needed from the applicant, an application to stop a case from an interested party is in place or where cases are complex.

HMCTS has increased resources to meet the higher demand following an increased number of estates requiring probate and is further increasing resourcing to further bring down overall timeliness on digital and paper applications.

Average waiting times for probate grants, up to December 2022, are routinely published on gov.uk via Family Court Statistics Quarterly.

Property Development: Floods

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many new residential properties have been constructed within Environment Agency flood zone 3 each year, since the financial year 2012/13. [HL6937]

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of new residential properties have been constructed within Environment Agency flood zone 3 for the most recent year that data are available, broken down by local planning authority area. [HL6939]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The percentages of new residential addresses created that have been within each of Environment Agency flood zones 3 and 2 in each financial year since 2012-13 are provided below. Figures for 2012-13 are not available on the same basis due to a change in land use change methodology which took effect from 2013-14.

The most recent available percentages of new residential addresses created that have been within Environment Agency flood zone 3, broken down by local authority area are provided in the attached table.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Proportion of new residential addresses created within Flood Zone 3 1 (Per cent)</i>	<i>Proportion of new residential addresses created within Flood Zones 2 and 3 2 (Per cent)</i>
2013-14	7	10
2014-15	8	11

2015-16	8	11
2016-17	8	11
2017-18	10	13
2018-19	8	11
2019-20	9	13
2020-21	7	11
2021-22	7	10

Sources

¹ Live table 320:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022>

² Using address data used to derive the land use change - new residential address statistics:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022>

Although National Flood Zone 2 is a stand-alone category, to be practically useful it is generally combined with National Flood Zone 3 to give a complete picture of areas at 0.1% or more risk of flooding in any given year. Therefore figures are provided for National Flood Zones 2 and 3 combined.

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many new residential properties have been constructed within Environment Agency flood zone 2 each year, since the financial year 2012/13. [HL6938]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The percentages of new residential addresses created that have been within each of Environment Agency flood zones 3 and 2 in each financial year since 2012-13 are provided below. Figures for 2012-13 are not available on the same basis due to a change in land use change methodology which took effect from 2013-14.

The most recent available percentages of new residential addresses created that have been within Environment Agency flood zone 3, broken down by local authority area are provided in the attached table.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Proportion of new residential addresses created within Flood Zone 3 1 (Per cent)</i>	<i>Proportion of new residential addresses created within Flood Zones 2 and 3 2 (Per cent)</i>
2013-14	7	10
2014-15	8	11
2015-16	8	11
2016-17	8	11
2017-18	10	13
2018-19	8	11
2019-20	9	13
2020-21	7	11
2021-22	7	10

Sources

¹ Live table 320:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022>

² Using address data used to derive the land use change - new residential address statistics:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022>

Although National Flood Zone 2 is a stand-alone category, to be practically useful it is generally combined with National Flood Zone 3 to give a complete picture of areas at 0.1% or more risk of flooding in any given year. Therefore figures are provided for National Flood Zones 2 and 3 combined.

Public Sector: Strikes

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide guidance to public bodies regarding the use of court action in response to strikes. [HL6706]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: The law is well established in this area and the means to enforce it are widely understood. Employers can seek an injunction in the High Court if they believe a union has not followed its statutory obligations in relation to strike action.

Public Sector: Voluntary Work

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote volunteering in support of public services. [HL6983]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: HM Government is committed to enabling people to volunteer in all manner of ways, including in support of public services. Volunteers play important roles alongside staff as magistrates, in schools, and in the NHS, for instance. Each public service area is responsible for its own volunteer management and for developing its strategic involvement of volunteers.

The Government is currently taking several steps to promote volunteering in support of public services. For example, the Department for Education continues to support the recruitment of school governors. The 'Inspiring Governance' programme recruits volunteers from business to become school governors and to serve on the local governing bodies of academy trusts. Since the programme began in 2016, it has placed 6,782 volunteers in governance roles. The Government has also invested over £1 million to support the recruitment of magistrates from a diverse range of backgrounds. A revised recruitment process has been introduced making use of best practice to ensure that it is fairer, more inclusive, and more accessible. These changes have been supported by a new marketing campaign designed to raise the profile of the magistracy, particularly among under-represented groups of society.

Public Transport: Key Workers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to make special public transport arrangements to enable key workers to travel to work in the event that the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) pay negotiation collapses. [HL7031]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government welcomes the recent cancellation of strikes by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) and the restart of discussions with the Rail Delivery Group on the fair and reasonable two-year pay offer.

The Government recognises the serious disruption rail industrial action causes passengers. If there are any further rail strikes, operators will continue to strive to provide as many services as they can resource reliably within existing operational constraints.

The Government has played its part in helping to facilitate and improve communication between the unions and the rail industry. Where necessary, Ministers will continue to facilitate open and constructive discussions to make progress and help the parties resolve the dispute.

Pupil Exclusions: Girls and Women

Asked by Baroness Thornton

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to understand the drivers behind young women and girls' official and unofficial school exclusions, in order to tackle the over-representation of ethnic minorities among those excluded. [HL7034]

Baroness Barran: Continuing to improve behaviour in schools is a priority for the government. Head teachers use suspensions and permanent exclusions when required as part of creating calm, safe and supportive classrooms. Schools should only use permanent exclusion as a last resort, and the Department supports teachers in taking proportionate and measured steps to ensure good behaviour in schools.

Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful, and the department has previously written to schools to remind them of the rules on suspension and permanent exclusion.

Analysis from the Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019) illustrated a complex picture but, on the whole, there is no substantial difference in permanent exclusion rates when comparing all ethnic minority children as a whole with white British children. More information on the Timpson Review of School Exclusion can be found attached.

The updated 'School suspension and permanent exclusion' guidance sets out that schools, local authorities, and local partners should work together to understand what lies behind local trends.

The department's 'Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees' guidance also

makes clear governing boards should carefully consider the level and characteristics of pupils who are leaving the school, and challenge the school and academy trust management teams on any permanent exclusions to ensure it is only used as a last resort.

Schools also have a clear duty not to discriminate against pupils under the Equality Act 2010. Ofsted's assessment of behaviour in schools includes specific consideration of rates, patterns and reasons for exclusions, as well as any differences between groups of pupils.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL7034_pdf [Timpson_review.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7034>

Pupils: Absenteeism

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government how many school children in England have had an unauthorised school absence in each of the past five years. [HL6690]

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government how many children in England are currently not attending school regularly due to unauthorised absences. [HL6691]

Baroness Barran: Schools are required to record in the register once in the morning session and once in the afternoon session whether or not a pupil is absent.

The attached table below shows the number of pupil enrolments in England with one or more sessions of unauthorised absence by academic year.

In the 2021/22 academic year, 366,042 pupil enrolments missed 10% or more of possible sessions due to unauthorised absence. This figure covers state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools in England.

Unauthorised absence includes pupils who arrived late (after registration has closed), unauthorised holidays, reason for absence not yet provided, and other unauthorised absence.

The data used in this answer are published in the National Statistics release on pupil absence in schools in England, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL6690_HL6691_table [HL6690_HL6691_table.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-21/HL6690>

Pupils: Foreign Nationals

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government how many newly settled children from overseas have not been able to immediately take up allocated school places due to pressures on school numbers in the past year. [HL6692]

Baroness Barran: Individual local authorities are under a duty to ensure that children in their areas are receiving a suitable education. We do not routinely collect data on the nationality of children whose parents are seeking school places. However, because of the high levels of migration from the beginning of 2022, the department did conduct a monthly survey of school placements for children from outside the UK between May and September 2022 to obtain better data on school place pressures. The data is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-placements-for-children-from-outside-of-the-uk>.

Railways: Solar Power

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Swiss Federal Railways regarding its trial of laying solar panels in between railway tracks in order to generate electricity. [HL6870]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Network Rail has had discussions with the Swiss Federal Railways and is aware of their strategic priorities, broadly aligning with its own.

The proposed solar panel innovation is interesting, but an initial analysis suggests that the proposal underestimates the challenges of maintaining the solar panels in a dusty, vibrating environment. The business case has also not been proven, noting that the deployment of assets in a safety critical location is necessarily more expensive than using land away from the track.

Finally, Network Rail is concerned that the installation would also conceal track fastenings making it more difficult to safely maintain the railway with Network Rail's video track inspection system.

Network Rail is aiming for 100 percent of its non-traction electricity to be from renewable sources by 2030 and has committed to seek to reduce the carbon footprint of traction electricity consumption by directly purchasing renewable electricity from specific new renewable projects. Network Rail is at an early stage in the process of reviewing options for feeding renewable electricity directly into the traction power supply. Through our First of a Kind scheme the Department for Transport has supported various projects looking at feeding renewable electricity into the railway. This includes providing £750,000 to Riding Sunbeams to develop and trial an innovative connection between renewable electricity generation and overhead electrification.

Railways: Tickets

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they are making on the tendering process for the Consolidated Online Retail Solution to deliver advanced rail retailing in the 15 months since the Prior Information Notice was formally issued on 15 December 2021. [HL6668]

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Consolidated Online Retail Solution is the only new rail retailing platform that (1) they, or (2) representatives of the Great British Railways Transition Team, are proposing; and if there are any alternative proposals, what those entail. [HL6669]

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any new rail retailing platform that (1) they, or (2) representatives from the Great British Railways Transition Team, are proposing will be subject to full and open public tender. [HL6670]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As set out in the Plan for Rail, we recognise that the current multitude of train company websites with different standards of service is confusing to passengers. We are continuing to review the best way to address this and are working closely with the rail sector to do this.

We will also open up railway data and systems, whilst lowering barriers to entry for the industry. For ticketing, that means a more competitive retail market and we welcome new players to spur more innovation and give passengers the services they need.

Further updates on rail retailing proposals will be provided in due course.

Rape

Asked by *Lord Dobbs*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many rape allegations were made to the police in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and how many of those resulted in (1) prosecution, and (2) conviction. [HL6736]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Hon gentlemen Parliamentary Question of 22.03 is attached.

The Rt Hon. the Lord Dobbs

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

30 March 2023

Dear Lord Dobbs,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking for the number of rape allegations made to the police in England and Wales for the last five years and how many of those resulted in (a) prosecution, and (b) conviction (HL6736). The two main sources of crime statistics are police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The CSEW only provides estimates of the prevalence of crime and different crime types as experienced by victims, which may not always be reported to the police.

The most up to date figures we have published on rape offences recorded by the police can be found in Appendix table A4 [1], published as part of the Crime in England and Wales; year ending September 2022 [2]. This table provides police recorded rape offences back to 2002. Table 1 shows a subset of table A4 providing the number of rape offences back to the year ending March 2017.

Our most recent Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022 [3] publication provides data on the number of rape incidents recorded by the police. These data are provided in Table 12 for the year ending March 2021 and Table 13 for the year ending March 2022 in the associated Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics [4] tables.

Unfortunately, we do not hold data on how these offences are treated by the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) are primarily responsible for court statistics so will hold information on prosecutions and convictions. They publish statistics [5] each quarter which might be of help to you. You can contact MoJ via email at ESD@justice.gov.uk. It may also be beneficial to contact the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as they collate information on prosecution by crime type. You can contact them via Enquiries@cps.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Police recorded rape offences, year ending March 2017 to year ending September 2022 England and Wales

Offence	Apr 2016	Apr 2017	Apr 2018	Apr 2019	Apr 2020	Apr 2021	Oct 2020	Oct 2021
	to Mar 2017	to Mar 2018	to Mar 2019	to Mar 2020	to Mar 2021	to Mar 2022	to Sep 2021	to Sep 2022
Rape	42,063	55,004	59,921	59,104	55,652	69,905	62,866	70,633

Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2022>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/>

crimeandjustice/bulletins/sexualoffencesinenglandandwalesoverview/march2022

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/sexualoffencesprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales>

[5]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UK Statistics Authority Response [PQHL6736 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-22/HL6736>

Recycling

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult on (1) policy, and (2) legislative changes, to help establish a circular economy in the UK. [HL6955]

Lord Benyon: The Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 set out our plans to minimise waste, promote resource efficiency and move towards a circular economy. We want to prolong the lives of the materials and goods that we use and move society away from the inefficient 'linear' economic model of 'take, make, use, throw'.

Turning to activities at the top of the waste hierarchy, waste prevention and reuse have significant benefits both environmentally and economically through value retention, jobs growth and potential money saving for consumers. Our ambition is reflected in the upcoming document, Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste (MRMW), which will constitute the new Waste Prevention Programme for England.

Through the landmark Environment Act 2021, the Government is delivering on commitments in the Resources and Waste Strategy bringing in a wide range of relevant reforms. Government has already consulted on a number of reforms including a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and consistent recycling collections for every household and business in England.

We continue to collaborate with the UKRI-funded National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research (NICER) programme to strengthen our evidence base on resource efficiency initiatives and will consider options to further formalise productive cross-government policy making and joined-up strategy to support resource-efficient circular economy business models in industry. This work will build on existing industry partnerships, cross-government research, and the work of the newly created Energy Efficiency Taskforce.

Additional policy development and legislative change to support the transition to a more resource efficient and

circular economy is being taken forward across Government.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that eligible Afghans in Afghanistan are able to access the Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme. [HL6662]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: In January 2022, we launched the scheme, with some of those evacuated under Op PITTING being granted a place on the ACRS and, in June 2022, we launched two further referral pathways onto the scheme.

The two further referral pathways onto the ACRS will continue to see individuals resettled to the UK. Beyond the first year of the third pathway, the Government will work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk. Further detail will be set out in due course.

This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history and we are proud to offer a safe and legal route to those affected by events in Afghanistan. We look forward to welcoming new arrivals to the UK and supporting them to rebuild their lives.

We continue to work, including with likeminded partners and countries neighbouring Afghanistan, on resettlement issues and to support safe passage for eligible Afghans.

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask His Majesty's Government how many endangered Afghan journalists have been resettled in UK to date under (1) the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme, or (2) the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, since the withdrawal of British military forces from that country. [HL6981]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Statistics on individuals resettled or relocated under the Afghan schemes have now also become available in the Immigration System Statistics, year ending December 2022 release.

They show that 21,387 people have now been resettled or relocated through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). This includes people identified as particularly at risk including journalists.

Whilst I am not able to provide a breakdown of this data by occupation, work continues to assure information relating to all the people resettled and relocated to the UK, under the ACRS and the ARAP, on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to announce a third pathway under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme; and what that pathway will include both (1) journalists still resident in Afghanistan, and (2) exiled Afghan journalists in Pakistan and Iran, at risk of persecution for their professional activities. [HL6982]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: On 13 June 2022, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office announced the launch Pathways 2 and 3 of the ACRS.

Under Pathway 3, in the first year, places are being offered to eligible at-risk British Council contractors, GardaWorld contractors, and Chevening alumni in Afghanistan or the region. We are pleased to have welcomed the first arrivals to the UK and look forward to welcoming all remaining individuals as soon as practicable.

Beyond this, we will work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk under Pathway 3. This commitment still stands, and further details will be set out in due course.

However, it is important that we take into account the capacity of the UK to resettle people, and our immediate focus is ensuring the relocation of those already assessed as eligible.

Refugees: Resettlement

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 22 March (HL6242), how many of those 30,055 people resettled in the UK through UNHCR routes were resettled since 2015. [HL6996]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Between 2015 and 2022, 28,302 people have been resettled to the UK through UNHCR resettlement routes. The UK ranks 2nd highest of European countries over this period.

Between 2015 and 2022, people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK via BN(O) Hong Kong Visas (153,708 visas granted), Ukraine Visa and Extension Schemes (233,770 visas granted), family reunion visas (44,659 visas granted) and established resettlement or relocation schemes (49,667 people).

Of the 49,667 people resettled or relocated over this period, 28,302 were through UNHCR resettlement routes and 21,365 were through non-UNHCR routes (i.e. Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 1 and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy).

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 22 March (HL6242), what were the figures for each year from 2013 to 2022. [HL7004]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Between 2013 and 2022, 30,055 people have been resettled to the UK through UNHCR resettlement routes. The UK ranks 3rd highest of European countries over this period.

The Home Office publishes data on resettlement in the 'Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on refugees resettled in the UK by scheme can be found in table Asy_D02 of the 'asylum and resettlement detailed datasets'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbooks. The latest data relate to the year ending December 2022.

UNHCR resettlement routes include the Gateway Protection Programme, Mandate Scheme, Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship Scheme and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 2.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

table Asy_D02 [table Asy_D02.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7004>

Refugees: Ukraine

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask His Majesty's Government what facility they provide for sibling family reunion in the UK for long-term residents of Ukraine who do not have Ukrainian citizenship, and who are therefore not entitled to nomination by the UNHCR under present arrangements for refugees from that country, in circumstances where the individual has fled to a third country. [HL6294]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Non-Ukrainian nationals who were resident in Ukraine prior to the invasion are eligible for the Ukraine Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine Scheme if they are the immediate family members of Ukrainians who are also benefiting from those schemes.

Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards fulfilling recommendation six of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review into the support for persecuted Christians to make the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief a permanent role. [HL6795]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The FCDO welcomes the findings of the Independent Review of our work to take forward the Bishop of Truro's recommendations, which noted that establishing the role of the position of Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) was at an advanced stage of delivery. The Special Envoy, Fiona Bruce MP, works with the Minister for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of

Wimbledon, and through the Foreign Secretary to the Prime Minister. We continue to ensure that progress made on the Truro recommendations is embedded and that FoRB is central to our wider human rights work.

Renewable Energy: Housing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that green incentives and loans for renewable energy efficiency measures for domestic properties are easy to understand and apply. [HL6816]

Lord Callanan: Catalysing the market for accessible green finance is a priority for Government. Our Green Home Finance Innovation Fund, which completed last year, was an early step in supporting the piloting of green mortgages.

That Fund is followed by the Green Home Finance Accelerator which launched in October 2022. This programme is making £20m available to lenders to develop and pilot a wider range of green loans products, with a focus on simple, straightforward customer journeys and high-quality advice. Learnings from the pilots will be shared with the lending community in due course to inform the design of future products.

Renewable Energy: Innovation

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they intend to provide to innovative renewable deployment, such as combined wind and wave offshore sites. [HL6895]

Lord Callanan: The Government supports innovative renewable deployment through a suite of research funding programmes and the Contracts for Difference scheme. For example, research projects on combining offshore wind and wave sites can apply to UK Research and Innovation for funding.

Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government how many officials are engaged in work to support marine energy reaching commercialisation. [HL6892]

Lord Callanan: There are four officials whose work is focussed on supporting marine energy commercialisation at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. They are supported by others across the Department who help deliver various renewable schemes and programmes.

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what funding they intend to make available within the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio for combined wind and wave energy generation. [HL6896]

Lord Callanan: The Net Zero Innovation Portfolio is investing up to £60m to support the development of state-of-the-art technologies in the future offshore wind industry.

Restoring Your Railway Fund

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to announce another competition for the Restoring Railway Fund; and if so, when. [HL6786]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Since being announced in January 2020 the Restoring Your Railway Fund has developed an ambitious portfolio of potential restoration schemes to reconnect smaller communities across England and Wales. The third round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund stopped accepting new bids on 5 March 2021. This was the final round of the Ideas Fund for the foreseeable future. We are now focussed on realising the benefits of those schemes in order to regenerate local economies and improve access to jobs, homes and education.

Rights of Way

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 29 March (HL6810), whether they will provide additional funding for local highway authorities to address (1) the backlog of 4,000 applications for historic rights of way, and (2) the 41,000 miles of potentially unrecorded routes discovered by the Ramblers and its volunteers. [HL7089]

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Benyon on 29 March (HL6810), what steps they are taking to ensure that the backlog of 4,000 applications for historic rights of way are assessed in a timely manner; and what discussions the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has had with the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities about the funding required by local authorities to consider those applications. [HL7090]

Lord Benyon: The final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 makes available up to £59.7 billion for local government in England, the majority of which is un-ringfenced in recognition of local authorities being best placed to understand local priorities and allocate funding accordingly.

The Government is committed to implementing the rights of way reforms package which will reduce bureaucracy and speed up the process for new rights of way to be added to the legal record for everyone to enjoy. The reforms will streamline processes for recording rights of way with landowners, local authorities and users

benefitting from a faster, less expensive, less confrontational and less bureaucratic process.

Local authorities will have powers to reject weakly evidenced applications, ignore irrelevant objections and agree appropriate modifications directly with landowners. Local authorities will have powers to correct obvious administrative errors on the definitive map via a significantly shortened process.

Road Traffic Offences: Mobile Phones

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will consider specific penalties for drivers who are caught watching videos on their phones while driving. [HL6840]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: If a driver is watching a video on a hand-held mobile phone, this is an offence which attracts a fixed penalty notice of £200 and six penalty points. If the case goes to the magistrates court the maximum fine is £1,000 (or £2,500 for bus and lorry drivers).

If a driver is watching a video on a mobile phone secured in a cradle, this is also an offence; the sanction is a £50 fixed penalty notice and a maximum fine of Level 3 on the standard scale if the case goes to court. There are also more general road traffic offences that the police can potentially use in cases where a driver is watching a video on a mobile phone in a cradle, for example, driving whilst not in proper control of the vehicle or driving without due care and attention.

We keep offences and their penalties under review.

Rwanda: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of journalists and human rights workers refused entry to Rwanda in the past three years; and what representations they have made to the government of that country to secure access to the country for such individuals. [HL6606]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We regularly discuss a range of issues with the Government of Rwanda through our High Commission in Kigali and at Ministerial level. The UK Government recognises the progress still to be made on human rights in Rwanda and continues both to help the country build a more open political space and to support longer-term stability.

Sahel: Security

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they have provided to (1) the African Union, (2) the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), (3) the Commonwealth nations in West

Africa, to counter the threat posed by terrorists in the Sahel. [HL6976]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK works with and supports the efforts of the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and countries across West Africa to counter the threat posed by terrorism, foster long-term stability and address the underlying drivers of conflict. The UK is assessing what support it can offer to the Accra Initiative, a regional security initiative, to help prevent the spread of violence and instability from the Sahel to coastal West Africa. In addition, the UK has strategic security partnerships with Ghana and Nigeria, which includes supporting Nigeria to address the causes of insecurity and conflict. The UK also continues to support stabilisation efforts in the Lake Chad Basin to build the capacity of the security sector in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad to respond to violent extremism and protect civilians affected by conflict.

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposed federation between Mali and Burkina Faso, and its potential impact on the stability of the Sahel region. [HL6978]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is aware that Burkina Faso's Prime Minister visited Mali in early February and referred to a 'federation' to boost their economic prospects. We are monitoring developments closely - Ministers have been clear that the approach that the Malian government is taking (including its partnership with Wagner Group) is counterproductive to regional security. The UK is a committed donor to the Sahel - in Mali and Burkina Faso, most of our funding is spent on humanitarian aid. The UK supports regional institutions including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union and are considering what support we could provide to regionally led initiatives such as the Accra Initiative to help prevent the spread of violence and foster long-term stability.

Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Saudi Arabia regarding the increased use of the death penalty in that country, particularly for non-lethal and political acts; and what plans they have, if any, to restrict the sale of arms and military technology in response. [HL6609]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Saudi Arabia remains a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office human rights priority country, in part because of the increased use of the death penalty. I [Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon] regularly raise the death penalty with the Saudi authorities, most recently on 11 March and during my visit to Saudi Arabia in February.

The UK Government takes its strategic export control responsibilities very seriously. We will not grant export licences if to do so would be inconsistent with the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. All licences are kept under careful and continual review as standard.

Saudi Arabia: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Singh of Wimbledon

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) discrimination against religious minorities and women, (2) the use of the death penalty, and (3) reports of extrajudicial killings, in Saudi Arabia; and on what basis they describe Saudi Arabia as a strategic partner. [HL6699]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK and Saudi Arabia have a longstanding bilateral relationship based on trade; investment; defence; security; energy and shared concerns about regional issues. We have vital national security and economic interests in maintaining and developing our relationship with Saudi Arabia, including in how we work together to tackle regional threats. No aspect of our relationship with Saudi Arabia prevents us from speaking frankly about human rights. We monitor a range of human rights issues in the Kingdom, including those pertaining to women, religious minorities and the continued use of the death penalty in the Kingdom.

Schools: Blasphemy

Asked by Lord Godson

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the new blasphemy guidance being developed by the Home Office will be legally binding upon schools; how they are planning to make schools aware of their new responsibilities under this guidance; and how it will be enforced. [HL6624]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: In response to recent incidents, the Government has been repeatedly clear that there is no blasphemy law in Great Britain.

There are currently no plans to develop new blasphemy guidance for schools.

Schools: Fire Prevention

Asked by Lord Best

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will publish a response to their consultation Building Bulletin 100: Fire Safety Design for Schools, which closed on 18 August 2021. [HL7055]

Baroness Barran: The department takes fire safety in schools very seriously. This is why the consultation draft of 'BB100: Fire Safety Design for Schools' proposed multiple interventions to further improve the already high fire safety standards of school buildings.

The department has been reviewing and evaluating the evidence submitted before, during, and post consultation, and will publish the response to the consultation and updated guidance in due course.

Secure Accommodation

Asked by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bellamy on 8 March (HL5707), what assessment they have made of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory report 'What do we know about children and young people deprived of their liberty in England and Wales?', published on 9 February 2022; and what steps they plan to take in response to the recommendations for collecting and publishing data made in that report. [HL6970]

Baroness Barran: The department welcomes the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory's report 'What do we know about children and young people deprived of their liberty in England and Wales', and recognises the growing concerns regarding deprivation of liberty (DoL) cases. Children and young people deprived of their liberty are some of the most vulnerable children in society.

The newly launched National DoLs Court has helped the judiciary and the government gain more robust data and a greater understanding of this cohort of children who are often the subject of DoL proceedings, which requires a cross-system response.

The department accepts that there is a need for more robust data and will be meeting with the Ministry of Justice, HM Courts and Tribunals Services, and Nuffield to discuss their recommendations. Officials are meeting with Nuffield on 19 April. As data collection continues, we will be able to better understand the number of children placed in different settings, their characteristics, experiences and outcomes.

Asked by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bellamy on 8 March (HL5707), what plans they have to improve the recording and publishing of data in relation to applications to deprive children of their liberty under the inherent jurisdiction. [HL7018]

Asked by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bellamy on 8 March (HL5707), whether they will record and publish data in relation to applications to deprive children of their liberty under the inherent jurisdiction, on a comparable basis to that for children subject to secure accommodation orders. [HL7019]

Lord Bellamy: HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are committed to making changes to internal case management systems to enable the routine publishing of data relating to applications to deprive

children of their liberty under the inherent jurisdiction of the court, taking consideration of the data-related recommendations made within the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory report.

HMCTS are working with the Department of Education and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory on how the current data can continue to be made available whilst the necessary changes are made to the case management systems.

Security: Embassies

Asked by Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications of vandalism and disorder that took place outside the High Commission of India in London on 19 March; and what steps they are taking to ensure the safety and security of diplomatic missions. [HL7001]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Government takes the protective security of the Indian High Commission extremely seriously. The Government remains committed to protecting the security of missions throughout the UK, including preventing and rapidly and robustly responding to incidents such as this.

The criminal damage and assaults on staff from the India High Commission at the incident on the weekend of the 18th March was unacceptable. The police have powers to deal with such acts. However, the use of these powers is an operational matter for the police, and decisions on possible criminal proceedings will be made in conjunction with the Crown Prosecution Service.

It is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on diplomatic security arrangements. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals and locations concerned.

Seeds: UK Internal Trade

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask His Majesty's Government why individuals in Northern Ireland buying vegetable and herb seeds for personal use direct from suppliers in Great Britain are required to have a Phytosanitary certificate costing upwards of £250. [HL6858]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Plants and seeds will be able to once again move easily within the UK. Plants will now move within the same plant passport regime as applies throughout the UK. As we put these arrangements into practice we will work closely with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure gardeners, farmers and growers can access plants and seeds from a wide variety of sources.

Sentencing Council for England and Wales

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the next Tailored Review of the Sentencing Council will include consideration of victims of crime and their representatives as key stakeholders; and if not, why not. [HL7073]

Lord Bellamy: The Sentencing Council considers all aspects of sentencing, including the impact of crime on victims generally. The Department has no plans to review the composition or functions of the Sentencing Council.

Sizewell C Power Station: China General Nuclear Power Corporation

Asked by Lord Haworth

To ask His Majesty's Government why they paid Chinese state-owned power group CGN over £100mn to withdraw from its proposed 20 per cent share of the Sizewell C nuclear power station project. [HL7069]

Lord Callanan: Following constructive commercial negotiations, CGN decided to exit the project as part of the Government investment in Sizewell C. The agreement to secure their exit covered value of their shareholding, their contribution to the project's development and a commercial return reflecting their work to date. The details of this arrangement are commercially confidential.

Slavery

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the average waiting period for an individual entering the National Referral Mechanism awaiting a reasonable grounds decision (1) before, and (2) after, the introduction of the updated guidance that came into effect this year. [HL7046]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Reasonable Grounds decisions will be made as soon as possible following referral. Statistics on the timescales of Reasonable Grounds decisions for victims of modern slavery are not currently published.

Slavery: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the Northern Ireland Executive on the creation of a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery or trafficking who have committed an offence. [HL6758]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office has had no discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on the creation of a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery or trafficking who have committed an offence.

Social Security Benefits: Disability

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that those with disabilities are in receipt of benefits that they are entitled to receive. [HL6596]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government makes information on benefits widely available to all those who may wish to claim, including disabled people and people with health conditions, through a variety of channels including GOV.UK. In addition, information is available from a wide range of other sources, including organisations and charities, who provide advice and support. The DWP continually seeks to improve the information it makes available to encourage people to claim the benefits they may be entitled to.

South Sudan: Refugees

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in response to the UNHCR 2023 Regional Refugee Response Plan to assist South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries; and what estimate has been made of how many of the refugees are returning to South Sudan through agencies such as the International Organisation for Migration. [HL6807]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is committed to supporting South Sudanese refugees in the region. In financial year 2022/23, the UK Government allocated at least £156 million in humanitarian support to East Africa. Our support is providing essential services and supplies, including food, clean water, nutritional support and healthcare, to millions of people, including South Sudanese refugees. The UNHCR reports that over 500,000 refugees have returned to South Sudan since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in 2018. A stable, sustained peace in South Sudan will be essential to allow refugees to return home safely - the UK funds peacebuilding programmes and continuously calls on the Government of South Sudan to implement the peace agreement in full, stop the violence and protect its citizens.

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current state of food distribution among South Sudanese refugees in Arua district, northern Uganda; and what steps they have taken in response to the latest World Food Programme appeal for that area. [HL6808]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Fifty-seven percent of Uganda's 1.5 million refugees are from South Sudan, accommodated mostly in settlements in the West Nile region, bordering Arua District. The UK is committed to providing life-saving assistance and protection to all refugees in Uganda, including nutrition and cash support for food security and to build self-reliance. In financial year 2022/23, the UK Government provided £9.1 million for refugee support in Uganda. We are working with the World Food Programme and other partners to ensure limited resources are prioritised for the most vulnerable.

Space Debris

Asked by Lord Cromwell

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to engage with the concerns of NASA and scientists around the world regarding the increasing risk posed by space junk. [HL6616]

Viscount Camrose: The Government is taking action to deliver on the Plan for Space Sustainability announced last year to help ensure a safe, secure, and sustainable space environment. This includes plans for regulatory reform, supporting the development of an industry-led Space Sustainability Mark, and building sustainable capabilities in the UK including Active Debris Removal and In-Orbit Servicing and Manufacturing missions. The Government engages extensively in international and scientific fora such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee to tackle the issue of the increasingly contested and congested space environment.

Sports

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UN General Assembly resolution A/77/L.28 that major sports events "should be organised in the spirit of peace" and that "the unifying and conciliative nature of such events should be respected". [HL6947]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The UK attaches great importance to the principles of the UN Charter, including not to use force against the territorial integrity of other states. These principles must be defended. We agree on the importance of sports events for improving international relations, and have set out our position about when events are used to try to legitimise conflicts.

Sports Competitors: Work Permits

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay published on 28 March (HL6443), when the next

review of the Governing Body Endorsement will take place; how long the review will run for; what criteria will be deployed as part of the assessment; and what consultation will take place with interested parties, and in particular Premier League clubs. [HL7053]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The reviews of each sport's Governing Body Endorsement criteria are led by the Home Office. Regular reviews are a common and integral part of this work.

The Government is currently carrying out a supplementary rapid review of the competitiveness of English football in attracting the best global talent while maintaining strong support to enable young domestic players to develop from the grassroots level. The scope of the review includes the Governing Body Endorsement criteria for English football. The Football Association, the Premier League, the English Football League, and the Professional Footballers' Association have been asked for written contributions to the review.

Sports: Belarus and Russia

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the International Olympic Committee's position that (1) no international sports events should be organised or supported by an International Federation of Sport or National Olympic Committee in Russia or Belarus, (2) no flag, anthem, colours or any other identifications whatsoever of these countries can be displayed at any sports event or meeting, including the entire venue, and (3) no Russian and Belarussian Government or State official should be invited to or accredited for any international sports event or meeting. [HL6945]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Vladimir Putin should not be able to use sport to legitimise Russia's barbaric invasion of Ukraine. The UK has built and led the international response in this area, including convening three collective statements signed by more than 35 countries. Amongst other principles, our statements also set out that Russia and Belarus should not be permitted to host, bid for, or be awarded any international sporting events; the use of official state Russian and Belarusian flags, emblems and anthems should be prohibited; and no athletes or officials representing the Russian and Belarusian states should be allowed to participate in international sport.

Sri Lanka: Tamils

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the UN Human Rights Council about the situation of Tamil communities in Sri Lanka. [HL6687]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK, alongside our partners in the Core Group, have led international efforts

to promote human rights for all communities in Sri Lanka, including through resolution 51/1 at the UN Human Rights Council. The resolution renewed the mandate of the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report on Sri Lanka and to protect and preserve evidence of past human rights abuses to use in future accountability processes. We have made our stance clear in statements to the Council, most recently on 7 March. The UK also made recommendations including on the need to address issues around the expropriation of land in the North and East during Sri Lanka's Universal Periodic Review in February.

Stalking

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the malicious use of Apple AirTags and similar devices to stalk victims without their knowledge; what estimate they have made of the prevalence of this behaviour; and what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with the manufacturers of such devices in order to prevent such stalking. [HL7008]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Stalking is a terrible crime which causes significant harm to victims. The Government is committed to protecting and supporting victims of stalking and is determined to do everything it can to stop perpetrators at the earliest opportunity.

I am aware of the reports of Apple AirTags being used by perpetrators to stalk their victims. Home Office officials have previously engaged with Apple on this issue and discussed Apple's responses to the concerns raised and the measures it has taken with a view to ensuring safeguarding. We do not have data on the prevalence of stalking related to such devices.

In order to improve our understanding of those who perpetrate abuse and identify what works to tackle their behaviour, the Home Office has invested over £2 million for various research projects since 2020, including research that specifically considered the way perpetrators may use technology to facilitate their abuse.

State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask His Majesty's Government why British Citizens who are subject to taxation by HM Revenue & Customs and are living in a British Overseas Territory are not eligible for an uplift in their state pension. [HL6932]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: There is no connection between State Pension uprating and taxation.

An individual's UK State Pension is based on the number of qualifying years on their National Insurance record.

The Government has a clear position, which has remained a consistent policy of successive Governments for around 70 years. UK State Pensions are payable worldwide and are uprated abroad where we have a legal requirement to do so; for example in the European Economic Area, or countries where we have a reciprocal social security agreement that allows for State Pension uprating which include the British Overseas Territories of Gibraltar and Bermuda. We have no plans to change this policy.

State Retirement Pensions: Telephone Services

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 16 March (HL6171), even allowing for waiting times for the Future Pension Centre having been higher than expected, why calls from the public remain unanswered. [HL6709]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The DWP Futures Pension Centre helpline has experienced unprecedented levels of contact from customers considering whether to pay voluntary National Insurance Contributions (VNICS) before the deadline due to recent media publicity. To alleviate customer concerns about meeting the deadline for paying VNIC's, HM Revenue & Customs has announced it will extend the deadline to pay these contributions until 31 July 2023. DWP have also provided additional resource directed to the telephony lines and will continue to review resourcing options to meet the current call demand.

Syria: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government, what discussions they have had with international partners about the possibility of opening a channel of communication to the insurgent group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib, in order to be able to combat the threat from ISIS in north western Syria more effectively. [HL6800]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Daesh are both proscribed by the UK Government under the Terrorism Act 2000. We are closely monitoring the security situation in north west Syria, including the actions of Daesh and maintain a regular dialogue with our international counterparts. The UK is a leading member of the Global Coalition and we are committed to making sure they cannot resurge in the region.

Tennis: Belarus and Russia

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the All England Lawn Tennis and

Croquet Club on the possible participation of Russian and Belarussian players at the grass-court Wimbledon Championships this year; and what assessment has been made of the inclusion of those players at that event. [HL6946]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Individual, self-funded Russian and Belarussian athletes can compete in the UK, subject to following our guidance on neutrality. We therefore support the approach of the All England Lawn Tennis Club and Lawn Tennis Association on the basis of following that guidance.

Trade Agreements: India

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in negotiating a free trade agreement with India; and when they expect an agreement to be reached. [HL6726]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: We have been in negotiations since January 2022, and talks are ongoing. Both nations have come to the table with the very highest of ambitions and a willingness to work together towards a mutually beneficial deal. We are now working through substantive issues like goods market access, services, and investment, and are starting to see a way forward that works for both sides.

However, we remain clear – the Secretary of State will only sign when we have a deal that is fair, reciprocal, and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

Trade Agreements: USA

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States of America; and when they expect an agreement to be reached. [HL6727]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: In 2020, the UK and US held five productive rounds of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

We remain ready to progress these discussions, but recognise that the US is not currently focused on FTAs with any country. In the meantime, we have done much to help grow our £279bn * of annual bilateral trade. In the last year, we've removed US tariffs on UK steel and aluminium and ended the US ban on UK lamb and beef exports. We've also been working closely on shared priorities identified at the recent UK-US Trade Dialogues – including digital trade and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

* Total UK-US trade (goods and services / exports plus imports) in 2022

Trade Barriers: Isle of Wight

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what information and paperwork need to be provided by a manufacturer, supplier or haulier in Southampton when transporting goods to the Isle of Wight, including goods for end use in the Isle of Wight. [HL6881]

Baroness Penn: Where a business moves goods from mainland Great Britain to the Isle of Wight, it will typically have to provide ordinary commercial information about what is being moved to the courier, haulier, and/or ferry company moving the goods, which could include, for example, a description of the goods and their destination.

Trade Barriers: Kazakhstan

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the UK–Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement, what discussions they have had with the government of Kazakhstan regarding assistance in removing barriers to digital trade or signing a similar agreement. [HL6774]

Lord Johnson of Lainston: The UK continues to work to strengthen our trade and investment relationships with countries such as Kazakhstan. Fast growing economies such as Kazakhstan provide an abundance of opportunities for UK businesses across a wide range of sectors – notwithstanding our world leading digital sector.

The Department for Business and Trade is supporting British business to grab these opportunities through trade dialogues and regular exchanges including the annual United Kingdom-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade and Investment that I co-chaired earlier this year in February in London.

At this moment, we are not expecting to launch negotiations with Kazakhstan on a Digital Trade Agreement.

Train Operating Companies: Tickets

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have received from (1) organisations, or (2) persons, opposed to them proceeding with the Consolidated Online Retail Solution (CORS) for new advanced rail retailing; and whether any of those representations has contributed to the delay to the CORS. [HL6733]

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Competition and Markets Authority concerning proposals by any Department for Transport operator of last resort Train Operating

Company (1) to establish and expand its rail retail footprint, and (2) to provide wider digital retail services to the rail retail sector. [HL6734]

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Competition and Markets Authority concerning any preferential market access which could be enjoyed by any Department for Transport operator of last resort Train Operating Company in its (1) promotion, and (2) sale, of new rail retail products and services across the rail sector. [HL6735]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We have been clear that there must be a level playing field between any future Great British Railways retail function and independent retailers to provide a competitive market that benefits customers. Independent retailers play an important role in growing the market and delivering innovation.

We consulted on our proposals around the retail market, where bodies, such as the Competition and Markets Authority, could express their views, and we are continuing conversations with the Office of Rail and Road and the Competition and Markets Authority while developing policy for online retail. We will publish a response in due course along with any further updates.

Training

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what programmes they have in place to support the retraining of workers to enable them to access work in new sectors. [HL6956]

Baroness Barran: The government is investing £3.8 billion more in further education and skills over this Parliament. The department's skills reforms provide a ladder of opportunity that enables young people and adults to attain good jobs, retrain, and progress in their careers or different careers.

In the 2023 Spring Budget, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a new initiative called Returnerships. This programme is designed to raise awareness of three different skills pathways, apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, and sector-based work academies programmes. This will provide a clear route back into work and encourage employers to hire older workers.

Apprenticeships are available for everyone over the age of 16, from those starting their career, to experienced workers looking to upskill or retrain in a new profession. There are high-quality apprenticeship routes into more than 660 occupations, from entry to expert roles.

As part of our investment in re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities to ensure adults, at any age, can upskill to reach their potential, transforming lives, Skills Bootcamps were introduced at the end of 2020. They deliver short, free, flexible training courses, giving people the

opportunity to build up sector-specific skills, with an offer of a job interview with an employer on completion.

Skills Bootcamps are still a relatively new training offer, but they are already delivering positive outcomes for adult learners and employers, and are available right across the country. Following the recent Budget announcement, the department will target making 64,000 training places a year available by the 2024/25 financial year to ensure that learners across all areas of the country can access Skills Bootcamps.

We have also introduced the Free Courses for Jobs scheme, which gives eligible adults in England without an existing full level 3 qualification or who are unemployed or meet the low wage criteria, the chance to access over 400 Level 3 qualifications for free.

The offer has seen over 35,000 enrolments reported between April 2021 and October 2022. This means that enrolments are 82% higher for adults without a full level 3 compared uptake of the same qualifications in 2018/19.

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), with an investment of £1.34 billion in the 2022/23 academic year. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to help them gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship, or further learning.

The National Careers Service provides free, up-to-date, impartial information, advice and guidance on careers, skills, and the labour market in England. It offers intensive support for low skilled adults without a qualification at level 3, as one of six priority groups for the Service. Professionally qualified careers advisers can support customers to explore the range of learning routes to determine the best route for them and to develop a careers action plan.

Community-based National Careers Service contractors are co-located in most Jobcentre Plus offices, as well as a range of other community settings. They work closely with work coaches at a local level, encouraging work coaches to refer customers in need of careers advice and guidance to the Service.

Transcaucasus: Roads

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the ruling of the International Criminal Court on 22 February that the government of Azerbaijan must end the blockage of the Lachin corridor, what representations they are making to the government of Azerbaijan to open the Lachin corridor. [HL6847]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has noted the International Court of Justice's judgments, and continues to call for immediate action to re-open the Lachin Corridor and restore the flow of goods and people into Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

(OSCE) on 2 March, our Ambassador stated that the parties to the conflict must engage in substantive negotiations, without preconditions, to secure a sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict and to resolve all outstanding tensions. This followed engagements by the Minister for Europe with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments over January and February this year.

Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan since 1 March regarding the closure of the Lachin Corridor. [HL6864]

Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken since 1 March regarding the closure of the Lachin Corridor. [HL6865]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has repeatedly called for immediate action to re-open the Lachin Corridor and restore the flow of goods and people into Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 2 March, our Ambassador stated that the parties to the conflict must engage in substantive negotiations, without preconditions, to secure a sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict and to resolve all outstanding tensions. The UK Government will continue to emphasise this message in further official engagement with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments in the coming months.

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with government of Azerbaijan about opening of Lachin Corridor in both directions, further to the International Court of Justice's Order of provisional measures on the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and what assurances they have received from the government of that country on the matter. [HL7063]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has noted the International Court of Justice's judgments, and continues to call for immediate action to re-open the Lachin Corridor and restore the flow of goods and people into Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on 2 March, our Ambassador stated that the parties to the conflict must engage in substantive negotiations, without preconditions, to secure a sustainable and peaceful settlement to the conflict and to resolve all outstanding tensions. This followed engagements by the Minister for Europe with the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments over January and February this year.

Transport: Databases

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish their transport data strategy; and, given the Department for Transport has been working on it since 2020–21, why it has not yet been published. [HL6759]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department published the Transport Data Strategy (TDS) on 28 March. Work on the Transport Data Strategy was paused during the Covid Pandemic, as officials working on it were needed for the response work.

Travellers: Caravan Sites

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many authorised Traveller sites in England are within 50 metres of (1) A-roads, (2) motorways, (3) sewage stations, (4) waste recycling centres, (5) industrial estates, and (6) railway lines. [HL6777]

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many authorised Traveller sites have given rise to complaints to local authorities about (1) environmental pollution and degradation, and (2) vermin infestation. [HL6778]

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many local authorities conduct regular pollution monitoring of (1) air, (2) noise, and (3) land, contamination on authorised Traveller sites. [HL6779]

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many authorised Traveller sites are on contaminated land. [HL6780]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) does not hold data centrally on the location of authorised traveller sites. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites states that Local Planning Authorities, when developing their Local Plan, should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.

Under the Local Air Quality Management Framework, as part of the Environment Act, all Local Authorities in England are required to assess air quality in their area.

The Government does not hold centrally information on complaints for statutory nuisances. Section 78R of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 requires Local Authorities and the Environment Agency to keep a public register about contaminated land in their respective areas.

Tree Planting: North of England

Asked by **Lord Storey**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many new trees have been planted as part of the Northern Forest project in each of the last three years. [HL6876]

Lord Benyon: The Northern Forest is an ambitious landscape scale partnership that aims to establish at least 50 million new trees by 2043 in and around the cities of Liverpool, Chester, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Hull. The government supports the Northern Forest as a contributor to levelling up by supporting new and existing jobs, rural economies, fighting climate change, facilitating nature recovery, and encouraging greater private investment in trees and woodlands. So far, the core partnership of the Woodland Trust, Mersey Forest, Manchester City of Trees, White Rose Forest and Humber Forest have established over 5 million new trees since 2018.

The Forestry Commission publishes information on new tree planting annually, including in the Northern Forest. These figures can be obtained from its Headline Key Performance Indicators reports, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators>. The most recent published provisional statistics are shown below (and is attached):

Year	Hectares Planted	Equivalent in number of trees
21/22	150	168,000
20/21	69	159,000

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators [Forestry-Commission-Key-Performance-Indicators-Report-2021-22-.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-27/HL6876>

Turing Scheme

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the causes of delays to payments to students on the Turing scheme; and what plans they have (1) to reduce the level of bureaucracy involved in applications, and (2) to mitigate the effect of these problems on poorer students. [HL6832]

Baroness Barran: Turing Scheme grant recipients are organisations that are, in the main, education providers. The department is aware that some organisations have experienced issues navigating the process for claiming Turing Scheme funds, including providing the correct evidence on projects, which has led to delays in payment being processed. The Turing Scheme delivery partner, Capita, has already taken steps to help

organisations better understand the process. This includes video instructions, written guidance and one to one telephone support when requested.

Department officials are also working with Capita to review how it can improve the overall customer experience while obtaining assurance that Turing Scheme funds are being appropriately spent, within the grant terms.

Under the current payment process, it is the responsibility of grant recipients to request grant funds on time, in line with project plans and to disburse funding to participants. To ensure this does not negatively impact disadvantaged students, Capita have made payments outside of its regular payment cycle where requests have been submitted late or were initially rejected due to incomplete evidence, especially if this puts student placements at risk.

The Turing Scheme continues to place great emphasis on providing opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Turkey: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Türkiye regarding its reported efforts to restrict opposition in that country. [HL6630]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are monitoring the run-up to the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey on May 14 and are in regular discussion with the Turkish electoral authorities, the government, opposition parties, civil society groups and the Turkish media. We have long encouraged Turkey to work towards the full protection of fundamental rights, particularly in the area of freedom of expression and assembly, which is essential to the long-term health of Turkish democracy. We have stressed the need for the elections to be carried out in a free and fair manner and will continue our dialogue with Turkey throughout the process.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of goods processed through the Green Lane entering Northern Ireland that will be routinely checked under the Windsor Framework; and what percentage of the routinely checked consignments will be done physically. [HL6653]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Trusted traders will face no routine physical checks on their goods moving in the green lane. The only physical checks completed will be

risk-based and intelligence-led to target smuggling, criminality, abuse or specific risks to animal, plant or public health. For agrifood goods, we will also radically reduce the number of visual inspections done on consignments in the green lane - from 100 percent now to 5 percent by 2025.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether goods forming part of a transaction between parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but bought online, will be processed via the red or green lanes under the Windsor framework. [HL6712]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The green lane will be available for goods bought online in line with the terms of the Windsor Framework. For example we have safeguarded the movement of consumer parcels, removing any need for international customs processes. That means that Northern Ireland consumers will be able to order from businesses in the rest of the UK and receive goods in the post as they do now. This will mean Northern Ireland citizens will uniquely be able to receive parcels from both the UK and EU without burdens. Importantly, this new approach will apply even to goods otherwise classified as prohibited or restricted under EU rules (though domestic UK law prohibitions and normal carrier terms and conditions will still apply).

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the processes for monitoring and enforcing regulation of parcels sent between Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the Windsor framework. [HL6713]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have safeguarded parcel movements and maintained business as usual for Northern Ireland consumers. That means parcels can be sent to friends and family in Northern Ireland, with no requirements on either the sender or recipient. People in Northern Ireland ordering from businesses in the rest of the UK will continue to order and receive goods through the post as they do now; and parcels sent between businesses will be able to use the same internal market scheme as applies for freight movements. To support this the UK has agreed that authorised parcel operators will manage a process of sharing data to monitor and manage any risks of smuggling into the EU market. The Government will set out further detail on the operational arrangements in due course.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the projected annual costs of operating the red and green lanes in Northern Ireland. [HL6714]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Further guidance on these arrangements will be provided in due course, and we will set out the details of new arrangements and their costs in the usual way.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the total estimated annual cost of operating the trusted trader scheme for Northern Ireland. [HL6715]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will continue to fund the Trader Support Scheme; and what the estimated annual cost of doing so will be. [HL6717]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will continue to provide a free-to-use support service for movements in the green lane. We will set out the details of new arrangements and their costs in the usual way, including to Parliament as we continue to do. Further guidance on the green lane will be provided in due course.

Information on the historical cost of the Trader Support Service and other support schemes is available in response to Written Question UIN 146816.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what will be the cost to individual companies of participating in the trusted trader scheme for Northern Ireland; and whether they will be providing any financial support for companies, particularly small companies, registering and participating in the scheme. [HL6716]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The internal market scheme will be straightforward and free for traders to register. In addition, we will continue to provide a free-to-use support service for movements in the green lane. Further guidance on the green lane will be provided in due course.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether all haulage vehicles transporting food retail or goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in consignments intended to remain in Northern Ireland will be fitted on each trip with a seal designed to track movement of the goods and ensure that the consignment is not altered or added to until the completion of its journey. [HL7043]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what the cost of each seal used to enable monitoring and protect the movement of each trip containing a consignment of food retail or goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will be; and whether the cost of such seals will be met by His Majesty's Government or the individual haulier. [HL7044]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is correct that goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, including food retail goods, which are intended to stay in Northern Ireland, will travel in sealed consignments to ensure that only internal UK traders are able to move goods without being subject to tariffs.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that disability groups in Northern Ireland that are currently receiving funding from the European Social Fund will now receive funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund, and that such arrangements are handled in a timely manner to ensure there is no gap in funding. [HL6882]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what money from the Shared Prosperity Fund has been allocated to disability groups in Northern Ireland; and what is the timetable for the delivery of that funding. [HL6883]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The economic inactivity competition closed on 27th January 2023, and we have received a strong and positive response from organisations across Northern Ireland seeking to deliver economic inactivity and Multiply support. We recognise the need for this important funding to be in place promptly as the European Social Fund support draws to a close in Northern Ireland.

You will be aware that the overall approach to addressing economic inactivity set out in the UKSPF Investment Plan has been informed by discussions with local partners - representative groups from key sectors, including the voluntary and community sector, business, higher education, skills and local authorities, and engagement activity with a wide range of organisations including disability groups over the summer. I can confirm that we will publish information on the successful projects as soon as we are able.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government how a company can apply for Trusted Trader status under the provisions of the Windsor Framework. [HL6655]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government will set out further specific operational arrangements in due course. But it is important to note that the Windsor Framework significantly expands the range of businesses who can benefit from trusted trader status. Businesses throughout the United Kingdom will now be eligible - moving away from the previous restrictions that required a physical premises in Northern Ireland. Registration will be straightforward. Criteria for businesses to qualify includes basic record keeping of goods movements, a good compliance record, and no history of serious criminal offences related to their economic activity.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the indication by the European Commission that it will not implement new arrangements for retail food consignments until new inspection facilities at Northern Ireland ports have been both completed and audited, whether they will extend full grace periods in all these areas until such changes are implemented by the European Commission. [HL7040]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: All current grace periods, including the Scheme for Temporary Agri-food Movements to Northern Ireland (STAMNI) arrangements will continue to be in place until further notice. If operators are not moving goods via STAMNI, they will continue to be subject to full EU checks and controls.

Ukraine: Cereals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to find alternative routes for the export of grain from Ukraine given the closure of Black Sea ports in that country. [HL6644]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Grain is leaving Ukraine through Black Sea ports. As of 19 March, more than 900 voyages carrying over 25 million tonnes of grain and other foodstuffs departed ports to deliver vital foodstuffs to Asia, Africa and Europe through the UK supported Black Sea Grain Initiative. The UK, along with G7 partners, has also supported increased exports of grain from Ukraine through land routes into Europe. Specifically the UK provided £10 million to bolster the Ukrainian railway system and provide greater resilience to facilitate the movement of grain by land exports.

Ukraine: War Crimes

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to bring to justice of those responsible for war crimes, potential genocide, and the abduction of children in Ukraine. [HL6898]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are making every effort to assist the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international investigations as appropriate, including leading international efforts to build support to the work of the ICC in Ukraine. On 20 March, the Deputy Prime Minister co-hosted an international Justice Ministers Conference at Lancaster House, generating over £4 million in voluntary contributions and new offers of practical support for the ICC and its investigation into the situation in Ukraine. Further to the £1 million financial contribution from 2022, the UK announced an additional £1 million financial contribution to the ICC at the Justice

Ministers Conference. The Government is exploring further the provision of expertise, advice and training including specialist support for children.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress is being made to establish a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression in Ukraine; and what contribution they are planning to provide in relation to resources and judicial expertise. [HL6899]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to holding Russia to account for its actions in Ukraine, including by supporting the International Criminal Court and Ukrainian domestic investigations into allegations of war crimes committed in Ukraine. As the Foreign Secretary announced on 20 January, the UK has accepted Ukraine's invitation to join a 'core group' to consider options for ensuring criminal accountability for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including possibly through a special tribunal. Discussions are ongoing. These are complex issues of international law, which the group must be allowed time to consider. The UK also stands ready to work with Ukraine on establishing a register of damages.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the USA about the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression in Ukraine; and what response they received. [HL6900]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is working closely with international partners, including the US government, to ensure those committing atrocities in Ukraine are held to account. As the Foreign Secretary announced on 20 January, the UK has accepted Ukraine's invitation to join a 'core group' to consider options for ensuring criminal accountability for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including possibly through a special tribunal. These are complex issues of international law, which the group must be allowed time to consider. The UK recognises the importance of working with partners on accountability.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to laying a resolution before the United Nations General Assembly providing for a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression in Ukraine, citing the precedents of such tribunals in Sierra Leone and Cambodia. [HL6901]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is working closely with international partners to ensure those committing atrocities in Ukraine are held to account, including at the UN level. As the Foreign Secretary announced on 20 January, the UK has accepted Ukraine's invitation to join a 'core group' to consider options for ensuring criminal accountability for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including possibly through a special

tribunal. These are complex issues of international law, which the group must be allowed time to consider.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ukraine about establishing a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression; and whether, in any such discussions, the Ukrainian constitution has proved to be an impediment to establishing such a body during the current state of Martial Law. [HL6966]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Foreign Secretary announced on 20 January, the UK has accepted Ukraine's invitation to join a 'core group' to consider options for ensuring criminal accountability for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including possibly through a special tribunal. Discussions into how to achieve this continue, including around potential issues linked to the Ukrainian constitution. These are complex issues of international law, which the group must be allowed time to consider.

Universal Credit

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the Spring Budget 2023 factsheet – Labour Market Measures that over 700,000 lead carers of children in receipt of Universal Credit will be made to look for work or increase the number of hours they work, what is their estimate of how this number will be broken down by (1) age of youngest child, and (2) by lone parent/other; and what additional work-related requirements will be applied to such claimants. [HL6635]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The information requested is provided in the tables below.

1) Estimate of the proportion of lead carers broken down by age of youngest child

Age of youngest child	Proportion
1	14%
2	12%
3	11%
4	9%
5	10%
6	9%
7	8%
8	7%
9	6%
10	6%
11	5%
12	4%

2) Estimate of the proportion of lead carers broken down by family type

Family Type	Proportion
Single, with children	70%
Couple, with children	30%

Caveats & Data Definitions:

- We do not hold data that explicitly identifies lead carers, as a result, figures are estimated assuming that if one member of the household has age of youngest child as required, and is in the relevant conditionality regime, then they are a "lead carer".
- Universal Credit conditionality regimes included are Intensive Work Search, Working with requirements, Planning for work and Preparing for work.
- Based on average volumes 2022/23.
- Based on internal Universal Credit Household dataset

Lead carers of children aged 1-2 will be required to have regular work focussed conversations with a dedicated Jobcentre work coach more often.

For lead carers of children aged 2, work coaches can offer claimants more support with work preparation activities such as, job readiness workshops; help with developing a CV; practicing interviewing skills; skills assessment; participating in training or employment programme.

Lead carers of children aged 3-12 will be supported by their work coach to increase their work search and preparation activity and will be required to be available for higher paid or longer hours jobs to align with Department for Education's 30hr free childcare offer.

Work search activities could include carrying out work searches, making job applications and creating and maintaining online job profiles. The requirements will be tailored to a claimant's circumstances (e.g., location of job, claimant eligibility for free childcare provision, availability and location of childcare provision, and transport).

Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask His Majesty's Government what evidence they have received about the impact of the loss of the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre following its sale. [HL6823]

Viscount Camrose: The decision to sell the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre was made by VMIC UK Ltd's Board of Directors. The facility was subsequently sold to Catalent. Once completed, it is intended that the facility will be capable of producing a range of therapeutics and vaccines.

Officials regularly engage with industry stakeholders to understand the wider landscape and implications for vaccine development and manufacturing in the UK and will continue to do so.

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications the sale of the Vaccines Manufacturing And Innovation Centre (VMIC) near Oxford for the UK's long-term investment in vaccine manufacturing; and how the disposal of the VMIC will contribute to the preparedness of the UK for future pandemics, particularly in view of the experiences of COVID-19 pandemic. [HL7010]

Lord Markham: The decision to sell the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre was made by VMIC UK Ltd.'s Board of Directors, with the facility being subsequently sold to Catalent. Once completed, it is intended that the facility will be capable of producing a range of therapeutics and vaccines.

Officials regularly engage with industry stakeholders to understand the wider landscape and implications for vaccine development and manufacturing in the United Kingdom and will continue to do so. Officials are also working across Government to review lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future health emergencies.

Vagrancy Act 1824

*Asked by **Baroness Adams of Craigielea***

To ask His Majesty's Government what they have plans to repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824; and if so, when. [HL6960]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Government does agree that the Vagrancy Act is antiquated and not fit for purpose, and therefore we have committed to repealing it. We made that commitment during the passage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. Our commitment to repealing it has always been dependent on introducing modern replacement legislation to ensure that police and other agencies continue to have the powers that they need to keep communities safe and protect vulnerable individuals.

I cannot give a specific date when we will bring the legislation in. We will bring forward suitable replacement legislation in a future legislative vehicle.

VAT: Northern Ireland

*Asked by **Lord Lilley***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will be able to (1) zero rate, and (2) exempt, additional goods and services from VAT in Northern Ireland under the terms of the Windsor Framework. [HL6934]

*Asked by **Lord Lilley***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will be able to raise the VAT registration threshold in Northern Ireland under the terms of the Windsor Framework. [HL6935]

*Asked by **Lord Lilley***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will be able to (1) zero rate, and (2) exempt, new goods and services from VAT under the terms of the Windsor Framework. [HL6936]

Baroness Penn: The Windsor Framework establishes new freedoms for the UK to set VAT rates and thresholds in Northern Ireland that go far beyond those available before EU Exit. That includes the ability to zero rate additional goods for VAT.

Vegetables: Imports

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of (1) tomatoes, (2) peas, (3) onions, and (4) carrots, consumed in England that were imported; and for each of those types of produce, what were the countries of origin of those imports. [HL6871]

Lord Benyon: For the UK in 2021, imports accounted for 83% of domestic consumption of fresh tomatoes, 8% of peas, 43% of onions, and 6% of carrots. Figures for England are not available as statistics on overseas trade cover the UK as a whole.

For UK imports of tomatoes, the top three trading countries by volume were the Netherlands, Morocco, and Spain, out of 20 countries in total. For peas it was Guatemala, Peru and Kenya, out of 39 countries in total. For onions it was the Netherlands, Spain and Egypt out of 43 countries. For carrots Spain, the Netherlands, and Israel were the top three out of 28 countries in total.

Victim Support Schemes: Women

*Asked by **Baroness Thornton***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address geographical areas where there is a shortfall in specialist community support for girls and young women, particularly those with protected characteristics, informed by age, gender, culture, and trauma of those in need. [HL7038]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Local authorities are supported by a range of grants from central government. The Department of Health and Social Care are investing £25 million in women's health hubs across England, so that women can get better access to care for essential services such as menstrual problems, contraception and the menopause.

The Government Equalities Office are responsible for equalities legislation, but all public authorities are bound by public sector equality duties.

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Asked by Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are offering to people from Hong Kong who have come to the UK under the British National Overseas (BNO) visa to help them take up teaching positions. [HL7002]

Baroness Barran: From 1 February 2023, teachers who are already qualified and recognised as teachers in Hong Kong are able to apply to have their qualification recognised with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in England, without additional training. This means that they can apply for teaching roles that require QTS.

For those looking to train to teach in physics and languages, bursaries worth up to £27,000 and scholarships worth up to £29,000 are available, including to those with a British National (Overseas) visa.

For those who are considering coming to England, we have introduced an international relocation payment worth up to £10,000 to help overseas physics and language teachers and trainees, including those from Hong Kong, to relocate.

Schools looking to complete safeguarding checks in order to employ teachers from Hong Kong can currently provide assistance to these individuals with a letter which can be used to apply for a Certificate of No Criminal Conviction from the Hong Kong authorities. Our statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, also sets out alternative safeguarding processes that schools can follow. This can be found attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL7002_pdf [Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7002>

Asked by Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the barriers faced by people from Hong Kong who have come to the UK under the British National Overseas (BNO) visa taking up employment that requires a Disclosure and Barring Service check. [HL7003]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: In April 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched a new UK-wide Welcome Programme to support BN(O) status holders. In November 2022, DLUHC published a letter to BN(O)s and prospective employers on Certificates of No Criminal Conviction (CNCC) from the Hong Kong Police. The letter outlines a revised guidance on how to obtain a CNCC and gives sectoral examples on alternative methods when one cannot be obtained. This letter is

available in English and Cantonese and is available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) landing page. We are working closely with FCDO officials to keep the guidance under review to help BN(O)s overcome the barriers they face when seeking employment.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Letter on CNCC [Letter on Certificates of No Criminal Conviction.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-03-29/HL7003>

Visits Abroad: Rwanda

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government whether journalists from The Guardian were invited to accompany the Home Secretary on her recent visit to Rwanda with journalists from other UK newspapers; if not, why not; and, further to the Home Office spokesperson's comments reported in the Press Gazette on 25 April 2022 that the Home Office "fully adheres to the Government Communication Service Propriety Guidance when dealing with members of the media", whether the decision on whether to invite Guardian journalists took account of the Government Communication Service Propriety Guidance which states that to "work effectively, media officers must establish their impartiality and neutrality with the news media, and ensure that they deal with all news media even-handedly". [HL6781]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government how the list of news organisations that attended to report on the Home Secretary's visit to Rwanda was drawn up; and at what stage that list was considered against the Government Communications Service Propriety Guidance on the need for media officers to "establish their impartiality and neutrality with the news media", by dealing "with all news media even-handedly." [HL6782]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what advice the (1) Home Secretary, and (2) Permanent Secretary of the Government Communications Service, received concerning the exclusion of news organisations who may not support Government policy from attending the Home Secretary's recent trip to Rwanda; and in particular whether they considered the Government Communications Service Propriety Guidance requiring media officers to "establish their impartiality and neutrality with the news media", by dealing "with all news media even-handedly." [HL6783]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Media outlets who accompanied the Home Secretary's visit to Kigali on March 18 – 19 were BBC News, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, GB News, Press

Association, The Sun, The Times. There were also numerous outlets in the region who covered the visit.

Even-handed treatment of the media in accordance with the Government Communications Service guidelines is central to how the Civil Service communicates. Due consideration of the GCS guidelines is undertaken in Home Office communications.

All news organisations were kept informed of the progress of the visit regardless of whether they attended or not.

Voice Over Internet Protocol

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what steps they are taking to ensure that BT identifies the residents qualifying under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. [HL6987]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what assessment they have made of how residents without broadband will be 'switched on' by BT to access Digital Voice services; and at whose cost. [HL6988]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what assessment they have made of how pay phones will be enabled after switch off. [HL6989]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what steps they have taken to identify people who are digitally excluded; and whether they have undertaken an Equalities Impact Study of the Digital Voice rollout. [HL6990]

Viscount Camrose: BT's PSTN migration process is called the Digital Voice Program. Following their decision to pause their residential migrations in March 2022, BT announced this month their intention to restart their Digital Voice Program in Summer 2023. Since pausing, BT has taken several steps to identify and develop solutions for their customers. BT conducted a detailed internal customer analysis to identify at-risk customers which includes the chronically sick and disabled. These cohorts will receive additional support from BT during their migration process. BT's planned restart will be prioritising customers with existing full fibre broadband services, little or no landline usage and no identified vulnerabilities.

Consumers who are landline-only customers won't be required to take a paid broadband service from BT if they

do not wish to. They will be provided with a dedicated internet connection specifically for their landline service at no extra cost. Customers without access to broadband or mobile coverage will still be able to use their landline for calls, but the technology that underpins it will be different. They will not be migrated to Digital Voice until they have the connectivity they need to make the switch.

Public call boxes or "pay phones" will also undergo the upgrade process. Pay phones will continue to work in the same way as they do today, but the technology which underpins them will change.

BT has created a Digital Phone Advisory Group which comprises charities and representative groups to advise on how best to support and engage with at-risk customer groups including the digitally excluded. When BT will migrate these customers, they will work closely with local authorities and other local stakeholders to help them make the move as effectively as possible.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what assessment they have made of the (1) timing, and (2) nature, of communication of the copper switch off. [HL6991]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the resumption by BT of the rollout of Digital Voice, what assessment they have made of the process for deciding the priority for areas for the copper switch off. [HL6992]

Viscount Camrose: BT's Digital Voice rollout relates to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) migration. The PSTN is a privately-owned network and the upgrade to digital voice services is an industry-led process. Consumers will be migrated to digital voice services by 2025. We remain engaged with Communications Providers including BT to monitor their migration processes. We want to ensure that consumers including the most vulnerable are protected and prepared for the upgrade.

Copper switch off, or the retirement of fibre-to-the-cabinet (FTTC) broadband services, is a separate process. Ofcom, the UK's telecommunications regulator, will monitor and oversee the withdrawal of copper services. FTTC broadband services will continue to operate after the PSTN has been replaced.

In Volume Three of Ofcom's Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26 (WFTMR), it set out some criteria by which it will allow Openreach to decommission the copper-based network in future, however Ofcom has also decided it is currently too early in the migration process to define the conditions that will trigger the complete deregulation of the copper network. Ofcom will set out further details on this process in the next market review period.

Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access: Life Sciences

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Markham of 14 February (HL5163), whether they will undertake a comparison of the impact of the UK's rebate rates in the voluntary scheme for branded medicines with the more favourable rebates in other European countries, given their declared ambitions for the UK life sciences sector. [HL6286]

Lord Markham: We have no plans to undertake such a comparison. Differences in the structure of medicine pricing policies and systems make direct comparisons of payment percentages or rebates with other countries difficult and potentially misleading.

The Government is open to ideas about how a successor to the voluntary scheme for branded medicines pricing and access should operate from 2024 onwards. We will be considering a range of factors and will work with industry to consider learning from approaches in the United Kingdom and internationally, to agree a mutually beneficial successor that supports better patient outcomes; ensures the sustainability of National Health Service spend on branded medicines; and enables a strong UK life sciences industry.

Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability

Asked by Baroness Adams of Craigielea

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of disabled people affected by changes to the eligibility criteria for the Warm Home Discount Scheme between 2022—23. [HL7050]

Lord Callanan: As a result of expanding and reforming the scheme in England and Wales, the Government estimated in the final impact assessment that 160,000 more households, where a person has a disability or long-term illness, will receive a rebate.

These changes do not apply in Scotland, where customers apply for a Broader Group rebate through their energy suppliers, who can set their own eligibility criteria.

Water: Sustainable Development

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take, together with international partners, to ensure global water security and to advance the global sustainable development agenda after the UN 2023 Water Conference on 22–24 March; and whether this will include commitments to the Water Action Agenda, particularly in view of the conclusions of the UN World Water Development Report 2023. [HL6798]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK played a leading role at the UN Water conference. Delivering the

UK's key intervention, Lord Goldsmith called on all for greater accountability, political leadership, and finance for water. Lord Goldsmith also announced our Water Action Agenda contributions including: £18.5 million in new support to strengthen Water, Sanitation and Hygiene systems in up to five countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and seed funding for a £38 million water programme. The UK supports the findings of UN World Water Development Report 2023, and agrees partnership and cooperation are key to achieving equitable access to water and sanitation for all.

Wave Power

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the performance of Wave Energy Scotland; and what plans they have, if any, to replicate its model to support the development of wave energy in England. [HL6893]

Lord Callanan: The Government has no plans to make an assessment of Wave Energy Scotland. It was established, and is fully funded, by the Scottish Government.

The Government supports the development and deployment of wave energy in the UK through research funding programmes and the Contracts for Difference scheme.

Wave Power: EU Grants and Loans

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that UK wave energy projects will continue to have access to EU funding through schemes such as the European Regional Development Fund and Horizon Europe. [HL6894]

Viscount Camrose: Wave energy projects have been eligible for a suite of HMG research funding programmes. The UK welcomes the EU's recent willingness to engage in discussions on UK association to EU programmes. HMG has acted to support UK researchers and businesses across the UK by introducing the Horizon Guarantee - now extended until end June 2023. In all circumstances, we are confident we're going to have a compelling offer for international S&T collaboration, building on our global strengths.

Wave Power: Finance

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of introducing a ringfence for wave energy in future contract for difference auctions. [HL6897]

Lord Callanan: Through the Contracts for Difference scheme the Government can ringfence budgets for technologies where costs are comparatively higher than

other technologies in the same pot, but show potential to make an important contribution to decarbonisation targets. In the upcoming Allocation Round 5 auction, tidal stream and wave technologies will be part of the emerging technologies pot, which has a £35m budget. Of this total, the Government has a ring-fenced budget of £10m to support tidal stream projects. Wave technology is costlier and at precommercial stage, which is several years behind tidal stream in development, hence the Government has not set a ring-fenced budget for this technology.

Windsor Framework

Asked by Lord Balfie

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 16 March (HL6104), when the next meeting of the UK–EU Joint Committee will take place; when and where the details and costs of the new arrangements will be set out; and whether a fuller answer to HL6104 in the first instance would have avoided the additional cost of answering this supplementary question. [HL6601]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Joint Committee met on Friday 24 March. We will set out details of the next Joint Committee meeting to Parliament in the usual way. Following the 24 March meeting at which the Windsor Framework was adopted, the Government will continue work to give it effect in domestic law as required. We will set out further details of those arrangements and their costs in due course as that work continues.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made on refining the specification of goods defined as "at risk" under the Windsor Framework; and what further discussions, if any, they are having on that definition. [HL6885]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Windsor Framework significantly expands the number of businesses able to be classed as internal UK traders and move goods as 'not at risk' of entering the EU through three important changes:

- First, businesses throughout the United Kingdom will now be eligible on a permanent basis.
- Secondly, we have quadrupled the turnover threshold below which companies involved in processing can move goods under the scheme which they can show stay in Northern Ireland.
- Thirdly, we have increased the number of firms eligible to move goods for processing in the animal feed, healthcare, construction and not-for-profit sectors. Inputs into food production will continue to benefit from inclusion in the 'not at risk' definition.

The Windsor Framework also expands both the traders that can access the scheme, and the goods they can move, while codifying in legal text a unique arrangement in

which UK public health and safety standards will apply for all retail food and drink in the UK internal market.

For those in the scheme who can show that their goods will stay in Northern Ireland, we will provide a radically simplified process for goods movements, underpinned by the existing Trader Support Service, as we have set out.

Windsor Framework: Parliamentary Scrutiny

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government which statutory instruments have been published to give effect to the Windsor Framework; and what plans they have to ensure that House of Lords select committees have sufficient time to scrutinise those instruments before motions are tabled for their approval. [HL6789]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Implementing the Framework expeditiously is essential to providing assurance and certainty as to what the Framework will mean in practice. At present, the Government has laid the Windsor Framework (Democratic Scrutiny) Regulations 2023 and The Value Added Tax (Installation of Energy-Saving Materials) Order 2023.

The Government will continue to bring forward legislation to give effect to the Windsor Framework in a way that enables scrutiny by Parliament, and to engage with the scrutiny committees of Parliament in order to support their work.

World War II: Military Decorations

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask His Majesty's Government for what reasons they decided to institute the Arctic Convoy Star. [HL6998]

Baroness Goldie: Following Sir John Holmes' independent Medal Review in 2012, the Arctic Star was introduced for veterans of the Arctic Convoys to Russia from 1942-1944. Sir John concluded that a separate Star for the Arctic was warranted on the basis that this comprised a distinct theatre of war in its own right, and his recommendation of the award of a bespoke campaign medal brought Arctic convoy veterans into line with awards for other distinct campaigns, such as the Africa and Italy Stars.

Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

To ask His Majesty's Government for what reasons they decided to institute the Bomber Command Clasp. [HL6999]

Baroness Goldie: Following Sir John Holmes' independent Medal Review in 2012, the Bomber Command Clasp to the 1939-45 Star was introduced for aircrew who served in Bomber Command. Sir John concluded that Bomber Command had been treated inconsistently with those who served in the Battle of

Britain, and his recommendation of the award of a clasp to Bomber Command air crew brought them into line with Fighter Command veterans, who were awarded a Battle of Britain clasp to the 1939-45 Star.

World Water Day

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to mark World Water Day on 22 March; and which minister will be attending the UN Water Conference from 22–24 March. [HL6665]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK has taken a leadership role at the first UN Water Conference in decades, which coincides with World Water Day, as co-chair of the interactive dialogue on water for health. Lord Goldsmith, the FCDO Minister of State with responsibility for Climate and Environment portfolios, opened the meeting and announced new support to strengthen Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) systems in up to five countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. This will prevent disease, protect people's health and safeguard the environment. It contributes to the UK government's commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, children and babies by 2030.

Yazidis: Women

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, together with international partners, to ensure that the Yazidi women and girl victims of Islamic State crimes are supported and have access to justice. [HL7011]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK led the UN Security Council to establish the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) and continues to encourage close co-operation between UNITAD and the Government of Iraq.

We also advocated for the passing of the Yazidi Survivors Law, an important first step toward assistance and justice for survivors of sexual violence by Daesh. The UK is committed to helping Iraq fully implement the legislation, including providing funding support to the Directorate of Yazidi Affairs.

During my recent visit to Iraq I met with Yazidi communities and leaders to hear their experiences and reiterate UK support.

Yemen: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have led recently at the United Nations with the aim of alleviating Yemen's ongoing humanitarian crisis; and what discussions they have had at the UN with the governments of Saudi Arabia and of the Gulf States in regard to humanitarian funding for Yemen this year. [HL7009]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK uses its role as penholder at the UN Security Council to support the Yemen peace process. A political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability and address the worsening humanitarian crisis. We are also working closely with the UN Special Envoy to Yemen in his efforts to develop the current de facto truce into a Yemeni-led political settlement under UN auspices. The UK pledged up to £88 million of aid for Yemen at the UN-led Humanitarian Pledging Conference in Geneva in March.

We continue to engage with Gulf partners regarding a coordinated approach to effectively deliver humanitarian aid in Yemen. This includes at the ambassadorial level and through our officials in Riyadh and Amman. At the inaugural UK-Saudi Arabia Aid Dialogue last month, improving humanitarian access and encouraging greater funding commitments by regional partners were identified as key targets.

Youth Rehabilitation Orders

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Derby

To ask His Majesty's Government when the pilot trial changes to Youth Rehabilitation Orders with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance will commence; and when they will report on their findings. [HL6850]

Lord Bellamy: Piloting the changes to Youth Rehabilitation Orders with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance are subject to the passage of secondary legislation which we intend to lay shortly. If passed, we intend that the new powers will come into force by summer 2023 for an initial 18-month period in selected areas. An evaluation will determine whether to fully roll out the changes. Publication of the findings will follow, but an exact date has not yet been decided.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Achieving Smokefree 2030: Cutting Smoking and Stopping Kids Vaping1	Artificial Intelligence..... 13
Canada Trade Negotiations: Update.....2	Artificial Intelligence..... 14
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Conclusion of Substantive Negotiations2	Ash Dieback Disease: Disease Control 14
Consultation on a Registration Scheme for Short-term Lets in England3	Asylum..... 14
Correction to Written Parliamentary Questions ...4	Asylum: Applications..... 15
Covid-19 Vaccine Update5	Asylum: Children 15
Draft Border Target Operating Model.....5	Asylum: Deportation 16
Inclusive Britain Progress Report.....6	Asylum: Housing 17
Maths Teaching6	Asylum: Rwanda 18
NatWest Group: Government Shares7	AUKUS: Nuclear Reactors..... 18
Reforms to the Process of Certifying Claims as Clearly Unfounded8	Azerbaijan: Sanctions 18
Smart Motorway Schemes: Cancellation8	BBC Arabic Service 18
UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Tackling Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland9	Beef: Origin Marking 19
Written Answers.....10	British Overseas Territories..... 19
A14: Tree Planting10	BRIXMIS: General Service Medal..... 19
Active Travel10	Broadband: Rural Areas 19
Advanced Research and Invention Agency: Environmental Protection.....10	Buildings: Energy 19
Afghanistan: Human Rights10	Burkina Faso: Humanitarian Situation 20
Afghanistan: Journalism.....10	Burkina Faso: Russia 20
Afghanistan: Refugees.....11	Burundi: Freedom of Expression..... 20
Afghanistan: Religious Freedom.....11	Burundi: Polio..... 20
Agriculture: Government Assistance.....11	Cancer: Health Services..... 20
al-Aqsa Mosque.....11	Carbon Emissions 21
Animal Welfare and Environment Protection: Standards12	Carbon emissions..... 21
Armed Forces12	Carbon Emissions: Public Sector..... 21
Armenia: Azerbaijan12	Carer’s Allowance 21
Armenia: Prisoners of War.....12	Cats and Dogs: Animal Welfare 22
Army: Defence Equipment.....13	Cats: Animal Welfare 22
Army: Recruitment.....13	Cereals 22
	Child Trust Fund..... 22
	Childcare: Finance..... 23
	Childcare: Staff..... 23
	China and India: Pollution Control..... 23
	China: Russia..... 24
	Climate Change 24
	Commonhold Council..... 24

Index to Statements and Answers

<p>Commonwealth: Foreign Relations24</p> <p>Community Orders24</p> <p>Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla25</p> <p>Coronavirus and Influenza26</p> <p>Coronavirus: Disease Control.....27</p> <p>Coronavirus: Immunosuppression.....27</p> <p>Coronavirus: Medical Treatments27</p> <p>Coronavirus: Screening28</p> <p>Coronavirus: Vaccination.....28</p> <p>Cost of Living: Women.....28</p> <p>Councillors: Carer’s Allowance29</p> <p>Counter-terrorism: Public Places.....29</p> <p>Crime: Rural Areas.....29</p> <p>Crimes Outside National Territories.....29</p> <p>Croxteth Hall: Plants30</p> <p>Customs30</p> <p>Cybersecurity.....30</p> <p>Dairy Farming: Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....31</p> <p>Debts: Advisory Services31</p> <p>Defence Equipment31</p> <p>Democratic Republic of Congo: Development Aid32</p> <p>Democratic Republic of Congo: Rwanda.....32</p> <p>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Unit for Future Skills32</p> <p>Developing Countries: Education.....32</p> <p>Development Aid.....32</p> <p>Development Plans.....33</p> <p>Digital Technology: Taxation.....33</p> <p>Domestic Abuse33</p> <p>Domestic Abuse: Older People34</p> <p>Drugs: Advertising34</p> <p>Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland35</p> <p>Education: Girls and Women35</p> <p>Electric Vehicles: Charging Points.....35</p>	<p>Electronic Cigarettes: Waste..... 36</p> <p>Employment Tribunals Service 36</p> <p>Employment: Disability..... 36</p> <p>Energy Bills Rebate: Boats..... 36</p> <p>Energy Performance Certificates..... 37</p> <p>Energy: Business 37</p> <p>Energy: Prices..... 37</p> <p>Energy: Rented Housing..... 37</p> <p>EU Law: Northern Ireland..... 37</p> <p>Evusheld 38</p> <p>Falkland Islands: Fossil Fuels..... 38</p> <p>Financial Services: Education..... 39</p> <p>First-tier Tribunal: Land and Property..... 39</p> <p>Fishing Vessels: Northern Ireland 39</p> <p>Freeports 40</p> <p>Freeports: Northern Ireland 40</p> <p>Freight: Windsor Framework 40</p> <p>Fruit and Vegetables: Imports 40</p> <p>Fuel Oil: Rural Areas..... 41</p> <p>Further Education: Care Leavers and Children in Care..... 41</p> <p>Further Education: T-levels 41</p> <p>General Practitioners: Complaints..... 42</p> <p>General Practitioners: Pharmacy 42</p> <p>Genito-urinary Medicine: HIV Infection..... 42</p> <p>Gonorrhoea 42</p> <p>Government Departments: Cybersecurity 43</p> <p>Government Departments: Procurement 43</p> <p>Groceries Code Adjudicator 43</p> <p>Health: Women..... 43</p> <p>Heat Pumps..... 44</p> <p>Heat Pumps: Housing..... 44</p> <p>Heat Pumps: Manufacturing Industries 44</p> <p>Heating: Renewable Energy 44</p> <p>High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention..... 45</p> <p>High Speed 2 Line 45</p>
--	--

Index to Statements and Answers

<p>Higher Education: Care Leavers.....45</p> <p>Higher Education: Research.....45</p> <p>HIV Infection: Prescription Drugs46</p> <p>HM Passport Office: Labour Turnover46</p> <p>HMS Prince of Wales: Repairs and Maintenance46</p> <p>Home Care Services: Drugs46</p> <p>Honey: Standards.....47</p> <p>Horn of Africa: Migration47</p> <p>Horticulture: Exports47</p> <p>Horticulture: Vacancies48</p> <p>Hospices: Hospital Beds.....48</p> <p>Housing: Construction.....49</p> <p>Housing: Migrants.....49</p> <p>Human Trafficking49</p> <p>Hunting Trophy Import (Prohibition) Bill: Northern Ireland49</p> <p>Hydrogen50</p> <p>Hydrogen: Heating50</p> <p>Illegal Migration Bill.....50</p> <p>Illegal Migration Bill: Impact Assessments51</p> <p>Immigration51</p> <p>Immigration Removal Centres51</p> <p>India: Human Rights.....51</p> <p>Indo-Pacific Region: Defence Equipment.....51</p> <p>Indo-Pacific Region: Navy51</p> <p>Infrastructure: Planning51</p> <p>Integrated Care Boards: Palliative Care51</p> <p>Integrated Care Boards: Pay52</p> <p>Integrated Care Systems: Finance52</p> <p>International Relations: Women.....52</p> <p>International Science and Technology Center and Science and Technology Center in Ukraine52</p> <p>Internet: Access53</p> <p>Internet: Satellites.....53</p> <p>Iran: Crimes against Humanity and Human Rights53</p>	<p>Iran: Nuclear Power..... 54</p> <p>Iran: Russia 54</p> <p>Israel: Bedouin..... 54</p> <p>Israel: Diplomatic Service 54</p> <p>Israel: Palestinians 54</p> <p>Jagtar Singh Johal..... 55</p> <p>Jimmy Lai 55</p> <p>Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: Disclosure of Information..... 55</p> <p>Kazakhstan: Politics and Government..... 55</p> <p>Leasehold..... 56</p> <p>Leasehold: Reform 56</p> <p>Liverpool City Council: Standards 56</p> <p>Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel 56</p> <p>Local Government: Elections 56</p> <p>Low Incomes 57</p> <p>Manufactured Goods: Northern Ireland..... 57</p> <p>Married People: Tax Allowances 58</p> <p>Meals on Wheels 58</p> <p>Meat: Imports 58</p> <p>Medicine: Higher Education..... 58</p> <p>Mental Health: Women 58</p> <p>Merchant Shipping: Medals..... 59</p> <p>Migrants: Hong Kong..... 59</p> <p>Migration 59</p> <p>Motor Vehicles: Lighting 59</p> <p>Mozambique: Armed Conflict..... 60</p> <p>Nagorno-Karabakh: Peacekeeping Operations.. 60</p> <p>National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service..... 60</p> <p>NHS 111 61</p> <p>Nurses: Migrant Workers 62</p> <p>Obesity..... 62</p> <p>Oil: Poole..... 62</p> <p>Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: Paris. 63</p> <p>Overseas Students..... 63</p>
---	---

Index to Statements and Answers

<p>Palantir: Databases63</p> <p>Palestinians: Foreign Relations64</p> <p>Parental Leave and Parental Pay64</p> <p>Parental Pay64</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils.....65</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils: Elections.....65</p> <p>Passport Office: Industrial Disputes65</p> <p>Physical Education65</p> <p>Phytophthora Ramorum: Disease Control.....65</p> <p>Plants: Northern Ireland66</p> <p>Police: Misconduct67</p> <p>Police: Vetting.....67</p> <p>Pre-school Education: Qualifications67</p> <p>Prison Sentences.....68</p> <p>Prisoners’ Release: Temporary Accommodation68</p> <p>Prisoners: Self-harm69</p> <p>Private Rented Housing69</p> <p>Private Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance69</p> <p>Probate.....69</p> <p>Property Development: Floods.....70</p> <p>Public Sector: Strikes71</p> <p>Public Sector: Voluntary Work71</p> <p>Public Transport: Key Workers.....71</p> <p>Pupil Exclusions: Girls and Women.....71</p> <p>Pupils: Absenteeism72</p> <p>Pupils: Foreign Nationals72</p> <p>Railways: Solar Power72</p> <p>Railways: Tickets73</p> <p>Rape.....73</p> <p>Recycling.....74</p> <p>Refugees: Afghanistan.....74</p> <p>Refugees: Resettlement75</p> <p>Refugees: Ukraine75</p> <p>Religious Freedom.....75</p>	<p>Renewable Energy: Housing 76</p> <p>Renewable Energy: Innovation..... 76</p> <p>Renewable Energy: Seas and Oceans 76</p> <p>Restoring Your Railway Fund 76</p> <p>Rights of Way 76</p> <p>Road Traffic Offences: Mobile Phones 77</p> <p>Rwanda: Human Rights 77</p> <p>Sahel: Security 77</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment..... 77</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: Human Rights 78</p> <p>Schools: Blasphemy 78</p> <p>Schools: Fire Prevention..... 78</p> <p>Secure Accommodation..... 78</p> <p>Security: Embassies 79</p> <p>Seeds: UK Internal Trade 79</p> <p>Sentencing Council for England and Wales 79</p> <p>Sizewell C Power Station: China General Nuclear Power Corporation..... 79</p> <p>Slavery 79</p> <p>Slavery: Northern Ireland 79</p> <p>Social Security Benefits: Disability 80</p> <p>South Sudan: Refugees 80</p> <p>Space Debris 80</p> <p>Sports 80</p> <p>Sports Competitors: Work Permits 80</p> <p>Sports: Belarus and Russia 81</p> <p>Sri Lanka: Tamils 81</p> <p>Stalking 81</p> <p>State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad 81</p> <p>State Retirement Pensions: Telephone Services 82</p> <p>Syria: Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham..... 82</p> <p>Tennis: Belarus and Russia..... 82</p> <p>Trade Agreements: India 82</p> <p>Trade Agreements: USA..... 82</p> <p>Trade Barriers: Isle of Wight..... 83</p>
--	--

Index to Statements and Answers

<p>Trade Barriers: Kazakhstan83</p> <p>Train Operating Companies: Tickets.....83</p> <p>Training83</p> <p>Transcaucasus: Roads.....84</p> <p>Transport: Databases85</p> <p>Travellers: Caravan Sites.....85</p> <p>Tree Planting: North of England85</p> <p>Turing Scheme85</p> <p>Turkey: Politics and Government.....86</p> <p>UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland.....86</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland...87</p> <p>UK Trade with EU.....87</p> <p>UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland.....88</p> <p>Ukraine: Cereals88</p> <p>Ukraine: War Crimes.....88</p> <p>Universal Credit.....89</p> <p>Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre 89</p> <p>Vagrancy Act 1824.....90</p> <p>VAT: Northern Ireland90</p> <p>Vegetables: Imports.....90</p> <p>Victim Support Schemes: Women90</p> <p>Visas: British National (Overseas)91</p> <p>Visits Abroad: Rwanda.....91</p> <p>Voice Over Internet Protocol.....92</p> <p>Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access: Life Sciences93</p> <p>Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability93</p> <p>Water: Sustainable Development93</p> <p>Wave Power93</p> <p>Wave Power: EU Grants and Loans93</p> <p>Wave Power: Finance.....93</p> <p>Windsor Framework.....94</p> <p>Windsor Framework: Parliamentary Scrutiny94</p> <p>World War II: Military Decorations.....94</p> <p>World Water Day95</p> <p>Yazidis: Women.....95</p>	<p>Yemen: Humanitarian Situation 95</p> <p>Youth Rehabilitation Orders..... 95</p>
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