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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Lord True	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Benyon	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Spokesperson, Wales Office, Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office, Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Davies of Gower	Whip
Lord Evans of Rainow	Whip
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
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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
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Chief Whip
Viscount Camrose	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 2 May 2023

Appointments Update: BBC Board Chairman

[HLWS738]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer KC MP:

On Friday 28 April Richard Sharp submitted his resignation as Chair of the BBC Board. On the same day the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments published the decision notice on the inquiry into the appointment process for the Chair of the BBC Board.

I understand and respect Richard Sharp's decision to stand down and following his resignation letter to me I wrote to him. A copy of this exchange of letters will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Board proposed that Richard Sharp stay in post until the next Board meeting on 27 June 2023, whilst an Acting Chair is appointed in line with the Charter. This will provide certainty and stability. A process will also commence to appoint a permanent new Chair.

Circumstances Leading to the Resignation of a Senior Civil Servant

[HLWS744]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oliver Dowden CBE MP, has today made the following statement:

On 6 March 2023, Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General announced in reply to an Urgent Question that the Cabinet Office had been asked to look into the circumstances leading to the resignation of Sue Gray, the former Permanent Secretary for the Union and the Constitution and committed to update Parliament as appropriate.

This process has involved interviewing relevant persons to establish further details on the contact between Ms Gray and the Leader of the Opposition. I can update the House that Ms Gray was given the opportunity to make representations as part of this process but chose not to do so.

I hope the House will understand that, in order to maintain confidentiality towards an individual former employee, I am unable at this stage to provide further information relating to the departure of Ms Gray whilst we consider next steps.

All civil servants are required to follow the Civil Service Code which sets out the four core values of the Civil Service:

- Integrity – putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests.
- Honesty – being truthful and open.
- Objectivity – basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.
- Impartiality – acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions.

Section 4.4.9 of the Civil Service Management Code sets out that all members of the Senior Civil Service are in the 'politically restricted' category, which places further restrictions on their political activity.

In addition, there is a requirement under the Directory of Civil Service Guidance, which underpins the Civil Service Code, that 'contacts between senior civil servants and leading members of the Opposition parties should be cleared with Ministers.'

The impartiality and perceived impartiality of the Civil Service is constitutionally vital to the conduct of government. Ministers must be able to speak to their officials from a position of absolute trust, so it is the responsibility of everyone in this House to preserve and support the impartiality of the civil service.

Separately, the Cabinet Office has made submissions to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA), the independent appointments watchdog, in relation to Ms Gray's application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules, prior to her taking up an appointment as Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Opposition. The Government's confidential assessment is in line with the usual process and ACoBA will consider evidence from a range of sources to make a recommendation on any appropriate restrictions on the appointment. As set out in the Business Appointment Rules, the aim of the Rules includes avoiding any reasonable concerns that 'a former civil servant might improperly exploit privileged access to contacts in Government or sensitive information'. The decision on any recommended restrictions on the appointment is for ACoBA.

The Government will provide a further update to the House in due course

Closure of Gov.uk Verify

[HLWS742]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Alex Burghart MP, has today made the following statement:

I would like to update the House on the Gov.uk Verify programme, following the Written Ministerial Statement in April 2022 made by my colleague (Heather Wheeler MP). As planned, the Gov.uk Verify programme has now closed. The final government service stopped using the platform on 30 March 2023.

Many services which used Gov.uk Verify have moved to Gov.uk One Login – the new government-built solution which enables users to prove their identity and access

central government services online. The Government Digital Service is using lessons learnt from Gov.uk Verify to help in the development of Gov.uk One Login and provide people with an experience that is representative of a modern, forward-looking democracy.

Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

[HLWS740]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My right hon Friend the Minister of State for Security (Tom Tugendhat) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am pleased to announce the publication of the draft Terrorism (protection of premises) Bill, also known as Martyn's Law, for pre-legislative scrutiny by the Home Affairs Select Committee. The draft Bill (CP 840) has been laid before the House and is also available on Gov.uk.

The Government confirmed its intention to bring forward Martyn's Law in December 2022. Since this announcement officials have been working at pace to finalise the proposals.

The plans have been developed following extensive engagement with security partners, business and victims' groups, including Figen Murray and the Martyn's Law Campaign Team. The Government would particularly like to thank Figen Murray, whose son Martyn Hett was killed in the Manchester Arena attack, for the significant contribution she has made through her tireless campaign to introduce the Bill.

The threat from terrorism is evolving and enduring. One of the most significant long-term trends, irrespective of ideology, is individuals (or small groups) who plan or carry out terrorist attacks without being part of an organised terrorist group. This type of terrorism is not new, but it is now the most prevalent, and presents unique challenges for our counter-terrorism response.

Attacks have tended to be 'low-complexity' involving 'low-sophistication' attack methodologies. For example, we have seen attacks which utilised knives and vehicles. Individuals may not have any relationship with or direction from established terrorist groups – but just because an attack is low-sophistication, it does not mean it is less deadly.

This trend is not exclusive, as such individuals are capable of higher-complexity attacks involving more sophisticated attack methodologies, such as the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing. This trend, from radicalised self-initiated actors, makes identification and disruption difficult, and it becomes increasingly challenging to predict threat at specific locations.

This is why it is right that Martyn's Law should seek to improve protective security and organisational preparedness at a wide range of public premises across the UK. Those responsible for certain public premises will be required to consider the threat from terrorism and implement reasonably practicable and proportionate mitigating measures. It will also establish an associated

inspection and enforcement regime, which will seek to educate, advise, and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Bill.

The requirements within the Bill will only apply to qualifying premises, in short qualifying premises have specific uses and a large capacity. Qualifying premises are split into two tiers, the 'standard duty' and the 'enhanced duty'. Standard duty premises are those with a capacity of 100 to 799 people. Enhanced duty premises are those with a capacity of 800 people or more. The Bill allows for provision to be made for some qualifying premises to be treated as standard duty premises when they would otherwise be enhanced duty premises, and vice versa.

Standard duty requirements have been developed to ensure there is a baseline level of protection and preparedness throughout the UK. These requirements will help keep the public safe, while at the same time not unduly burdening business. The enhanced tier requirements are more extensive because those premises have a responsibility to keep larger numbers of people safe.

The regulator will apply a 'reasonably practicable' test to carefully consider what is reasonable to expect of a specific premise, there will not be a one size fits all approach. In all instances, the Government and the regulator will provide guidance and support to ensure we do everything possible to alleviate burden on business.

The requirements which apply to enhanced duty premises, will also apply to large events held at non-qualifying premises, known as qualifying events. These are public events with a capacity of 800 or over, which require express permission to enter (with or without payment).

We recognise that it would not be appropriate for all locations to consider and put in place security measures. Striking the right balance between protecting the public and proportionality has been at the heart of policy development and the Bill.

I am looking forward to working with the Home Affairs Select Committee to ensure the legislation is robust and delivers on its core aims ahead of a formal introduction into Parliament.

Notification of Contingent Liability

[HLWS743]

Baroness Penn: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Jeremy Hunt) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England ("the Bank") decided at its meeting ending on 3 February 2022 to reduce the stocks of UK government bonds and sterling non-financial investment-grade corporate bonds held in the Asset Purchase Facility (APF) by ceasing to reinvest maturing securities. The Bank ceased reinvestment of assets in this portfolio in February 2022 and has since commenced sales of

corporate bonds on 28 September 2022, and sales of gilts acquired for monetary policy purposes on 1 November 2022.

The previous Chancellor agreed a joint approach with the Governor of the Bank of England in an exchange of letters on 3 February 2022 to reduce the maximum authorised size of the APF for asset purchases every six months, as the size of APF holdings reduces.

Since 16 January 2023, the total stock of assets held by the APF for monetary policy purposes has fallen from £851bn to £821.3bn. In line with the approach agreed with the Governor, the authorised maximum total size of the APF has therefore been reduced to £821.3bn.

The risk control framework previously agreed with the Bank will remain in place, and HM Treasury will continue to monitor risks to public funds from the APF through regular risk oversight meetings and enhanced information sharing with the Bank.

There will continue to be an opportunity for HM Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the Government's broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank, the APF and its directors from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal supply procedure.

A full departmental Minute has been laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.

Product Security Regime: Implementation Plan

[HLWS741]

Viscount Camrose: The Government is determined to cement the UK's place as a science and technology superpower by 2030. We will grow the UK economy, create high-paid jobs of the future, protect our security, and radically improve people's lives through science, innovation and technology. To ensure that consumer connected technology is more secure against cyber threats, the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022 ("the PSTI Act") will mandate that minimum security requirements must be complied with before consumer connectable products can be supplied to UK customers. UK consumers will be the first in the world to benefit from these protections.

I have now made commencement regulations which will bring Part 1 of the PSTI Act into effect on 29th April 2024. The Government is also today publishing the technical wording of the new security requirements within the full draft text of the PSTI (Security Requirements for Relevant Connectable Products) Regulations 2023. Manufacturers and other businesses in the supply chain of these products now have 12 months to transition their

businesses to comply with these new security requirements.

From April next year, consumers and businesses across the UK will benefit from world-leading security protections from the threat of cyber crime:

- Universal default and easily guessable default passwords will be banned on consumer connectable products - meaning UK customers will enjoy additional protections from their products being compromised by hackers, and used to launch cyber attacks against citizens, businesses, critical national infrastructure, and nation states.
- Device manufacturers will have to publish contact information allowing vulnerabilities relating to their devices to be reported to them. This will enable manufacturers to maintain an awareness of, and therefore address, existing or future cyber security risks.
- Manufacturers will have to be transparent about how long their products will receive security updates for. This will provide security-conscious consumers with vital, standardised security information, that they can use to inform their purchasing decisions, and drive the provision of longer security update periods through market forces.
- Manufacturers will also be required to ensure that a customer is made aware of a product's security update support period before allowing them to purchase the product on the manufacturer's website.

Officials at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology have been working closely with industry, consumer rights organisations, and cyber security experts, to ensure the requirements this legislation will set out satisfy the government's ambitions. Today, in addition to making commencement regulations, the Government is publishing the technical wording of the new security requirements within the full draft text of the PSTI (Product Security) Regulations 2023:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/secure-by-design>

Once the notification requirements of international bodies, including the World Trade Organization, have been complied with, the final draft regulations will be laid before Parliament for scrutiny.

UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport

[HLWS739]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Minister for Sport, Gambling and Civil Society, Stuart Andrew MP:

I wish to inform the House that His Majesty's Government announced the UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport in conjunction with the Sport and Recreation Alliance on Friday 28 April:

<https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research-publications/concussion-guidelines>

The vast majority of people participate in sport safely, but reducing the risks associated with concussion and making sport even safer for everyone is an ambition shared by both Government and the sport sector. Ultimately, we want more people to participate in sport and have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience.

The new UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport are, therefore, a significant step forward. The most important message is: ‘If in doubt, sit them out’, and the new guidelines are designed to help those at grassroots level:

Recognise the signs of concussion;

Remove anyone suspected of being concussed immediately and;

Return safely to daily activity, education/work and, ultimately, sport.

The guidelines are designed for everyone involved in grassroots sport from school age upwards – participants, coaches, volunteers, parents – as well as those working in education settings and healthcare professions. The guidelines are aimed at grassroots sport where trained healthcare professionals are typically not available to manage concussed individuals.

The guidelines have been developed by an independent drafting group of leading UK and international experts in

the field of sport-related concussion who used the latest and most robust scientific and medical evidence available. The guidelines have been endorsed by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine and supported by the NHS and the Home Nations’ Chief Medical Officers.

The UK-wide high-level guidelines are part of a wider package of work being taken forward under the Government’s Action Plan on Concussion, as set out in DCMS’s Command Paper of December 2021.

Since publication of the Command Paper, through the Action Plan, the Government has created a distribution network of key stakeholders to share the new concussion guidelines and directed UK Sport and Sport England to ensure that the guidelines are implemented where appropriate by sports in receipt of public funding.

We have also encouraged sport national governing bodies to discuss training protocols with player associations. For the longer term, we have also created an Innovation and Technology panel of experts to work with companies in the tech industry to explore technological solutions and established a new Sports Concussion Research Forum to identify the research questions that need answering in this important area.

We encourage Members of the House to share this important message widely to ensure that the benefits of sport are enjoyed safely.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 2 May 2023

Afghanistan: Journalism

Asked by *Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to respond to the needs of vulnerable journalists, writers, and media workers in Afghanistan. [HL7150]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a champion of media freedom and a proud member of the Media Freedom Coalition. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, 40 per cent of media outlets in Afghanistan have ceased to operate and 60 per cent of journalists have lost their jobs since August 2021. In response, the UK is providing programme funding to support media organisations still operating in Afghanistan. We also continue to raise the issue of media freedom in our discussions with the Taliban.

Asked by *Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking with the government of Pakistan to ensure that (1) Afghan journalists in Pakistan are protected from any acts that could endanger their safety, and (2) Afghan journalists at risk in that country are relocated to safe third countries [HL7151]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Defending media freedom at home and abroad is a priority for the UK Government. We continue to address media freedom in our discussions with the Taliban and regularly raise the issue with the Government of Pakistan. A number of Afghan journalists have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). We continue to work with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), likeminded partners and countries neighbouring Afghanistan to support the safe passage of eligible Afghans to the UK. Our commitment on ACRS Pathway 3 to welcome wider groups of at-risk Afghans still stands. Further detail will be set out in due course.

Agriculture: Industrial Injuries

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of workplace injuries, including fatalities, in the agricultural sector compared to all other sectors of the UK economy over the past five years. [HL7224]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: As the regulator for workplace health and safety, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publishes official statistics on deaths and injuries at work.

Published statistics of work-related fatal injuries over the last five years by industry sector are available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm>. The data shows that 138 workers in the agricultural sector were killed in work-related accidents over the five years 2017/18 to 2021/22, equivalent to 8.61 deaths annually per 100,000 workers. This rate of fatal injury to workers in the agricultural sector remains markedly higher than the average across all industries: 21 times as high as the average rate across all industries. [Note 1] [Note 2].

Published statistics of workplace non-fatal injuries over the last five years by industry sector are also available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/index.htm>. This data shows that on average, an estimated 12,000 workers in the agricultural sector sustained an injury at work each year between 2017/18 to 2021/22, equivalent to 4,190 injuries per 100,000 workers. This is statistically significantly higher than the average rate across all industries. [Note 1] [Note 3].

Notes

[Note 1] Agricultural sector defined as Section A, Agriculture, forestry and fishing, of the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification.

[Note 2] Source: Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

[Note 3] Source: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, a national representative household survey run by the Office for National Statistics.

Air Force: Training

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the average length of time between trainee pilots completing armed forces-flying training and joining an operational conversion unit in relation to (1) fast jets, (2) multi-engine heavy lift aircraft, and (3) rotary wing aircraft. [HL7178]

Baroness Goldie: As of March 2023, the average length of time between trainee pilots completing the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) and joining an operational conversion unit is:

Fast Jet - 22 months.

Multi-engine - 11 months

Rotary Wing - 14 months.

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the RAF is solely responsible for training Royal Navy fast jet pilots; and what is their assessment of asking the US Marine Corps to help train Royal Navy pilots at times when RAF training may not be running as intended. [HL7179]

Baroness Goldie: The Royal Air Force (RAF) is not solely responsible for the training of Royal Navy (RN) Fast Jet (FJ) pilots. The UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS), contracted to Ascent, delivers

aircrew training of elementary, basic and advanced flying training phases for all three Services, in order to prepare them for their arrival at their designated operational aircraft units.

The RN has maintained a limited programme to train FJ pilots with the United States Navy (not US Marine Corps) to sustain a cadre of maritime FJ pilots following the withdrawal of Joint Force Harrier.

Asbestos: Health and Safety

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for reviewing the penalties for those found guilty of an offence under (1) the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, and (2) other related legislation, including regulations 12, 38(1)(a) and 41(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 and sections 33(1)(c), 33(6) and 157(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. [HL7263]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have advised prosecution is one of a range of enforcement options available to environmental and health and safety regulators, including withdrawing approvals, serving enforcement and fixed penalty notices, varying license conditions and providing written advice.

The law currently allows for an unlimited fine and imprisonment for those convicted of offences under health and safety regulations, fly-tipping and breaches of environmental permitting. No specific assessment has been made regarding whether a revision to these penalties is necessary, although the Regulators Code requires that all regulators keep their activities under review.

Sentencing is a matter for the independent courts who must follow the relevant guidelines issued by the independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales. The guidelines implement the requirements of Section 125 of the Sentencing Act, which requires that any fine imposed should reflect the seriousness of the offence and take into account the financial circumstances of the duty holder. The level of fine should reflect the extent to which the offender fell below the required standard, and should meet the objectives of punishment, deterrence and the removal of gain derived through the commission of the offence, in a fair and proportionate way. The fine must be sufficiently substantial to have an economic impact that brings home, to both management and shareholders, the need to comply with health and safety legislation.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what measures they intend to take to prevent the transmission of malaria to asylum seekers who are removed to Rwanda. [HL7406]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: All individuals relocated to Rwanda are offered malaria prophylaxis treatment in the UK. Malaria medication will be provided via individual prescription to each individual, even if they refuse to engage with Immigration Removal Centre healthcare staff, which will include an additional 7 days' supply for use on arrival in Rwanda.

Upon relocation to Rwanda, individuals will be provided with the healthcare and other support needed to ensure their health, security, and wellbeing.

When in Rwanda, appropriate medication will be available to relocated individuals where needed, free of charge. Mosquito nets and insect repellents are also available and accessible to relocated individuals in initial reception accommodation.

Breast Cancer: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accessibility of (1) medicines, and (2) clinical interventions, for secondary metastatic breast cancer in England. [HL7158]

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding the accessibility of (1) medicines, and (2) clinical interventions, for secondary metastatic breast cancer. [HL7159]

Lord Markham: The Government is committed to supporting timely patient access to clinically- and cost-effective new drugs, including for metastatic breast cancer. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England are working closely together to ensure that there is a joined-up, timely approach to supporting access to new medicines for National Health Service patients, including those licensed through Project Orbis and the creation of the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP). For example, average times taken between licensing and the publication of NICE guidance for new medicines have been reduced from 10.2 months for 2017/18 to 3.1 months for 2022/23. The proportion of positive NICE recommendations increased from 79% in 2017/18 to 92% in 2022/23.

NICE is also able to make recommendations through the cancer drugs fund (CDF), which has benefitted over 88,000 patients as of March 2023. The CDF has allowed patients with metastatic breast cancer to access new medicines like trastuzumab deruxtecan and palbociclib, while allowing for the collection of further data on their clinical and cost effectiveness to inform a final NICE recommendation.

NICE published a surveillance review of its guideline on advanced breast cancer in January 2023. It concluded that the recommendations on biological therapy, chemotherapy, psychological support and preventing and

managing complications will be updated. These updates will be scheduled into NICE's work programme and will include equality impact assessments and consultation with stakeholders to ensure access issues are fully considered.

The NHS Cancer Programme has commissioned five new cancer clinical audits, which will provide timely evidence for cancer service providers of where patterns of care in England may vary, increase the consistency of access to treatments and help stimulate improvements in cancer treatment and outcomes for patients. The Royal College of Surgeons began work on this audit in October 2022 with the first outcomes expected in 2023/24. One of the five audits will cover primary and metastatic breast cancer.

The Department has not had specific discussions with the Devolved Governments. However, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Health have agreements in place with NICE to use their technology appraisals and clinical guidelines. NICE will engage with them to support implementation. Both NICE and the Scottish Medicines Consortium are permanent partners in ILAP. Decisions on how guidance is implemented is a matter for each Government.

Breast Cancer: Northern Ireland

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had regarding the implementation of a secondary metastatic breast cancer clinical audit for Northern Ireland. [HL7232]

Lord Markham: This is a devolved matter for the Northern Ireland Department of Health to respond to.

British National (Overseas): Visas

*Asked by **Lord Leong***

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding they have allocated for supporting access to English language provision for British National (Overseas) visa holders in (1) 2021/22, and (2) so far in 2022/23; and how much of this was accessed by BNO visa holders in each of those years. [HL7373]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: In 2021/22, 941 Hong Kong BN(O)s were supported to access English language provision at a total cost of £811,000. In 2022/23, 4694 Hong Kong BN(O)s were supported at a cost of £3 million.

Buildings: Electrical Safety

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with relevant (1) professional, and (2) trade, bodies about improving the (a) quality, and (b) safety, of electrical installations in buildings. [HL7173]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Government officials have regular discussions with relevant professional bodies and trade associations. This includes participation in the Committee that maintains and improves our national quality and safety standards for electrical installations in buildings. Officials also attend the Committee that maintains and develops the competence and qualifications framework for electrical installers.

Cabotage: EU Countries

*Asked by **The Earl of Clancarty***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve cabotage arrangements for UK musicians touring in the EU. [HL7365]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The dual registration measure came into force in July 2022 to enable eligible specialist events hauliers to transfer their vehicles temporarily between their two operator licences without needing to change vehicle mid-tour.

The measure allows specialist hauliers to undertake journeys in GB on the basis of their GB operator licence and to do the same in the other location on the basis of their EU Community Licence or other third country operator licence. This means specialist events hauliers using the measure benefit by not having their journeys limited by cabotage rules that apply to international operators within each territory, when touring for cultural events.

The Department understands that seven operators – which have an operating base in GB and in the EU or other third country – are currently making use of this measure.

China and Russia: Guided Weapons

*Asked by **Lord Stevens of Birmingham***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the threat posed by recent developments in (1) Russian, and (2) Chinese, hypersonic missile technology. [HL7171]

Baroness Goldie: Russia and China continue to progress in the development and deployment of hypersonic missiles and technologies and these weapons pose an increasing threat to international stability.

Combined Authorities: East Midlands

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made on the proposals for a Combined Authority covering Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. [HL7347]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: An East Midlands devolution deal, covering Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, was announced in August 2022.

The deal included the establishment of a new Mayoral Combined County Authority, with an inaugural mayoral election anticipated in May 2024. The area has now consulted on their proposals and each of the four constituent councils has voted to submit these proposals to the Secretary of State. Implementation of the deal including creation of the Combined County Authority is subject to passage and coming into force of the relevant provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and to the following statutory process including local consents and Parliamentary approval to secondary legislation.

Construction: Stone

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the benefits of stone as a relatively low-carbon building material; and what steps they are taking to promote research and development of its use. [[HL7328](#)]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Depending on how stone is quarried and how far it is transported, it is likely to be a relatively low-carbon material. We are carrying out research into the impact of measuring embodied carbon and methods of reducing it across building types - including the contributions that could be made by different material choices. We will set out further announcements in due course.

Continuing Care: Liability

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether NHS continuing healthcare managers within a Clinical Commissioning Group have a duty of care to those whom they support; and if so, whether (1) the duty of care includes ensuring rigorous monitoring and supervision of the services commissioned, and (2) this includes services provided by care agencies. [[HL7170](#)]

Lord Markham: Clinical Commissioning Groups have been replaced by integrated care boards (ICBs), effective as of 1 July 2022. As set out in legislation and statutory guidance, ICBs deliver NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) for their local area.

ICBs have a duty of care for individuals eligible for NHS CHC as part of their care planning, commissioning of services, and case management responsibilities. One element of ICB case management is monitoring and supervising services commissioned as part of NHS CHC packages, including services provided by care agencies. In this way, ICBs ensure that the agreed care and support package meets the individual's needs and can identify and act on any issues arising in the provision of NHS CHC.

ICBs therefore ensure that quality standards are met and sustained, as set out in the NHS Standard Contract.

Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend for the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to be retained under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. [[HL7265](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: With the introduction of the Retained EU Law (REUL) Bill, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) remains focused on ensuring that regulatory frameworks maintain the United Kingdom's high standards of health and safety protection and continue to reduce burdens for business.

HSE's approach aligns closely with the Government's pledge to do more for business to help promote growth by removing disproportionate burdens and simplifying the regulatory landscape. Our standards of health and safety protections are among the highest in the world. HSE will continue to review its retained EU Law to seek opportunities to reduce business burdens and promote growth without reducing health and safety standards.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are reviewing the case for making the Eurostar terminal at St Pancras a designated point of entry and exit for items affected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). [[HL7367](#)]

Lord Benyon: The Government has closely considered the case for designating St Pancras as a CITES Point of Entry and Exit (PoE). Given the nature of CITES trade and the demands a PoE would place on the terminal's resources and facilities, we do not consider it appropriate to designate it at this time. Defra keeps the list of designated PoEs under review and will continue to work closely with Border Force and industry to evaluate and update the PoE list as appropriate.

Crime: Southern Africa

Asked by *Lord Oates*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take, if any, to address the allegations of criminal activity made against British citizens in the Al Jazeera documentary, Gold Mafia. [[HL7152](#)]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We do not comment on individual cases, this is a matter for law enforcement.

Cystic Fibrosis

Asked by Baroness Fraser of Cragmaddie

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the House of Commons Health Committee Report NHS Charges, published on 6 July 2006, that when the medical exemptions list was created in 1968, most babies born with Cystic Fibrosis did not live beyond childhood; and what assessment they have made of the case for extending eligibility for medical exemption certificates to patients with Cystic Fibrosis to access life-saving drugs. [HL7208]

Lord Markham: No specific assessment has been made. The medical exemptions list was last reviewed in 2009, when cancer was added, and there are no plans to extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list to include cystic fibrosis. Approximately 89% of prescription items are currently dispensed free of charge and there are a wide range of exemptions from prescription charges already in place, for which those with cystic fibrosis may meet the eligibility criteria and be in receipt of free prescriptions.

In addition, those on a low income can apply for additional support through the NHS Low Income Scheme. This provides both full and partial help with a range of health costs, not just prescription charges. Those who do not qualify for low-income help, may benefit from the purchase of a prescription pre-payment certificate. This caps the cost of prescriptions at £111.60 per year, helping people to get all the medicines they need for just over £2 a week.

Destroyers and Frigates

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government whether assessment they have made of their previous commitment not to reduce numbers of destroyers and frigates below 19. [HL7181]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any new frigates will achieve Initial Operating Capability before 2026. [HL7182]

Baroness Goldie: The Royal Navy (RN) continues to ensure that it has sufficient assets available to deliver its operational outputs. In the coming years, the make-up of the RN will change as it transitions from Type 23 Frigates to Type 26 Anti-Submarine Warfare and Type 31 General Purpose Frigates.

The first Type 31 frigate, HMS VENTURER, is scheduled to be ready for operations in 2027 while the first Type 26 frigate, HMS GLASGOW, is scheduled to be ready for operations in 2028.

Diplomatic Service: Political Impartiality

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 4 April (HL6671), what guidance is given to British diplomats on maintaining political impartiality when they are acting privately in a public setting, as distinct from carrying out their diplomatic responsibilities. [HL7117]

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. The private conduct of British diplomats is governed by the Diplomatic Service Code, contained in the Diplomatic Service Regulations (DSRs) as DSR1. DSR36 of these Regulations also highlights the requirements relating to political activity.

Disability and Special Educational Needs

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask His Majesty's Government how the new level 3 SENCO qualification will be able to influence the teaching profession as a whole to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special education needs and disabilities across schools in England. [HL7189]

Baroness Barran: The Early Years Recovery Programme includes funding for training of up to 5,000 early years Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), leading to an accredited Level 3 early years SENCO qualification. The training is for SENCOs currently working in early years group-based providers or working as childminders. SENCOs working in schools are subject to different requirements. They must be a qualified teacher, and must achieve the masters-level National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination within 3 years of appointment as a SENCO.

Disability and Special Educational Needs: Disability Aids

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure through ongoing continual professional development that all teachers and support staff are made aware of potential benefits, and given some instruction of, the implementation of assistive technology for those with special educational needs and disabilities. [HL7188]

Baroness Barran: The department is expanding training to increase school staff confidence in using assistive technology (AT). Following the promising results of our initial pilot, we are extending assistive technology training to a further 150 maintained schools. The extension, known as the 'AT Test and Learn' programme, will teach mainstream school staff how to use AT effectively, with a focus on the technology

schools already have available or can easily obtain, such as text-to-speech tools. It will build on last year's pilot by training more schools over a longer period and with more impact data to gain a fuller picture of how AT training can support wider Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, continuing professional development.

Disability and Special Educational Needs: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask His Majesty's Government when the proposed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities NPQ course will commence. [HL7184]

Baroness Barran: The department is currently developing the transition arrangements for introducing the National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators as the new mandatory qualification for those in the role.

All arrangements, including those around the delivery and start dates, will be communicated in the coming months.

Economic Crime: Southern Africa

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations of corruption and money laundering contained in the Al Jazeera documentary Gold Mafia, and what steps, if any, they will take to freeze assets held in the UK or dependent territories by those who have been (1) alleged to have engaged in, and (2) found guilty of, financial crime. [HL7153]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We do not comment on individual cases, this is a matter for law enforcement.

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations against British citizens made in the Al Jazeera documentary, Gold Mafia; and what steps they will take, if any, to investigate the activities of companies whose named directors are alleged to have been involved in conspiracy to commit financial crime. [HL7155]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We do not comment on individual cases, this is a matter for law enforcement.

Educational Visits: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to increase the amount of school pupils visiting the UK from EU countries, particularly France, by removing the passport requirement that is currently in place. [HL7141]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: At the summit in Paris on 10 March 2023 the UK committed to ease the travel of

school groups to the UK by making changes to documentary requirements for schoolchildren on organised trips from France.

We are currently working through the details of implementation; and more information, including timescales, will be provided in due course.

This agreement with France will help to strengthen and maintain educational and cultural links with our closest continental neighbour. We will keep the position under review and ensure that we continue to operate our border in the UK's best interests.

Educational Visits: EU Nationals

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding by the Tourism Alliance that there was an 83 per cent decline in EU student group visitors to the UK in 2022; what estimate they have made of the financial impact on the UK economy of this decline; what assessment they have made of the reasons for this decline; what plans they have (1) to return to policy of accepting ID cards in place of passports for educational group visits, and (2) to reduce the costs of visas for participants in such visits who require them. [HL7157]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: All visitors from outside the EU are expected to hold a passport (and visa where necessary) and those visiting from EU countries are now expected to do the same.

In implementing this policy, a full impact assessment was carried out which can be found at the following link: Impact Assessment (publishing.service.gov.uk). We will continue to monitor the ongoing impact of these documentary requirements.

At the summit in Paris on 10 March 2023 the UK committed to ease the travel of school groups to the UK by making changes to documentary requirements for schoolchildren on organised trips from France. Further details will be announced in due course.

Fees for immigration and nationality applications are kept under review however, there are no plans to reduce the level of fees charged. Income from fees plays a vital role in our ability to run a sustainable migration and borders system and reduce the burden on UK taxpayers.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Impact Assessment [ID_cards_removal_-_Impact_Assessment_-_2021.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-04-17/HL7157>

Elections: Young People

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adverse impact on the ability of

young people to vote as a result of the voter identification provisions of the Elections Act 2022; whether all those eligible to vote will have access to acceptable forms of identity documents irrespective of age; and what steps they are taking to (1) monitor, and (2) assess, the effects of the new voter identification system amongst all age groups at the local elections in May. [HL7377]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer the Noble Marquess to the debate on [Voter Identification](#) at HC volume 728, column 138, debated on 21 February 2023, and to the answer given to PQ [HL 6447](#), and the debate on [Voter ID](#) at HC volume 731, column 919, debated on 27 April 2023.

Regarding the steps taken to monitor and assess the effects of voter identification, I refer the Noble Lord to the response given on 14 March to PQ [162192](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PQ HL6447 [HL6447.pdf]

Voter ID [Voter ID.pdf]

Voter Identification [Voter Identification.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-04-21/HL7377>

Electoral Register: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask His Majesty's Government when the provisions of Part 2 of the Elections Act 2022 relating to overseas electors will be brought into force. [HL7230]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The secondary legislation to deliver the overseas electors change is expected to be made and come into force in January 2024.

Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Rooker

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to institute a programme of testing of domestic premises to measure the risks of neutral current diversion. [HL7167]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulates the safety of the public electricity network, including equipment owned by Distribution Network Operators. HSE have monitored developments carefully and continue to do so. Officials from HSE are of the view that no additional action is required by the regulator to manage this risk of neutral current diversion at the present time.

Asked by Lord Rooker

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the issue of neutral current

diversions leading to electricity flowing through gas meters following domestic gas explosions. [HL7169]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Health and Safety Executive (HSE) officials have advised neutral current diversions are a known phenomenon and can occur for a number of reasons. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations require additional electrical bonding when cutting conducting gas pipes to minimise the risk to workers. HSE are of the view that no additional action is required by the regulator to manage this risk at the present time but will keep emerging evidence under review.

Electricity Storage Health and Safety Governance Group

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask His Majesty's Government what organisations are members of the electricity Storage Health and Safety Governance Group; and when it last met. [HL7120]

Lord Callanan: The Electrical Storage Health and Safety Governance Group last met on 13th March 2023. Member organisations include: the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the National Physical Laboratory, the Health and Safety Executive, the Office for Product Safety and Standards, London Fire Brigade, Kent Fire and Rescue Services, the National Fire Chief's Council, the Association For Renewable Energy and Clean Technology, the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers, the British Association of Electrotechnical Allied Manufacturers Association, the British Standards Institution, the University of Newcastle, the Institute for Engineering and Technology, the Energy Institute, and representatives from both the domestic and grid-scale energy storage industry as well as engineering consultancies.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government to what extent the Environmental Outcome Reports provided for by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill will cover site assessments undertaken as part of the planning process for offshore wind farms. [HL7349]

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government which environmental tests will be applied in the preparation of Environmental Outcomes Reports as provided for by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill. [HL7350]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Government recognise the important role site assessments play in understanding the impact of development and such assessments will fall under the new system of Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs).

An outcomes-based approach will test the acceptability of environmental impacts, with indicators developed to assess how a plan/project supports environmental outcomes set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan, the Clean Air Strategy, and the UK Marine Strategy. These indicators will measure the expected change due to a plan/project against baseline conditions and wider trend data.

The Bill creates a framework for assessment that can work across the various EIA and SEA regimes - including the nationally significant Infrastructure Planning regime covering offshore wind projects. Further detail will be developed through consultation.

Environmental Land Management Schemes: Finance

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask His Majesty's Government what funds are available through the new Environmental Land Management schemes to support the establishment of local abattoirs and food processing hubs to improve farmers' access to food markets. [HL7289]

Lord Benyon: Our Environmental Land Management schemes do not include support for abattoirs or food processing hubs. However, the Government recognises the important role local abattoirs play in supporting rural economies and maintaining a robust and competitive sector. The first round of the Farming Investment Fund opened in 2022. This offered access to financial support to establish new producer led abattoirs through our Adding Value offer. We have previously offered support for a mobile abattoir through the Rural Development Programme for England. In February 2023, Mark Spencer, Minister for Food and Farming, announced the launch of a new smaller abattoir fund to help drive productivity, add value, promote innovation and utilise new technology and enhance animal welfare. Defra is working closely with the sector on the design and content of this fund and full details of the funding package will be announced later this year.

With regards to other support for farmers, we have committed to spend around £600 million on grants and other support for farmers to invest in productivity, animal health and welfare and innovation over three years and paid out over £30 million so far in grants for technology and equipment. We have also provided 10,000 farmers with help and advice through the Future Farming Resilience Fund, which provides farmers with free advice to help farmers work out what to do for their business. Finally, we are looking at how we can support new entrants into the sector and those looking to grow their farming businesses by developing their entrepreneurial capabilities through a pilot scheme being run in conjunction with Harper Adams and Landworkers' Alliance.

Europe: Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports from Médecins Sans Frontières that nearly 500 refugees suffered serious personal injury on the borders of Serbia with Hungary, and of Bulgaria with Turkey; and what representations they will make to the states concerned. [HL7135]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK Government consistently urges all states to uphold international law and international human rights standards and to avoid any action that may endanger human life. We have made no specific assessment on these reported instances of injuries incurred on borders within Europe, but we regularly discuss migration and treatment of refugees with partners, including through our Embassies and we remain committed to supporting them manage this effectively.

Evan Gershkovich

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Russia regarding the detention of the journalist Evan Gershkovich; and what further action they propose. [HL7102]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In response to Evan Gershkovich's arrest, the Foreign Secretary said "Russia's decision to detain Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich shows their complete disregard for media freedom." On 17 April, the UK co-signed a statement by the Media Freedom Coalition of 46 UN Member States, delivered by the US Ambassador. We condemned Mr Gershkovich's detention and urged Russia to end its draconian crackdown on freedom of expression, including against media figures. As Mr Gershkovich is a US citizen the US Government will lead on consular support. The UK will work with the US to support their efforts to secure his release.

F-35 Aircraft: Crew

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government how many fully trained F35B pilots they expect to employ by 2030. [HL7180]

Baroness Goldie: Workforce planning for the second tranche of Lightning is ongoing. However, I am withholding the information requested as its disclosure would prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

First Time Buyers: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide support to first-time buyers by the end of 2023. [HL7302]

Baroness Penn: The Government remains committed to making the aspiration of homeownership a reality for as many households as possible.

We operate a range of schemes that aim to increase the supply of low-deposit mortgages for credit-worthy households, including first-time buyers, increase the availability of new housing, and stimulate economic growth. These include the Mortgage Guarantee Scheme, which is open until the end of 2023 as well as First Homes and Shared Ownership through the Affordable Homes Programme. The Government also helps first-time buyers to save for a deposit through the Lifetime ISA and Help to Buy: ISA.

We are also investing £11.5 billion to build more of the affordable, quality homes this country needs.

Over 829,000 households have been helped to purchase a home since Spring 2010 through Government-backed schemes, with the annual number of first-time buyers at a 20-year high in 2021.

We have also cut Stamp Duty Land Tax, doubling the threshold at which SDLT becomes due from £125,000 to £250,000 and expanding First-Time Buyers Relief raising the threshold at which stamp duty becomes payable from £300,000 to £425,000. The maximum property value on which First Time Buyers Relief can be claimed has also been lifted from £500,000 to £625,000. These will apply until 31 March 2025 to support the property market.

Fisheries: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what provisions under the Windsor Framework govern Northern Ireland fishing vessels landing catch from waters around England, Scotland and Wales. [HL7460]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether, under the Windsor Framework, fishing vessels registered in Great Britain landing catch in Northern Ireland are considered third country vessels; and if so, what steps they are taking to rectify this. [HL7461]

Lord Benyon: There is no change to the requirements that apply regarding landing of vessels into ports in Northern Ireland. Vessels should continue to operate in line with the status quo as set out in the guidance on gov.uk.

Heat Pumps: Costs

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address public concerns about the cost of replacing household gas or electric heating systems with air source heat pumps. [HL7175]

Lord Callanan: The Government is lowering costs through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, which provides a £5000 grant towards the purchase of an air source heat pump and is available until 2028, and through zero rating VAT on air source heat pumps until 2027. This is part of a comprehensive policy package to grow the market to 600,000 installations a year by 2028 and work with industry to make heat pumps as cheap to buy and run as fossil fuel boilers. Further details are set out in the recent Powering Up Britain publications (2022) and the Heat and Buildings Strategy (2021).

High Speed 2 Line: Rolling Stock

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 11 April (HL6905), how many trains of what capacity are included in the contract scope; what is the value of the purchase contract; and what are its delivery dates. [HL7194]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Rolling Stock contract awarded to the Hitachi/Alstom Joint Venture ('JV') will see the JV design, build and maintain a fleet of 54 state-of-the-art high-speed trains that will operate on HS2. Each train will be 200m long with up to 528 seats and have the option to couple two units together to create a 400m long train. The final seating capacity of the rolling stock will be agreed in collaboration between HS2 Ltd, DfT, and the West Coast Partner (as future operator) in order to support their customer service proposition. The contract award value for the supply of the rolling stock and a 12 year initial maintenance period is £2bn (as at December 2021) and the current contract programme will see the full fleet delivered to HS2 Ltd by November 2030.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 11 April (HL6905), how such rolling stock will be capable of operation on rail routes connected to HS2 as differing demand dictates; and to what extent value for money to the taxpayer will be demonstrated, given the absence of information about the operational routes for which such rolling stock will be compatible. [HL7195]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd is working with the West Coast Partnership Development (WCPD), acting as the future operator, to ensure that the rolling stock is capable of operation on rail routes connected to HS2 as differing demand dictates. HS2 Ltd and WCPD are working with the Department for Transport to finalise the operational routes for which the rolling stock will be compatible, supported by demand and revenue analysis to demonstrate value for money to the taxpayer.

Hkalam Samson

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Myanmar regarding the six-year prison sentence imposed on the former President of the Kachin Baptist Convention, Reverend Dr Hkalam Samson, on 7 April; and what steps they have taken in response to the sentence. [[HL7111](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK condemns the arbitrary detention of politicians, civil society members and journalists by the military regime, including the former President of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Reverend Dr Hkalam Samson. On 18 April, the UK Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief called for his immediate release and for the release of all those arbitrarily detained in Myanmar. On 21 December 2022 the UK coordinated a landmark UN Security Council Resolution which urged immediate action by the military regime to release all those in arbitrary detention.

Hong Kong: Sanctions

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to sanction officials of the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region who are responsible for enforcing the Hong Kong national security law against pro-democracy campaigners. [[HL7113](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have made clear our strong objection to the National Security Law (NSL), which is being used to stifle opposition and criminalise dissent in Hong Kong. We have taken a number of measures in response to the situation in Hong Kong, including the bespoke immigration route for British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)s), the suspension of the UK-Hong Kong extradition treaty and the extension of the arms embargo applied to China to Hong Kong. We keep all potential sanctions designations under close review. It would not be appropriate to speculate about future sanctions measures as to do so could reduce their impact.

Immigration: Interviews

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of shelter from rough weather for those awaiting immigration interviews at Lunar House in Croydon. [[HL7163](#)]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Attendees are provided with an appointment time for interviews to attend Lunar House and no internal waiting facility currently exists for early arrivals. The facility will be moved in 2024 to 2 Ruskin Square, Croydon where an indoor waiting area will be provided.

India: G20

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask His Majesty's Government what specific proposals, if any, they have forwarded to the government of India for consideration at the forthcoming G20 meeting. [[HL7177](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government places a high priority on the G20 and will continue to engage closely with India throughout its Presidency.

In visits to India, the Foreign Secretary and Chancellor reaffirmed their strong support for India's G20 Presidency and committed to work together to address the world's most pressing challenges. The Prime Minister is looking forward to attending the New Delhi Summit in September this year.

Individual Savings Accounts: Older People

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent estimate they have made of how many people over the age of 60 have ISAs in the UK; and what is the (1) total, and (2) average, value of those ISAs. [[HL7316](#)]

Baroness Penn: The latest information is available in Hansard under reference HL1263, which gives this specific breakdown for the 2019 to 2020 tax year. Breakdowns of ISAs by age bands for tax year 2020 to 2021 will be published in HMRC's Annual savings statistics in June 2023. These statistics show ISA breakdowns for individuals aged over 65.

Jimmy Lai

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China regarding the imprisonment of the British citizen Jimmy Lai. [[HL7112](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign Secretary set out our views regarding developments in Hong Kong with State Councillor Wang Yi in February. 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 and raised Mr Lai's case with Christopher Hui, Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury of Hong Kong, on 18 April. 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.

Kazakhstan: Russia

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the remarks of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on 18 March that the UK's relationship with Kazakhstan has "great growth potential", what assessment they have made of Kazakhstan's support for Russia's evasion of sanctions. [HL7095]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government welcomes the public commitments made by the Government of Kazakhstan that it will not be a back door for sanctions evasion. The measures that Kazakhstan is implementing to prevent sanctions circumvention have been part of our bilateral dialogue over the last year. Senior officials from the FCDO sanctions team are visiting Kazakhstan this month to discuss sanctions enforcement with the Kazakh Government. We look forward to ongoing close consultation in this area.

Leasehold: Reform

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in relation to leasehold reform since the enactment of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022. [HL7416]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: We are due to bring forward further leasehold reforms later in this Parliament, and announcements will be made in the usual way.

Local Government: East Riding

Asked by Baroness Pinnock

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Local Government (Levelling Up), during her visit to Hull on 28 February that she would like to see a devolution deal for Hull and

the East Riding "sooner rather than later", when they will provide further details of any plans. [HL7352]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Hull and East Yorkshire were announced in the Levelling Up White Paper as an early County Deal area. The Minister for Levelling Up visited Hull on 28 February where she took part in conversations with the Leaders of Hull and East Yorkshire about their plans for devolution in the region. Devolution discussions will continue following the May elections.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the collection of data for the Electoral Commission by polling staff at this year's local elections will be publicly available; and if so, whether it will include (1) not only the number of electors who had no approved ID, but also those who arrived to vote with ID which is not approved, and (2) those who did not have ID or the correct ID, but returned later with the correct ID to vote. [HL7237]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: With regards to the query on data recorded at polling station, I refer to the response given on 14th March to PQ 162192 .

The Answer includes the following attached material:

PQ 162192 [162192.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-04-18/HL7237>

Marine Environment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) protect, and (2) enhance, the marine environment through (a) no-take zones, and (b) marine protected areas. [HL7359]

Lord Benyon: The government recently announced the first three Highly Protected Marine Areas in English waters. These areas will prohibit all extractive, destructive, and depositional activities, including all fishing, enabling nature to fully recover by increasing marine biodiversity and supporting climate-resilient ecosystems. The government will explore additional Highly Protected Marine areas this year.

We have already built a comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering 40% of English waters and are now focusing on making sure they are properly protected. MPAs are protected through the planning and marine licensing regimes and we are aiming to have all MPAs in English waters protected from damaging fishing activity by 2024. This will help achieve our new legally-binding target to have 70% of protected features in MPAs in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in a recovering condition.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to establish a national access and waiting time standard for children and young people's mental health services, and if so, when; and what plans they have to establish a pathway for young people transitioning from children and young people's mental health services to adult mental health services, in order to collect detailed and accurate numerical data. [HL7376]

Lord Markham: NHS England has consulted on the potential to introduce five new waiting time standards as part of its clinically-led review of National Health Service access standards, including that children, young people and their families presenting to community-based mental health services should start to receive care within four weeks from referral. As a first step, NHS England has shared and promoted guidance with its local system partners to consistently report waiting times to support the development of a baseline position. NHS England is developing implementation proposals for consideration by Government.

We are supporting children and young people by expanding mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan. The Plan sets out the intention to develop a new approach to young adult mental health services for people aged between 18 and 25 years old which will support the transition to adulthood. The Plan will extend current service models to create a comprehensive offer for ages between zero and 25 years old that offers person centred and age appropriate care for mental health needs.

National Food Crime Unit: Administration of Justice

Asked by Lord Rooker

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to grant the National Food Crime Unit of the Food Standards Agency powers to present its cases to the courts. [HL7168]

Lord Markham: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) works to prevent, detect and investigate fraud within our food system. The Unit develops and presents evidential case files to the Crown Prosecution Service in anticipation of proceedings in the criminal courts, achieving its first end-to-end conviction in 2021. Other cases are shortly to be before the courts. The NFCU's existing suite of investigatory powers is not wide enough to enable the NFCU to carry out certain investigatory functions for criminal offences outside of general food law. The NFCU is therefore currently dependent on partners like the police to perform some functions such as obtaining search warrants.

Under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

now has the power to grant through regulations access to powers such as those under the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984 to NFCU officers. Following a public consultation last summer, work is underway on the necessary secondary legislation to grant these powers and bring the FSA under the Independent Office for Police Conduct oversight. Primary legislation would also be necessary to place the use of these investigatory powers by NFCU officers under the inspection remit of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and this is expected to be legislated for when parliamentary time allows.

Navy: Guided Weapons

Asked by Lord Stevens of Birmingham

To ask His Majesty's Government by what date they plan to have equipped the Royal Navy surface fleet with adequate capabilities to defend itself from hypersonic missile attack. [HL7172]

Baroness Goldie: The Royal Navy is constantly reviewing and updating their offensive and defensive capabilities based upon intelligence and threat analysis.

Due to the sensitive nature of these assessments, it is inappropriate to discuss the specific nature of our capabilities and the operational analysis being conducted

Offences against Children

Asked by Lord Kamall

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statements that "Research has found that group-based CSE offenders are most commonly White" and "there is no factor which makes any group of children uniquely vulnerable" in the Home Office report Group based Child Sexual Exploitation: Characteristics of Offending, published in December 2020, what new evidence they received following that report which led the Home Secretary to claim that perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are "almost all British-Pakistani" and that victims are "overwhelmingly white girls from disadvantaged or troubled backgrounds". [HL7140]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We know that child sexual exploitation is not exclusive to any single culture, community, race or religion. The Home Secretary's comments relate to the findings of local reviews into child sexual exploitation cases in Rotherham, Telford and Rochdale, which showed that perpetrators in those cases were overwhelmingly British-Pakistani men and the victims were white girls.

The 2020 Home Office report on group-based Child Sexual Exploitation set out the best evidence on ethnicity, age, offender networks, the context in which these crimes are committed and implications for national and local policy. As noted within the report, beyond those specific high-profile cases, the academic literature highlights significant limitations to what can be said about links

between ethnicity and group-based child sexual exploitation.

It is essential for police and local authorities to have a good understanding of offender characteristics and the drivers of child sexual exploitation in their areas, so that they can uncover and tackle offending effectively. That is why the Prime Minister and Home Secretary have announced a number of steps to improve our data on, and our response to, group-based child sexual exploitation, including a new Taskforce, regional analysts in every police region, a new Complex and Organised Child Abuse Database hosted by the Taskforce and the roll out of the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme, which brings together force-level, regional, and national data and intelligence.

Parking: Fees and Charges

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compliance of digital or app-only payment options for essential services such as parking in public spaces with the Equality Act 2010. [HL7261]

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have issued any guidance to councils to protect older people in (1) England, (2) Wales, (3) Scotland, and (4) Northern Ireland, who have removed cash or telephone credit card payment options from parking services and have introduced digital or app-only payments that require ownership and Wi-Fi connection of smartphones. [HL7262]

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all parking facilities and essential public services, including (1) medical appointments, (2) council enquiries, (3) service payments, and (4) registrations, are always available to those who do not have internet access, Wi-Fi connection or smartphones. [HL7315]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: The Secretary of State recently wrote to all local authorities in England setting out his expectations that parking services for which councils are responsible for remain accessible. For example, it would not seem appropriate for parking on a high street to be solely available for those who have access to a mobile phone. Nor would it appear sensible for local authorities to phase out paper-based parking options such as 'scratch cards' if the only available replacement is an entirely digital option.

All local authorities have statutory duties to ensure that they do not discriminate in their decision making against older people or those with vulnerabilities. Cash remains legal tender and it will continue to be used by people who favour its accessibility and ease. Local authorities should ensure that there are alternative provisions for parking

payments available so that no part of society is digitally excluded.

A copy of the letter is available on gov.uk.

Questions about medical appointments should be directed to the Department of Health and Social Care. Responsibility for local government is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but officials in this department will engage counterparts on these matters.

Parole Board

*Asked by **Lord Jackson of Peterborough***

To ask His Majesty's Government, with regard to the Parole Board (Amendment) Rules 2022, to whom is the Chair of the Parole Board accountable in the effective discharge of his or her duties with regard to agreeing public hearings of the Parole Board. [HL7368]

*Asked by **Lord Jackson of Peterborough***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the workings of the Parole Board (Amendment) Rules 2022 with regard to efficacious processing of requests for parole hearings to be held in public. [HL7369]

Lord Bellamy: The decision on whether to hold a public hearing sits with the Chair of the Board. The Parole Board has published extensive guidance on its approach to public hearings on its website: [Applying for a Parole review to be public - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parole-board-public-hearings).

The Parole Board is an independent non-departmental public-body. As such, any decision the Chair might take on whether a parole hearing should be held in public is made independently of the Secretary of State for Justice. The Ministry of Justice is only made aware of an application for a public hearing when the Parole Board seeks representations from the Secretary of State in his role as a party to the proceedings. Although appointed by the Secretary of State as a public appointee, the decisions of Chair, and those taken by the Parole Board, can only be challenged by way of onwards rights of appeal or judicial review.

The Parole Board (Amendment) Rules 2022 contains the provisions that enable public parole hearings. Specifically, Rule 15 provides that public hearing applications can be made by anyone no later than 12 weeks before a hearing and the decision whether to grant an application rests with the Chair of the Parole Board. There are no plans to review these provisions.

Police: Misconduct

*Asked by **Lord Lexden***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers 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 4 April (HL6681) where he stated that "Any decision concerning

publication of an LQC's name is a matter for the relevant PCC", what discussions they have had with Police and Crime Commissioners about disclosing the names of legally qualified chairs. [HL7144]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Decisions concerning the publication of a Legally Qualified Chair's (LQC) name are a matter for the relevant Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). These decisions are made independently of Government.

The Government has not held any specific conversations with PCCs regarding these decisions.

Prison Accommodation

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prisoners in England and Wales are subject to 23 hours of confinement in cells each day; and what are the reasons for this. [HL7400]

Lord Bellamy: The information requested is not held by the Ministry of Justice, as collecting it would require extremely detailed monitoring of each wing in each prison establishment. No prisons are routinely operating a 23 hour per day or similar lockdown.

Governors are afforded the flexibility to deliver balanced regimes that maintain an appropriate level of time out of cell on a range of activities, including association, which meet the needs of the establishment's population.

Prisoners' Release: Health Services

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are considering day release for prisoners who need to attend health appointments on external premises as an alternative to the normal requirement of two prison officers as escorts. [HL7399]

Lord Bellamy: The Prison Rules in England and Wales provide that a prisoner may be allowed to leave prison for short periods on temporary licence (ROTL). The main purpose of ROTL is to aid resettlement and suitable, risk assessed prisoners may be allowed out during the day to, for example, work, attend college, attend an interview or maintain/re-establish links with their family.

ROTL under special purpose licence (SPL) is permitted for compelling compassionate reasons not directly linked to resettlement; for example, to allow the prisoner to attend medical appointments.

The decision to allow temporary release is taken by the prison governor, on behalf of the Secretary of State, who must always balance the needs of the prisoner and the purpose of the ROTL applied for, against the need to maintain public safety and the public's confidence in the

criminal justice system. Each decision is taken on a case by case basis to safeguard the public.

Prisons: Drugs

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there has been an increase or decrease in the rate of seizures of psychoactive substances, such as spice and black mamba, in prisons since 1 January 2020. [HL7402]

Lord Bellamy: We publish the number of incidents where drugs are found in prisons in England and Wales in the [HMPPS Annual Digest](#), the latest issues covering the period from April 2021 to March 2022. The table below provides the data on incidents of psychoactive substances, as a drug type, found in prisons from January 2020 to December 2020, as well as the previous and following 12-month periods.

Finds of psychoactive substances increased in the period of January 2020 to December 2020 compared to the previous 12-months but decreased in the following 12-months. These periods are not directly comparable, because changes in the day to day running of prisons during the Covid-19 pandemic are likely to have influenced these figures. An increase in the incident of finds in prisons may be as a result of more items being found, rather than more items being present in prisons.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Psychoactive substance finds incidents*</i>
January 2019 – December 2019	7,651
January 2020 – December 2020	9,290
January 2021 – December 2021	6,740

Source: HMPPS Incident Reporting System

* (1) Secure training centres Rainsbrook and Oakhill report separately as they are contracted establishments and therefore data is not included in this dataset.

(2) Data includes HMPPS operated Immigration Removal Centres and during contracted out escorts.

(3) In the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016) "psychoactive substance" means any substance which is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it, and is not an exempted substance. Exempted substances are: controlled drugs, medicinal products, alcohol or alcoholic products, nicotine, tobacco products, caffeine or caffeine products or any substance which is ordinarily consumed as food, and does not contain a prohibited ingredient.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/2/contents>

(4) It is important to consider with incidents of finds in prisons, that an increase in numbers may be as a result of more items being found, although not necessarily attributable to any one particular security counter-measure, rather than more items being present in prisons.

Private Rented Housing: Rents

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to introduce a system of nationwide rent controls. [HL7358]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: I refer the noble Lord to the answer given to [HL3865](#), given 13 December 2022.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL3865 [HL3865.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-04-20/HL7358>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Asked by *Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government when Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be reopened for at-risk Afghans. [HL7149]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: As of 31 December 2022, the UK had granted settled status to over 7,600 individuals under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Since then, we have welcomed the first individuals under Pathway 3. Further information on the number of individuals relocated and resettled under each Pathway of the ACRS is detailed in the quarterly Immigration Statistics. The latest release is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets>

Under stage one of Pathway 3, places are being offered to eligible at-risk British Council contractors, GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni in Afghanistan or the region, and their eligible family members.

FCDO have informed over 250 individuals from these cohorts that they are eligible in principle for resettlement under Pathway 3, subject to passing security checks. Including their family members, this accounts for over 1,200 of the 1,500 available places under this stage of Pathway 3. FCDO have communicated an outcome on over 11,200 (98%) of the over 11,400 EOIs received. We look forward to welcoming all remaining individuals as soon as practicable.

We recognise there are many vulnerable individuals who remain in Afghanistan and the region. Unfortunately, the capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited and difficult decisions have to be made on who will be prioritised for resettlement.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

asylum-and-resettlement-datasets [asylum-summary-dec-2022-tables (1).xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-04-17/HL7149>

Refugees: International Cooperation

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of last year's statement by the UN that more than 100 million people have abandoned their homes because of war, violence and persecution; and what plans do they have to achieve greater international co-operation to deal with this situation. [HL7137]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK delivered a statement on 11 October 2022 at the 73rd Annual Executive Committee of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) setting out our assessment of the unprecedented scale of global forced displacement.

We are working to ensure the second Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 strengthens international co-operation to deliver on the ambitions of the Global Compact on Refugees. We are also supporting the UN Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement through collaboration with his Special Advisor, to help find solutions to internal displacement for millions of people.

Schools: Blasphemy

Asked by *Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the new blasphemy guidance being developed by the Home Office and the Department for Education will be legally binding upon schools; how they are planning to make schools aware of their new responsibilities under that guidance; and how that guidance will be enforced. [HL7123]

Baroness Barran: In response to recent incidents, the Government has been clear that there is no blasphemy law in the UK. The Department has no plans to produce specific guidance on blasphemy for schools.

Head teachers are best placed to make the decisions on how to meet the needs of their pupils. In doing so, there are a range of considerations, supported by existing departmental guidance. This includes ensuring political impartiality and promoting respect and tolerance between people of different faiths and beliefs.

Scottish National Party: Finance

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much public funding was provided to the Scottish National Party for the last financial year for which figures are available. [HL7122]

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Eligible political parties can receive a limited amount of public funding each year. Information on this is held by the Cabinet Office.

Political parties are required to report the funding that they receive, including public funding, directly to the Electoral Commission as part of their wider financial

reporting obligations. The Electoral Commission publishes this information on their online database for transparency and public scrutiny.

Solar Power: Fire Hazards

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of fires arising from solar photovoltaic panels. [HL7119]

Lord Callanan: Research funded by Government between 2015 and 2018 by the Building Research Establishment indicates the risk from solar PV fires is very low. Government continues to work with industry to make solar even safer and ensure best practice. In February 2023 RISC Authority, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme and Solar Energy UK published an updated Joint Code of Practice on recommendations for fire risk prevention in UK solar systems.

South Sudan: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what are their plans to reinstate aid funding to the Health Pooled Fund in support of hospitals and health care centres across South Sudan. [HL7325]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK is the largest donor to the Health Pooled Fund (HPF) in South Sudan providing up to £175 million from 2018 to 2024. In August 2022, the FCDO, on behalf of HPF donors, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of South Sudan setting out how we'll work together to transition responsibility for funding for eight state hospitals. HPF completed the phased withdrawal from the eight state and referral hospitals by 31 March 2023. In mid-March 2023, the Minister of Health for South Sudan reported that the Government of South Sudan would be procuring essential medicines for the unsupported health facilities.

South Sudan: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the outcome of the meeting on 19 April between the Minister for Development and Africa, and the Africa Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, with regard to reducing the recent increase in attacks on aid workers delivering humanitarian aid to those in need in South Sudan. [HL7322]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The UK unequivocally condemns all attacks on humanitarian workers who must be able to carry out their vital work safely. The UK is chair of the Humanitarian Donor Group in South Sudan and is an important voice in coordinating donor response to the crisis. This includes through diplomatic action that aims to ensure the

protection of civilians and improving the operating environment so humanitarian organisations can access difficult areas and reach those most in need. The UK called on the Government of South Sudan to remove all constraints on humanitarian access at the UN Security Council on 6 March 2023. We also called for the Government of South Sudan to act urgently to address the ongoing theft of humanitarian resources.

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what support is provided by UK Development Aid to the role of local churches in South Sudan and faith-based organisations in peacebuilding, resilience building and the delivery of humanitarian aid. [HL7323]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Faith-based actors play a crucial role, particularly in the areas of peacebuilding, health and education, across South Sudan. The Ecumenical visit in February 2023 demonstrates how the Churches can help to support peace building at a local and national level in South Sudan. The UK engages regularly with South Sudanese civil society, including faith-based organisations, through humanitarian and diplomatic fora. The UK-funded Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund (POF) has supported communities to reach local peace agreements, ensuring women's participation, and integrating gendered provisions including the return and reintegration of abducted women and children. The UK is chair of the Humanitarian Donor Group in South Sudan and is an important voice in coordinating donor response to the crisis. This includes through diplomatic action that aims to ensure the protection of civilians and improving the operating environment so humanitarian organisations can access difficult areas and reach those most in need.

South Sudan: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask His Majesty's Government what financial contribution they made in (1) 2021 and (2) 2022, to the bodies which oversee the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan: namely the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring & Verification Mechanism; and what is their planned contribution for 2023. [HL7324]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Poor implementation of South Sudan's peace agreement to date is driving violence and the humanitarian crisis. It is vital that the South Sudanese government deliver progress according to timelines set out in their Roadmap. The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) and the Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring & Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) play an important part in monitoring the peace agreement. The FCDO funds in-

kind support through the placement of technical experts in both CTSAMVM and RJMEC. In Financial Year 2021-2022, this amounted to £1.2 million in-kind support and in Financial Year 2022-2023 support totalled £407,261. For Financial Year 2023-2024, the FCDO has committed to up to £480,000 continued in-kind support.

Sudan: Armed Conflict

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of Sudan (1) to call for a ceasefire in response to the conflicts in that country, and (2) to encourage the conflicting sides to engage in discussions to form a civilian-led government. [HL7114]

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they will make to the UN to convene in order to discuss the current conflict taking place in Sudan. [HL7116]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are pursuing all diplomatic avenues to end the violence and de-escalate tensions. The Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Development and Africa are in regular touch working with international partners to engage all parties in Sudan. We led calls with the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, regional groupings and the UN Security Council to discuss the situation and coordinate a response.

In a public statement by the Quad (KSA, UK, US, UAE) and the Trilateral Mechanism (AU, United Nations and Governmental Authority on Development) we have publicly welcomed the extension of the ceasefire by 72 hours. This initial stage of diplomacy, establishing a process to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities, will contribute to action on the development of a de-escalation plan.

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of Sudan to take steps (1) to protect civilians, (2) to ensure the availability of humanitarian aid, and (3) to ensure the provision of adequate supplies for hospitals. [HL7115]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are pursuing all diplomatic avenues to end the violence and de-escalate tensions. The Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Development and Africa are in regular touch working with international partners to engage all parties in Sudan. We have led calls with the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, regional groupings and the UN Security Council to discuss the situation and coordinate a response.

In a public statement by the Quad (KSA, UK, US, UAE) and the Trilateral Mechanism (AU, UN and Governmental Authority on Development) we have

publicly welcomed the extension of the ceasefire by 72 hours. This initial stage of diplomacy, establishing a process to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities, will help ensure unimpeded humanitarian access.

Sudan: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to Sudanese leaders concerning the safety of leaders of civilian movements in that country; in particular, Yasir Arman. [HL7205]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are pursuing all diplomatic avenues to end the violence and de-escalate tensions. The Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Development and Africa are in regular touch working with international partners to engage all parties in Sudan. We have led calls with the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, regional groupings and the UN Security Council to discuss the situation and coordinate a response.

In a public statement by the Quad (KSA, UK, US, UAE) and the Trilateral Mechanism (AU, UN and Governmental Authority on Development) we have publicly welcomed the extension of the ceasefire by 72 hours. This initial stage of diplomacy, establishing a process to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities, will help ensure unimpeded humanitarian access.

Syria: Foreign Relations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of current efforts to normalise relations between Syria and its Arab neighbours; and in particular, what is their assessment of the possibility of a general amnesty allowing refugees outside Syria to return home and improved humanitarian access to Syria. [HL7136]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Conditional engagement, tied to UNSCR 2254, is more likely to advance the political process. Conditions in Syria do not currently allow for safe return of refugees. Previous regime 'amnesties' have not been reliable. Genuine progress on arbitrary detention, missing persons and the justice sector would help to establish conditions to enable returns. While we welcome increased humanitarian access following the February earthquakes and call for it to be sustained, we note that previous limits were due to regime and Russian obstruction.

Teachers: Workplace Pensions

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of any changes to employer contributions for the Teachers' Pension Scheme on further education colleges. [HL7131]

Baroness Barran: Work on finalising the 2020 valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is still ongoing and the department expects to be able to publish the outcome in late summer.

There are several policy decisions and scheme-based assumptions still to be determined that could affect the final outcome, which means it is not possible at this stage to accurately assess the likely impact on scheme employers. Following His Majesty's Treasury's (HMT) announcement on 30 March 2023 of the government's response to the consultation on the methodology for determining the discount rate to be applied in the valuation of public service schemes, it is expected that the contribution rate for the TPS will need to rise. That is why the government has committed to providing funding for the 2024/25 financial year for centrally funded employers, including those in the further education sector, to help address the impacts involved.

The department is working with HMT and the actuary for the TPS, the Government Actuary's Department, to progress the TPS valuation as quickly as possible. Regular updates will continue to be provided to the groups representing employers and members.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of any changes to employer contributions for the Teachers' Pension Scheme on universities [HL7132]

Baroness Barran: Work on finalising the 2020 valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is still ongoing and the department expects to be able to publish the outcome in late summer.

There are several policy decisions and scheme-based assumptions still to be determined that could affect the final outcome, which means it is not possible at this stage to accurately assess the likely impact on scheme employers. Following His Majesty's Treasury's (HMT) announcement on 30 March 2023 of the government's response to the consultation on the methodology for determining the discount rate to be applied in the valuation of public service schemes, it is expected that the contribution rate for the TPS will need to rise. That is why HMT has committed to continue discussions with the department on the impact for TPS employers in the higher education sector.

The Department is working with HMT and the actuary for the TPS, the Government Actuary's Department, to progress the TPS valuation as quickly as possible. Regular updates will continue to be provided to the groups representing employers and members.

Travel Requirements: Pupils

Asked by Lord Anderson of Ipswich

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to deliver on their commitment in the UK–France Joint Leaders' Declaration of 10 March to ease

the travel of school groups to the UK by making changes to documentary requirements for schoolchildren on organised trips from France. [HL7096]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: At the summit in Paris on 10 March 2023 the UK committed to ease the travel of school groups to the UK by making changes to documentary requirements for schoolchildren on organised trips from France.

We are currently working through the details of implementation and more information, including timescales, will be provided in due course.

This agreement with France will help to strengthen and maintain educational and cultural links with our closest continental neighbour. We will keep the position under review and ensure that we continue to operate our border in the UK's best interests.

Travel: EU Law

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to repeal or amend retained EU legislation that (1) enables passengers undertaking journeys of over 250 km to claim compensation in cases of significant delay, (2) entitles bus passengers to claim compensation when delayed for longer than 90 minutes on a journey of longer than 3 hours, and (3) gives passengers the right to accommodation where a delay necessitates an overnight stay for the passenger to be able to complete the journey; and if not, why the relevant pieces of retained EU law not been included in their Retained EU Law Dashboard. [HL7294]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department is currently in the process of reviewing its stock of Retained EU Law (REUL). The Department will set out its approach to each piece of REUL in due course.

The REUL dashboard was last updated in January and provides a list of REUL identified to that point. Since then, the Department has continued to identify REUL in scope of the Bill and expect this list to continue to evolve.

Turkey: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the Turkish judiciary has sufficient independence to conduct free and fair hearings of cases with political implications. [HL7134]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have long encouraged Turkey to work towards the full protection of fundamental rights. We are closely monitoring reports of the widespread use of anti-terror legislation to silence critics of the state and encourage Turkey to ensure that all charges under the legislation are carried out in a proportionate and transparent manner.

His Majesty's Government has no locus to intervene in Turkish domestic legal cases but our Embassy in Ankara frequently monitors high-profile trials. We will continue to raise specific cases with the Turkish government and through the Council of Europe.

Turkish Peoples' Democratic Party

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allegations that imprisoned members of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Turkey were not provided with full details of the indictment against them and their colleagues, and were allowed only one day out of three to make their defence during the trial held in April. [HL7133]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: British Embassy officials have been monitoring the Kobane trials in person and will continue to do so, alongside other like-minded missions. We follow events in Turkey carefully, particularly government moves to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP), the lifting of immunity for its MPs, and the replacement of opposition mayors by state-appointed officials. While these decisions are for the Turkish Government, we expect Turkey to undertake legal processes fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

Uebert Angel

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take, if any, to investigate alleged discrepancies in the application that Uebert Angel, Zimbabwe's Ambassador at Large, made for British citizenship. [HL7154]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office takes allegations of immigration fraud seriously and thoroughly investigates allegations of deception with a view to removing status if appropriate.

We do not routinely comment on individual cases.

Asked by Lord Oates

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether British citizen Uebert Angel should retain diplomatic status as Zimbabwe's Ambassador at Large. [HL7156]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are aware of an Al Jazeera documentary investigating cases of alleged smuggling and fraud involving Uebert Angel, a dual British-Zimbabwean national and Presidential Envoy and Ambassador At Large for the country of Zimbabwe to Europe and the Americas. Whilst Mr Angel holds a diplomatic passport he is not diplomatically accredited to the UK - countries are free to determine for themselves who they grant these passports to, but the passport itself does not confer any diplomatic status on the holder. We cannot comment further on specific cases at this stage.

The UK sees corruption as an important barrier to economic reform and inclusive growth in Zimbabwe. We engage with the Government of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, civil society and other actors in the fight against corruption in Zimbabwe.

Ukraine: Apache AH-64 Helicopters

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to giving Ukraine Apache helicopters. [HL7337]

Baroness Goldie: The Government has no current plans to gift Apache helicopters to Ukraine.

USA: Official Visits

Asked by Baroness Hoey

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of the £7 million cost of policing the visit of President Biden to Northern Ireland will be paid by the Government. [HL7124]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: President Biden visited the UK as a Guest of Government. It is long-standing policy not to comment on protective security arrangements. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals involved.

Warships: Procurement

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they still plan to replace amphibious shipping with Multi-role Support Ships. [HL7183]

Baroness Goldie: The Multi-Role Support Ship (MRSS) programme will replace the current mixed fleet of amphibious and Casualty Receiving vessels in the 2030s. These vessels will enable the projection of littoral strike capability worldwide and ensure that a modernised amphibious capability is available to the Commando Force.

Wind Power: Celtic Sea

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask His Majesty's Government when a decision will be made as to where the Celtic Sea floating offshore wind power line will come ashore and connect to the national electricity transmission grid; who will make that decision; and what mechanism will be used to decide on that location. [HL7176]

Lord Callanan: National Grid Electricity Systems Operator (ESO) is currently developing the Holistic Network Design (HND) Follow Up Exercise. Working closely with the Crown Estate, the ESO will make

recommendations for the grid connections of in-scope offshore wind projects in the Celtic Sea.

The Terms of Reference for the HND Follow Up Exercise, published on GOV.UK, outline the Network Design Objectives which will inform the recommendations. The recommendations will be finalised in July 2023 and published as part of the Transitional Centralised Strategic Network Plan by the end of the year.

The recommendations will inform connection agreements, including the location of interface points between the on and offshore network. Any infrastructure proposed will be subject to the appropriate planning process.

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of findings by Human Rights Watch that human rights are being violated as a result of the failure to implement an effective compensation scheme under the Windrush Compensation Scheme. [HL7190]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: We do not accept the Human Rights Watch assessment of the Windrush Compensation Scheme nor that human rights are being violated in the way it is operated. We remain absolutely committed to righting the wrongs of Windrush. The latest Windrush Compensation Scheme statistics show that £57.13m had been paid out by the end of February 2023 across 1,520 claims. A further £11.13m has been offered, awaiting acceptance, or pending review, taking the total amount paid or offered to £68.27m. In addition, over 60% of claims have received a final decision.

We have engaged with Human Rights Watch in response to their report and will continue to work with them to discuss their findings. We are making good progress towards the vast majority of recommendations from Wendy Williams' report and believe there are more meaningful ways of achieving the intent of a very small number of others.

Through this work, we will make sure that similar injustices can never be repeated and are creating a Home Office worthy of every community it serves.

The Home Secretary continues to co-host Windrush Working Group meetings to discuss how we can work together to drive further improvements.

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist victims of the Windrush scandal who still face long waits; and what plans they have to review the levels of compensation granted to applicants of the Windrush Compensation Scheme. [HL7191]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: Following implementation of the significant changes made to the Scheme since December 2020, we are now fully focused on reducing the time between claim submission and decision. The Scheme continues to run ongoing recruitment campaigns to ensure the necessary level of staffing is maintained and has continued to backfill those who have left. Alongside significantly increasing the number of EO decision makers, the Scheme has also increased quality assurance capacity to ensure more decisions can be assured and processed at pace.

In the meantime, as set out by the Home Secretary at the Windrush Working Group Meeting on 24 January 2023, additional experienced EO decision makers have been deployed on a temporary basis to assist with accelerating decision making, this is in addition to the established EO decision makers that are already in post.

Alongside significantly increasing the amount of Decision makers, we have also increased our Quality Assurance capacity to ensure more decisions can be assured and processed at pace. Furthermore, we are improving the evidence gathering process, including revising our data sharing agreements with other government departments.

We continue to listen and respond to feedback received from stakeholders and our customers to ensure the Scheme is operating effectively for everyone.

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to grant victims of the Windrush scandal the right to have a hearing at the Home Office. [HL7193]

Lord Murray of Blidworth: If an individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of their compensation claim, they can ask the Home Office to review its decision. This will be an internal independent review by someone who has not been involved in the individual's case (Tier 1 review).

If an individual remains dissatisfied, they can then request an external independent review (Tier 2 review). Their claim will be looked at by the Adjudicator's Office.

The Adjudicator's Office is a separate organisation, independent of the Home Office who can look at, among other things, whether the department has followed its policies, and the use of discretion by the Windrush Compensation Team.

The compensation scheme is intended to properly compensate members of the Windrush generation and to deliver on the commitment to right the wrongs that were experienced, while avoiding the need for court proceedings. We think this is in the best interests of those affected.

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