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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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
Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton	Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Viscount Camrose	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
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Lord Gascoigne	Whip
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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, Ministry of Defence
Lord Mott	Whip
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business and Trade and Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Penn	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Swinburne	Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Chief Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

Childcare Reforms

[HLWS74]

Baroness Barran: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children, Families and Wellbeing (David Johnston), has made the following statement:

The bold and transformative reforms to childcare that this government announced at the Spring Budget, including the single biggest investment in childcare in England ever made, will help to give children the best start in life and is a core element to our long-term strategy to grow the economy and get people back into work.

By 2027-28, we expect the amount of money we are investing in childcare to have doubled from £4 billion to £8 billion each year and it will give working parents 30 free hours of childcare per week from when their children are 9 months old until they start school.

Today's announcements are a vital next step to deliver our new entitlements for parents, providers, local authorities, and the early years sector in preparation for the first phase of delivery in April 2024.

They include details of when and how eligible working parents of two-year-olds can apply to receive the first 15 hours free childcare for 2-year-olds and the significant increases to sector funding to support the successful delivery of the upcoming entitlements.

Early Years Funding

We have published the new Local Authority rates funding for 2024-25 alongside the government's response to the recent consultation on early years funding.

In 2024-25, we are providing over £400m additional funding to deliver a significant uplift to the hourly rate paid to local authorities for the entitlements. This includes £67m of new funding to reflect the 9.8% increase in the National Living Wage from April 2024, £57m in recognition of teacher pay and pension costs in 2024, and the £288m additional funding for 2024-25 announced at Spring Budget in March 2023.

The final local hourly funding rates for 2024-25 include an average 4.7% increase for the current 3 and 4-year-old entitlement, from £5.62 in 2023-24 to £5.88 in 2024-25. Average funding rates for 2-year-olds will be £8.28 per hour, and rates for under 2s will be £11.22 per hour.

As set out in the government response to our consultation, there was broad agreement with our proposals relating to funding the entitlements for 2-year-olds and under 2s, and we will implement the majority of the proposals included in the consultation. This includes a new national funding formula to distribute entitlement funding for 2-year-olds and under 2s, extending the majority of the existing local funding rules to the new entitlements, and extending eligibility for the Disability

Access Fund (DAF) and the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to younger age groups. These proposals will ensure that funding for the early years entitlements are distributed fairly, efficiently, and supports delivery of the entitlements across the country. The full consultation response has been published on GOV.UK [<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-funding-extension-of-the-entitlements>].

Full details on the 2024-25 local authority hourly funding rates, including step-by-step tables, have been published on GOV.UK [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025>].

Childcare entitlement codes

From 2 January, eligible working parents will be able to apply for their 15 hours childcare for their 2-year-olds. Parents have until 31 March to apply for a code.

To apply for a childcare code, each parent needs to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage. This means that each parent needs to earn from just over £9,500 per year to be eligible for 15 hours a week of childcare during term time. Parents must also each earn under £100,000 adjusted net income per year to remain eligible for the entitlement.

More information on the range of childcare support available to parents can be found on the Childcare Choices website, where parents can explore the early education entitlements and other government help with childcare costs.

Capital funding allocations

We will publish this week the allocations of the £100m of capital funding for the 2023-24 financial year to support local authorities in delivering the expansion of the 30-hours early years entitlements and our commitment that all parents will be able to access wraparound care from 8am-6pm by 2026.

Local authorities are responsible for mapping supply and demand in their areas to ensure there are sufficient places available locally. They will be expected to work their local private, voluntary, and independent providers and schools to introduce or expand childcare provision in their area where there are gaps in provision.

The funding is anticipated to help deliver thousands of new places across the country.

Full details of the allocations, including guidance for local authorities and childcare providers will be published on GOV.UK this week.

Childminder grants

The Childminder Start-up Grant Scheme is open for applications from Thursday 30th November. The Scheme supports new childminders by providing them with grant funding, worth up to £7.2m, helping childminders with the cost of setting up their own businesses.

As previously announced, we are offering £600 to new childminders registering with Ofsted, and £1200 to new childminders registering with a childminder agency

(CMA). Grants to childminders registering with CMAs will be paid in two instalments, with a 6-month limit on claiming the second instalment.

Childminders must apply for the grant within two months of registering as a childminder, or within two months of the Scheme launching.

The scheme is available to all new childminders who have completed their registration on or after 15th March 2023. Individuals who have previously been registered as childminders and wish to re-register into the sector may also apply for the scheme, but there must be at least a 12-month gap between the date of their previous registration being cancelled and their new registration being finalised.

The Scheme will be facilitated by Ecorys UK Ltd, and new childminders can apply on GOV.UK.

Lionesses Futures Fund

[HLWS75]

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:

The Government has today announced it is investing £25 million in 2024-25, complemented with £5 million of additional investment from The Football Association, to create a new Lionesses Futures Fund. This fund is expected to deliver 30 state-of-the-art 3G artificial grass pitches across England, providing gold-standard provision for women and girls.

This funding honours the Lionesses' win at the UEFA EURO 2022 Final and their journey to the final of the FIFA World Cup 2023, as well as their efforts to continue to raise the profile of women's football, both domestically and internationally. It is important to build on these successes to ensure a long-lasting and sustainable future for women's football in this country.

The Football Foundation, the charitable body responsible for delivering the existing Government (as well as FA and Premier League) investment in grassroots facilities in England, will lead delivery of this new fund. The Foundation is applying robust principles to identify sites to benefit from this investment across all of England. The Government will continue to monitor and work closely with the Foundation to ensure projects have women's and girls' usage at the heart of their plans.

Many of the selected projects - which will be confirmed by the Football Foundation in due course - will have a women and girls-led club at their heart. In total these sites will support an estimated 8,000 unique female players - built around women and girls' priority use, using reserved peak-time slots, women and girls-only evenings and priority booking for women's and girls' teams to drive up participation and create pathways for growth.

The decision to focus investment on artificial grass pitches allows for increased hours of playing time as well as a larger variety of playing formats, creating more

opportunities for women and girls to get involved at a recreational level. We know that a lack of appropriate and accessible changing facilities is a current barrier to women's and girls' participation. With this in mind, each site will also have a new or upgraded changing facility.

The new investment the Government is committing to today builds on our existing investment of over £300 million in grassroots and multi-sport facilities across the UK between 2021 and 2025 (which we deliver in partnership with the Football Associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This funding also seeks to increase access for underrepresented groups (including women and girls) and ensures that every community has access to the grassroots facilities it needs.

We are in a defining period for women's football in this country and the Government is committed to honouring the Lionesses and building on their legacy - this investment will transform grassroots access and make sure that high quality facilities are ready and available when women and girls turn up to play.

Public Health: Opt-out HIV Testing

[HLWS76]

Lord Markham: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Victoria Atkins) has made the following Written Statement:

The Government remains committed to ending new HIV transmissions within England by 2030. In order to do this successfully, we must identify and treat more of those who are unknowingly living with HIV.

As part of our HIV Action Plan, NHS England is currently operating a bloodborne virus emergency department opt-out testing programme for HIV, and Hepatitis B and C for 34 emergency departments across London, Manchester, Salford, Brighton and Blackpool, focusing on areas with extremely high HIV prevalence (5 or more HIV cases per 1,000 residents aged 15-59), in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) HIV Testing guidance.

This means that anyone aged 16 years and over attending an emergency department in these areas and having a routine blood test will get automatically tested for HIV, and Hepatitis B and C, unless they opt-out. Accessible public-facing information about testing, its benefits and how they can opt-out allows individuals to make informed choices.

Through their recently published evaluation report, the data from NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) indicate that the existing opt-out testing programme has been highly successful in areas of extremely high HIV prevalence, helping identify over 2,000 cases of blood borne viruses, including 550 cases of people living with undiagnosed or untreated HIV.

After careful consideration of the available evidence, I am pleased to announce the Government is committing to new research, commissioned through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), to

evaluate the expansion of HIV opt-out testing to a further 46 emergency departments, in areas across England where there is high HIV prevalence (2 or more HIV cases per 1,000 residents). Funding will support 12 months of testing for each emergency department, to begin during the next financial year.

We anticipate that this will be an effective way to reach a substantial proportion of the estimated 4,500 people in England who are living with HIV but unaware of their status.

We will continue to keep Parliament updated on our progress to meet our 2030 ambitions as set out in our HIV Action Plan. We also want to thank our partners across the NHS, in NHS England, in UKHSA, local government, and the community and voluntary sector for their work towards ending HIV transmission in England.

Restoring our Natural Heritage

[HLWS73]

Lord Benyon: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State (Steve Barclay) has made the following statement:

Tackling climate change and restoring nature go hand in hand. As we prepare for the next international climate discussion at COP28, today we are delivering a package of measures to steward and restore our natural heritage, connect people with nature and strengthen our global environmental leadership. Together, these measures are a huge step forward in delivering our Environmental Improvement Plan.

From rare British rainforests in our countryside to the trees in our towns and cities, we are investing in nature and ensuring more people can enjoy its benefits. We will work in partnership with businesses, communities and farmers to restore nature across the country.

We know that access to the countryside boosts our wellbeing and the rural economy. Getting out into nature can help our physical and mental wellbeing. Natural England research shows that we could save the NHS more than £2 billion a year if everyone had good access to green space.

Every year there are 270 million visits to National Parks and National Landscapes (the new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in recognition of their importance to the nation) but we need to do more to make sure everyone, especially those unfamiliar with the countryside, have the chance to enjoy it responsibly.

To deliver on our manifesto commitment, we will start the process to designate a new National Park. To support existing National Parks and National Landscapes, government will publish the final response to the Landscapes Review and provide an additional £10 million in the new year to help them achieve more for people and nature. Government is also making an additional £5 million available this year, for Protected Landscapes teams to apply for, to improve the water environment in these special places.

To restore nature and support responsible access to the countryside we are:

- Taking forward a further 34 new Landscape Recovery projects, involving over 700 land managers across the country. Together these projects will restore more than 35,000 hectares of peatland, sustainably manage more than 20,000 hectares of woodland, including some temperate rainforest, create over 7,000 hectares of new woodland, and benefit more than 160 protected sites (SSSIs), alongside the sustainable production of food. The successful round 2 projects will now be awarded a share of around £25 million in development funding to finalise delivery plans, and secure money from private investors through green finance. This builds on the success of the first 22 Landscape Recovery projects that are already underway, aiming to restore more than 600 km of rivers and targeting the conservation of more than 260 flagship species.
- Publishing a plan to recover England's temperate rainforests, a globally rare and important habitat found in, for example, Cornwall, Devon, and Cumbria.
- Creating two new community forests in Tees Valley and Derbyshire – locally led projects planting trees near to where people live and work.
- Launching a competition for a second National Forest - inspired by the existing National Forest in the Midlands, this competition will support the creation of a new forest for the nation in England, helping to increase public access to woodlands, boost tree-planting, support nature recovery and tackle climate change.
- Publishing the Woodland Access Implementation Plan to protect, improve and expand access to woodlands, enabling more people to spend time in nature.
- Delivering our Biodiversity Net Gain package so new homes improve the local environment.
- Giving residents a say on the future of street trees in their neighbourhood, implementing a new duty to ensure communities are consulted before trees are cut down.
- Dedicating £2.5 million of funding to connect more children with nature, building on the success of the Generation Green project. The funding will help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience the wonders of our most beautiful landscapes.

These announcements today will build on our environmental leadership and help us to deliver our commitments to protect 30% of land by 2030. We have already created or restored wildlife habitats the size of Dorset and passed the world-leading Environment Act with long-term targets to restore nature. At COP28, we will once again champion nature as a vital ally to tackle climate change and commit to get more people out into nature.

A full list of the successful projects in the second round of Landscape Recovery can be found in Annex A.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Annex A – Landscape Recovery round two projects [Restoring our natural heritage WMS Appendix A.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2023-11-29/HLWS73/>

Written Answers

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

Affordable Housing

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote affordable housing and appropriate support services to prevent a rise in homelessness. [HL368]

Baroness Penn: The provision of affordable housing is part of the Government's plan to build more homes and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.

Our £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme will deliver thousands of affordable homes for both rent and to buy right across the country and the Levelling Up White Paper committed to increasing the supply of social rented homes and a large number of the new homes delivered through our Affordable Homes Programme will be for social rent.

We are providing over £1 billion over three years through the Homelessness Prevention Grant, including a £109 million top up this year, to support local authorities to deliver their statutory duties. This funding can be used flexibly – for example, to offer financial support for people to find a new home or to work with landlords to prevent evictions, among other preventative measures, or to provide temporary accommodation where needed.

Afghanistan: Refugees

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the human rights implications of the forced deportations of Afghans from Pakistan. [HL197]

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the impact of the deportations of Afghans from Pakistan on religious minorities affected by the deportations, particularly (1) Hazaras, and (2) Ahmadis. [HL198]

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the level of instability in Afghanistan as a result of the mass deportations of Afghans from Pakistan. [HL199]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government continues to monitor the return of Afghans from Pakistan. Pakistan has a long history of welcoming vulnerable refugees and we urge them to respect the human rights of all Afghans in Pakistan. We are working with the UN Refugee Agency to ensure Pakistan adheres to its international human rights obligations. Since September,

we have committed £18.5 million to the International Organisation for Migration in Afghanistan to support vulnerable undocumented people returning from Pakistan and Iran. We are monitoring the situation in Afghanistan, including the humanitarian and human rights implications. We note the Taliban's creation of a Refugee Commission to aid the resettlement of people returning.

Alternative Education

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the numbers of (1) schools, local authorities and multi-academy trusts commissioning alternative provision from unregistered settings, and (2) pupils receiving such provision, in the latest year for which figures are available. [HL363]

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to regulate unregistered alternative provision for schooling. [HL364]

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure schools, local authorities and multi-academy trusts that commission unregistered alternative provision take suitable and consistent checks on the quality and safety of that provision. [HL365]

Baroness Barran: Data on the number of pupils receiving school arranged alternative provision is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/e34e06f9-b3f1-4d63-8c02-08dbe514ee42>. This shows that 12,084 pupils were receiving school arranged alternative provision in an education setting without a unique record number (URN) assigned by the department. This data was recorded across 2,558 schools which had arranged alternative provision and includes schools in multi-academy trusts.

Data on the number of children and young people receiving local authority arranged alternative provision is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/c1229d41-8321-4c05-8c04-08dbe514ee42>. This shows that 8,311 placements were made in education settings without a URN. 140 local authorities recorded placements in education settings without a URN.

The alternative provision statutory guidance is clear that alternative provision, including unregistered alternative provision arranged by a local authority, should be good quality, registered where appropriate, and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks. Responsibility for the alternative provision used rests with the commissioner. The statutory guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>.

The Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance states that, where a school places a pupil in alternative provision, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>. Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

The department launched a call for evidence on the use of unregistered alternative provision last year. The responses to the call for evidence have been analysed and the analysis will be published later this year. The department will set out further proposals to strengthen protections for children and young people in unregistered alternative provision as they develop.

Army

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the operational readiness and viability of the UK's Warfighting 3rd Division. [HL343]

The Earl of Minto: Warfighting capability remains the cornerstone of deterrence and the bedrock of a world-class British Army. The 3rd (UK) Division is at the heart of this, able to manage a multi-domain battle in ever greater depth; designed to act with NATO and capable of providing a framework for Allies.

The Army constantly keeps its warfighting capability under review, and regularly assesses the adequacy of its readiness. It is embracing the ever-changing global landscape and ensuring that it will be more capable against peer adversaries and integrated with our NATO Allies and partners.

Asylum: Hotels

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any individual is responsible for carrying out a full risk assessment when implementing sharing of hotel rooms for asylum seekers to ensure vulnerable residents are safeguarded; and if so, who. [HL349]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Our asylum accommodation service providers are responsible for ensuring that all accommodation complies with the standards and provisions set out in [Schedule 2 of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts \(AASC\)](#).

The sharing of rooms in Initial Accommodation (IA) is not new and we work with local authorities and their partners to minimise the impact on health and local services of any increases to occupancy within individual sites. All representation will be considered by the Home

Office prior to any new asylum seekers being routed to additionally available beds.

When implementing room sharing, our providers will discuss the move with each individual and will encourage them to raise any safeguarding, medical or other issues which would mean room sharing is not appropriate. All personal circumstances will be considered before deciding if room sharing is suitable.

AUKUS: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Goldie on 3 July (HL Deb col 987), what estimate they have made of the planned UK expenditure consequent on the AUKUS agreement. [HL341]

The Earl of Minto: As announced in the Integrated Review Refresh, we are providing £2 billion this year and £2.95 billion next year to Defence. Of this new money, £3 billion will be invested across the defence nuclear enterprise, supporting areas such as the construction of industrial infrastructure, allowing us to continue to grow our graduate and apprentice nuclear skills programmes, and enhancing support to in-service submarines. This will support the overall delivery of AUKUS, while longer-term funding will be revisited at the next Spending Review.

Bangladesh: Elections

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the human rights implications of the violence taking place in Bangladesh ahead of the forthcoming general election. [HL376]

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Bangladesh on the release of Khaleda Zia, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader, ahead of the forthcoming general election. [HL377]

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the human rights implications of previous alleged electoral irregularities and human rights abuses in Bangladesh on the fairness of that country's forthcoming general election. [HL378]

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Bangladesh on the need for all political parties and candidates to have equal access to the Bangladesh Electoral Commission during the forthcoming general election. [HL379]

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the human rights implications of the scale and scope of the arrests of opposition party activists in Bangladesh, and of the impact on the forthcoming general election. [HL380]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: It is important that the people of Bangladesh should have the opportunity to freely choose their government. We are concerned at recent violence and the arrest of opposition politicians. We call on all stakeholders to exercise restraint, prevent violence and come together to create the conditions for a free, fair, participatory and peaceful election. Respect for human rights, rule of law and access to justice is essential. Bangladesh remains a Human Rights Priority Country for the FCDO and we regularly raise our human rights issues regarding the treatment of those in detention, including Khaleda Zia, with the Government of Bangladesh.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have further to support the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of recent actions by President Dodik and the Republika Srpska. [HL344]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK fully supports the High Representative and the use of his executive powers, should the situation require it. We remain an active member of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB), through which we provide the High Representative with political guidance. Ambassadors of the PIC SB issued a statement on 22 September, urging Dodik to immediately stop his policy of non-recognition of and non-co-operation with the High Representative.

Broadband

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 14 November (HL Deb col 472), what assessment they have made of whether they will achieve their target of at least 85 per cent of premises having access to gigabit capable broadband by 2025. [HL358]

Viscount Camrose: The Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible. According to [ThinkBroadband](#), an independent broadband news and information site, over 78% of UK premises can now access gigabit-capable broadband, which represents significant progress since January 2019, when coverage was just 6%. We are currently on track to achieve our target of 85% coverage by 2025.

We have created a competition-friendly environment in areas where deployment is commercially viable. This Government has also reduced barriers to broadband rollout. For example, we passed the Product Security and Telecoms Infrastructure Act in 2022, making it cheaper and easier for companies to deploy, upgrade and share infrastructure. As a result, there is now a thriving market of over 100 providers who are estimated to invest nearly £40bn by 2030 in rolling out gigabit broadband all over the UK.

The Government is also investing £5bn as part of Project Gigabit to ensure the hardest-to-reach areas in the UK receive coverage. Through our 12 Project Gigabit contracts and 27 current live procurements, we have made over £2 billion of funding available to suppliers to bring gigabit-capable broadband to up to 1.1 million premises in hard-to-reach parts of the country.

Climate Change

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government, given recent weather events, what progress has been made in helping the UK to adapt to climate change. [HL424]

Lord Benyon: The Government published its Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) (see attached) in July 2023. This marked a step-change in the Government's approach to climate adaptation, putting in place an ambitious programme of decisive action for the next 5 years to address each of the 61 climate risks and opportunities in its Third Climate Change Risk Assessment.

NAP3 builds on our work already underway to provide an improved and more resilient infrastructure, greener economy, and sustainable food production. For example, we are responding to environmental threats to domestic food production through our Environmental Land Management farming schemes, protecting hundreds of thousands of homes with a record-breaking £5.2 billion investment in flood and coastal schemes, and safeguarding future water supplies by working with regulators to accelerate £2.2 billion of investment through our ambitious Plan for Water.

The Government will continue to monitor its progress on adapting to climate change both internally through a new, senior officials Climate Resilience Board, and externally by the Climate Change Committee's (CCC's) reports to Parliament. The Government published its response to the CCC's latest report in October 2023.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Third National Adaptation Programme (07/23)
[Third_National_Adaptation_Programme.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-11-20/HL424>

Council Tax: Empty Property

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the empty homes premium since its introduction in 2013, with reference to the Local Government Association's findings of 13 November that empty homes in England have risen by nearly 10 per cent in the past five years. [HL393]

Baroness Penn: The judgement on whether to apply the empty homes premium, and the level of premium, rests with local councils. Through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, the Government has provided further flexibility to councils by enabling councils to apply a premium after a property has been empty for twelve months, rather than the current two years.

Cystic Fibrosis: Drugs

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether new or existing patients with Cystic Fibrosis will continue to have access to modular drugs through the NHS to treat that condition. [HL448]

Lord Markham: Since 2019, National Health Service patients have been able to access Orkambi, Symkevi and Kaftrio through an interim access agreement between NHS England, the company Vertex, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the UK Cystic Fibrosis Trust. The agreement makes the medicines available for a limited time at a reduced price, while further information has been collected to inform a NICE appraisal. On 15 November 2023, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved a new licence extension and children as young as two years old with cystic fibrosis are now eligible to receive Kaftrio through the interim access agreement.

NICE is currently consulting on its draft recommendations on the use of Orkambi, Symkevi and Kaftrio and has not yet published its final recommendations. NICE continues to work with stakeholders to address the issues highlighted by the committee in the draft guidance. Under the terms of the interim access agreement for the cystic fibrosis medicines, Orkambi, Symkevi and Kaftrio, eligible children and adults with cystic fibrosis can continue to receive ongoing treatment and be initiated onto treatment with these medicines, as clinically appropriate, while NICE concludes its evaluation.

Cystic Fibrosis: Medical Treatments

Asked by *Lord Weir of Ballyholme*

To ask His Majesty's Government what new treatments or strategies are planned to support sufferers of Cystic Fibrosis through the NHS. [HL450]

Lord Markham: NHS England commissions 47 specialised cystic fibrosis centres for adults and children

across England, in addition to supporting the optimal monitoring of patients with cystic fibrosis at home, and best practice in remote consultations.

Through these centres, NHS England provides a range of innovative treatments including inhaled therapies such as nebulised antibiotics. Since 2019, thousands of people with cystic fibrosis have been able to benefit from licensed treatments, firstly Orkambi and Symkevi and then Kaftrio, following its marketing authorisation in 2020. Access to these treatments is provided under the terms of a commercial agreement reached between the manufacturer, Vertex and NHS England, with the full support of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Within the agreement between NHS England and Vertex, there is a flexible commercial mechanism to ensure continued access for patients already receiving any of the licensed treatments following the conclusion of a full NICE evaluation.

On 3 November 2023, NICE published a consultation on draft guidance that did not recommend these treatments as a cost-effective use of National Health Service resources. This draft is an initial step in the review of these medicines and does not affect patients' continued access to these medicines on the NHS in any way. Eligible children and adults with cystic fibrosis can continue to receive ongoing treatment and be initiated onto treatment with these medicines, as clinically appropriate.

On 15 November 2023, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved a new licence extension that will mean children as young as two years old with cystic fibrosis are eligible to receive Kaftrio.

NHS England anticipate that as many as 600 children could benefit from this latest approval under the terms of the existing commercial agreement negotiated with Vertex in 2019. NHS cystic fibrosis centres across the country have plans in place to ensure that all children eligible today can be provided long term access to this life-changing treatment.

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the long-term plans for the use of Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre. [HL350]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Derwentside immigration removal centre (IRC) which is currently a women only centre, will be converted into a detained facility for men in due course.

Detention Centres

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are planning to update (1) the Detention Centre Rules 2001, and (2) the Adults at Risk Policy; and if so, when and

whether there will be a consultation on the changes proposed. [HL347]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: As set out by Lord Murray during the passage of the Illegal Migration Bill through parliament, the Home Office will be updating the Adults at risk in immigration detention policy to work with provisions in the Illegal Migration Act. Amendments to the statutory guidance will be laid before parliament by statutory instrument.

A separate, broader review of the Adults at risk policy is also currently being undertaken and includes reviewing Rule 34 and Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001.

The Home Office values engagement with key stakeholders when developing its policies and is currently giving thought to how and with whom the engagement process will be undertaken in reviewing these important safeguarding measures.

Digital Technology: Training

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expand the delivery of digital skills short courses and skills academies. [HL443]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to support vocational learning pathways for the delivery of digital skills education. [HL444]

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the digital skills gap for those aged over 50. [HL445]

Baroness Barran: Digital and computing skills are critical to achieving the department's science and technology superpower ambitions, which were published in March 2023 in the UK Science & Technology Framework. Programmers, data scientists, and other key digital roles will help to deliver the department's ambitions for the critical technologies detailed in the Framework, like AI and Quantum, but their importance is not limited to these technologies. These roles are fundamental to the wider labour market with 60% of businesses believing their reliance on advanced digital skills will increase over the next five years.

The department is investing in employer led technical skills and education, with courses and training in digital subjects often at the forefront of its reforms. For example, the department has introduced three Digital T Levels. These are gold-standard Level 3 technical qualifications designed with employers to meet industry standards. They have a significant industry placement built in to give experience of work within the digital sector.

There are also over 30 Digital Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) now being taught. These are Level 4/5 qualifications developed by awarding bodies in collaboration with employers so students can develop the

digital skills that employers want. Additionally, digital apprenticeships continue to grow with over 22,000 starts in 2022/23, which is an increase of 19% from the previous year.

The department is building on these initiatives through the Digital and Computing Skills Education Taskforce which brings together government and external expertise to increase the numbers of individuals taking digital and computing qualifications in mainstream and tertiary education and to attract individuals into digital jobs.

The department's ambitious skills agenda is backed by an additional £3.8 billion in further education and skills over this Parliament. The department is using this funding to ensure people of all ages can access high quality training and education which addresses skills gaps and boosts productivity. Key examples of how this funding has been used to support digital skills can be seen in the introduction of 21 Institutes of Technology (IoTs) across England, the introduction of the Free Courses for Jobs offer and the national roll out of Digital Skills Bootcamps.

IoTs are leaders in the provision of high quality higher level technical education. They are employer-led collaborations that bring together the best of existing further education provision with higher education partners to develop a high skilled, diverse workforce that is designed to respond to evolving sector needs. IoTs aim to help close skills gaps in STEM sectors, like digital. By establishing IoTs as a permanent network of 'go to' providers with deep employer relationships for Level 4/5 higher level STEM training, they play a critical role in boosting local economies and delivering the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and HTQs.

Launched in April 2021, the Free Courses for Jobs offer allows eligible adults to access over 400 Level 3 qualifications (A level equivalent) for free, including those linked with digital careers. These courses are ideal for those adults over 50 without a Level 3 qualification that are looking to improve their digital skills, retrain or upskill to meet their potential.

Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over, with courses available in digital subjects such as software development, cyber security, and data analytics. The majority of the trailblazers in Skills Bootcamps launched in 2020, were Digital. Digital training constituted the biggest element of the department's provision in the ensuing waves of delivery in the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

More Skills Bootcamps in Digital are being delivered through the launch of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which enables the department to procure Skills Bootcamps in response to quickly emerging skills needs and changing employment patterns. The department focused on Skills Bootcamps in digital skills as a priority for the first competition run from the DPS, and Digital skills are further included in the second competition.

Digital skills are increasingly critical for all citizens, enabling them to play a full part in society. Through the

Adult Education Budget, the department introduced a new legal entitlement in 2020 for adults to study free, high quality Essential Digital Skills Qualifications and, from August 2023, new digital Functional Skills Qualifications. These qualifications were developed against employer supported National Standards and provide learners with the essential digital skills they need to participate actively in life, work and society.

The government recognises that formal qualifications are not appropriate for everyone, which is why it also funds community learning and other non-regulated learning, such as building confidence in essential digital skills, through the Adult Education Budget. Many local authorities and other further education providers are already delivering these courses that help equip adults with the essential digital skills they need for work, life and further learning. From next year, the Adult Skills Fund will continue to support both qualification-based learning and tailored learning (which will include non-regulated learning to build digital skills) so adults can retrain and upskill in the most effective way.

Through skills reforms, the government is continuing to ensure learners are supported, including those who need the most support, to train, retrain and upskill so they can climb the ladder of opportunity towards better jobs, better wellbeing, and better options for the future.

Electric Cables

Asked by *Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Callanan on 22 November that "it is up to 10 times more expensive" to bury power lines (HL Deb col 740), what evidence they have to support that conclusion. [HL573]

Lord Callanan: The evidence to support the claim that underground lines can be up to 10 times more expensive than overhead lines comes from an independent 2012 report endorsed by the Institution of Engineering & Technology called "Electricity Transmission Costing Study", which can be found at <https://www.theiet.org/impact-society/factfiles/energy-factfiles/energy-generation-and-policy/electricity-transmission-costing/> (also attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Electricity Transmission Costing Study [Attachment to HL573.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-11-23/HL573>

Ethnic Groups: Equal Pay

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 21 March 2022 where she stated that they reserve the right to introduce legislation for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting

"at a future point, if and when the reporting tools are sufficiently developed, effective in driving positive change and accessible to more businesses" (HL Deb col 722), whether they still remain open to doing so. [HL321]

Lord Gascoigne: The Government published guidance in April which sets out how employers can measure, report on, and address any unfair ethnicity pay gaps within their workforce. This was an action from our ambitious Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March 2022.

We have no plans to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay reporting. Instead, we want to encourage and support employers who want to use ethnicity pay reporting to improve transparency and build trust among their employees. We are engaging with employers and representative bodies to promote the new guidance. We will also seek case studies from those that are already reporting on their ethnicity pay data, so that others can benefit from their experience.

Fisheries: Monitoring

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether footage captured through remote electronic monitoring of fishing will be available to the public or just to designated observers; and if just to designated observers, how this will be monitored. [HL505]

Lord Benyon: We do not anticipate making raw footage available to the public. How remote electronic monitoring (REM) data would be reviewed would depend on the data objectives for that fishery. We consulted on the data objectives in our recent consultation on REM in English waters. We are considering responses to this consultation and will publish a response in due course.

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government why the rollout of remote electronic monitoring of fishing (1) is voluntary, and (2) has been slow; and what consideration they have given (a) to making it mandatory, and (b) to expediting its implementation. [HL506]

Lord Benyon: Our recent consultation on remote electronic monitoring (REM) in English waters proposed a phased approach to the expansion of REM. This would begin with volunteers in priority fisheries and then become mandatory for all vessels in those fisheries. In this consultation we also sought views on the timeline and other implementation issues. We are considering consultation responses and will publish a response in due course.

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are their contingency plans in the event that insufficient numbers of fishing vessels volunteer to adopt remote electronic monitoring. [HL507]

Lord Benyon: Our current expectation is that we will have sufficient volunteers to expand the use of remote electronic monitoring (REM) in 2024. In our recent consultation on REM in English waters, we proposed the establishment of steering groups. Among other things, these would enable us to develop our approach with stakeholders across relevant fisheries. This could include looking at alternatives if sufficient volunteers were not forthcoming.

Fishing Catches: Cetaceans

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many cetaceans were caught in UK waters in 2022; and how that number compares to estimates of cetacean bycatch. [HL504]

Lord Benyon: All cetaceans are fully protected in UK waters under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. In the UK, it is an offence to deliberately disturb, harm, capture or kill wild cetaceans. We are not aware of any cetaceans being caught illegally in UK waters in 2022.

The UK introduced new rules in 2021 making it mandatory under fishing vessel licence conditions for fishers to report any marine mammal bycatch to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). On the introduction of this requirement, communications were sent out by Defra, the Devolved Administrations and the MMO to ensure that industry understood the new obligations.

This reporting is complemented by a range of other monitoring programmes.

The Government funds the UK Bycatch Monitoring Programme which uses onboard observers to estimate bycatch rates and high-risk gear types. The 2022 annual programme report will be completed and published, once fishing effort figures for 2022 are finalised and can be integrated into bycatch estimates.

In addition, both the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP) and the Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme investigate the causes of death of stranded cetaceans around the UK coast to improve our understanding of, and ability to tackle, key threats like bycatch. CSIP strandings data are published in annual reports. Due to unprecedented events, including the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's largest ever outbreak of avian influenza, the delivery of project reports has been delayed. The 2022 annual report will be finalised shortly and released in due course, following publication assurance processes.

Since 2020, Defra has also funded Clean Catch UK, a research programme which is developing and trialling a range of bycatch monitoring and mitigation measures. This programme has developed a bycatch self-reporting mobile application and an online 'Bycatch Mitigation Hub' with information on different approaches to reduce bycatch.

We recognise that accidental bycatch in fisheries is one of the greatest threats faced by cetaceans, and we remain fully committed to tackling this and addressing monitoring gaps. In 2022, the UK Government and Devolved Administrations published the UK Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI). This outlines how the UK will achieve its ambitions to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the bycatch of sensitive marine species. As a core objective of the BMI, the Government will continue to build on existing monitoring work to improve our understanding of bycatch and entanglement of sensitive marine species.

Fraud: Databases

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the comprehensiveness of their current data in estimating total national fraud, and (2) the feasibility of reintroducing a government-led Annual Fraud Indicator. [HL342]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office and the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) publish datasets reflecting their respective responsibilities for fraud against individuals and businesses, and fraud against the public sector.

These include the Crime Survey of England and Wales (supplemented by data from Action Fraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau), the Economic Crime Survey of 2020 estimating fraud against businesses across seven sectors (due to be refreshed in 2024), and the PSFA's annual report on the scale of fraud. There are also plans for a new Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Service in 2024.

General Practitioners: Rural Areas

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage more GPs to practice in rural areas. [HL475]

Lord Markham: The Government recognises that there are issues with recruitment and retention in certain areas of the country, including some rural locations. We launched the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme in 2016, which has attracted hundreds of doctors to train in hard to recruit locations, including many rural areas, by providing a one-off financial incentive of £20,000. As of 2023/24, there are 782 places available on the scheme.

Health and Safety: Artificial Intelligence

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Buscombe on 5 June 2018 (HL8200), what testing and examination was carried out to ensure that any artificial intelligence software supplied for use in the Department for Work and

Pensions is safe and without risks, as required by section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. [HL473]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: We will continue to work in close collaboration and partnership with other government departments and bodies to align with government's AI approach, particularly the [AI Safety Institute](#). DWP is exploring the use of AI and how it can support better digital services in a safe, transparent, ethical and considered way. We will work with HSE as and where it is appropriate to do so.

HIV Infection: Disease Control

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support community-led efforts in other countries that focus on HIV prevention, awareness, and support for key affected populations, such as sex workers, LGBTQ+ communities, and people who use drugs. [HL336]

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to facilitate international knowledge exchange and collaboration to accelerate progress towards the global goals of ending new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths by 2030. [HL337]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains a world leader in efforts to end the global AIDS epidemic and funds all key partners in the global AIDS response, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria.

The UK's investments, including to the WHO, help to ensure that people at high risk of HIV in the global south can access Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and other HIV prevention and treatment services. WHO has recently published new guidelines on HIV, STI and viral hepatitis prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations, which will support countries and local organisations in designing and implementing their HIV strategies and interventions.

Our recent pledge of £1 billion to the Global Fund will save over 1 million lives, including by providing antiretroviral therapy for 1.8 million people, HIV counselling and testing for 48 million people, and reaching 3 million members of key affected populations with prevention programs.

Our funding for the Robert Carr Fund and UNAIDS supports initiatives to empower local civil society and grassroots organisations, predominantly in the Global South, to increase access to HIV prevention, testing and care services, particularly for LGBT+ people.

Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have in the current session of Parliament either to reintroduce the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill or to support its reintroduction. [HL375]

Lord Benyon: We are disappointed that the Hunting Trophies Bill failed to progress in the House of Lords in the previous session, in spite of overwhelming support from MPs for our proposals. We are committed to delivering on our manifesto pledge to ban the import of hunting trophies and will continue to explore ways to bring this forward.

Immigration: Detainees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking over the immigration detention estate to ensure the use of force is continually monitored and recorded for all detainees, and particularly vulnerable adults and children. [HL346]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We will accept nothing but the highest standards from companies employed to manage the immigration removal estate.

Published guidance Detention Services Order 07/2016, and the training received by detainee custody officers (DCOs) makes it clear that physical force and restraint equipment must only be used as a last resort, and for the shortest possible time, and physical force will be used only after a thorough risk assessment and in consideration of each individual's personal circumstances. Where restraints are used, they must be removed at the earliest opportunity.

The Home Office reviews all reports resulting from a use of force in detention to identify trends, ensure that techniques are used proportionally, are justified, and are only used for the minimum period required.

Industry: Investment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter from the Capital Markets Industry Taskforce to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as reported by Sky News on 14 November, which stated that Britain has lower domestic investments than other G7 countries; and what steps they are taking in response. [HL369]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The government welcomes representations from industry relating to capital markets and will continue to engage with a wide range of organisations on these issues.

At Autumn Statement, the Chancellor updated on his comprehensive package of ongoing regulatory reforms to support our capital markets and make the UK one of the most attractive places to start, grow and list a company. This includes: delivering Lord Hill's central recommendation, laying legislation to fundamentally overhaul the UK's prospectus regime; putting in place a consolidated tape to improve market data; launching a financial market infrastructure sandbox to test distributed ledger technology and; making fundamental changes to short selling. The FCA and government are also engaging industry stakeholders to take forward the recommendations of the Investment Research Review.

Supporting these capital market reforms, the Chancellor also announced that the government will explore options for a NatWest retail share offer in the next 12 months, subject to supportive market conditions and achieving value for money.

Together with the pension investment package announced at Autumn Statement, the government's actions will boost growth in the UK's capital markets and high-growth companies, while improving savers outcomes and investment.

Medical Records: Data Protection

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compliance by UK Biobank with NHS England's assertion that "information is never passed to insurance companies without patient consent." [HL352]

Viscount Camrose: The assurance that identifiable data will not be shared with any organisation, including insurance companies, was provided to participants at the time of recruitment, and still applies. Members of the public invited to join UK Biobank were given information leaflets and a consent form that stated that de-identified data would be made available to researchers from across industry, academia, charitable and government sectors if the applications met the required thresholds of including a bona fide researcher and doing health-related research in the public good.

Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, following the professional and technical advice received by both Houses that a partial decant is both more risky and expensive than a full decant, why a partial decant is still being considered as an option for Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. [HL458]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In July 2023 the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Client Board endorsed the R&R Programme Board's recommended shortlist of R&R delivery options. This included a "full decant"

option where both Houses move out of the Palace at the same time (with the Commons prioritised for earlier return) and an option whereby the House of Commons would maintain a "continued presence" in varying locations in the Palace during the works and the House of Lords would move out of the Palace. The Client Board has also requested that a fallback option of enhanced maintenance and improvement forms part of further detailed design work on these options to inform a decision on the preferred way forward in due course, currently expected in 2025.

The Client Board considered it important that more than one option should be subject to further detailed design work and analysis in order to meet the spirit of the new mandate for R&R agreed by both Houses last year and to reflect that members of both Houses have differing views about how the programme can best be delivered.

Refugees: Biometric Residence Permits

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there are mechanisms available to extend the move-on period for an individual where the issuing of a biometric residence permit is significantly delayed following a letter granting refugee status. [HL348]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Following the service of an asylum decision, an individual continues to be an asylum seeker for the purpose of asylum support until the end of the relevant prescribed period, also known as the 'grace period' or 'move on period'. This period is 28 calendar days from when an individual is notified of a decision to accept their asylum claim and grant them leave. This period remains as 28 days and there are no plans to change this. Individuals are notified of this period in their grant letter.

Confirmation of the exact date an individual's support and accommodation is due to end is issued in a 'notice to quit' (NTQ) or 'notice to vacate' (NTV) letter. This will either be at least 7 days from when the notice is issued, or the date on which the grace period comes to an end, whichever is the longest in date. A NTQ will only usually be issued once a person has been issued a biometric residence permit (BRP).

This means that individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served and that support usually will not end unless an individual has been issued with a BRP.

It's important to note that individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible if they require them.

Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask His Majesty's Government what was their expenditure in real terms on road maintenance each

year since 2000 for which figures are available.
[HL326]

Lord Davies of Gower: The table summarises maintenance expenditure by road class, adjusted for inflation, in England, from April 2005 onwards.

<i>Road class</i>	<i>Financial Year Ending (FYE)</i>	<i>Structural Treatment [Note 1, 2]</i>	<i>Routine and other Treatment [Note 1, 2]</i>	<i>Highways Maintenance Policy, Planning and Strategy [Note 2]</i>	<i>Total [Note 2]</i>						
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2006	728	457	[z]	1,185	and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2017	716	292	[z]	1,007
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2007	681	466	[z]	1,148	Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2018	870	287	[z]	1,157
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2008	646	513	[z]	1,159	Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2019	744	299	[z]	1,043
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2009	633	530	[z]	1,164	Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2020	777	283	[z]	1,060
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2010 [Note 4]	1,166	477	[z]	1,643	Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2021	763	297	[z]	1,059
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2011	579	375	[z]	954	Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2022	887	285	[z]	1,172
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2012	595	387	[z]	982	Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2006	2,439	1,664	389	4,492
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2013	513	332	[z]	845	Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2007	2,315	1,596	428	4,338
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2014	620	306	[z]	926	Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2008	2,265	1,721	419	4,406
Trunk motorway and trunk 'A' roads [Note 3]	FYE 2015	864	270	[z]	1,135	Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2009	2,213	1,315	390	3,918
Trunk motorway	FYE 2016	790	305	[z]	1,095	Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2010 [Note 4]	2,502	1,774	421	4,696
						Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2011	2,386	1,673	390	4,449
						Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2012	2,313	1,573	345	4,231
						Local authority roads [Note 6, 7, 8]	FYE 2013	2,022	1,528	339	3,888
						Local	FYE	2,119	1,496	358	3,973

'C' and 'U')						Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2019	1,723	758	[z]	2,480
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2008	1,649	1,114	[z]	2,763	Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2020	1,640	777	[z]	2,417
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2009	1,612	945	[z]	2,557	Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2021	1,676	771	[z]	2,447
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2010 [Note 4]	1,723	1,088	[z]	2,811	Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2022	1,632	793	[z]	2,42
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2011	1,612	1,108	[z]	2,720						
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2012	1,439	973	[z]	2,412	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2013	1,333	946	[z]	2,280	<i>Asked by Baroness Hayman</i>					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2014	1,369	889	[z]	2,258	To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring forward the remaining funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to give the social housing sector certainty to plan for decarbonising their housing stock beyond 2025. [HL406]					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2015	1,564	890	[z]	2,453	Lord Callanan: The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) is a 10-year, £3.8bn 2019 manifesto commitment. £6 billion of new Government funding will be made available from 2025 to 2028 in addition to the £6.6 billion allocated in this Parliament to energy efficiency and clean heat in buildings. Conversations are continuing with HM Treasury to assess SHDF's share of the £6bn to be made available from 2025 to 2028, and provide long-term funding certainty, support the growth of supply chains and ensure we can scale up our delivery over time.					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2016	1,561	782	[z]	2,343	Suella Braverman					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2017	1,315	783	[z]	2,098	<i>Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest</i>					
Of which: Local authority minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U')	FYE 2018	1,394	766	[z]	2,160	To ask His Majesty's Government whether the written agreement made with the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, as mentioned in her resignation letter, was used as the basis for any policy direction in the Home Office; and if so, what the nature of that policy direction was. [HL374]					
						Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I refer the noble peer to the answer of 20 November 2023, Official Report, House of Commons, PQ 1905.					

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