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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Lord True	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Bellamy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Benyon	Minister of State, 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
Lord Davies of Gower	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Lord Evans of Rainow	Whip
Lord Gascoigne	Whip
Lord Harlech	Whip
Lord Johnson of Lainston	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade
Lord Markham	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Earl of Minto	Minister of State, 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 Dirlerton	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

Monday, 4 December 2023

AUKUS Defence Partnership

[HLWS86]

The Earl of Minto: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Just over two years ago, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia launched the ground-breaking new strategic partnership – known as AUKUS. As we have seen over the last two years or so, the world has become more dangerous. That's why Defence partnerships like AUKUS only become more important in ensuring the UK and our allies maintain a strategic advantage.

For more than a century, our nations have stood shoulder to shoulder, along with other allies and partners, to help sustain peace, stability, and prosperity around the world.

On Friday, I was delighted to meet with the US Secretary for Defense, Lloyd Austin, and the Australian Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Richard Marles at the Defense Innovation Unit in California for the annual AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting.

For Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (Pillar I), we are collaborating to deliver this capability at the earliest possible date while upholding the highest nuclear non-proliferation standard.

For Advanced Capabilities (Pillar II), we are significantly deepening cooperation on a range of security and defence capabilities, making sure that each nation has the capabilities needed to defend against rapidly evolving threats.

Through these efforts, AUKUS contributes to integrated deterrence by pursuing layered and asymmetric capabilities that promote deterrence and stability.

We reflected on the exceptional progress made as part of delivering on the Optimal Pathway to develop a conventionally armed, nuclear powered, submarine capability to the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy, as announced by the AUKUS leaders in March this year. This includes increased training opportunities for Australian sailors in the UK and US, and the introduction of enabling legislation to the US Congress and Australian Parliament. We reaffirmed our shared commitment to upholding the highest standard for nuclear non-proliferation.

Our industry is supporting Australia in this endeavour. Both BAE Systems in Barrow and Rolls Royce in Derby are playing a key role in the delivery of this world-class capability.

We also reflected on how the strategic alignment of our national defence strategies, anchored by our shared

values, is facilitating unprecedented collaboration in advanced technologies. Through Pillar II, we are accelerating and deepening the development and delivery of advanced military capabilities, based on the most important challenges we face. This progress will improve our shared ability to tackle emerging threats.

We are significantly scaling up our cooperation on maritime capabilities and have committed to test these through a landmark maritime autonomy experimentation and exercise series. This will help us test our interoperability and increase the sophistication and scale of autonomous systems in the maritime domain. There will be significant opportunities for UK industry to engage.

We are advancing our trilateral anti-submarine warfare activities and undersea vehicle launch and recovery. These capabilities help to increase the range and capability of our undersea forces and will also support SSN-AUKUS. This follows our successful trials last month, where HMS *Tamar* played a key role in combined exercises off the east coast of Australia.

We are strengthening cyber capabilities across the three AUKUS partners, ensuring that we are working hand in hand with our industry partners across all our supply chains and protecting this endeavour for the future.

We are developing quantum technologies to increase resilience for our trilateral forces in Global Positioning System-degraded environments and enhance stealth in the undersea domain, including on future SSN-AUKUS submarines.

Critical to all of our capability development is our ability to facilitate faster and deeper defence trade between our nations. These efforts will increase private-sector cooperation across our nations, which is crucial to our ambition in emerging technologies. The Advanced Capabilities Industry Forum will provide a mechanism for industry-industry and government-industry consultation on how to transfer the necessary technology, data, and know-how needed to deliver capability quickly. We have also previewed our first AUKUS Innovation Challenge.

In addition, we have confirmed our trilateral cooperation on the Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC) programme. This will provide 24/7, all-weather capabilities that will increase AUKUS nations' ability to characterise objects deep in space up to 22,000 miles (36,000 kilometres) away from earth, supporting HMG's commitments to be a meaningful actor in space under the National Space Strategy (2021). Cawdor Barracks in South-West Wales has been identified as the UK's preferred host site, which will progress subject to planning permission.

Together, these initiatives provide us with a solid foundation to enhance our collective security and deterrence to keep all three nations' safe in a world which is becoming more dangerous by the day.

For additional detail, I refer members to the AUKUS Defence Ministers' [communicate](https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/)

[3604511/aucus-defense-ministers-meeting-joint-statement/](#).

Defence Equipment Plan

[HLWS82]

The Earl of Minto: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I wish to inform Parliament that the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Defence has written to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee with our 2023 update on the affordability of the 2023 Defence Equipment Plan as at the end of financial year 2022-23, which details the Department's spending plans in equipment procurement and support projects over a period of 10 years.

I am placing a copy of his letter and the supplementary tables in the Library of the House and they have been published online. This more concise update takes the place of the usual Equipment Plan financial summary report and maintains continuity of financial reporting ahead of implementing the outcomes of the Integrated Review Refresh and the Defence Command Paper 2023 (DCP23). I welcome the continued engagement of the National Audit Office (NAO) who have today published their independent assessment of our plans.

The world is increasingly dangerous and the transition into a multipolar, fragmented and contested world had happened more quickly and definitively than anticipated in the original Integrated Review. The risk of escalation is greater than at any time in decades.

This year's Equipment Plan comes at a time where there are significant financial pressures due to pivotal world events, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the plan recognises the significant impact inflation has had on Defence's budget.

We have increased the budget for the Equipment Plan to £288.6 billion. Against this assumption we estimated there was a 6% pressure, but there are other reasonable scenarios in which the department has a surplus over ten years. The position reported in the plan and by the NAO does not reflect the Government's aspiration to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP as soon as economic and fiscal conditions allow.

While we are currently forecasting a pressure, the department is confident it can live within its equipment budget, with only 25% of the Equipment Plan committed over the next decade, providing the headroom to adjust the programme as needed and ensuring we can remain responsive to emerging events. We have also made significant changes to how we manage the nuclear enterprise which will support us to deliver the nuclear deterrent on schedule.

We published DCP23 this summer and work is already underway to develop proposals to deliver its intent within our current budget. The additional funding from the 2022 Autumn Statement and 2023 Spring Budget is already

allowing us to make new investments in stockpiles and munitions.

While we recognise the affordability challenge of the 2023-2033 Equipment Plan, it is only right that the choices we make to address this reflect the Government's priorities as set out in DCP23, as the department focuses more on Artificial Intelligence, digital capabilities and assuring supply chains to modernise our Armed Forces. We continue to work on reform to our acquisition processes including more iterative development of capabilities.

Horizon Europe and Copernicus Programmes: UK's Association

[HLWS85]

Viscount Camrose: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology; Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP:

On Monday 4 December the UK and EU will sign our bespoke new agreement finalising the UK's association to the Horizon Europe and Copernicus programmes. This deal is set to create and support thousands of new jobs as part of the next generation of research talent. It will help deliver the Prime Minister's ambition to grow the economy and cement the UK as a science and technology superpower by 2030.

As part of the new deal negotiated over the last six months, the Prime Minister secured improved financial terms of association to Horizon Europe that are right for the UK – increasing the benefits to UK scientists, value for money for the UK taxpayer. It ensures:

- 1) UK taxpayers will not pay for the time where UK researchers have been excluded since 2021, with costs starting from January 2024.
- 2) The UK will have a new automatic clawback that protects the UK as participation recovers from the effects of the last two and a half years. It means the UK will be compensated should UK scientists receive significantly less money than the UK puts into the programme. This was not the case under the original terms of association.

Later today we expect UK and EU representatives to meet in the format of the Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes, where they are due to sign a decision to adopt Protocols I and II and amend Annex 47 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, thereby formalising the UK's association to Horizon Europe and Copernicus.

I will meet in Brussels with EU Research and Innovation Commissioner Iliana Ivanova and members of the UK and EU R&D sectors to discuss and promote efforts to boost UK participation in Horizon Europe and Copernicus.

My visit to Brussels marks the start of joint UK-EU work to ensure that UK businesses and researchers and

their international counterparts come together and seize the opportunity that UK association to the programmes brings.

Researchers, academics, and businesses of all sizes can confidently bid for a share of the more than £80 billion available through the two programmes, with calls for the 2024 Work Programme already open. It builds on the Government's record-breaking backing for R&D, with a commitment to invest £20 billion in UK R&D by 2024-25, borne out in recent announcements like the £500 million boost to the AI Research resource and £50 million for battery manufacturing R&D, announced in the Autumn Statement.

DSIT will shortly launch a communications campaign to maximise participation in Horizon Europe and Copernicus from researchers, academics and businesses of all sizes in the UK. Encouraging smaller businesses to pitch for, and win, Horizon and Copernicus funding supports DSIT's aim to help the UK's promising science and tech firms scale-up and grow. Officials will work closely with key sector stakeholders to ensure this message reaches businesses of all kinds, who might not have previously considered applying, as well as researchers and academics in every part of the country.

Independent Review of Women's Football

[HLWS84]

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:

I wish to inform the House that the Government has today published its response to the recommendations made by the Independent Review of Women's Football.

Women's football has developed rapidly in recent years and there is no doubt that we are at a defining moment. The Lionesses' win at the UEFA EURO 2022 Final and their journey to the final of the FIFA World Cup earlier this year has continued to raise the profile of women's football, both domestically and internationally. It is vital that we continue to build on these successes to ensure a long lasting and sustainable future for women's football in this country.

The Review of Women's Football examined the opportunities and challenges for the women's and girl's game. The Review made ten strategic recommendations which would lift minimum standards and deliver bold and sustainable growth at elite and grassroots levels. The Government supports all ten of the recommendations in the Review, and believes that these must be acted on as a priority to ensure the women's game propels itself to the next level. I want to take this opportunity to thank Karen Carney again for the enormous amount of hard work and commitment that went into producing such a prominent Review. I am grateful for her continued support for the women's game and I very much look forward to working with her going forward.

Responsibility for driving forward the recommendations sits across multiple stakeholders including the Football Association (FA); NewCo (the new independent entity that will be responsible for the management of the women's professional game); clubs; the Premier League, the English Football League (EFL), broadcasters, the Football Foundation, the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA), Sport England and the Government. Government will continue to drive forward the recommendations requiring government action whilst working with other key organisations to ensure implementation across the board.

In order to hold all stakeholders accountable, the Government will be convening an implementation group, which will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of each recommendation.

The Government has announced a further £25 million for the Lionesses Futures Fund, in addition to £5 million from the FA. This £30 million fund will deliver up to 30 3G pitches in England, with gold-standard provision for women and girls. These state-of-the art artificial grass pitches will be built around women and girls priority use, using reserved peak-time slots, women and girls only evenings and priority booking for women and girl's teams to drive up participation and create pathways for growth. The funding will also provide safe and necessary grassroots facilities, such as women and girl's changing rooms and showers, to welcome the next generation of players both on and off the pitch. All this builds on our investment of over £300 million in similar facilities across the UK, which also substantially benefits the women's and girls' game at a grassroots level.

The ambition has always been for the Review's recommendations to go beyond women's football and apply to women's sport more widely - sharing best practice and giving women and girls equal opportunities to play the sport they love. With this in mind, the Government will be convening a roundtable discussion with industry leaders across all women's sports.

By collectively implementing the recommendations from the Review, the women's game in this country can become a world leading sport that not only generates immense economic and social value, but also sets the standards for women's professional sport globally that allows others to follow.

The full text of the Government's response to the Review of Women's Football can be found [here](#).

Telegraph Media Group: Public Interest Intervention Notice

[HLWS83]

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:

My Department has written to the Barclay family and RedBird IMI, the current and proposed owners of

Telegraph Media Group (TMG), to inform them of my decision to issue a Public Interest Intervention Notice (PIIN) in relation to the anticipated acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group Ltd (TMG) by Redbird IMI.

This relates to concerns I have that there may be public interest considerations – as set out in section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002 – that are relevant to the anticipated acquisition of TMG by RedBird IMI and that these concerns warrant further investigation.

At this stage, my decision to issue the PIIN triggers the requirement for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to report to me on jurisdictional and competition matters; and for Ofcom to report to me on the media public interest considerations in section 58(2A) of the Enterprise Act 2002 – namely, the need for accurate presentation of news and free expression of opinion in newspapers. I have asked both the CMA and Ofcom to report back to me by 26 January 2024.

I have also made an Order to prevent actions by the parties to the merger that might prejudice the process or impede my ability to protect the public interest during the period in which the Intervention Notice is in force. It prohibits transfer of the ownership of the business without my prior written consent. It also requires the parties to

ensure that steps are not taken to integrate the business with any other enterprise, to take action to ensure that no significant changes are made to the management and oversight of the business, and to do what is within their power to ensure that key editorial staff within the business are not removed or transferred without my prior written consent, or they are at least encouraged to remain.

This Order came into force at 10am on 1 December 2023. It will remain in force until the PIIN ceases to be in force.

I reserve the right to take such further action under the Act as I consider appropriate, which may include exercising my powers under section 42 of the Act in relation to any other relevant merger situation. My decision to issue a PIIN is without prejudice to my ability to take any such additional action in accordance with the Act.

My role as the Secretary of State in this process is quasi-judicial and procedures are in place to ensure that I act independently and follow a process which is scrupulously fair, transparent and impartial.

DCMS will update Parliament after both reports from the regulators have been received and considered.

Written Answers

Monday, 4 December 2023

Alaa Abdel Fattah

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to verify the physical well-being of the British pro-democracy activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, imprisoned in Egypt. [HL382]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains committed to supporting Mr El-Fattah and his family. Since Mr El-Fattah's sentencing in December 2021, the UK Government has remained in contact with his family and have made numerous representations to the Egyptian authorities concerning his imprisonment and welfare, and continue to make regular requests for consular access. The Prime Minister most recently raised this case with President Sisi on 20 October. The Former Foreign Secretary, and Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, have also raised this case regularly with the Egyptian authorities and met family members several times.

Asylum: Rwanda

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to (1) the remarks by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 10 May (HL Deb col 1922), and (2) the Supreme Court's decision on the government's Rwanda policy, what methodology they used in designating Rwanda as a safe country for the offshore processing of asylum claims. [HL340]

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We undertook an analysis of a wide range of publicly available evidence from a variety of reliable sources about Rwanda's asylum system and human rights situation. The information was carefully selected in accordance with internationally established country-of-origin information research methods.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether a senior official in NHS England has been asked to take responsibility for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. [HL408]

Lord Markham: NHS England is currently scoping a national programme of work on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a senior official will be asked to lead the work on NHS England's behalf.

Babylon Health

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will commission an independent review into their (1) relationship with, and (2) outcomes, from their work with Babylon Health. [HL42]

Lord Markham: The Department of Health and Social Care does not have any current plans to commission an independent review of Babylon Health.

In 2018, NHS Hammersmith and Fulham Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England commissioned Ipsos Mori to undertake an independent evaluation of the Babylon GP at Hand practice. The final report was published in May 2019 and is publicly available.

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the amount of money that (1) they, and (2) the NHS, spent on Babylon Health. [HL43]

Lord Markham: The 2022/23 payments made by the National Health Service to general practice is published by NHS Digital. Over £11 million was paid to Babylon GP Practice, including Primary Care Network and COVID-19 payments (minus deductions) in 2022/23.

Bangladesh: Civil Society and Human Rights

Asked by *Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support (1) human rights, and (2) civil society in Bangladesh. [HL414]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned by the recent conviction of human rights activists and the shrinking of civil society space in Bangladesh. Bangladesh remains a UK Human Rights Priority Country. The UK regularly raises with the Government of Bangladesh, both in public and private, the importance of respect for human rights and the rule of law. In October, I met Prime Minister Hasina and raised the arrests of human rights defenders in Bangladesh. We press the Government of Bangladesh to end harassment and intimidation of civil society, the media and political opposition, including the Bangladesh National Party.

Bangladesh: Elections

Asked by *Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support free and fair elections in Bangladesh. [HL413]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK wants to see free, fair, participatory and peaceful elections in Bangladesh. I made this clear to the Government of Bangladesh when I met Prime Minister Hasina in October. We are concerned at the violence that has taken

place at recent demonstrations and have called on all stakeholders, privately and publicly, to exercise restraint. The UK continues to stress to the Government of Bangladesh that respect for human rights, rule of law and access to justice are essential elements of the democratic process.

Carbon Emissions and Energy: Finance

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of the departmental budget for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for the current financial year is allocated to supporting, promoting and delivering (1) energy demand reduction measures, and (2) zero and low carbon energy generation measures; and what changes in the departmental budget and headcount for those tasks are planned for the 2024–25 financial year. [HL432]

Lord Callanan: The Government published how the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's current year budget has been allocated in the 2023-24 Main Estimate. The Government will publish the equivalent information for the 2024-25 financial year in the forthcoming 2024-25 Main Estimate. Departmental headcount figures are published each year in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts.

Childbirth

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask His Majesty's Government how many babies were born in England each year since 1945. [HL435]

Asked by Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

To ask His Majesty's Government how many babies were registered in Cornwall in each year since 1945. [HL436]

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

Please see the letter attached from the National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority.

Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

27 November 2023

Dear Lord Taylor,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking a) how many babies were born in England each year since 1945 (HL435) and b) how many babies were registered in Cornwall in each year since 1945 (HL436).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes statistics on births registered in England. Birth statistics are based on year of registration, rather than date of birth.

Table 1 of the attached dataset provides numbers of live births registered in England from 1945 to 2022, and stillbirths registered from 1981 to 2023. Data on stillbirths registered in England prior to 1981 are not available.

Table 2 of the attached dataset provides numbers of live births and stillbirths registered in Cornwall from 1981 to 2022. Figures for Cornwall are based on the mother's usual residence. Data on the mother's usual residence prior to 1981 is not available.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Dataset [PQ_HL435_HL436_data (1) (1).xlsx]

UK Statistics Authority

[271123_Sir_Ian_Diamond_UKSA_Lord_Taylor_HL435_HL436 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-11-20/HL435>

Climate Change Convention: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will include experts on migratory species from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee among the UK delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28 UAE). [HL548]

Lord Benyon: We set out how we will deliver outcomes for food, farming and the environment through our Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes in an update in January. This can be found at [Environmental Land Management \(ELM\) update: how government will pay for land-based environment and climate goods and services](#). This includes our plans to expand and refine the schemes to contribute more to our environmental targets, including on nature recovery, and to target funding towards actions in places where they can have the biggest impacts, in ways that are joined up across larger areas, and that are designed to deliver the required results.

Since then we have launched the 2023 Sustainable Farming Incentive and further rounds of Countryside Stewardship and Landscape Recovery. We will publish more details on the 2024 offer in due course.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Dame Kate Bingham's experience, as set out in *The Long Shot*, of leading the Vaccine Task Force during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether

they intend to review the processes and systems of supervision and governance in respect of projects commissioned by His Majesty's Government. [HL391]

Lord Markham: No assessment has been made of The Long Shot. The Government has published a review of the Vaccine Task Force's performance. The review draws out learning that can be applied to future government programmes, both in emergency circumstances, and to business-as-usual activity.

Criminal Proceedings

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Policy Exchange report *The Wicked and the Redeemable: A Long-Term Plan to Fix a Criminal Justice System in Crisis*, published on 4 November. [HL468]

Lord Bellamy: We are considering this report with interest.

We remain committed to reducing the outstanding crown court caseload and have introduced a raft of measures to allow courts to work at full capacity, including removing the cap on sitting days for the third year running and recruiting up to 1,000 judges across all jurisdictions.

We have already delivered 5,600 new prison places as part of our commitment to deliver 20,000 additional, modern prison places to ensure the right conditions are in place to rehabilitate prisoners, cut crime, and protect the public. We are also investing in a range of interventions to tackle the causes of reoffending, including delivering our temporary accommodation service for prison-leavers, offering more offenders work opportunities in prison, and expanding the number of Incentivised Substance-Free Living wings.

Cystic Fibrosis: Drugs

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding was provided through the NHS for modular drugs to treat Cystic Fibrosis in each of the past three years. [HL446]

Lord Markham: The information requested is subject to commercial agreements which are commercial in confidence. I am therefore unable to provide a figure.

Cystic Fibrosis: Medical Treatments

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what level of funding will be provided in the next financial year for the treatment of Cystic Fibrosis through the NHS. [HL449]

Lord Markham: The information requested is subject to commercial agreements which are commercial in confidence. I am therefore unable to provide a figure.

Energy: Prices

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their recent decision to increase payment amounts to offshore windfarms by more than 50 per cent, what plans they have to mitigate the impact on consumer energy bills. [HL440]

Lord Callanan: The publication on 16 November of core parameters, including Administrative Strike Prices (ASPs) for the next Contracts for Difference (CfD) round, does not determine impacts on consumer bills. The ASPs are the maximum prices available for renewable electricity, with the actual price being achieved through a competitive auction process. Renewable electricity procured through the CfD continues to provide value for money for consumers by capping the price paid to generators.

Euro 2028: Casement Park

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the long-term impact of the redevelopment of Casement Park in preparation for hosting the UEFA Euro 2028 competition on domestic football in Northern Ireland. [HL724]

Lord Caine: The Northern Ireland Regional Stadia Programme, including the redevelopment of Casement Park, is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Department for Communities.

Matters such as the assessment of the long-term impacts of the completion of stadiums in Northern Ireland rests with the Department for Communities and the Regional Stadia Development Programme Board. My department has no role in the Regional Stadium Development Board.

Family Courts

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to review the evidence arising from the Family Courts transparency pilots at (1) Leeds, (2) Cardiff, and (3) Carlisle. [HL469]

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to present to Parliament their response to the Family Courts transparency pilots. [HL470]

Lord Bellamy: The Government supports the President of the Family Division's ambition to increase transparency in the family courts. The Media Reporting Pilots, led by the President, are running from January

2023 to January 2024 and will be independently evaluated. The Government will carefully consider the findings of the evaluation once complete, and publish an assessment as appropriate.

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for freedom of speech of (1) transparency orders, and (2) privacy injunctions, used in family courts, which may restrict named individuals from discussing the case with third parties including family and media outlets. [HL471]

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the use of transparency orders in family courts to prevent proceedings being open to media scrutiny, including (1) those made under the auspices of the Family Courts Transparency Pilots, and (2) those made in other general family court proceedings. [HL472]

Lord Bellamy: The Government recognises the importance of enabling the media to access family court proceedings to increase transparency in the Family Justice system while at the same time ensuring the privacy of vulnerable children and families going through court are protected.

Transparency Orders and privacy injunctions are made by the independent judiciary, taking all relevant factors, including freedom of speech, into consideration.

Transparency Orders are used by the court to set the parameters on what may or may not be reported in a particular case without amounting to contempt of court. The template Transparency Order, drafted by the judiciary, is cast in injunctive terms. If a Transparency Order is made in a case, then it is binding on members of the media to whom it applies. The Media Reporting Pilots in the family courts are being independently evaluated before any decisions are made on whether there should be changes to provision on media access to, and disclosure of information from family proceedings.

Food Poverty: Government Assistance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the rise in demand for food banks, what steps they are taking to support families experiencing food poverty. [HL494]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Government recognises that understanding food security is important and this is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 2019/20 and added further questions on foodbank use in 2021/22. These statistics help our understanding of the characteristics of people most in need and, alongside the broad suite of poverty data, help to shape future policy considerations.

We are committed to reducing poverty and supporting low-income families. We will spend around £276bn through the welfare system in Great Britain in 2023/24 including around £124bn on people of working age and children.

From April 2023, we uprated benefit rates and State Pensions by 10.1% and, subject to Parliamentary approval, working-age benefits will rise by 6.7% from April 2024, in line with inflation.

With almost one million job vacancies across the UK, our focus remains firmly on supporting people, including parents, to move into and progress in work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment - particularly where it is full-time - in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. The latest statistics show that in 2021/22 children living in workless households were 5 times more likely to be in absolute poverty, after housing costs, than those where all adults work.

To help people into work, our core Jobcentre offer provides a range of options, including face-to-face time with work coaches and interview assistance. In addition, there is specific support targeted towards young people, people aged 50 plus and job seekers with disabilities or health issues.

To help people progress in work, our voluntary in-work progression offer, rolled-out from April 2022, is now available in all Jobcentres across Great Britain. We estimate that around 1.2m low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work.

To support parents into work, on 28 June 2023, the maximum monthly amounts that a parent can be reimbursed for their childcare increased by 47%, from £646.35 for one child and £1,108.04 for two or more children to £950.92 and £1,630.15 respectively. Importantly, we can now also provide even more help with upfront childcare costs when parents move into work or increase their hours.

We are also committed to ending low hourly pay for those on the National Living Wage (NLW) in the UK. From 1 April 2023, the National Living Wage increased by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over. Further to this, on 1 April 2024, we will increase the National Living Wage for workers aged 21 years and over by 9.8% to £11.44 representing an increase of over £1,800 to the gross annual earnings of a full-time worker on the NLW.

This Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living which is why we are providing total support of £104bn over 2022-2025 to help households and individuals. Included within this, to support low-income households with increasing rent costs, the government will raise Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2024. This will benefit 1.6 million low-income households, who will be around £800 a year better off on average in 2024-25.

Free School Meals: Disability

Asked by *Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to update the Free Schools Meals Guidance to explain how local authorities and schools should provide free school meals to eligible disabled children who, for whatever reason, cannot access them. [HL404]

Asked by *Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding by the charity Contact that a third of eligible disabled children do not access free school meals for reasons that may be linked to their disability, such as being too unwell to attend school or being unable to eat the meals due to dietary or sensory requirements; what steps they are taking in response; and, in particular, whether they intend to offer a voucher scheme to such children during term time. [HL405]

Baroness Barran: Schools have a duty to provide nutritious, free meals to pupils that meet the eligibility criteria, including being a registered pupil of a state funded school. Free School Meal (FSM) provision should be made to eligible pupils either on the school premises or at any other place where education is being provided. The department expects schools to act reasonably in ensuring that their food provision accounts for medical, dietary and cultural needs. The department has published statutory guidance (attached), which describes steps a school may take, including the establishment of individual healthcare plans which may include special diets.

Local authorities are funded to support children with special educational needs, including those who are unable to attend school on a long-term basis. The department has published guidance to provide more information, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education>. The department continues to keep its guidance under review to ensure that free school meal eligibility supports those who most need them.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL404_HL405_guidance
[HL404_HL405_supporting_pupils_at_school_with_medical_conditions.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-11-20/HL404>

Furs: EU Law

Asked by *Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with their counterparts in the EU regarding the introduction of legislation to ban (1) fur farming, and (2) fur sales. [HL599]

Lord Benyon: No recent discussions have been held with EU member states regarding the introduction of legislation to ban fur farming or fur sales.

We are continuing to build our evidence base on the fur sector, which will be used to inform any future action on the fur trade. This includes commissioning the Animal Welfare Committee to explore current responsible sourcing practices in the fur industry.

Furs: Imports and Sales

Asked by *Baroness Hayman of Ullock*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following reports that 96 per cent of respondents to their 2021 Call for Evidence on the fur trade strongly agreed that it is wrong for animals to be killed for fur, what plans they have to bring forward legislation to ban the (1) import, and (2) sale, of fur. [HL659]

Lord Benyon: We are continuing to build our evidence base on the fur sector, which will be used to inform any future action on the fur trade. This includes commissioning the Animal Welfare Committee to explore current responsible sourcing practices in the fur industry. Any future measures would be subject to consultation.

Housing: Gardens

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many new homes have been created each year since 2005 for which figures are available; and what percentage of those had private gardens. [HL433]

Baroness Penn: The department publishes an annual release entitled 'Housing supply: net additional dwellings, England', which is the primary and most comprehensive measure of housing supply, with estimates of new homes delivered, in each financial year shown in Table 1 below. This information is also readily available on gov.uk.

Table 1. Housing Supply Net Additional Dwellings, England, 2004-05 to 2021-22¹.

2004-05	185553
2005-06	202653
2006-07	214936
2007-08	223534
2008-09	182767
2009-10	144870
2010-11	137394
2011-12	134896
2012-13	124722
2013-14	136605
2014-15	170693
2015-16	189645
2016-17	217345

2017-18	222281
2018-19	241877
2019-20	242702
2020-21	211865
2021-22	232816

Source: Live Table 122,123
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>

¹ Net additional dwellings includes new builds but also dwellings supplied through conversions of existing buildings, change of existing buildings use, other gains/losses, offset by demolitions. The detail, with each component, is published in Live Table 123.

The Department does not hold figures on what percentage of those had private gardens.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of Palestinian civilians who have been killed in the Israel-Palestine conflict since 7 October. [HL293]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As of 1st December, more than 15,000 people have been killed in Gaza according to the Hamas controlled Gaza Media Office. We have been consistently clear that all sides must make all possible efforts to protect civilians and must abide by their international obligations and respect International Humanitarian Law. The UK is continuously assessing needs and advocating for access routes to be established into Gaza, sufficient levels of humanitarian assistance to flow into Gaza and calling for humanitarian pauses to allow aid to be safely distributed within Gaza.

The UK Government has already announced £60 million in humanitarian funding since the crisis began and has sent more than 74 tonnes of emergency relief for civilians in Gaza. The UK Government is concerned about the shocking impact of the conflict on children in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and UK humanitarian aid will ensure the specific needs of children are met.

Languages: Teachers

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many teachers of modern foreign languages (MFL) have been recruited by maintained (1) secondary schools, and (2) primary schools, as a result of the inclusion of MFL teachers on the Shortage Occupation List announced on 4 March 2021. [HL401]

Baroness Barran: The department does not hold data on the number of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) secondary level teachers recruited as a result of the

inclusion of MFL on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL). Primary level MFL teachers are not included on the SOL.

Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask His Majesty's Government why is the absence of a working executive a reason for not including Northern Ireland in the third round of the Levelling Up Fund when in previous years the absence did not stop funding. [HL462]

Baroness Penn: In Northern Ireland, the Government is not proceeding with this round of the Levelling Up Fund at this time. In the context of the growing pressure on Northern Ireland budgets it is right that UKG should consider its approach to funding available for Northern Ireland in the round. £30 million has been reserved for Northern Ireland from LUF 3. As part of our commitment to levelling up, we want to work with a restored Executive to find the best approach to supporting people in Northern Ireland, taking account of current budget pressures.

We will continue to work closely with projects and places in Northern Ireland that were awarded a total of £120 million in the first two rounds of the Fund and work with stakeholders on how best to level up communities in Northern Ireland.

Microplastics: Washing Machines

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to tackle microplastic pollution entering waterways from washing machines. [HL419]

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential environmental benefits of mandating microfibre filters on new washing machines. [HL420]

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their policy paper Plan for Water, updated on 4 April, what funding they intend to provide to develop microfibre filters on new washing machines. [HL421]

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their policy paper Plan for Water, updated on 4 April, what plans they have to set a timetable for the enforcement of a mandate for microfibre filters on new washing machines. [HL422]

Lord Benyon: The Government has already taken significant steps to tackle plastic pollution (e.g. microplastics), including restricting the supply of several single-use plastics through introducing a plastic

packaging tax from April 2022; restricting the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds; and preventing billions of plastic microbeads from entering the ocean each year by introducing a ban on microbeads in rinse off personal care products.

The majority of microfibres are removed through water treatment and analysis of the evidence available to date does not show that there is a sufficient benefit to the environment that can justify legislation to mandate the microfibre filters in new washing machines with prices ranging from £30 to £122 per machine, dependent on manufacturer and whether the filters are disposable or reusable. Defra's Plan for Water therefore includes a commitment for industry to develop low cost, effective microfibre filters on washing machines and encourage their effective use. We have met industry colleagues and posed this challenge and we look forward to any proposals they are able to share when they are able to do so.

NHS England: Databases

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government why the answer to the "Frequently Asked Question" on the NHS England website about NHS England's Federated Data Platform "Can patients opt out of sharing their data with the Federated Data Platform?" was changed at some point after 20 November, from starting with "No" to saying that the national data opt-out "will always be respected". [HL518]

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government for what reason the accessible version of the easy read PDF about NHS England's Federated Data Platform says "No" in answer to the question "Can patients opt out of their data being shared in the FDP?", after the main "Frequently Asked Questions" page was changed to say that opt-outs will be respected. [HL519]

Lord Markham: The Frequently Asked Questions have been developed and refined based on feedback from stakeholders and the public. The National Data Opt-Out applies when confidential patient information is used for planning and research, not when it is used for direct care. Although the Federated Data Platform (FDP) will not use such information for planning or research, the answer was revised to make clear that, as with any system handling patient data, the National Data Opt-Out would be respected for any relevant uses of data.

We are committed to providing public information that is meaningful and accessible for a range of audiences. The easy read accessible version has been co-produced with representatives of the audience for whom it is designed. We will continue to keep this under review to make sure it is aligned with the other information available on the FDP.

Nutrition and Poverty: Children

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following a survey by the School and Public Health Nurses Association and the British Dental Association in June which showed that 65 per cent of health practitioners reported that children's health had got worse over the last year as a result of hunger, what plans they have to address hunger and poor nutrition in children. [HL630]

Lord Markham: The Government understands concerns regarding food inflation and its impact on the current cost of living, and as such is providing support of over £94 billion over 2022/23 and 2023/24 to help households and individuals.

Data from the Office for National Statistics shows prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages rose by 13.6% in the year to August 2023. This was down from 14.9% in July and a recent high of 19.2% in March 2023, which was the highest rate seen for over 45 years. This means that food prices are still increasing but at a slower rate than before.

Through the Healthy Food Schemes, the Government provides a nutritional safety net to those who need it the most. The three Healthy Food Schemes, namely Healthy Start, Nursery Milk and the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, together help more than three million children. They support wider Government priorities on obesity and levelling up. The schemes help to support children and babies when they are at home, in childcare and in early years at school, and pregnant women. From April 2021, the value of the Healthy Start increased from £3.10 to £4.25, providing additional support to pregnant women and families on lower incomes to make healthy food choices.

The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme provides approximately 2.2 million children in Key Stage 1 with a portion of fresh fruit or vegetables each day at school. Around 419 million pieces of fruit and vegetables were distributed to children in 2022/2023. In addition, the Nursery Milk Scheme provides a reimbursement to childcare providers for a daily 1/3 pint portion of milk to children and babies.

Free school meals are provided to over one third of school children. This includes two million pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals, making up 23.8% of all pupils, which is an increase from January 2021 when 1.7 million or 20.8% pupils were eligible. In addition, almost 1.3 million more infants enjoy a free and nutritious meal at lunchtime following the introduction of universal infant free school meals in 2014. A further 90,000 disadvantaged pupils in further education also receive a free meal at lunch time. Overall, we spend over £1 billion per annum delivering free lunches to a large proportion of school children.

The Government's wider programme of work to create a healthier environment to help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight includes:

- regulations which restrict the placement of products high in saturated fat, salt or sugar in store and online;
- efforts to reformulate products high in calories, sugar and salt;
- the Soft Drinks Industry Levy; and
- calorie labelling regulations for food sold in large out of home businesses.

Older People

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the number of (1) over 65 year olds, and (2) over 80 year olds, in each year since 1945. [HL437]

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Goss Moor*

To ask His Majesty's Government what was the number of (1) over 65 year olds, and (2) over 80 year olds, living in Cornwall in each year since 1945. [HL438]

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

Please see the letter attached from the National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority.

The Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

28 November 2023

Dear Lord Taylor,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Questions asking about the number of (1) over 65-year-olds (HL437), and (2) over 80-year-olds in each year since 1945 for both the UK as a whole and those living in Cornwall (HL438).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing population estimates for the United Kingdom. The attached Excel file provides estimates for the United Kingdom from 1953 to 2021 and for England and Wales from 1945 to 2022. United Kingdom age group estimates are not available from before 1953. Estimates for the United Kingdom for 2022 are not yet available due to synchronisation issues caused by the latest census being held in 2021 in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and in 2022 in Scotland.

The file also contains estimates for Cornwall from 1971 to 2022. Age group estimates prior to 1991 are not available for Cornwall as local authority reorganisation in the early 1970s prevents comparisons prior to 1971.

When accessing any of our files please read the 'notes, terms and conditions' contained within them.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Dataset [PQ_HL437_HL438_LordTaylor_Data (1).xlsx]

UK Statistics Authority

[281123_Professor_Sir_Ian_Diamond_UKSA_Lord_Taylor_HL437_HL438 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-11-20/HL437>

Pesticides: Environment Protection

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the environmental impacts from including saponins, phosphorous peroxide, and other substances which are irritants or otherwise harmful to worms and other soil organisms, in products labelled as "soil conditioners" or "anti-worm caster"; and what guidance they have issued about the legality of doing so. [HL459]

Lord Benyon: No assessment has been made. The Environment Agency assesses the presence of many chemicals in the environment, but has very limited data for chemicals in soil and the potential impacts on individual species. Saponins are a very broad and diverse group of compounds with biosurfactant and biopesticide properties and with many applications including some personal care products. The Environment Agency has developed a Prioritisation and Early Warning System for chemicals of emerging concern to systematically consider this challenge and to integrate horizon scanning with environmental monitoring and international collaboration. Substances can be added for future assessment, depending on the availability of evidence.

The Government recognises how vital healthy soil is for food production, water regulation, biodiversity, carbon storage and providing diverse habitats and agricultural opportunities. Earthworms are an excellent indicator of soil health, as they are impacted by pH, waterlogging, compaction, tillage, rotation and organic matter management.

Pesticides are strictly regulated because of their potential impacts on human health and the environment (including impacts on earthworms and soil micro-organisms) and, if authorised, are subject to conditions to ensure safe use. For many products, professional use only by properly trained operatives is one of those conditions. There are no plant protection products that are currently authorised for the control of worm casts on turf.

A consultation and call for evidence on a new fertiliser regulatory framework is planned for early 2024. The process of regulation development will be iterative as more research is needed into newer fertiliser types before requirements for these products can be drafted into law. Soil conditioners may be subject to regulation under the future revised framework for fertilisers.

Prison Sentences

Asked by **Lord Moylan**

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison serving an imprisonment for public protection sentence who have been held for 10 years or more beyond their original tariff, broken down by the exact number of years over tariff. [HL423]

Lord Bellamy: On 16 October 2023, the Lord Chancellor announced he would be looking at options to curtail the licence period to restore greater proportionality to IPP sentences in line with recommendation 8 of the report by the Justice Select Committee (JSC), published on 28 September 2022.

These changes are being taken forward in the Victims and Prisoners Bill. The measures will make it quicker and easier to terminate an IPP licence (and therefore the IPP sentence as a whole) whilst balancing public protection considerations.

The new measure will:

- i) Reduce the qualifying period which triggers the duty of the Secretary of State to refer an IPP licence to the Parole Board for termination from ten years to three years;
- ii) Include a clear statutory presumption that the IPP licence will be terminated by the Parole Board at the end of the three-year qualifying period;
- iii) Introduce a provision that will automatically terminate the IPP licence two years after the three-year qualifying period, in cases where the Parole Board has not terminated the licence; and
- iv) Introduce a power to amend the qualifying period by Statutory Instrument.

The Lord Chancellor was persuaded by the Committee's recommendation to reduce the qualifying licence period from 10 years to 5 years and is going further: reducing the period to 3 years. These amendments will restore greater proportionality to IPP sentences and provide a clear pathway to a definitive end to the licence and, therefore, the sentence.

In addition to these changes, the actions this Government are taking are working; the number of prisoners serving the IPP sentence who have never been released now stands at 1,269 as of September 2023, down from more than 6000 in 2012.

Table 1: The tariff-expired Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoner population at least 10 years over tariff, 30 September 2023.

Time over tariff	Count
From 10 years to less than 11 years	132
From 11 years to less than 12 years	117
From 12 years to less than 13 years	128
From 13 years to less than 14 years	128
From 14 years to less than 15 years	94
From 15 years to less than 16 years	62

Time over tariff	Count
From 16 years to less than 17 years	21
From 17 years to less than 18 years	1
From 18 years to less than 19 years	1
Total	684

Please note:

(1) The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Regional Planning and Development: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the third tranche of Levelling Up funding for Northern Ireland; and when that funding will be provided. [HL403]

Baroness Penn: In Northern Ireland, the Government is not proceeding with this round of the Levelling Up Fund at this time. We will continue to work closely with projects and places in Northern Ireland that were awarded a total of £120 million in the first two rounds of the Fund and work with stakeholders on how best to level up communities in Northern Ireland.

Our priority remains seeing the restoration and return of a locally elected and accountable Executive, because that is what the people of Northern Ireland need and deserve.

Religious Freedom

Asked by **Lord Kempsey**

To ask His Majesty's Government what priorities they have identified in their work to promote freedom of religion or belief; and what is in outline the current plan of work for the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief. [HL415]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's foremost priority on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is defending FoRB for all and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities.

We work through international bodies to strengthen coalitions of support and protect FoRB for all. We use our global diplomatic network to encourage States to uphold their human rights obligations, supporting this work with dedicated FoRB programme spend. And we continue to work to embed FoRB considerations across the work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB, Fiona Bruce MP, is currently serving as Chair of the 42-country International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA), which she is working to grow and strengthen. Alongside her counterparts from other countries, the

Special Envoy works through IRFBA to champion FoRB, highlighting international best practice and raising awareness of, and challenging, FoRB violations and abuses across the world.

The Special Envoy works closely with civil society to highlight FoRB issues, and is leading a series of roundtables in the FCDO to strengthen collaboration on FoRB between FCDO officials and civil society.

Schools: Concrete

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have finalised their assessment of the number of schools impacted by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete; and if so, how many schools it has impacted. [HL537]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government how many additional mobile classrooms will be required to be provided to schools to cope with the problems caused by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. [HL538]

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what has been the total of additional resources allocated to deal with the problems created in schools by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. [HL539]

Baroness Barran: An updated list of schools and colleges with confirmed cases of RAAC as at 16 October 2023 was published on 19 October 2023 and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reinforced-autoclaved-aerated-concrete-raac-management-information>. This link contains a summary of the number of schools and colleges with confirmed RAAC and the status of education in place at these schools and colleges at the specified date.

Every school or college with confirmed RAAC is assigned dedicated support from the department's team of 80 caseworkers. Each school's dedicated caseworker will support them to put in place a bespoke mitigation plan, and this will ensure that each school and college receives the support that suits their circumstances. The department has placed contracts with multiple suppliers of temporary accommodation to get to site quickly for emergency provision and is confident that it has sufficient supply of them to meet need. The department will support schools if there are any site-specific issues that need resolving in order to install temporary accommodation.

The department supports schools and colleges in a number of ways. This includes significant capital funding and providing guidance and support to help schools and responsible bodies manage their buildings effectively. On RAAC, the department will spend whatever it takes to keep children safe.

The government is funding the emergency work needed to mitigate the presence of RAAC, including installing alternative classroom space where necessary. All reasonable requests for additional help with revenue costs, like transport to locations or temporarily renting a local hall, are being approved. The government is funding longer-term refurbishment or rebuilding projects to address the presence of RAAC in schools. Schools and colleges will either be offered capital grants to fund refurbishment work to permanently remove RAAC, or rebuilding projects where these are needed, including through the school rebuilding programme. The department is working closely with responsible bodies to assess what the right solution is for each case.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what additional assistance they are providing to support students in exams who have been directly impacted by the problems of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete in schools. [HL540]

Baroness Barran: To support all students taking GCSE exams in 2024, the department has confirmed that students will not need to memorise the usual formulae and equations for GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science, as they must in a normal year. Ofqual is holding a consultation on this proposal to provide formulae and revised equation sheets, which closes on 30 November.

For schools that are directly affected by RAAC, the department has asked Awarding Organisations (AOs) to provide as much flexibility as possible within the confines of their processes and regulations, for example by granting extensions to deadlines for coursework or non-examined assessments and sensitively considering the timing of moderation visits. The department has asked AOs to agree such arrangements in advance so schools have as much certainty as possible and can plan their timetabling and teaching accordingly. The department encourages schools that are having specific difficulties in delivering coursework or assessments to contact the relevant AO as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

Social Security Benefits: Anxiety and Mental Health

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are currently claiming disability benefit because of mental health conditions, including severe anxiety. [HL554]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Figures for the number of people currently claiming disability benefits – Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and Attendance Allowance (AA) due to mental health conditions.

Table (a) – Claimants on the PIP caseload with mental health conditions

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
PIP	1,119,500

Table (b) – Claimants on the DLA caseload with mental health conditions

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
DLA	56,500

Table (c) – Claimants on the AA caseload with mental health conditions

<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
AA	26,500

Notes:

- These figures are produced using recent data available from Stat-Xplore (May 2023).
- Figures for PIP and DLA exclude Scotland.
- Figures for AA include Scotland (as AA has yet to be devolved to Scotland).
- Figures for PIP are cases where psychiatric disorders have been listed as the claimant's main disabling condition.
- A PIP claimant's main disabling condition is recorded during their assessment. Medical conditions are shown as recorded on the PIP Computer System (PIPCS).
- Claimants may have multiple conditions which are not recorded by PIPCS.
- All volumes have been rounded to the nearest 100.
- Figures for DLA and AA are cases where psychosis, psychoneurosis, or personality disorder have been recorded as the claimant's main disabling condition.
- Main disabling condition is the main medical reason for the claim. Medical conditions are sourced from information recorded on the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) computer system (DLACS) and AA computer system.
- Claimants may have multiple conditions which are not recorded by DLACS or the AA computer system.

Social Services: Children

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Manchester

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase investment in early intervention and prevention as part of children's social care reform. [HL417]

Baroness Barran: The government has invested billions in local services. This year alone, the total social care grant for local government is over £2 billion. In the 'Stable Homes Built on Love' Strategy, the department outlined its plans to build on the strengths of current early help and Child in Need services, through the creation of Family Help.

The department is investing £200 million in Children's Social Care reforms, including £45 million for the Families First for Children Pathfinder programme, which will test how multi-disciplinary family help teams can improve the support that children and families receive. The pathfinder will inform the next stage of the department's reform programme which will look to deliver transformation more widely.

The department also announced over £1 billion of funding for programmes to improve early help services, including delivering Family Hubs.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Manchester

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Josh MacAlister The independent review of children's social care, published on 23 May 2022; and what progress they have made in improving council-run homes in the children's social care system given the findings of that report. [HL418]

Baroness Barran: In February 2023 the department published its consultation and implementation strategy, 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. This sets out the department's plans for a system-wide transformation of children's social care, and details how the department will help families overcome challenges, keep children safe, and make sure children in care have stable loving homes, long-term loving relationships, and opportunities for a good life.

To support local authorities to meet their statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient provision for children in their care, the department has announced £259 million capital funding to maintain capacity and expand provision in both secure and open children's homes that provide high-quality, safe homes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people across England. The department has allocated a portion of the £259 million capital funding to open children's homes enabling a total of 69 projects to be delivered, which will create an additional 350 beds across this sector.

The department has also committed to developing a core overarching set of Standards of Care for fostering, children's homes, and supported accommodation. This will help simplify the regulatory landscape, raise quality, and ensure there are consistent safeguards across different types of settings.

The department will develop a programme to support improvements in the quality of leadership and management in children's homes, including exploring proposals for a leadership programme to attract and train new talent.

In addition, the department is investing £10 million to develop Regional Care Co-operatives (RCCs) to plan, commission and deliver children's social care placements. Through operating on a larger scale and developing specialist capabilities, the RCCs will be able to develop a wider range of places to meet children's needs better.

The department is also making good progress on addressing challenges relating to the retention and

recruitment of social workers, which is key to supporting the delivery of the wider children's social care reforms. This includes introducing an Early Career Framework to better support newly qualified social workers to meet the challenges of child and family social work, increasing the number of social worker apprenticeships, and supporting local authorities with their retention and workload challenges. Alongside 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', the department also published a consultation on a set of rules for local authority engagement of agency child and family social workers. The response to this consultation was published on 25 October 2023 and sets out a set of national rules intended to increase workforce quality and sustainability. The department will consult on statutory guidance on the technical detail in Spring 2024. These reforms are in addition to the department's £50 million annual investment in recruiting, training and developing the workforce.

State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Lord Wasserman

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 26 October (HL10597), in how many countries there is a legal requirement to uprate the UK State Pensions paid to those UK pensioners who live there; and which countries they are. [HL637]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The UK State Pension is payable worldwide to those who meet the qualifying conditions, without regard to nationality, and the amount is based on an individual's National Insurance record. UK State Pensions are up-rated overseas only where there is a legal requirement to do so. The Government has no plans to change this policy.

People who live outside the UK will not receive an increase in their State Pension unless they live in:

- an EEA country or Switzerland; or
- a country with which DWP have a reciprocal agreement that allows for it. These countries are:
 - Barbados
 - Bermuda
 - Gibraltar
 - Guernsey
 - The Isle of Man
 - Israel
 - Jamaica
 - Jersey
 - Mauritius
 - the Philippines
 - Turkey
 - The United States of America, and

- the separate republics of the former Yugoslavia* that are not EU Member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kosovo; Montenegro; North Macedonia; and Serbia).

*Following the break-up of Yugoslavia, the UK agreement with former Yugoslavia now covers Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

Storms: Flood Control

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Sheffield

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the damage caused by flooding following (1) Storm Babet, and (2) Storm Ciarán; and what steps they are taking to combat the increase in the frequency and severity of flooding caused by climate change. [HL491]

Lord Benyon: The Government acknowledges the devastating impact Storm Babet and Storm Ciarán have had on householders and businesses and sympathises with those affected.

The Environment Agency has been inspecting assets that may have been impacted. As of Wednesday 22 November, the Environment Agency have conducted almost 12,000 inspections – these inspections are in response to both storms. During Storm Babet the Environment Agency estimate that around 2,150 properties flooded, and around 97,000 were protected. During Storm Ciarán estimates are that around 180 properties flooded and around 42,000 properties were protected.

This Government is acting to drive down flood risk from every angle. In July 2020 we published a long-term Policy Statement, which sets out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. Alongside this, the Environment Agency's [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#) and [Roadmap to 2026](#) is helping to create climate resilient places.

The Government is investing a record £5.2 billion over 6 years in flood and coastal erosion schemes to better protect communities across England. In March 2023, the Environment Agency estimated that approximately £1.5 billion of the investment programme had been spent, with over 200 flood risk schemes completed. Around 60,000 properties have benefited from better protection since the start of the current 6-year programme (between April 2021 to March 2023). This takes the total number of properties protected to 374,000 since 2015.

Lastly, Government is investing £200 million in a flood and coastal resilience innovation programme supporting local projects across the country. In September 2023, Defra also announced a new £25 million natural flood management programme. This information can be found on Gov.uk.

Technology: Equality

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, in conjunction with employers, to increase diversity within the UK technology sector. [HL442]

Viscount Camrose: The Government is committed to increasing diversity within the technology sector. We do this by working with external organisations and employers, and highly value this collaboration to overcome current barriers. We are also improving diversity in the cyber security sector through the National Cyber Strategy. This focuses particularly on attracting more woman and girls to the cyber profession, and includes the CyberFirst Girls Competition which saw over 12,500 girls (aged 12-13) take part this year alone.

We have supported the Tech Talent Charter (TTC) since 2017, a not-for-profit organisation that provides measurement and insights into diversity through its work with over 700 organisations and across 42 industry sectors, representing 160,000 people in UK technology roles. This year, we also commissioned Color in Tech to deliver research exploring what works for attracting and retaining ethnically diverse talent within the technology sector. The data was used to create a best practice toolkit for employers to build an inclusive workplace environment.

HMG supports diverse entrepreneurs through the £12m Digital Growth Grant, delivered by Barclays Eagle Labs to support startups across the UK. In addition to a range of accelerator programmes, mentorship and educational materials funded by the grant, Barclays Eagle Labs and specialist partners are running growth programmes targeted specifically at female founders and black founders. Among the grant's primary objectives is that at least 35% of all entrepreneurs supported by the programme will come from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally, the £30 million AI and Data Science Conversion Course programme was established to address the lack of diversity and supply of talent in the UK AI labour market. It is funding up to 3000 scholarships for students from backgrounds underrepresented in the tech industry. We are working with industry to co-fund these scholarships - for every one scholarship that industry funds, the government will fund an additional three across the programme. The Digital Skills Council is also harnessing industry efforts to support further action on digital upskilling and improve the diversity of the digital workforce.

Transport: Poverty

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusion of the report Getting the measure of transport poverty, published by the Social Market Foundation on 15 November, that investment in public transport is more beneficial

to alleviating transport poverty than lowering the cost of driving. [HL390]

Lord Davies of Gower: The government has consistently invested in public transport, including through the most recent announcement of £150 million dedicated to levelling up bus services, with areas across the North and Midlands given extra support for services to become more frequent, more reliable, cheaper and easier to use.

Universities: China

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Civitas report, Strategic Dependence of UK Universities on China – and where should they turn next?, which suggests that up to one-third of Chinese funding to UK universities comes from sources linked to the Chinese military or banned by the United States; and what plans they have to investigate those links and to address the situation. [HL383]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what support, guidance or advice they provide to universities to ensure that universities are not reliant on funding from hostile regimes. [HL384]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding in the Civitas report, The Strategic Dependence of UK Universities on China – and where should they turn next?, that Huawei Technologies and its subsidiaries are the single largest source of Chinese funding to British universities since 2017. [HL385]

Viscount Camrose: The UK government's approach to China is rooted in the UK national interest. We will not accept collaborations which compromise our national security. We have taken steps to significantly strengthen the UK's protections from overseas interference in our higher education and research sector, including through our Trusted Research Campaign and the direct support offered by the Research Collaboration Advice Team. The updated International Education Strategy also advises Universities to ensure they have appropriate processes in place to manage risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding. As part of the Integrated Review Refresh, we are conducting a detailed review of the measures designed to support our academic sector to keep their research secure.

Voice over Internet Protocol

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Viscount Camrose on 3 April (HL6992) and 25 April (HL7109), what assessment

they have made of whether having a battery powered handset provided by BT in case of power cuts with a mobile sim card inside will be sufficient if there is no mobile signal. [HL395]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Viscount Camrose on 3 April (HL6992) and 25 April (HL7109), what assessment they have made of whether there will be universal access to emergency services following deinstallation of copper wire connection. [HL396]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Viscount Camrose on 3 April (HL6992) and 25 April (HL7108), what assessment they have made of whether the battery powered handsets which only last for a short time will be adequate for all but the briefest power cut and for those off the electricity grid. [HL397]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Camrose on 5 April (HL6988), whether residents without broadband will have to have a router installed and pay to be supplied with a broadband service. [HL398]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Camrose on 5 April (HL6988), whether all makes of wrist-worn personal alarms will operate over WiFi. [HL399]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Camrose on 3 April (HL6992), what assessment they have made of whether BT has adequately consulted the residents affected, particularly the vulnerable such as those who are (1) over 70, (2) disabled, (3) in remote rural areas, and (4) digitally excluded. [HL400]

Viscount Camrose: BT has a range of resilient solutions, including a battery back-up unit and hybrid phone. These solutions are compliant with, and in some cases exceed, Ofcom's requirement to provide a back-up facility for emergency calls for a minimum of 1 hour during a power outage. It is worth noting that other providers may offer different solutions.

The BT hybrid phone with a mobile SIM card inside is not a solution that will be offered to customers that have no mobile signal where they live. Instead, they will be

offered a battery back-up unit which will enable them to make a phone call in the event of a power cut. These solutions are available free-of-charge to vulnerable customers - those who use a telecare device, only use landlines and or are over the age of 75, without mobile signal or broadband or have disclosed other additional needs. These will be available for all to purchase if they wish.

Many Communication Providers, including BT, engage regularly with other broadband providers, Ofcom and power companies about the resilience of their networks and have robust contingency plans in place to protect their customers in the event of planned power outages.

Landline only customers will not be required to take a paid broadband service from providers if they do not wish to. Instead, they will be provided with a dedicated internet connection and router specifically for their landline service at no extra cost.

With regard to telecare systems, lifeline alarm systems or remote ringers, I cannot state definitively which products would function over Digital Voice or which would need modification or replacement, given the range of devices and providers across these sectors. However, Digital Voice telecare devices do exist for all use cases. Furthermore, the switch to Digital Voice has already taken place in other countries; in these cases, all telecare users have been provided Digital Voice compatible devices. DSIT has been working with the Department for Health and Social Care and the telecare industry to raise awareness of the migration and to help identify alternatives, while BT and other providers have set up test labs for manufacturers to test their equipment.

BT has engaged with a broad range of external stakeholders as part of its Digital Voice migration programme. The Digital Voice Advisory Group (DVAG) has advised BT on how best to support and engage with customers who will require additional support to migrate to Digital Voice. Members of the DVAG include representative groups and charities such as Age UK, the Department of Health and Social Care, Independent Age, Rural Services Network, and Which?. BT has also invited other organisations to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis. Other Communication Providers operate similar programmes to raise awareness.

BT has engaged with local authorities in a number of areas related to Digital Voice, although no local authorities are formal members of DVAG. BT is working with local authorities via industry working groups to discuss issues such as telecare and frequently engages with the Local Government Association about Digital Voice.

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