

Session 2024-25
No. 16



Tuesday
10 September 2024

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>
Baroness Smith of Basildon	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Lord Collins of Highbury	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on Trent	Whip
Baroness Blake of Leeds	Whip
Baroness Chapman of Darlington	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Coaker	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Hanson of Flint	Minister of State, Home Office
Baroness Hayman of Ullock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill	Minister of State, Department for Transport
Lord Hermer	Attorney-General
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath	Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Baroness Jones of Whitchurch	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business and Trade and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and Whip
Lord Kennedy of Southwark	Chief Whip
Lord Khan of Burnley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Leong	Whip
Lord Livermore	Financial Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Merron	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Sherlock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Smith of Malvern	Minister of State, Department for Education
Baroness Taylor of Stevenage	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Timpson	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Twycross	Whip
Lord Vallance of Balham	Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Baroness Wheeler	Deputy Chief Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 10 September 2024

British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago

[HLWS80]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Lammy), has today made the following statement:

Following the meeting between the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras, and the Prime Minister of Mauritius on 23 July, the UK and Mauritius have agreed to continue the negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)/Chagos Archipelago launched under the previous Government in November 2022. An agreed resolution to this long-standing, complex and important issue is in the interest of both parties and the best way to protect the UK's national interests. Working in close coordination with the United States, the UK will endeavour to expeditiously reach a negotiated agreement that protects and preserves vital security interests on Diego Garcia, respects Chagosian communities, enhances environmental cooperation and builds a long-term strategic partnership with Mauritius as a close Commonwealth partner. To enhance these efforts Mr Jonathan Powell has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Envoy to the BIOT/Chagos Sovereignty Negotiation.

Development Consent Decision Extension

[HLWS78]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Louise Haigh), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

This statement confirms that it is necessary to extend the deadline for a decision on the application by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited under the Planning Act 2008 for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order ("the application").

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, a decision on an application must be made within 3 months of receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless the power under section 107(3) is exercised to extend the deadline and a Written Ministerial Statement is made to the Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority's report on 10 June 2024. The current deadline for a decision on the application is, therefore, 10 September 2024.

The deadline for the decision is extended to 10 March 2025. The Department will however endeavour to issue

the decision ahead of the extended deadline of 10 March 2025 where possible.

The reason for the extension to the decision deadline is that while the Secretary of State is minded to agree with the Examining Authority's recommendation that she should withhold consent, she wishes to gather further information on certain matters and to allow for the analysis of that further information before taking her final decision. She is therefore publishing a letter today which explains why, having weighed the benefits and adverse effects of the proposed development, she is minded to refuse consent and sets out those matters on which she requires further information.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the Secretary of State's decision on whether to grant the application development consent.

Immigration Rules: Statement of Changes

[HLWS77]

Lord Hanson of Flint: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Migration and Citizenship (Seema Malhotra) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

Introduction of a Visa requirement on Jordan

We are today introducing a visa requirement on all visitors from Jordan. Nationals of Jordan will also be required to obtain a direct airside transit visa if they intend to transit via the UK having booked travel to another country. The visa requirement comes into force at 15.00 BST today.

Consequential to this, nationals of Jordan will no longer be eligible to travel to the UK with an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

There will be a four-week, visa-free transition period for those who already hold an ETA and confirmed bookings to the UK obtained on or before 15:00 BST 10 September 2024 where arrival in the UK is no later than 15:00 BST 8 October 2024.

Arrangements are in place so that Jordanian nationals can apply for visas. We are publicising the changes so travellers are aware and can plan accordingly.

We are taking this action due to an increase in the number of Jordanian nationals travelling to the UK for purposes other than what is permitted under visitor rules since the visa requirement was lifted in February 2024. This has included a significant and sustained increase in asylum claims, and high rates of refusals at the border due to people travelling without the intention of visiting for a permitted purpose. This increase in asylum claims and refusals has added significantly to operational pressures at the border, resulting in frontline resource being diverted from other operational priorities.

The decision to introduce a visa requirement has been taken solely for migration and border security reasons. Our relationship with Jordan remains a strong and friendly one. Any decision to change a visa status is not taken lightly and we keep the border and immigration system under regular review to ensure it continues to work in the UK national interest.

Implementation of the UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme

On 25 October 2023, the UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme was launched to secure our borders and make the UK safer, by enhancing our ability to screen travellers upstream. The scheme applies to those passengers visiting or transiting the UK, who do not currently need a visa for short stays and do not have a valid UK immigration status prior to travelling.

Currently, the ETA scheme applies to nationals of Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The Government will complete the implementation of the scheme, in a phased manner to all remaining non-visa nationalities. In November 2024, the ETA scheme will open to all nationals travelling to the UK who do not currently need a visa, except Europeans, and will be a travel requirement from 8 January 2025. In March 2025, the scheme will then be extended to European nationals and will be a requirement for travel from 2 April 2025, completing the rollout of the ETA scheme. The complete list of ETA nationalities is detailed in the accompanying Statement of Changes at Appendix ETA National List at ETANL 1.1.

Once fully rolled out, the ETA scheme will close the current gap in advance permissions and mean that for the first time, we will have a comprehensive understanding of those travelling to the UK.

End Diplomatic Visa Waivers and introduce a "Diplomatic Visa Arrangement" (DVA) Visitor visa

The UK's border is being transformed to include digital pre-travel checks. As part of this, Diplomatic Visa Waivers (DVWs) are being phased out. Diplomatic Visa Arrangement (DVA) visitor visas are being introduced to replace DVWs. DVAs will ensure diplomatic passport holders from countries that have benefited from DVW, who are nominated by their governments through a Note Verbale, will continue to benefit from smooth and efficient access to the UK. DVAs will provide a bespoke visitor visa for eligible diplomatic passport holders. Applications will be made through a light-touch application form, but application fees and the requirement to submit fingerprints will be waived. The route aims to support and better facilitate diplomatic travel to the UK and will also enable DVA visitors to undertake a range of standard visitor activities. These changes will not impact accredited diplomats who are free, or "exempt" from immigration control.

Introduction of the VIP Delegate Visa

We are launching the VIP Delegate Visa, a bespoke visa product targeted at delegations accompanying foreign

Heads of State and serving Government Ministers on official visits to the UK. This product is a global offer, balancing the UK's bilateral considerations and aligning more closely with the approach of international partners.

This product will be capped at an upper limit of twenty issues for government official delegates accompanying Heads of State, and ten for government official delegates accompanying serving Government Ministers. Those applying for this product will have their application assessed under the Immigration Rules, supported by a Note Verbale process, but application fees and the requirement to submit fingerprints will be waived.

Changes to Appendix Bereaved Partner and Appendix Gurkha and Hong Kong military unit veteran discharged before 1 July 1997

Currently, a bereaved partner who has no other route to stay must leave the UK if they cannot afford the fee for settlement. So, we are changing the relevant rules to allow bereaved partners and their dependants to benefit from a fee waiver if they are destitute. Equivalent changes are being made to the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) Regulations 2018, which are also being laid in Parliament today. The provision of a fee waiver to those who are destitute will allow them to settle in the UK at the time they are most vulnerable.

Changes to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

We are making some changes to the Immigration Rules in Appendix EU for the EUSS, which, in accordance with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, enables EU, other European Economic Area and Swiss citizens living in the UK before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, and their family members, to obtain the UK immigration status they need to continue living in the UK. The changes include referring to the scope to automatically convert pre-settled status under the EUSS to settled status where the person qualifies for this and without the need for them to make a further valid application, and to require a joining family member to apply to the EUSS within three months of their first (not latest) arrival in the UK since the end of the transition period (or later where there are reasonable grounds for their delay).

These changes to the Immigration Rules are being laid on 10 September 2024. For the changes regarding Jordan, due to safeguarding the operation of the UK's immigration system, those changes will come into effect at 15.00 BST on 10 September 2024. The changes regarding Appendix Bereaved Partner and Appendix Gurkha and Hong Kong military unit veteran discharged before 1 July 1997 will come into effect on 9 October 2024, changes regarding the VIP Delegate Visa will come into effect on 10 October 2024, changes to introduce a "Diplomatic Visa Arrangement" (DVA) Visitor visa will come into effect on 18 February 2025 and associated changes to end Diplomatic Visa Waivers will come into effect on 11 March 2025.

All other changes will come into effect on 8 October 2024.

National Security and Investment Act 2021: Annual Report

[HLWS79]

Baroness Twycross: My Right Honourable friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon. Pat McFadden MP, has today made the following statement:

I am today laying before Parliament the Annual Report covering the operation of the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act 2021 for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This fulfils the requirements under section 61 of the NSI Act and a copy of the report will also be published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The Government is committed to ensuring the Act protects our national security and does so as effectively, efficiently, and transparently as possible - giving investors the certainty they need to kickstart growth across the UK.

The report shows the vast majority of notified acquisitions – 95.6% – were cleared to proceed within 30 working days. Of the 847 notifications reviewed – only 4.4% – were issued with a call-in notice and underwent further assessment. Five final orders were issued and ten called in acquisitions were withdrawn before a decision was made. All notifications were screened within the Act’s statutory time limits.

This report shows that notifications, call-ins, final orders, withdrawals, and final notifications covered many different sectors and acquirers’ countries of origin.

I have included new information in this year’s report. For the first time, the report sets out how many calendar days (as well as statutory days) different stages of the process, for example the time it took to make a final decision following a notification or a call-in. I hope this will provide further transparency on how the Act is operating.

Water (Special Measures) Bill

[HLWS81]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: My honourable friend, the Minister for Water and Flooding, Emma Hardy MP, has made the following Written Statement:

On 4 September, the Government introduced the Water (Special Measures) Bill to Parliament to deliver on our manifesto commitment to put water companies under special measures to clean up our water. This builds on the statement of 11 July, which set out our first steps for ending the crisis in the water sector, and paves the way for a review to shape further, transformative legislative change to fundamentally transform how our water system works and clean up our rivers, lakes and seas for good.

This Government will never look the other way while water companies pump record levels of sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas.

To deliver on the manifesto commitment to ‘block the payment of bonuses to executives who pollute our waterways’, the Bill will provide Ofwat with a new power

to establish rules for the water industry relating to governance and remuneration.

The Bill also delivers on the manifesto commitment to ‘bring criminal charges against persistent law breakers’ by making obstruction of the general investigatory powers of Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Drinking Water Inspectorate punishable by imprisonment; and by opening up new routes for prosecuting executives.

To deliver on the manifesto commitment to ‘impose automatic and severe fines for wrongdoing’ the Bill will enable the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales to issue automatic fines for certain offences, ensuring water companies face rapid repercussions where it is immediately clear they have acted unlawfully.

To deliver on the manifesto commitment to ‘ensure independent monitoring of every outlet’, the Bill will place a requirement on water companies to publish data on discharges from emergency overflows in near real-time. This data will be independently scrutinised by the regulators.

Finally, the Bill will also modernise and strengthen the water industry Special Administrations Regime by introducing procedural rights around winding up petitions, and providing powers to recover the costs of special administration – bringing it in line with other sectors, such as energy.

Taken together, these measures will turn around the performance of the water industry and will be a first important step in enabling long-term and transformative change across the water sector.

However, I am clear that there are other fundamental challenges facing the sector, which will not be addressed by this Bill alone. A comprehensive reset is needed to restore our rivers, lakes and seas to good health, deliver a resilient water supply in the face of a changing climate, and ultimately ensure that the water sector works for customers and the environment.

Therefore, to build on the critical first steps of the Water (Special Measures) Bill, this Government will carry out a review of the water sector regulatory system and will fundamentally transform the water sector through future legislation. The review will focus on the private regulatory model and will not change plans for much needed investment in PR24. It will ensure that the framework that underpins our water sector delivers long-term stability, with incentives aligned to clear, achievable targets that reflect the needs of customers and the environment at a catchment, regional and national scale, supporting the Government’s growth mission. We will invite views from a range of experts covering areas such as the environment, public health, consumers, investors, engineering and economics, and this will include a public consultation to test the proposals and bring in a diverse range of views. Further details will be set out in the Autumn.

World Health Organisation Pandemic Accord Negotiations

[HLWS76]

Baroness Merron: My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention (Andrew Gwynne MP) has made the following Written Statement:

I would like to update the House regarding the ongoing negotiations on a new, legally binding international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (“Pandemic Accord”) at the World Health Organization (WHO).

Infectious diseases do not respect borders. As the COVID-19 pandemic showed, and the current mpox health emergency has reminded us, we can only protect citizens and economies from health threats if we collaborate closely with other countries.

Whether it is to monitor the spread of disease or to develop new vaccines, in future health emergencies we will likely rely on others, and they may rely on us, to share the information and resources we all need to save lives. It was only because of the information shared with us from countries which Covid reached first that helped us develop the vaccines which protected the UK and many around the world. More global collaboration on health threats will make Britain stronger and safer.

That is why the Government is committed to working with our international partners, including those in the Global South, to negotiate a Pandemic Accord that enhances global health security across the world and is firmly in the UK’s national interest.

The Pandemic Accord presents a unique opportunity to:

- protect lives, livelihoods and the NHS by strengthening pandemic prevention and response;
- contribute to economic growth by promoting innovation in pandemic-related R&D; and
- signal to the world that the UK is taking a new approach to multilateralism and is sincere about improving equitable access to vaccines, treatments and tests.

The Government is also determined to use this opportunity to support delivery of our health, growth and security missions. We will engage closely with our

developed and developing country partners to reach a consensus agreement that reflects their priorities as well as our own, to keep us all safer. We will also continue to engage with civil society, industry, and the Devolved Governments, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

Member States of the WHO have until the World Health Assembly in May 2025 to reach an agreement on the Pandemic Accord, following an extension agreed at the World Health Assembly in May 2024.

Targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations to improve information sharing and collaboration for public health emergency response were agreed at the World Health Assembly in May 2024. The International Health Regulations are an important technical framework that helps to prevent and protect against the international spread of disease. This set of proposed amendments updates the regulations to reflect lessons learned, including from COVID-19.

Every WHO Member State, including the UK, now has the right under the International Health Regulations to evaluate each and every amendment before exercising its sovereignty to decide whether to accept or opt out of each of - or all of - the amendments. This Government will of course only agree to amendments if they are in the UK national interest. Officials across Government are currently analysing the amendments and will provide advice to Ministers. The Government will provide an update to Parliament on the UK’s approach in due course.

The Pandemic Accord and International Health Regulations negotiations have been the subject of significant misinformation. Both the WHO and the UK Government are clear that respect for Member State sovereignty is a guiding principle of the negotiations. Cooperation with countries around the world doesn’t compromise our sovereignty, it strengthens our security.

The Government is firm in our belief that a new Pandemic Accord and strengthened International Health Regulations that set out how countries will work together to address health threats is in all of our best interests. The world is safer when we stand together.

We will continue to update the House through the course of this session at relevant and important junctures in the negotiating process.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 10 September 2024

Agriculture: Sustainable Development

Asked by *Lord Cromwell*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce or withdraw support to the Sustainable Farming Incentive and, if so, (1) when, and (2) by how much; and what assessment they have made of the subsequent effect on existing agreements and new applications. [HL588]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: This Government is fully committed to Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes, including the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). Record numbers of farmers are now in an ELM scheme, and the Government wants to maintain the momentum built over recent months.

The Government will optimise ELM schemes such as the SFI in an orderly way, over time. The Government will work with the sector to make sure schemes produce the right outcomes for all farmers, including small, grassland, upland and tenanted farms, supporting food security and nature's recovery in a just and equitable way.

Breast Cancer: Screening

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to upgrade the ultrasound and x-ray equipment and software used in breast cancer screening units, to improve breast cancer detection; and what is their estimate of the proportion of units that have access to upgraded software and equipment. [HL758]

Baroness Merron: The Department invested £10 million of funding into the NHS Breast Screening Programme in 2023, providing 28 new breast screening units and nearly 60 service upgrades, targeted at areas with the greatest challenges of uptake and coverage. This extra capacity aims to boost the uptake of screening in areas where attendance is low, tackle health disparities, and contribute towards higher early diagnosis rates, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

In addition, the Digital Transformation of Screening (DToS) programme seeks to design, deliver, and implement a more sophisticated and future-proof digital system for all screening IT systems. Although we know the new system will offer us huge improvements, it is important that the programme is introduced without interrupting the delivery of breast screening services. A full replacement of the IT systems will only take place when the DToS programme can replicate what the current National Breast Screening System does.

Carbon Emissions

Asked by *Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to set out a detailed and comprehensive analytical framework for establishing the optimum route to achieving Net Zero. [HL577]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: The Government sets five-yearly carbon budgets which outline our pathway to net zero. To identify the optimum route, Government considers a range of factors including technical potential, impacts on growth, wider costs and benefits, as well as advice from our independent advisory body, the Climate Change Committee. We will publish an updated Carbon Budget Delivery Plan in Spring 2025 and set the Carbon Budget 7 target by June 2026, in line with statutory duties.

Climate Change: Atlantic Ocean

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of any slowing or collapse of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation on their economic planning. [HL634]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: The Government has not assessed the effect of any slowing or collapse of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) on economic planning. The Sixth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that there is a high likelihood of the AMOC weakening in the 21st century, but an abrupt collapse is unlikely in this timeframe. The Government is monitoring ongoing research into how AMOC might change in the future and what impacts that would have.

Environmental Land Management Schemes: Finance

Asked by *Lord Cromwell*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which the Environmental Land Management Scheme will achieve a full financial replacement for support previously available under the now closed Basic Payment Scheme. [HL589]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Government is supporting farmers and land managers through a range of grants and schemes beside ELM, designed to support a resilient and healthy food system that works with nature and supports British Farmers. These grants are set out on Defra's "[Funding for Farmers](#)" webpage.

Gender Dysphoria: Hormone Treatments

Asked by **Baroness Hunt of Bethnal Green**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to all members of the House of Lords on 8 August, what other forms of care will be included within the clinical study around the use of puberty blockers for young people experiencing gender dysphoria or gender incongruence. [HL629]

Baroness Merron: Young people experiencing gender dysphoria or gender incongruence will be provided with care within a different clinical model, embedding multi-disciplinary teams in specialist children's hospitals. Individuals within these National Health Service specialist gender services will be offered multidisciplinary assessment, within the context of a tailored package of care and support that responds to their individual health and social care needs. A study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as one of the treatment options for children and young people with gender incongruence is being developed through a joint programme between NHS England and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the research arm of the Department.

It is planned that recruitment into the study will be through these NHS specialist gender services, ensuring that individuals accessing hormone suppression through the study do so following a holistic multidisciplinary assessment within the services above. The study team has submitted their research application, and this is currently undergoing scientific review. Subject to the study achieving the necessary approvals, including ethics approval, the NIHR will publish details of the award, including trial design and methodology, on its website. The study forms part of a wider joint programme of research and evaluation underpinning the delivery of new services for children and young people with gender incongruence. Further research will be needed to continue to build the evidence base and our understanding of best practice in this important clinical area, including for psychosocial interventions. Work will continue with a broad range of stakeholders to inform further study priorities.

Hospital Wards: Gender

Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town**

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the outcome of the Department of Health and Social Care consultation on patients' rights to request medical treatment (1) from someone of the same biological sex and (2) on single-sex wards, where "sex" refers to biological sex. [HL616]

Baroness Merron: Earlier this year, there was a consultation on a series of updates to the NHS Constitution, which included a section on sex and gender, and which made commitments relating to same-sex

accommodation, intimate care, and gendered language. Analysis of the responses to the consultation is currently in progress, and a decision on the outcome of this process will be made in due course.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what timelines are in place for the development of a cost-benefit analysis on the centralised procurement and supply of adult flu vaccines, in line with paragraph 4.5.6 of the NHS Vaccination Strategy. [HL680]

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to engage with external stakeholders in the development of a cost-benefit analysis of the centralised procurement and supply of adult flu vaccines, in line with paragraph 4.5.6 of the NHS Vaccination Strategy. [HL681]

Baroness Merron: The *NHS Vaccination Strategy* outlined the intention to explore whether centralising the procurement and supply of adult flu vaccines could deliver better outcomes and address the existing clinical, operational, and financial challenges associated with local procurement. NHS England, the Department, and the UK Health Security Agency are working in partnership on a programme of work to consider this. This will include undertaking a cost-benefit analysis and market engagement with stakeholders. The work, including timelines, is still under development and subject to ministerial decision-making.

Malvern Hills Trust

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Malvern Hills Trust, also known as the Malvern Hills Conservators, is considered to be a public body and, if so, for what purposes. [HL567]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Malvern Hills Trust, also known as the Malvern Hills Conservators, is not considered to be a public body.

Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Asked by **Lord Carrington**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how long it will take to change relevant legal forms and provide training to the judiciary and court staff on the system that replaces section 21 repossessions. [HL586]

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede: The system to process possession claims when section 21 is abolished already exists for claims under Section 8 grounds of the Housing Act 1988 and the Civil Procedure Rules.

There will be some form changes to remove the Section 21 process. Any changes required will be made by the relevant Procedure Rule Committee once the details of the new legislation are confirmed. Guidance materials for court staff will also be updated accordingly. Judicial training is the responsibility of the Lady Chief Justice and the Judicial College and will be considered as part of wider implementation plans.

Treasury: Public Appointments

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask His Majesty's Government which Treasury Minister or Ministers (1) requested and (2) approved, (a) the appointment of Ian Corfield, (b) the appointment of Oliver Newton, as civil servants, and (c) the promotion to Director for Special Advisers and Chancellor Engagement of Louise Tinsley; which senior individual or individuals in the Treasury authorised the Recruitment Principles exceptions; and whether any Ministerial Code declaration of interest was made by Treasury Ministers to (i) the Permanent Secretary, or (ii) the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests. [HL665]

Lord Livermore: Ian Corfield was appointed on a short-term basis to carry out urgent work in support of the government's International Investment Summit in October. A full recruitment process could not have been completed in the time available. He has since been appointed, unpaid, as a direct ministerial appointment.

Louise Tinsley has been a civil servant for 7 years. She had passed a selection board for a role at director level prior to the election. She has been appointed to her current role for an initial period of 6 months.

The Treasury does not comment on individual appointments at Deputy Director level or below.

Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to respond to the outstanding Joint Committee on

Vaccination and Immunisation recommendations in relation to the approval and commissioning of new vaccines. [HL725]

Baroness Merron: Officials across the Department, the UK Health Security Agency, and NHS England routinely develop policy options based on the advice issued by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Officials must consider a number of factors before a policy position can be established, and the time taken to complete this process can vary depending on these factors, and the nature of the JCVI's advice. It is important to fully consider feasibility and all operational and clinical factors to maintain the high standards of the United Kingdom's world-leading vaccination programmes, and ensure best value for money for taxpayers.

The Department aims to respond rapidly to the JCVI's advice, as demonstrated by the recent introduction of programmes to protect older adults and infants, through maternal vaccination, from the respiratory syncytial virus.

Winter Fuel Payment

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the increase in the energy price cap and the means testing of the winter fuel allowance on pet ownership and, in particular, the ability of older people to maintain their pets when faced with rising fuel bills. [HL706]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: The Government has made no assessment on the impact of the energy price cap on pet ownership. The Government is committed to supporting households struggling with their energy bills, and we are continuing to deliver the Warm Home Discount which provides a £150 rebate off energy bills to eligible low-income households.

The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero does not administer the Winter Fuel Payment.

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