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**Monday**  
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Answers.....1**

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

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

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# Written Answers

Monday, 4 November 2024

## 10 Downing Street: Paintings

Asked by *Lord Kempson*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the portraits of Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh, William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher and William Shakespeare, which formerly hung in 10 Downing Street, have either been (1) rehung elsewhere; or (2) moved into storage; and if so, where. [[HL1812](#)]

**Baroness Twycross:** I refer the Noble Lord to my answer of 23 September 2024, Official Report, PQ HL1035 and the answer of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, Georgia Gould, 31 October 2024, Official Report, PQ 8943. To note, the portrait of William Gladstone was hung in 11 Downing Street, rather than 10 Downing Street.

## Abortion: Clinics

Asked by *Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many abortion clinics run by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, MSI Reproductive Choices and the National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Service have (1) never been inspected by the Care Quality Commission, or (2) not been inspected by it since 30 September 2021. [[HL1989](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** The following table shows the number of abortion clinics which have never been inspected by the Care Quality Commission, as well as the number of clinics which have not been inspected since 30 September 2021:

<i>Name of provider</i>	<i>Have never been inspected</i>	<i>No inspection since 30 September 2021</i>
British Pregnancy Advisory Service	1	6
MSI Reproductive Choices	4	5
National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Service	4	3

Source: Care Quality Commission.

## Asylum: Children

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Scottish Guardianship Service for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors, following the publication of the report An evaluation of the Scottish Guardianship Service in November 2021. [[HL1885](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office takes our duty of care towards children and young people extremely seriously and we prioritise asylum applications from children and young people. We do not run the Scottish Guardianship Service and the evaluation is therefore for the Scottish government, but we welcome the support offered to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children by the service.

## Asylum: MOD Wethersfield

Asked by *Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many residents at Wethersfield accommodation site have had their asylum case substantive interview since 1 September; and how many of these cases had a legal representative. [[HL1804](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office publishes statistics on the number of people in asylum accommodation (including Wethersfield) in table Asy\_D09 of the quarterly Immigration System Statistics, and on the number of interviews conducted in table Asy\_05(M) of the Migration Transparency Data 'Immigration and protection' collection. However, there is no data published on whether individuals in a particular location have had an interview, or whether they had a legal representative.

Asked by *Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there is a requirement for employees at the Wethersfield accommodation site to be trained in detecting signs of trauma and torture, as well as mental health awareness. [[HL1805](#)]

Asked by *Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many Home Office staff work at the Wethersfield accommodation site. [[HL1806](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** ClearSprings Ready Homes (CRH) operates the Wethersfield site on behalf of the Home Office and is responsible for the safeguarding of those accommodated there.

The site and CRH are overseen by a Home Office assurance team which includes a dedicated safeguarding lead and an on-site senior responsible officer.

CRH delivers asylum accommodation and support services across the South and Wales regions. There are a number of requirements in the Asylum Accommodation and Support contract regarding safeguarding and identifying and responding to specific needs of residents. CRH operates in line with both the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract Safeguarding Framework and Safeguarding Reporting Protocol.

Along with our accommodation providers, we have robust processes in place to ensure that where someone is at risk, they are referred to the appropriate statutory agencies for the appropriate safeguarding interventions.

## Autism Employment Review

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to resuming recruitment for a task group to implement the recommendations of the Buckland Review of Autism Employment, published on 28 February. [HL1835]

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to expanding the recommendations of the Buckland Review of Autism Employment, published on 28 February, across neurodiversity more widely. [HL1836]

**Baroness Sherlock:** In our plan to Make Work Pay, we committed to raising awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace.

Our forthcoming employment White Paper considers how to improve employment outcomes and experiences for disabled people and people with health conditions. We are exploring how we can build on the earlier, independent, Buckland Review which was focused more narrowly on autism and employment, to improve understanding and support for all neurodivergent people at work.

## Aviation: Carbon Emissions

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consultations they had with the aviation industry before the publication of their Industrial Strategy Green Paper Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy and what steps they will take to enable the aviation industry to contribute to carbon removal projects in developing that Strategy. [HL1947]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government recognises the importance of the aviation sector to the UK economy. International connectivity, underpinned by strong airports and airlines, drives economic activity through facilitating trade and investment and enabling the movement of workers and tourists.

In the Green Paper the Government committed to engage widely throughout the development of our Industrial Strategy. This will include convening and co-design of ambitious Sector Plans for all eight growth-driving sectors (e.g. advance manufacturing). The UK approach to developing the Industrial Strategy focuses on growth that is aligned with our net zero and environmental objectives.

## Blood: Medical Equipment

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Merron on 9 October (HL Deb col

1995), whether the working group considering apheresis capacity intends to consult stakeholders, including (1) the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, and (2) the Advanced Therapy Treatment Centre network, prior to publishing its report. [HL2078]

**Baroness Merron:** The apheresis working group was established to address issues around apheresis capacity and improve the resilience of stem cell supply for the United Kingdom. The working group is currently in the evidence gathering phase ahead of publishing its report in spring 2025.

The group is comprised of stakeholders from apheresis users, commissioning bodies, patient representatives, and subject matter experts. Each member has a responsibility for keeping wider stakeholders informed. The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult is already represented within the working group. The catapult is responsible for coordination of the Advanced Therapy Treatment Centre network. Through submissions from, and engagement with, the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, a report is in preparation on apheresis capacity across users to be discussed at the next working group meeting.

## Business: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Johnson of Lainston*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to ensure that all economic regulators comply with the growth mandate outlined in the Smart Regulation White Paper, published in May (CP 1089). [HL2110]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government is committed to ensuring that our approach to economic regulation supports growth. As part of delivering on the growth mission, all economic regulators are in the scope of the growth duty and the Growth Duty Performance Framework.

The framework is a valuable tool that will help government to deliver economic growth by improving accountability and transparency of the performance of various regulators, including economic regulators.

## Carbon Emissions

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the (1) expected, and (2) last possible, date that they will publish their Net-Zero Strategy to comply with the judge's order in Friends of the Earth and others v Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, taking into account any pre-election period for local elections. [HL1752]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government will comply with the Court Order and lay before Parliament a report on its carbon budget strategy by the Court Order deadline.

## Care Quality Commission

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the Care Quality Commission about discharging its obligations under section 46 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 to update the health and social care sectors on how frequently it will assess the providers it regulates. [HL1988]

**Baroness Merron:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) was planning to publish information about their expectations of the frequency of future assessments in July 2024. Due to the timing of the review into the operational effectiveness of the CQC led by Dr Penny Dash, the CQC did not share this information as planned.

The interim findings of Dr Dash's review, as well as the full and final report published on 15 October 2024, made clear recommendations on how the CQC needs to change its regulatory approach. The CQC has committed to making those changes.

The CQC will publish an update on how frequently it will be carrying out its future assessments in due course, in consultation with stakeholders and others, as outlined by Section 46 (7) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

## Chad: Refugees

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what further steps they are taking to support Chad in coping with increasing numbers of Sudanese refugees. [HL1996]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Since the outbreak of the conflict in Sudan, the UK has provided £19 million in humanitarian funding to support Sudanese refugees and Chadian host communities in Eastern Chad. In August, Minister Dodds announced a further £15 million to support those fleeing violence in Sudan, Chad and South Sudan. This vital assistance will provide food assistance for 145,000 people in Sudan and 60,000 vulnerable refugees in Chad. The UK is the third largest donor to the response in Eastern Chad.

## Child Maintenance Service: Domestic Abuse

*Asked by Baroness Hazarika*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to implement the recommendations accepted in Dr Samantha Callan's report Independent Review of the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) response to Domestic Abuse, published on 17 January 2022. [HL1939]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The scale of violence against women and girls in our country is intolerable and this Government will treat it as the national emergency that it is.

The previous government accepted eight of the ten recommendations in Dr Callan's review and had made good progress in implementing these including introducing legislation to remove the £20 application fee in February 2024. The CMS domestic training has been reviewed following engagement with stakeholders to ensure it supports victims and survivors of abuse effectively.

This Government is committed to building on these improvements. Following a trial of a dedicated team to handle domestic abuse cases, this has been rolled out across the CMS to support vulnerable customers including where the most challenging or complex domestic abuse is an issue.

This government has extended the consultation that was launched in May 2024 which explored proposals to reform the CMS. This included removing Direct Pay and managing all CMS cases in one service to allow the CMS to tackle non-compliance faster and explore how victims and survivors of domestic abuse can be better supported. The consultation closed on 30 September 2024 and a response will be published in due course.

The Department is also progressing a review of the child maintenance calculation, aspects of which were the subject of Dr Callan's recommendations, to address issues of affordability of liabilities for low-income families. Any changes to the CMS calculation will require further consultation and legislative changes would need parliamentary approval.

## Children: Maintenance

*Asked by Baroness Hazarika*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total amount of child maintenance arrears owed to date; and of the total number of children for whom maintenance is accordingly outstanding. [HL1869]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) always encourages paying parents to pay their maintenance on time, to avoid accrual of arrears. Where a paying parent fails to pay on time or in full, the CMS aims to take immediate action to recover the debt and re-establish compliance. The CMS is committed to using its wide-ranging enforcement powers proportionally, and in the best interests of children and separated families.

The Department publishes Child Maintenance Service (CMS) statistics regularly and the relevant information can be accessed from Table 5 of the supplementary tables in the [latest release](#).

Table 5 counts how much child maintenance due has accumulated since the CMS began, in 2012. At the end of June 2024 this was £654.6m. Please note that this figure does not include arrears incurred with the Child Support Agency pre-2012.



The information requested on the total number of children for whom maintenance is outstanding is not readily available, and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

*Asked by Baroness Hazarika*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the total amount of child maintenance arrears collected through enforcement action to date. [HL1870]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) continues to take rigorous action to collect maintenance, combining robust negotiation activity with the highly effective use of its extensive range of Enforcement Powers. This approach is driven by the Payment Compliance strategy increasing CMS compliance influencing activities to tackle non-paying cases and challenge non-compliant behaviours.

The Department publishes Child Maintenance Service (CMS) statistics regularly and the relevant information can be accessed from Table 6.1 Enforcement Actions in the supplementary tables in the [latest release](#).

Between April 2015 and June 2024, the CMS has collected a total of £80.8m from Paying Parents via enforcement actions taken to collect both the maintenance arranged by the CMS, and Child Support Agency arrears that have been transitioned to CMS systems. This may include actions taken against parents for whom no ongoing maintenance has been arranged under the CMS.

*Asked by Baroness Hazarika*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many times the Child Maintenance Service has used the following enforcement sanctions to date: (1) suspended passport confiscation, (2) suspended disqualification from driving, (3) immediate prison sentence, (4) immediate passport confiscation, and (5) immediate driving disqualification. [HL1871]

**Baroness Sherlock:** Sanctions such as sending Paying Parents to prison, disqualifying them from holding or obtaining a passport or driving licence are a last resort and only used when every other method of recovering unpaid child maintenance has been tried. The CMS only pursues these sanctions when they believe the Paying Parent can pay but is refusing to do so. Where this is found to be the case CMS will quickly move to taking court action.

The Department publishes Child Maintenance Service (CMS) statistics regularly and the relevant information can be accessed from Table 6.2 of the supplementary tables in the [latest release](#).

From July 2019 to June 2024, there were 4 suspended passport confiscations, 25 suspended qualifications from driving, 17 immediate prison sentences, 3 immediate passport confiscations and 2 immediate driving disqualifications.

*Asked by Baroness Hazarika*

To ask His Majesty's Government on how many occasions the Child Maintenance Service has referred

cases to the Crown Prosecution Service or provided assistance to the police to prosecute those who commit the controlling or coercive behaviour offence post-separation. [HL1938]

**Baroness Sherlock:** Following the extension of the offence of coercion and control to post-separation, the CMS have considered the implications for the policy and operational framework within which statutory child maintenance arrangements sit. The CMS will not have a role in prosecuting those who commit this form of abuse. The CMS will provide all feasible assistance to the police who remain best equipped to investigate and prosecute those who commit the offence of coercion and control post-separation.

CMS caseworkers signpost parents to appropriate support organisations/police to report abuse and we can act on their behalf if they are in immediate danger.

### **Clerk of the Parliaments and House of Lords Management Board: Accountability**

*Asked by Lord Forsyth of Drumlean*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 25 September (HL1209), how the governance structures of the House hold the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Management Board accountable. [HL1802]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Clerk of the Parliaments is accountable to the House of Lords as a whole but, in practice, this is primarily channelled through the Commission and other domestic committees. These arrangements were established by the House following the recommendations of the Leader's Group on Governance in 2016: [Governance of Domestic Committees in the House of Lords \(2015–16, HL Paper 81\)](#).

The Commission provides high-level strategic and political direction to the Clerk of the Parliaments and Management Board; requires that decisions on the management of the House are taken at the appropriate governance level; and monitors the performance of the House of Lords Administration and bicameral teams that are co-funded by the Lords but not directly controlled by the Clerk of the Parliaments (such as the Parliamentary Security Department, Parliamentary Digital Service, and Strategic Estates) against agreed targets. It also scrutinises and agrees financial and corporate plans proposed by the Administration. The Clerk of the Parliaments provides updates at each Commission meeting, and meets the Chair of the Commission, the Deputy Chair, and other members, on a regular basis. The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk Assistant also attend each Commission meeting, and other members of the Management Board attend when items relevant to their responsibilities arise.

The Commission, sitting with the House of Commons Commission as the Restoration and Renewal Client Board, scrutinises work undertaken as part of the R&R

programme. The Clerk of the Parliaments and Chief Operating Officer are members of the Client Board.

The Commission appoints the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to provide advice to the Clerk of the Parliaments (as Accounting Officer) and senior management on the effectiveness of internal controls. The Committee considers internal and external audit reports covering Lords operational areas and bicameral teams that are co-funded by the Lords and management responses thereto; evaluates the adequacy of the Administration's risk management system and assurance processes in place; and evaluates and advises on the suitability of financial practices, internal controls, and effective governance processes throughout the administration of the House. It also works with the House of Commons Administration Estimate Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to monitor areas of joint interest to both Houses. The Clerk of the Parliaments, Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director attend each meeting of the Committee, and other members of the Management Board and other senior managers attend when agenda items relevant to their responsibilities arise.

The Services Committee is appointed by the House and has delegated authority from the Commission to provide advice on strategic policy decisions on member-facing services, and oversee consequential delivery and implementation. The Committee regularly examines, amongst other things, updates on major projects being undertaken by the administration and bicameral teams. The Clerk of the Parliaments and Chief Operating Officer attend each meeting, and other members of the Management Board and other senior managers attend when agenda items relevant to their responsibilities arise.

The Finance Committee is appointed by the House and has delegated authority from the Commission to consider expenditure on services provided from the Estimate for the House of Lords; report to the Commission on the forecast outturn, Estimate and financial plan submitted by the Management Board; monitor the financial performance of the House Administration, and bicameral teams that are co-funded by the Lords; and report to the Commission on the financial implications of significant proposals. The Clerk of the Parliaments, Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director attend each meeting of the Committee, and other members of the Management Board and other senior managers attend when agenda items relevant to their responsibilities arise.

Agendas, minutes, and some papers, for all of the domestic committees referenced above, are available to members online and in the Printed Paper Office.

In common with other Accounting Officers in the public sector, the Clerk of the Parliaments may be held to account by the Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons.

## Cotton: Origin Marking

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have conducted any checks of products they use which contain cotton to ascertain where the cotton was grown. [[HL1904](#)]

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what procedures they apply to NHS product supply chains to identify if any products which contains cotton are grown in the Xinjiang area of China. [[HL1905](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** Section 47 of the Health and Social Care Act 2022 mandated my Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to conduct a review of the risks associated with slavery and human trafficking in National Health Service supply chains, with an emphasis on cotton-based products. The report was laid in parliament on 14 December 2023.

The report revealed that while many NHS tier one suppliers are United Kingdom-based, their supply chains often connect through multiple tiers to higher-risk countries, where many of the suppliers of cotton are based. Approximately 34% of high-risk suppliers were registered as based in China, where there is significant concern of forced labour, especially in Xinjiang's cotton production. Concern has also been raised about Pakistan's Sialkot region, a major source of surgical instruments where production is often subcontracted to the largely unregulated informal sector. Concerns also extend to cotton-producing nations like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and to Malaysia and China for personal protective equipment manufacturing.

The supply chain mapping undertaken for the purpose of the review was identified as inappropriate for the size and range of products supplied to the NHS, requiring extensive effort by the buyer and suppliers to collect information that was still insufficient to affect change. Many of the suppliers identified as having high risk supply chains are UK based, however their supply chains are global.

In response to the findings the review makes a series of recommendations, outlined in detail in the publication. It advises a joint-department strategy for better risk assessment and mapping in NHS supply chains, urging ongoing emphasis on managing modern slavery risks, including updating procurement practices and standardising assessments integrated with e-commerce systems.

It recommends bolstering NHS staff's ability to tackle modern slavery, and improving supply chain mapping capability. Upcoming regulations under Section 12ZC of

the NHS Act 2006 will further aid the NHS in assessing and mitigating modern slavery risks in individual procurements, alongside the introduction of a consistent risk assessment embedded into the health family's e-commerce system.

### **Dangerous Dogs**

*Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the number of registered neutered XL bullies in England and Wales. [HL2027]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Dogs aged under 12 months on the 31 January 2024 need to be neutered by the 31 December 2024. In March this year, the Government announced that there would be an extension for the youngest dogs that were aged less than 7 months on the 31 January 2024. These dogs would need to be neutered by the 30 June 2025. As these deadlines have not yet passed, we have not received and processed all neutering forms and so we do not hold data on the number of XL Bullies that have been neutered. We recommend that owners arrange for their dogs to be neutered as soon as possible to meet these deadlines.

*Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the number of registered unneutered XL bullies in England and Wales. [HL2029]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Dogs aged under 12 months on the 31 January 2024 need to be neutered by the 31 December 2024. In March this year, the Government announced that there would be an extension for the youngest dogs that were aged less than 7 months on the 31 January 2024. These dogs would need to be neutered by the 30 June 2025. As these deadlines have not yet passed, we have not received and processed all neutering forms and so we do not hold data on the number of XL Bullies that have been neutered. We recommend that owners arrange for their dogs to be neutered as soon as possible to meet these deadlines.

### **Darfur: Hospitals**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to Saudi Hospital in El Fasher. [HL1971]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK condemns the appalling violence in El Fasher, capital of North Darfur, including the impact this has had on the Saudi Hospital. The UK is funding the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) which is providing support to the Saudi Hospital. The UK is one of the largest donors to the SHF.

### **Dental Services**

*Asked by Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that everyone who needs one is able to access a NHS dentist. [HL1896]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government plans to tackle the challenges for patients trying to access National Health Service dental care with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments, and to recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most. To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to NHS dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

### **Department for Science, Innovation and Technology**

*Asked by Lord Markham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the future of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology as a stand-alone department. [HL1269]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** There are currently no plans to revisit DSIT as a stand-alone Department.

### **Department for Work and Pensions: Remote Working**

*Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Smith of Basildon on 21 October (HL1282), how many substantive disclosures have been issued, since the general election, by the Department for Work and Pensions in response to Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) requests on Civil Service workplace occupancy across the department; and whether they will place in the Library of the House a copy of each FOI disclosure, redacting the name of the applicant. [HL1891]

**Baroness Sherlock:** Since the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024, the Department for Work and Pensions has received and responded to one Freedom of Information (FOI) request relating to Civil Service workplace occupancy across the department.

We will place a copy of this FOI, FOI2024/58197 in the House libraries.

### **Domestic Abuse**

*Asked by Baroness Doocey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps the Home Office is taking in response to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's briefing *Shifting the Scales of Justice*, published in September, particularly in relation to the call for the immediate institution of a data-sharing firewall between the police and immigration enforcement. [HL1799]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** We look forward to seeing the final 'Shifting the Scales of Justice' report when it is laid in Parliament. The Government will respond in full to the



report's recommendations within 56 days, as per the Domestic Abuse Act of 2021.

With regards to data-sharing between police and immigration enforcement, we are committed to finding a solution that will encourage migrant victims and give them confidence to come forward.

### **Drax Power Station: Timber**

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the article "UK power stations burnt wood from old forest areas, Drax emails show", published in the Financial Times on 16 October, which cited internal emails from 2022 that concluded that Drax was "highly likely" to have burned wood sourced from 'old growth' forests in Canada. [HL1755]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government only supports sustainable biomass and generators only receive subsidies for biomass that complies with our sustainability criteria. The 2023 Biomass Strategy contained a commitment to consult on developing and implementing a cross-sector sustainability framework to enable greater consistency across sectors. Next steps on this will be announced in due course.

### **Driving under Influence**

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to lowering the legal alcohol limit for drivers as tested by a breathalyser. [HL1792]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** This Government takes road safety very seriously and reducing those killed and injured on our roads is a key priority. The Department is currently considering policy options in this area.

### **Electric Bicycles and Electric Scooters: Hire Services**

*Asked by Baroness Pidgeon*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are considering introducing legislation granting (1) London boroughs, and (2) Transport for London, legal powers to regulate the use of rental e-bikes and e-scooters. [HL1770]

*Asked by Baroness Pidgeon*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to legalise the use of private e-scooters in public spaces. [HL1771]

*Asked by Baroness Pidgeon*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to legalise rental e-scooters following the trials ending in May 2026. [HL1772]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** As you will appreciate, the new Government is still in its early stages, and my Department is carefully considering next steps and potential policy solutions for micromobility, including rental e-bikes and e-scooters.

### **Electric Bicycles: Hire Services**

*Asked by Baroness Pidgeon*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to regulate the dockless rental e-bike market. [HL1769]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** As you will appreciate, the new Government is still in its early stages, and my Department is carefully considering next steps and potential policy solutions for the dockless rental e-bike market.

### **Fly-tipping**

*Asked by Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat fly-tipping. [HL2180]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Fly-tipping is a serious crime which blights communities and the environment and dealing with it imposes significant costs on both taxpayers and businesses. In our manifesto we committed to forcing fly-tippers and vandals to clean up the mess that they have created as part of a crackdown on anti-social behaviour. We will provide further details on this commitment, and other actions to tackle fly-tipping, in due course.

In the meantime, Defra will continue to chair the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group through which we work with a wide range of stakeholders such as local authorities, the Environment Agency and National Farmers Union, to promote good practice with regards to tackling fly-tipping, including on private land.

### **Food: Labelling**

*Asked by Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to respond to the fairer food labelling consultation, which closed on 7 May, and what plans, if any, they have to implement the proposals therein to improve transparency in method-of-production welfare labelling for pork, chicken, and eggs. [HL2072]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** A public consultation on fairer food labelling was undertaken between March and May 2024 by the previous government. This sought views on proposals to improve and extend current mandatory method of production labelling. We are now carefully considering all responses before deciding on next steps and will publish a response to this consultation in due course.

## Forest Products

Asked by **Lord Mott**

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to make secondary legislation to implement the UK's Forest Risk Commodity regime. [HL2037]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** We recognise the need to take action to ensure that UK consumption of forest risk commodities is not driving deforestation, and we will set out our approach to addressing this in due course.

## Forests: Commodities

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to introduce forest risk due diligence regulations under Schedule 17 to the Environment Act 2021. [HL2077]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** We recognise the need to take action to ensure that UK consumption of forest risk commodities is not driving deforestation, and we will set out our approach to addressing this in due course.

## Gambling: Fines

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

To ask His Majesty's Government how many fines were imposed against gambling companies by the Gambling Commission for failing to meet their social responsibility obligations in (1) 2019, (2) 2020, (3) 2021, (4) 2022, (5) 2023, and (6) 2024. [HL1825]

**Baroness Twycross:** The total number of fines imposed by the Gambling Commission on operators for failing to meet their social responsibility obligations in each of the last six years is detailed below:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (to-date)
2	2	9	10	9	3

## Gaza: Medical Treatments

Asked by **Baroness Helic**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the World Health Organization evacuate women and children from Gaza to Europe for medical treatment; and whether any of the patients being evacuated will be treated in the UK. [HL1810]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The plight of sick and injured people in Gaza is deeply distressing. We urge Israel to open safe, regular routes for those requiring medical evacuation. The UK is supporting the provision of essential healthcare to Palestinian civilians, including through field hospitals operated by UK-Med in Gaza, and through the World Health Organization in Egypt to support medically evacuated Palestinians.

There are provisions that allow Palestinians to come to the UK for Private Medical Treatment under the Immigration Rules. Where a relevant application is made consideration will be given to exceptional circumstances, compelling or compassionate grounds. We are keeping all existing visa pathways under review.

## Gender Dysphoria: Children

Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the NHS recruitment requirement for new psychologists working with children with gender dysphoria to "practice in a gender affirming manner in line with WPATH SOC 8", that is, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's standards of care, is in line with its endorsement of the Cass Review. [HL1674]

**Baroness Merron:** All of the National Health Service's new Children and Young People's gender services are being established closely in line with recommendations from the Cass Review, which the Government and NHS England are committed to implementing in full.

The recruitment campaign referred to relates to a temporary service which was set up solely to provide psychosocial support for the relatively small number of children and young people already referred to endocrine clinics by the Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service clinic, prior to the closure of that service in March 2024. The trust has acknowledged that old terminology was used in the job advertisement, including the references to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's standards of care, and is amending it.

## Gender Recognition

Asked by **Lord Reay**

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the Financial Ombudsman Service decision of September in relation to MoneySuperMarket, what is the policy position of (1) the Office for Equality and Opportunity and (2) the Equality and Human Rights Commission on whether (a) gender identity and (b) non-binary status are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. [HL1894]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') provides protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Government is proud of the Act and the rights and protections it affords, and we are committed to upholding this important piece of legislation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is independent of the Government, therefore, we cannot speak on its behalf.

## Gender: Public Consultation

Asked by *Baroness Barran*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 16 September (HL693), on what grounds responses to the call for input on incorrect guidance on single-sex spaces and gender self-identification have been categorised as 'invalid'. [HL1919]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Responses to the call for input were deemed invalid where they did not meet the criteria set out on the call for input Gov.uk page under 'how to respond'.

## Genetically Modified Organisms: Crops

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce biosecurity measures to ensure gene-edited crops do not enter the human food or animal feed systems, or the wider environment, in the light of the recent announcement of field trials of gene-edited crops on 25 commercial farms. [HL1848]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** We have no plans to introduce biosecurity measures for all research trials involving gene-edited plants. These plants only contain genetic sequence that could arise through traditional breeding. However, unlike equivalent trials for traditionally bred plants, Defra asks for confirmation that the person with overall responsibility for them will put in place appropriate measures, as necessary, to minimise the possibility of material from the plants entering the human food or animal feed systems.

## Government Departments: Public Expenditure

Asked by *Viscount Camrose*

To ask His Majesty's Government which Departments had not agreed their spending settlements ahead of the Autumn Budget Statement by 16 October. [HL1708]

**Lord Livermore:** All departments agreed their Spending Review settlements ahead of Autumn Budget. As you would expect, some technical details took longer to be worked through but the overall numbers were agreed within the expected timeframes. Details of the Settlements were announced by the Chancellor as part of her Budget speech yesterday, and are now available to be viewed online.

## Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations contained in the Barnardo's and Co-op report A recipe for success: How do children and young people want to access food

in their communities?, published in September, (1) to extend eligibility of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme to all households in receipt of Universal Credit, and (2) to improve uptake among teenagers. [HL1734]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** I refer my noble Friend to the answer of 21 October 2024 to Question [HL1266](#).

## Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Visual Impairment

Asked by *Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 19 March (HL Deb cols 93–96), what progress, if any, they have made in ensuring that there is automatic provision of accessible flat screen payment devices to hospitality and retail outlets, and specifically tactile covers to ensure these payment systems comply with the Equality Act 2010. [HL1788]

**Lord Livermore:** The government is committed to ensuring high standards of financial inclusion across the financial services sector. It is important that all payment methods are accessible for those with disabilities, including those with visual impairments.

The Treasury has been engaging with UK Finance, the Financial Conduct Authority, the Royal National Institute of Blind People, and other Government departments on this matter. UK Finance will soon be assessing potential initiatives to encourage stakeholders to adopt common standards for point-of-sale terminals and drive improvements and adoption. The Government is closely monitoring progress in this important area.

## House of Lords: Security

Asked by *Lord Dobbs*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what the final cost will be of recent works at Peers Entrance. [HL2021]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** For security reasons, the Houses do not publish capital expenditure on security mitigating projects as providing this level of detail could enable an individual to infer the extent and nature of the works, and thus the vulnerabilities which they were intended to mitigate.

## Import Controls: Inflation

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to review the inflationary impact of the Border Target Operating Model. [HL1897]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Defra continues to monitor and review the impacts of new controls introduced under the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM). We will work closely with industry, trade partners and enforcement agencies to minimise costs to

trade and disruption, while continuing to protect our biosecurity.

The Government's modelling of the inflationary impact of the BTOM uses a peer-reviewed econometric model, including the impacts of non-tariff measures related to checks such as the cost of Export Health Certificates and port fees, and upstream impacts such as administrative processing time, training, certificates of origin and security deposits or guarantees when moving agricultural goods under licence.

Analysis has indicated the BTOM policies would lead to an approximate increase in consumer food price inflation of less than 0.2 percentage points over a three-year period.

An outbreak of a major disease could have a much more significant impact. The 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease cost £12.8 billion in 2022 prices, £4.8 billion of which was cost to Government and £8 billion cost to the private sector.

### International Law

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take in their capacity as penholder at the meeting of the UN Security Council meeting in November to promote international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to aid access and attacks on peacekeepers and health workers. [HL1999]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** International Humanitarian Law (IHL) must be upheld, and civilians protected. The UK champions IHL and calls on all parties to a conflict to observe robust standards. We use every opportunity to ensure IHL compliance is a subject of international and multilateral discussions. During the UK Presidency of the United Nations Security Council in November, we will host a briefing on the UN Secretary-General's recommendations on the protection of humanitarian personnel and assets. We condemn attacks on healthcare workers who are protected under IHL. The UK also signed a joint statement by UNIFIL contributing countries which condemned attacks on its peacekeepers and called for respect for international law.

### Iran: Baha'i Faith

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what actions they are taking to encourage the government of Iran to respect freedom of religion or belief for Baha'is in that country, in particular with regard to the provision of medical attention for detained citizens, such as Mahvash Sabet; and what they are doing to secure the release of wrongfully detained Baha'i community leaders. [HL1781]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** We condemn Iran's restrictions against Freedom of Religion or Belief. The continued systematic targeting of the Baha'i community,

which includes unfair arrest and detention, land grabs, and denial of burial rights, is unacceptable. We are committed to working with international partners to hold Iran to account for its repression of the Bahai's, and other religious minorities, including at the UN Third Committee.

### Iran: Christianity

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent representations they have made to the government of Iran regarding the persecution of Christians in that country. [HL1828]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** We condemn Iran's restrictions against Freedom of Religion or Belief. Christians, particularly converts from Islam and other minority religions, continue to face severe repression in Iran. We are committed to holding Iran to account for its attacks against religious minorities, including at the UN Third Committee.

### Israel: Hamas

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Israel permitted funds to flow to the Hamas terrorist organisation from third party countries via Israel. [HL1715]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** It is not appropriate for the Government to comment on unverified reports. The UK continues to work closely with our partners to identify opportunities to disrupt Hamas financial networks, including cutting off access to funding being used to carry out atrocities. Counter Terrorist Financing remains one of the UK's priorities under the National Security objectives set out in the UK's National Security Strategy. This work is ongoing alongside UK efforts to reach a long-term political solution so that Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace.

### Mental Health Services: Schools

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their anticipated timescale for rolling out mental health support teams to every school and college. [HL2009]

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have for mental health support teams in schools to include a specialist child counsellor. [HL2010]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department of Health and Social Care is working with the Department for Education and NHS England to consider how to deliver our commitment of access to a specialist mental health professional in every school. We need to ensure that any



support meets the needs of young people, teachers, parents, and carers. This includes considering the role of existing programmes of support with evidence of a positive impact, such as mental health support teams in schools and colleges.

### Mental Health: Pupils and Teachers

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what data they have on the impact of mental health support teams on (1) improving pupil mental health, and (2) improving teacher mental health. [HL2012]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department of Health and Social Care is working with the Department for Education and NHS England to consider how to deliver our commitment of access to a specialist mental health professional in every school. We need to ensure that any support meets the needs of young people, teachers, parents, and carers. This includes considering the role of existing programmes of support with evidence of a positive impact, such as mental health support teams in schools and colleges.

There were almost 8,500 schools and colleges participating in the mental health support team programme in 2023/24, which equates to 34% of the schools and colleges in England.

Assuming the average number of schools or colleges and pupils or learners per mental health support team remains constant, we estimate that coverage would increase to 54% of pupils or learners and 42% of schools or colleges by March 2025.

An interim report, titled *Early evaluation of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Trailblazer programme: a rapid mixed-methods study*, was published in June 2023 and highlights the impacts of mental health support teams on improving pupil mental health and improving teacher mental health. A copy of the report is attached.

Data regarding the latest coverage of the mental health support team programme is routinely collected and published by the Department for Education.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Evaluation Report [Evaluation Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-10-24/HL2012>

### Ministers: Disclosure of Information

*Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government when monthly reporting of Ministerial data on gifts and hospitality will begin; what the gap will be between events each month and the publication of the details; when the Gov.uk platform containing such data will go live; and

whether it will include senior officials and special advisers as well as Ministers. [HL1765]

**Baroness Twycross:** This Government will introduce a register for ministers' gifts and hospitality bringing publication of ministerial transparency data on a broadly equivalent basis to the parliamentary register.

Work on the new register is progressing and further details will be published in due course. Transparency data for ministerial meetings and overseas travel, special advisers and senior officials will continue to be published quarterly as it has been under previous administrations.

### Money

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of cash access of those living in the most rural areas. [HL1826]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to protect the use of cash in the purchasing of everyday goods and services. [HL1827]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government recognises that cash continues to be used by millions of people across the UK, including those who may be in vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the Government recognises that businesses need access to cash deposit services in order to continue accepting cash and, therefore, support people's ability to continue to transact using cash.

The Financial Conduct Authority has recently assumed regulatory responsibility for protecting access to cash, and its new rules went live on 18 September. The rules require the UK's largest banks and building societies to seek to assess the impact of a closure of a relevant cash withdrawal or deposit facility and put in place a new service if necessary. The most recent data from the FCA shows 98 per cent of people in rural areas live within 3 miles of a free-to-use cash access point offering deposits.

The decision to accept or decline a form of payment is a commercial one. However, the Government recognises the importance of cash as a means of payment for essential services and to the wider economy, and therefore welcomes the work of the regulators to monitor cash acceptance. For example, research published by the Financial Conduct Authority in 2020 found that 98 per cent of small businesses surveyed would never turn away a customer if they needed to pay in cash.

### Music: Government Assistance

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they taking to support the music industry following a slowing rate of growth. [HL1832]



**Baroness Twycross:** Growth is the number one mission of the government. Our new Industrial Strategy is central to that Growth Mission, developing a credible, 10-year plan to deliver the certainty and stability businesses need to invest in the high-growth sectors. The creative industries, including music, are one of our priority growth sectors, and we are committed to celebrating our nation's wealth of talent and driving economic growth in communities across the country.

To support this growth, we are considering investment, innovation, infrastructure and international impact alongside skills, and a quality creative education to nurture the next generation of musical talent. We have already launched an independent review of the curriculum and assessment to ensure it champions creative subjects.

The Government recognises the importance of the grassroots music sector in fostering the next generation of talent, which will support the growth of the music industry. We will respond to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's report on grassroots music venues in the coming weeks.

We will launch a consultation on new protections for ticket resales this autumn. We want to support fans, and ensure that ticket revenues go to the music sector and not to touts.

In order for the music industry to grow, it is crucial that we find the right balance between fostering innovation and ensuring protection for creators, which requires thoughtful engagement within the creative industries and with companies driving AI development. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders and will set out next steps on AI as soon as possible.

Artists and creators should be appropriately remunerated, as this is what allows them to invest their time, effort, and money into creating music. That is why this Government is enabling fresh and meaningful conversations with stakeholders to explore concerns around creator remuneration from streaming, in the form of a working group.

And it is also our priority to ensure that UK artists continue to thrive and grow on the global stage. The Government will explore how best to help touring artists operating in the EU without a return to free movement, and we are working collaboratively across departments and with industry representatives on this issue.

### **NHS England: Remote Working**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the impact of working from home on efficiency and outcomes in NHS England. [[HL1572](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** It is for NHS England to decide the best way to recruit and retain staff whilst also promoting productive outcomes. NHS England will continue to model their ways of working on what allows them to maximise outcomes, and work with optimal efficiency.

### **NHS: Equality**

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State at the Department for Health and Social Care on 7 October (HC4240), what guidance (1) the Department for Health and Social Care, and (2) NHS England, have given to NHS trusts and its arms-length bodies on reducing external spending on equality, diversity, and inclusion programmes. [[HL1879](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** The Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expenditure Guidance was published on 14 May 2024, and required all Departments and arm's length bodies to set controls on all equality, diversity, and inclusion related expenditure. No further guidance was issued by the Department to National Health Service trusts.

NHS England has not published written guidance to NHS trusts and arm's length bodies on reducing external spending on equality, diversity, and inclusion programmes.

### **NHS: Hacking**

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the NHS database hack by Qilin in June, (1) how many individual patients' data were hacked, (2) whether data were hacked that could be used to identify any individual, (3) whether, and what, medical information was hacked, and (4) whether any results were hacked and, if so, what type of results. [[HL1830](#)]

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the database hack by Qilin in June, what assessment they have made of the use of single databases for storage of information in the NHS; and what risks they have identified. [[HL1831](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** The data leaked following the cyber-attack on Synnovis is still being investigated by Synnovis. This involves interrogation to identify the personal data that has been affected. The complexity of the investigation means it will take time for Synnovis to clarify and identify which individuals and organisations have been impacted and the nature of the data.

We understand that the data leaked in the Synnovis cyber-attack was not taken from a single database but was a partial copy of content from Synnovis's administrative working drives.

When any databases which contain personal data are established by an organisation, the organisation has its own legal responsibilities as a controller of the data to ensure data protection by design and default in the design and development of a database, and to carry out a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) under UK General Data Protection Regulation. A DPIA includes an

assessment of any risks to individuals, and how these risks are mitigated.

### **Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance**

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what has the cost been to date of the reconstruction of Peers' Entrance; and what is the budget for the total cost of this project. [HL1888]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** For security reasons, the Houses do not publish capital expenditure on security mitigating projects as providing this level of detail could enable an individual to infer the extent and nature of the works, and thus the vulnerabilities which they were intended to mitigate.

### **Parliamentary Estate: Security**

*Asked by Lord Dobbs*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many people, in the most recent two years for which figures are available, have used the entrance to the Parliamentary Estate located by the Westminster Underground Station. [HL2022]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** For security reasons, the Houses do not publish data about the movements of passholders on the Parliamentary Estate.

### **Peers: Allowances**

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what would now be the daily attendance allowance if it were adjusted for inflation, as measured by the retail price index, from the level of £300 set in October 2010. [HL1887]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Daily Allowance rate was introduced on 1 October 2010 at £300 per day. Retail Price Index (RPI) figures for October 2024 are expected to be released by the Office for National Statistics on 20 November 2024. It is therefore not yet possible to calculate a figure for the Daily Allowance adjusted for inflation by RPI for the month of October 2024.

Based on September 2024 RPI figures, if the Daily Allowance rate had been adjusted annually for inflation, it would be £515 per day from 1 September 2024.

### **Police**

*Asked by Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much they have spent to date on the development and delivery of the Single Online Home programme. [HL1775]

*Asked by Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to require all police forces in England

and Wales to make full use of the Single Online Home programme; and if so, whether they will publish those plans. [HL1776]

*Asked by Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to increase the number of interactive services provided to the public by the Single Online Home programme; and if so, whether they will publish those plans. [HL1777]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Since 2016, the Home Office has invested £103m in the police-led Digital Public Contact (DPC) Programme to create greater choice for the public and support police in managing contact volume more efficiently. During this time, the DPC Programme has delivered the Single Online Home, a national web-based platform and digital police station where the public can report incidents, apply for licences, and provide and discover information about crime in their area. Single Online Home functionality is also available through the Police.uk mobile phone app.

At October 2024, 40 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales plus British Transport Police have been onboarded onto the platform and one further force is currently onboarding. Discussions are ongoing with the remaining two forces. DPC continues to support onboarded forces in making use of the wide range of Single Online Home services available. There are currently no plans to mandate all forces to make full use of the platform.

*Asked by Baroness Doocey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support forces to minimise the number of police officers posted in back office or business support functions where their warranted powers are not required. [HL1801]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** This Government is committed to strengthening neighbourhood policing as part of our Safer Streets Mission. This is a vital part of restoring confidence in policing, and getting thousands of officers back on the beat in our communities.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the police have the resources they need. While we expect that police officers will be used in tackling crime and protecting the public, it is for Chief Constables and directly elected PCCs, and Mayors with PCC functions to make operational decisions based on their local knowledge and experience, including how best to allocate resources.

### **Police: Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence**

*Asked by Baroness Doocey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to amend police regulations

in relation to allegations of police-perpetrated domestic abuse or violence against women and girls. [HL1800]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a top priority for this Government and our manifesto included the mission to halve VAWG over the next decade.

In her statement to Parliament on 23 October on police accountability, the Home Secretary reiterated the Government's commitment to strengthen police misconduct and vetting systems. Those who commit heinous acts such as VAWG have no place in policing and our measures will ensure that there is a statutory underpinning for national vetting standards and strengthen requirements relating to the suspension of officers under investigation for domestic abuse or sexual offences.

### Police: Mental Health

Asked by *Baroness Doocey*

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the light of the Social Market Foundation and Police Federation joint report Pay and Morale Survey 2023, published in February, what assessment they have made of current morale within the police service in England and Wales. [HL1797]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Government values the vital contribution of police officers across the country who work tirelessly to keep us safe every single day. This Government will work collaboratively with policing to address challenges and ensure officers have the right support, resources and recognition they need to tackle crimes and to keep the public safe, as well as improving standards across the board to restore public confidence.

This Government is also committed to supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of all our police and is working closely with police leaders and staff associations, including the Police Federation, to support this.

On 29 July, the Government announced that it had accepted the Police Remuneration Review Body's recommendation to award officers in the federated and superintending ranks a consolidated pay award of 4.75%, with effect from 1 September 2024.

### Police: Vetting

Asked by *Baroness Doocey*

To ask His Majesty's Government to what extent they are prioritising work to connect civil and family courts' databases and IT systems with police databases and IT systems to inform policing vetting procedures. [HL1798]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Work is ongoing between the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to ensure a system is in place for the information transfer of protective orders from the courts to policing.

The government is also working with the NPCC to develop a Continuous Integrity System to enable relevant information on officers and staff to be captured and assessed in quick time as part of a wider integrity programme to enhance the vetting regime.

### Poultry: Animal Welfare

Asked by *Baroness Gale*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the decision by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs to amend retained Council Regulation 1/2005, which prohibits lifting chickens by the legs in such a way as to cause them unnecessary pain or suffering, what legislative measures they intend to advance to improve the welfare of layer hens and broiler chickens. [HL2057]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** We are carefully considering the recommendations in the Animal Welfare Committee's report on the welfare implications of carrying methods for poultry to ensure the highest standards of animal welfare and will set out next steps in due course.

### Prescriptions

Asked by *Baroness Cumberlege*

To ask His Majesty's Government why there is disparity in the legal prescribing rights of various professions when nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, therapeutic and diagnostic radiographers, dietitians and paramedics all undertake prescribing training together, and are assessed in the same way. [HL1928]

**Baroness Merron:** Non-medical prescribers must work within their own level of expertise. This, together with the requirements of the roles in which different professions are employed, is reflected in the differences between the legal prescribing responsibilities of these professions. Regulators keep records of which healthcare professionals can prescribe, and employers have a responsibility to ensure that non-medical prescribers undertake the relevant training and development, so that their knowledge and skills remain up to date. This is to ensure clinicians work within their sphere of competence.

### Prime Minister: Corporate Hospitality

Asked by *Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government when Universal Music originally made the offer of hospitality of two sets of Taylor Swift concert tickets to the Prime Minister. [HL1767]

**Baroness Twycross:** 16 August 2024.

## Private Education: VAT

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the HMRC guidance of 10 October on the steps that steps independent schools should take to pay VAT on their fees with effect from 1 January 2025 is reissued to correct any errors in, and improve the drafting of, that guidance. [HL1813]

**Lord Livermore:** HMRC has put in place a number of measures to ensure schools can be ready for the introduction of VAT on private school fees and remains committed to supporting schools with their new VAT obligations, including by providing bespoke guidance and webinars.

We do not recognise reports that HMRC's guidance contains errors. In publishing its guidance, HMRC has addressed areas of uncertainty and will provide further clarification in guidance if that is required. As with all guidance, HMRC will keep the guidance for private schools under review and continue to update it in light of further feedback we receive during our ongoing engagement with the sector – for example, any common questions that arise during the webinars. Following the Budget, an update to the guidance has now been published to reflect the final policy design and legislation.

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they plan to apportion the revenue raised by charging VAT on school fees between the recruitment of more teachers, the creation of more nurseries and the establishment of breakfast clubs in all primary schools. [HL1814]

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of independent schools which will absorb wholly or in part their VAT charge from 1 January 2025 rather than increasing their fees. [HL1815]

**Lord Livermore:** From 1 January 2025, the 20% standard rate of VAT will apply to all education services, vocational training, and boarding services provided by private schools for a charge.

It will be a commercial decision for individual schools how they fund this additional cost. Charging VAT at the standard rate of 20% does not mean that schools must increase fees by 20%.

Schools can reclaim VAT paid on inputs and reduce costs to minimise the extent to which they need to increase fees. On average, the government expects fees to rise by 10%. After recovery of VAT on their costs, on average the government expects schools to be liable for VAT amounting to approximately 15% of fee income.

The government will use this funding to help deliver its commitments relating to education and young people. In the Budget the government announced a £2.3 billion increase to the core schools budget for financial year 2025/26, increasing per pupil funding in real terms.

Further detail on this can be found in the Tax Information and Impacts Note (TIIN) published alongside the Budget.

## Sandeels: North Sea

*Asked by Lord Mott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to make any changes to their policy regarding the permanent closure of sandeel fisheries in English waters of the North Sea. [HL2036]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Both the UK and Scottish Governments closed English Waters of the North Sea and all Scottish Waters to fishing for sandeel in March 2024. The closure is in place to shield sandeel as an essential food source for threatened seabird populations, commercially valuable fish and for marine mammals. The EU has raised a dispute that the UK's decision to prohibit fishing for sandeel within UK waters is not compliant with the Trade and Cooperation agreement (TCA). The dispute proceedings are confidential therefore there is little more I can say at this time.

## Serbia: Military Aircraft

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the agreement signed by the governments of France and Serbia pertaining to the sale of 12 Rafale fighter jets to Serbia; and (2) of the implications for peace and security in the Western Balkans. [HL1873]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** Serbia's acquisition of French Rafale aircraft to replace MiG fast jets is a part of modernising its capabilities, and indicates Serbia is moving to diversify its defence procurement and reduce dependency on Russian military equipment and influence. In terms of the implications for peace and security in the Western Balkans, we continue to encourage Serbia to play a constructive role in reducing tensions and promoting good neighbourly relations across the region. Minister for Europe, North America and UK Overseas Territories most recently spoke to Minister Đurić on the importance of this on 1 October and the Serbian Ambassador on 9 October.

## Sickle Cell Diseases

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with NHS England and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence about access to innovative treatments for sickle cell disease. [HL2125]

**Baroness Merron:** Department officials regularly discuss a range of issues with colleagues in NHS England



and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), including access to new and innovative treatments for a range of diseases and conditions.

The NICE makes evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS, based on an assessment of their costs and benefits. The NICE is currently evaluating exagamglogene autotemcel within its licensed indication for treating sickle cell, and has not yet published final guidance.

The NICE will aim to publish guidance on any new, licensed treatment for sickle cell disease as soon as possible after licensing.

### Silica: Death

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many cases of silicosis and how many deaths there have been during the past five years associated with exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in engineered stone worktops, and what steps they plan to take to reduce that number, in particular by inspections for RCS in manufacturing and developing tools to identify RCS exposure. [HL1921]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been advised that a database which collects voluntary information from around 350 physicians on Surveillance of Work-related and Occupational Respiratory Diseases (known as SWORD) has recorded eighteen cases of silicosis where a respiratory physician has attributed the cause to working engineered stone. HSE is aware of one death.

HSE is working with industry stakeholders to establish practical guidelines to ensure workers are protected, meeting recently with manufacturers of stone products to discuss the range of possible actions for working with engineered stone. Further workshops with other stakeholders in the supply chain are proposed, aimed at determining the best focus for inspections targeting engineered stone, whilst HSE also investigates reported ill-health and concerns about inadequate risk management.

### Special Advisers: Redundancy Pay

*Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the Model Contract for Special Advisers, what is the value of any severance payment in lieu of notice if a special adviser is dismissed during, or at the conclusion of, a special adviser's four-month probationary period. [HL1817]

**Baroness Twycross:** Paragraph 6c of the Model Contract for Special Advisers sets out a special adviser's entitlements if they are dismissed during or at the conclusion of their 4-month probationary period, or if

they terminate their employment by giving notice during that same period.

### Species Dysphoria

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government what the policy of the Office for Equality and Opportunity is on recognising species dysphoria. [HL1875]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Office for Equality and Opportunity does not have a policy approach that recognises species dysphoria.

### Sudan: Armed Conflict

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are giving to citizen-led emergency response rooms in Sudan; and whether mobile financial services are being used to support them. [HL1970]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK is supportive of the citizen-led Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) and recognises the critical life-saving work they provide for communities in Sudan. The UK is one of the largest funders of the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) which supports the Emergency Response Rooms, as well as a consortium of International non-governmental organisations delivering protection services. Last year, we provided £23 million to the SHF. On 6 August, the Minister of State for Development met with representatives of the ERRs at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Sudan to better understand the challenges they face. We will continue to support the use of cash through a range of partners.

### Tajikistan: Human Rights

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the human rights situation in Tajikistan, in particular the right to freedom of religion or belief for the Pamiri minority; and what representations they have made to the government of Tajikistan to address ongoing discrimination and abuses against this group. [HL1977]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK is committed to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all, as guaranteed under international human rights law. We are clear that incitement of violence or hatred against individuals based on their religion or belief is unacceptable. Through our Embassy in Dushanbe, we monitor closely the human rights situation in Tajikistan, including the treatment of the Pamiri population in Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). We regularly raise our concerns with Tajik authorities. Minister of State Stephen Doughty and Minister of State Hamish Falconer have separately encouraged Tajik counterparts to raise Tajikistan's compliance with international human rights.



## Telecommunications Cables: Seas and Oceans

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government when the second undersea cable protection ship will join the Royal Navy. [HL1840]

**Lord Coaker:** RFA PROTEUS, the first of two Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance ships, is in service providing protection to undersea critical national infrastructure. The Strategic Defence Review will inform how to best deliver and augment RFA PROTEUS, taking advantage of the opportunity presented by new technologies.

## Travellers: Statistics

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to disaggregate data collection in Government Departments in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. [HL1791]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Office for Equality and Opportunity encourages the use of Government Statistical Service harmonised standards for ethnicity data collection across government departments and other public bodies.

The current ethnicity harmonised standard is based on the 2011 Census questions across the UK. The ethnicity questions were adjusted so they could be used in the 2021 censuses for England and Wales, and Northern Ireland; and the 2022 Census for Scotland.

The 2021 classification for England and Wales has 19 groups including the categories 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Roma':

(<https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity-harmonised-standard/>).

Data collected by government departments for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups is already published on the Office for Equality and Opportunity's Ethnicity Facts and Figures website (<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>). It was the first of its kind in

terms of scale, scope and transparency and has been welcomed as best practice internationally. It contains statistics covering topics such as health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

## Uzbekistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Uzbekistan on their promises to eliminate restrictions on freedom of religion or belief for religious minorities and amending the 2021 law on freedom of conscience and religious organisations. [HL1978]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK regularly raises concerns about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan with the Uzbek authorities, including during Ministerial meetings. No specific representations have been made on the issue of freedom of religion or belief for religious minorities in recent meetings. However, the Minister for Europe, North America and UK Overseas Territories spoke to Deputy Foreign Minister Madrakhimov on 31 October and raised wider human rights issues. We will continue to monitor changes to legislation that impact minority groups.

## Visas: Belarus

Asked by *Lord Rogan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they are holding with (1) the Irish Football Association, and (2) UEFA, to ensure that Belarusian players are granted visas to enable them to play against Northern Ireland at the National Stadium in Belfast. [HL1824]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** HMG continue to engage with the Irish Football Authority (IFA) through the normal channels and as required.

Where a member of the Belarusian National Football team requires a visa to enter the UK they will be required to submit an online application, pay a fee and then submit their biometrics at a UKVI Visa Application Centre as is the standard approach for all UK visa customers.

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