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**No. 39**



**Tuesday**  
**5 November 2024**

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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<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 Statements

*Tuesday, 5 November 2024*

## Local Digital Television Programme Services (Amendment) Order 2024

[HLWS184]

**Baroness Twycross:** I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Honourable Friend, the Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth, Stephanie Peacock MP:

The Government has today laid in draft [The Local Digital Television Programme Services \(Amendment\) Order 2024](#). This statutory instrument will give Ofcom new powers to renew the licences for the local TV multiplex and the 34 local TV services until 2034. The current licences are due to expire in November 2025.

A previous version of this Statutory Instrument was laid in draft on 7 May 2024. However it was subsequently withdrawn as delays caused by the General Election meant that it was no longer possible to take forward the renewal process provided for by the Order. The updated draft includes additional powers for Ofcom to extend the licences for a period of 12 months, subject to the consent of the licence holder, before renewing them. This will ensure Ofcom has sufficient time to conduct the renewal process before the licences would otherwise expire.

This Government is committed to supporting a thriving local media, and in particular the role it plays in providing trusted and accurate news at a local level. However, we are aware of the challenges it faces in the context of a rapidly changing industry landscape. We want local media, including local TV, to survive and thrive long into the future. That is why we are taking steps to ensure the continuity of local TV services until at least 2034 so that audiences, and the sector more widely, can continue to benefit from the valuable local news and content that they provide.

## NATO Parliamentary Assembly

[HLWS187]

**Baroness Smith of Basildon:** My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister had made the following statement:

**The Prime Minister:** The following will represent the United Kingdom at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Derek Twigg MP (Leader)

Stuart Anderson MP

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Beamish

Kevin Bonavia MP

Nesil Caliskan MP

Juliet Campbell MP

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Dodds of Duncairn

Richard Foord MP

Lord Fox

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton  
Baroness Kingsmill  
Emma Lewell-Buck MP  
Gordon McKee MP  
Yasmin Qureshi MP  
Lucy Rigby MP  
Tim Roca MP  
Alec Shelbrooke MP  
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Spellar.

## Police Remuneration

[HLWS183]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I would like to provide clarification on the written statement I made on 29 July 2024 (HCWS36).

I stated that London Allowance for officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994 will be increased by £1,250. I would like to clarify that this should have stated that the maximum rate of London Allowance for officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994 and not receiving a replacement allowance will be increased by £1,250.

## Post Office

[HLWS182]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** My Honourable Friend the Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports (Gareth Thomas MP) has today made the following statement:

The Horizon scandal represents one of the biggest miscarriages of justice of our time. The Government's priority is to get redress to those affected as quickly as possible and is doing all it can to increase the pace of redress across all schemes. We continue to review each scheme to explore ways to speed up redress. To ensure postmasters are receiving redress as quickly as possible, we are making upfront fixed offers and providing interim and partial payments wherever possible. As of 31 October 2024, approximately £438 million has been paid to over 3,100 claimants across four schemes. The total amount of redress paid out has increased by over 85% since the end of June. There is still a lot more to do.

While we continue to address the past, now is also the time to consider the future of the Post Office. Exploring ways to strengthen the Post Office network is a manifesto commitment for the Government and a priority for the Department for Business and Trade. The UK-wide Post Office branch network is an essential part of the UK's economic infrastructure, supporting high streets, businesses, and contributing directly to the Government's mission to kick start economic growth.

The company has undoubtedly had a challenging period and it is clear the Post Office is at a critical juncture. While Post Office continues its work to make the

company more efficient, it is also important that Government has a clear vision for the future direction of the Post Office to make sure that this public asset delivers what is important to the British public. Given the complexity and scale of some of the challenges being faced by the Post Office, the Department has appointed external consultants to support this work.

The Government will be carefully considering what customers, communities and postmasters would like to see from a modern Post Office network. Given the Post Office is a public asset, it is essential the public have their say on the future direction. As such, Government plans to publish a Green Paper to seek the public's views on a range of different proposals in the first half of 2025.

## RAAC in the NHS Estate

[HLWS188]

**Baroness Merron:** My Hon friend the Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care) (Karin Smyth MP) has made the following Written Statement:

Today I wish to update the House on the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the NHS estate. RAAC is a type of concrete that is prone to collapse and needs replacing.

As the Chancellor announced on 30 October, over £1 billion will be invested to tackle dangerous reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and make inroads into the existing backlog of critical maintenance, repairs, and upgrades across the NHS estate. This Budget will begin delivering on our promise of change for the NHS. It will take time, but we are beginning to rebuild the health service to make it fit for the future.

We are committed to removing RAAC from the NHS estate as a priority. The NHS has been surveying hospital sites to identify the presence of RAAC since 2019. As of 3 October 2024, there are 47 hospital sites in England with confirmed RAAC, a reduction of 7 since February of this year. To date, RAAC has been completely eradicated at 13 hospital sites and further sites will have eradicated RAAC this financial year. The published list of sites on GOV.UK has been updated accordingly and can be found here [Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\) in hospitals: management information - GOV.UK](#). The full list of sites with RAAC as well as eradications can also be found in the table below.

Once the presence of RAAC is confirmed at a hospital site, the Trust joins NHS England's national RAAC programme. This programme has delivered mitigation, safety, and eradication works across all hospital sites with confirmed RAAC to keep facilities safe and open and is working to remove RAAC fully from the NHS estate.

The Chancellor reiterated in her Autumn Budget Statement that the seven identified hospitals in England constructed wholly or primarily from RAAC in the New Hospital Programme will proceed at pace, due to substantive safety risks associated with these. These schemes were out of scope of the recent NHP review and have continued to their existing delivery timeframes.

These seven hospitals continue to receive funding and support to ensure patient and staff safety from NHS England's national RAAC programme ahead of the delivery of replacement hospitals. Keeping capacity open but being scrupulous about RAAC monitoring and mitigation until the RAAC can be removed is fully in line with the current evidence and recommendations of the Institution of Structural Engineers.

### *Current List of Hospital Sites with RAAC and Eradications in England as of 3 October 2024*

<i>Trust</i>	<i>Site Notes</i>	<i>RAAC Status</i>
Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Bassetlaw District General Hospital	RAAC eradicated
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Oval Depot	RAAC eradicated
Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Haywood Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Medway NHS Foundation Trust	Medway Maritime Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust	University Hospital Lewisham	RAAC eradicated
Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust	Norwich Community Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Barnsley Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	Chase Farm Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Warrington And Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Warrington General Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Hull University Teaching Hospital Trust	Castle Hill Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Blackpool Victoria Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust	North Cambridgeshire Hospital - Wisbech	RAAC eradicated
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust	Stepping Hill Hospital	RAAC eradicated
Airedale NHS Foundation Trust	Airedale General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Countess of Chester Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	Frimley Park Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP
James Paget	James Paget Hospital	RAAC confirmed;

University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		in national programme and in the NHP	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust - St Richard's	St Richard's Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	University Hospital Aintree	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust	Worthing Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Mid and South Essex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Broomfield Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	University Hospital of North Tees	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Leighton Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP	South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	James Cook Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP	Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust	Scunthorpe General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust	West Suffolk Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP	The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	The Princess Royal Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust - Hinchingbrooke	Hinchingbrooke Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme and in the NHP	The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust - Russell's Hall	Russell's Hall	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust - Stamford	Stamford and Rutland Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust	Royal Free Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust - NorthManGH	North Manchester General	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Homerton University Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust - Wythenshawe	Wythenshawe Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Wirral University Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Clatterbridge Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Scarborough General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	North Devon District Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	Harrogate Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust	Derriford Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust	Southampton General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Guildford Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Northern Care Alliance - Salford Royal Hospital	Salford Royal Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust	Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Edgbaston	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Northern Care Alliance - The Royal Oldham Hospital	The Royal Oldham Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust	New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
East Lancashire Hospitals (Blackburn)	Royal Blackburn Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Northern General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	Kidderminster Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Kettering General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Churchill Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust	Sandwell General Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Solent NHS Trust	St. Mary's Community Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme	Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust	Rowley Regis Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
			Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Royal Hampshire County Hospital,	RAAC confirmed; in national

	Winchester	programme
Bolton NHS Foundation Trust	Royal Bolton Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust	Royal United Hospital, Bath	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust	Leigh Infirmary	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
Queen Victoria Hospital Foundation Trust	Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead	RAAC confirmed; in national programme
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust	Bristol Eye Hospital	RAAC confirmed; in national programme

## Single Trade Window

[HLWS186]

**Lord Livermore:** My honourable friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (James Murray) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The government is considering its future plans for the border and how best to meet the needs of its users. In the context of financial challenges, the government is pausing delivery of the UK Single Trade Window in 2025/26.

As part of its efforts to support businesses trading across the UK border, the government will consider the role of the Single Trade Window and will provide an update as part of the next phase of the Spending Review, reporting in late Spring 2025.

## Supported Housing Consultation

[HLWS185]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Homelessness and Democracy (Rushanara Ali MP) has today made the following statement:

Supported housing provides a home to over half a million people who rely on support to live as

independently as possible or recover from a period of crisis. When it is provided responsibly, it results in improved wellbeing, health, and employment prospects for residents, and can relieve pressure on services like the NHS and social care.

There are many excellent supported housing providers in England providing high quality support and accommodation to their residents. But sadly, there continue to be cases of residents finding themselves at the hands of exploitative landlords. A minority of rogue landlords are failing to give residents the support they need, which is resulting in poor outcomes for residents and poor value for money for the taxpayer. It is vital that the quality of supported housing improves and delivers a better experience for residents.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 (the Act) includes measures to drive out rogue providers and drive-up standards for vulnerable people living in supported housing. It contains powers for the government to set new National Supported Housing Standards for the support provided to residents, enforced through a licensing regime. It also allows for a link between licensing, the standards and Housing Benefit, delivering better value for money for the taxpayer. We are committed to delivering the measures in the Act and to improving the quality of supported housing in England to ensure residents get the support that they deserve.

I am making this statement today to fulfil my duty under the Act to update Parliament on the progress made towards making licensing regulations. My officials have been working with stakeholders to develop the proposals in the forthcoming consultation on licensing, which we will publish in the new year. We also remain committed to establishing a Supported Housing Advisory Panel.

We strongly encourage supported housing providers, local authorities, regulators, provider organisations, and crucially residents to respond to the consultation as it is vital that we get these reforms right. I look forward to working with the sector and residents on this important issue.



# Written Answers

Tuesday, 5 November 2024

## Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made on developing a sanitary and phytosanitary agreement with the European Union. [HL1900]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Following their meeting in Brussels on 2 October, the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister have agreed to strengthen the relationship between the EU and UK, putting it on a more solid, stable footing. We have already said we will seek to negotiate a UK-EU veterinary/SPS agreement to help boost trade and deliver benefits to businesses and consumers in the UK and the EU. The UK and EU are like-minded partners with similarly high standards. We recognise that delivering new agreements will take time, but we are ambitious, have clear priorities and want to move forward at pace.

## Agriculture: Land Use

Asked by **Lord Roborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they aim to ensure that the Land Use Framework merely informs decisions by land owners and does not set prescriptive requirements. [HL1513]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government will publish a consultation on land use to inform the publication of a Land Use Framework for England. The land use framework will support farmers and nature recovery, based on an evidence base and spatial analysis.

## Artificial Intelligence

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research modelling by Accenture showing that AI could almost double the UK's economic growth over the next 15 years. [HL1913]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the heart of the Government's plan to kickstart an era of economic growth, transform how we deliver public services, and boost living standards for working people across the country. The government will continue to take a robust approach to handling and using statistical information to ensure effective decision-making. We are unable to comment specifically on third-party sources.

## Artificial Intelligence: Skilled Workers

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of workers with AI-driven skills. [HL1912]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government has developed a number of initiatives to increase the number of workers with AI-driven skills.

DBT's Global Talent Network AI Futures programme attracts top young AI talents to the UK by focusing on exceptional international early to mid-career AI researchers, engineers, and entrepreneurs which will support the upskilling of our domestic workforce.

Skills England will build the highly trained workforce needed to deliver the national, regional and local skills needs of the next decade by setting both young people and adults up to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world.

The AI Action Plan, commissioned by the Technology Secretary and drafted by the tech entrepreneur Matt Clifford, will set out, in part, the steps needed to equip our workforce with the right skills to support the AI sector's growth.

## Bus Services: South of England

Asked by **Lord Bassam of Brighton**

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the annual cost to the rail network of providing rail replacement bus services between Three Bridges and Brighton. [HL2090]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** When engineering work takes place, it is the responsibility of the train operators to ensure the provision of rail replacement bus services, via their contracted suppliers.

My Department does not hold the information on these costs at a granular level.

## Crown Estate Scotland

Asked by **Lord Teverson**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Livermore on 14 October (HL Deb col 30), what progress they have made in their discussions with the Scottish Government on the nature and content of the Crown Estate Bill, and whether those discussions include extending the benefits of the Bill in relation to new borrowing powers to Crown Estate Scotland. [HL1914]

**Lord Livermore:** The UK Government was initially in contact with the Scottish Government, before the introduction of the bill, to confirm that no legislative consent motion was required. This is on the basis that the bill does not legislate on devolved matters and the management of the crown estate in Scotland is devolved.

Asked by **Lord Teverson**

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to tabling amendments to the Crown Estate Bill to extend its provisions to Crown Estate Scotland, and what discussions they have had with Scottish Government about the possibility of a

legislative consent motion being put before the Scottish Parliament. [HL1915]

**Lord Livermore:** The management of the crown estate in Scotland is a devolved matter. In the first instance it is a matter for the Scottish Government to consider any proposed changes they may want to make to Crown Estate Scotland. There have been no discussions with the Scottish Government on this matter.

*Asked by Lord Teverson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of market distortion and lack of parity between England and Scotland, specifically in terms of delivering off-shore wind power, if Crown Estate Scotland does not have equivalent powers to the Crown Estate following the enactment of the Crown Estates Bill. [HL1916]

**Lord Livermore:** The management of the crown estate in Scotland is a devolved matter. In the first instance it is a matter for the Scottish Government to consider any proposed changes they may want to make to Crown Estate Scotland, including, for example, changes to its existing borrowing powers or investment powers.

### Drugs: Rehabilitation

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure access to drug treatment services for those leaving prison on day of release. [HL2016]

**Baroness Merron:** Everyone leaving prison with a need for drug and alcohol treatment should be able to access high-quality provision that enables them to recover from their problems as quickly as possible. We will continue to ensure that the full range of evidence-based treatment interventions is available to address drug and alcohol needs among people who are in prison, or who have left prison, including abstinence-based interventions, to support recovery from drug and alcohol dependency.

A cross-Government implementation group has been established to support the introduction of the changes to the Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS40) that were announced in July, and includes the Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service, the Department of Health and Social Care, and NHS England.

In September, the Department and NHS England issued clear clinical advice to support the delivery of SDS40 and give local services more flexibility to use additional drug and alcohol treatment and recovery grants to meet local needs.

### Electronic Cigarettes: Black Economy

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the effectiveness of the ban on disposable vapes, particularly regarding black market sales. [HL2008]

**Baroness Merron:** Strong and proportionate enforcement is crucial to the successful implementation of restrictions on vape product sales. The ban on the sale of single use vapes will be enforced by Trading Standards, who will be able to issue a £200 fixed monetary penalty to anyone found to be selling these vapes, and a stop notice ordering the business or individual to cease the illegal activity. If this notice is not complied with, an individual will be guilty of an offence, and will be liable on conviction to an unlimited fine or imprisonment.

Trading Standards will also have the power to enter premises to inspect for single use vapes. They will be able to search premises, break open containers, and remove them for disposal.

We are discussing with Trading Standards how we can best support their enforcement action, and are working with relevant organisations including local authorities and industry organisations to ensure businesses understand which products are covered by the single use vape ban, and to ensure that all banned products are removed from shelves ahead of implementation.

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Flags

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government what planning applications the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office have made to fly flags that do not have deemed consent. [HL1874]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has not made any planning applications to fly flags that do not have deemed consent in 2024.

### Frigates

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many operational frigates are in the Royal Naval order of battle. [HL1837]

**Lord Coaker:** As a new government we inherited a situation in which the Royal Navy has nine Type 23 frigates in service, six of which are currently available. The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and departmental planning requirements. The Royal Navy will be transitioning from Type 23 Frigates to two new classes, Type 26 and Type 31, over the next decade.

### Fruit and Vegetables

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the British Medical Journal article Scurvy—a re-emerging



disease with the rising cost of living and number of bariatric surgical procedures, published on 22 September, what steps they are taking to ensure those in lowest socioeconomic brackets have access to fresh fruit and vegetables. [HL1995]

**Baroness Merron:** The Healthy Start scheme was introduced in 2006 to encourage a healthy diet for pregnant women, babies, and young children under four years old from very low-income households. It can be used to buy, or put towards the cost of, fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk, and infant formula. Healthy Start beneficiaries have access to free Healthy Start Vitamins for pregnant women and children aged under four years old.

Scurvy results from the prolonged absence of vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, from the diet and is rare in the United Kingdom. Most cases of scurvy, and malnutrition, will be secondary to another health condition which may impact on nutritional needs or impact on a person's ability to eat and drink, rather than it solely being caused by poor or inadequate dietary intake.

### Georgia: Elections

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the recent election in Georgia was free and fair. [HL2114]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** In Minister of State Stephen Doughty's 27 October statement he made clear his support for the findings of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' election monitoring mission preliminary report on Georgia's election. That report notes that the election day itself was well-organised and administered in an orderly environment. However, it also highlighted a range of concerns, including frequent breaches of voter secrecy, procedural inconsistencies, as well as reports of intimidation and pressure on voters that negatively impacted public trust in the process. Allegations of irregularities must be investigated thoroughly and independently.

### Great British Railways

*Asked by Earl Attlee*

To ask His Majesty's Government how their proposed Great British Railways organisation will differ from the Strategic Rail Authority that was abolished in 2006. [HL1847]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) did not integrate track and train, nor was it intended to.

Great British Railways will integrate track and train at a route and operating company level, thus reducing costs, increasing revenue and improving performance, thus serving passengers, freight and the taxpayer.

### Immigration Controls: EU Countries

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of traffic management and driver welfare measures in the event of queues relating to the introduction of the European Union's Entry/Exit system. [HL1899]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** Government continues to work closely with the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum to ensure that well-rehearsed traffic management plans for freight and passenger traffic are in place ahead of the introduction of the European Union's new Entry/Exit system (EES).

Driver welfare is an important factor during any disruption. KMRF has responsibility for providing welfare to freight and non-freight traffic during a period of significant congestion or gridlock on the road network in Kent. KMRF holds an established Driver Welfare Plan. This is currently being reviewed ahead of EES implementation.

### Import Controls: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Foster of Aghadrumssee*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the timescale for repealing section 10(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, in accordance with the commitment set out in paragraph 116 of the Safeguarding the Union Command Paper (CP1021). [HL1933]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The Government is committed to taking all necessary steps to protect the UK internal market while implementing the Windsor Framework in good faith, including having regard to all aspects of the Northern Ireland economy, and taking forward policies in the Safeguarding the Union Command paper.

The Government has no current plans to repeal section 10(1)(b) of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

### Myanmar: Crimes against Humanity

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support calls for accountability for atrocity crimes in Myanmar by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and what steps they are taking to support the case brought by The Gambia in the International Court of Justice against Myanmar for alleged breaches of the Genocide Convention committed against the Rohingya people. [HL1783]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK strongly condemns all human rights abuses in Myanmar. There must be accountability for the atrocities committed. In May, the UK coordinated a statement with partners calling for an immediate end to violence from all sides in

Myanmar. In July 2024, the UK's joint declaration of intervention, together with Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, was accepted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case alleging Myanmar has perpetrated genocide against the Rohingya. The UK has provided £800,000 to the UN's Independent Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) and established the Myanmar Witness programme to gather and preserve evidence of human rights violations in support of future prosecutions.

## Myanmar: Diplomatic Relations

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to appointing a special envoy for Myanmar to coordinate a comprehensive policy for that country, and to implementing measures similar to those contained in the BURMA Act of the United States. [HL1845]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** Resolving the crisis in Myanmar is an important priority for the UK. Diplomatically, the UK uses its penholder role at the UNSC to support ASEAN's leadership and maintain an international spotlight on the deteriorating situation. We also maintain an embassy in Yangon to manage our wide-ranging humanitarian programmes (over £150 million since the coup). Although the UK has not appointed a separate Special Envoy for Myanmar, we have attended, and will continue to attend, Special Envoys' meetings to help resolve the crisis. We are committed to pressuring the military regime to change course through sanctions targeted at stopping its access to finance, arms and equipment. This includes a recent full sanctions programme announced in October 2024.

## Myanmar: Political Prisoners

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to seek the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Myanmar. [HL1844]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK condemns the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, and all others who have been detained arbitrarily. The charges against her are politically motivated. At the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and in a joint press statement with other international partners in July, we have consistently called for the full implementation of UNSC resolution 2669 (December 2022), which demands the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all those arbitrarily detained.

## Myanmar: Politics and Government

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to empower the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar, in particular (1) the National Unity

Government, (2) the ethnic nationalities, (3) civil society within the country and along its borders, (4) journalists, and (5) human rights defenders, in their work for a transition to genuine federal democracy for all the people of Myanmar. [HL1846]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK has announced 19 rounds of targeted sanctions, most recently in October 2024 against suppliers of aviation fuel and equipment to the Myanmar military. We continue to support all ASEAN efforts, including the 5 Point Consensus. ASEAN have explicitly asked the UK to back their efforts by keeping the UN Security Council united on Myanmar. In October, Indonesia convened a meeting for Special Envoys from across the international community, including the ASEAN Special Envoy and UN Special Envoy. Several international stakeholders, including the UK, sent senior officials to attend the meeting. The UK also provides aid frequently which supports the role of civil society to promote peace and stability in Myanmar.

## Myanmar: Rohingya

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking in response to the mass killing of Rohingya people, including mainly women and children, in August by drone and artillery attacks in Maungdaw of the Rakhine State in Myanmar. [HL1784]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** We are deeply concerned about the Rohingya communities' situation in Rakhine state, Myanmar and were shocked by the attack on civilians fleeing Maungdaw in August. We continue to work with members of the United Nations Security Council and other international partners in calling for the protection of civilians by all parties and the need for unhindered humanitarian access to ensure support can reach the most vulnerable. We will continue to work with international partners to ensure there is accountability for acts committed against the Rohingya, including through the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Since 2017, the UK has provided over £48 million in aid including cash assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene services to the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities in Rakhine state. The UK has announced 19 rounds of targeted sanctions, most recently in October 2024 against suppliers of aviation fuel and equipment to the Myanmar military.

## NHS Blood and Transplant: Stonewall

*Asked by Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the appropriateness of NHS Blood and Transplant continuing to be a paid member of Stonewall. [HL2084]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department supports Arm's Length Bodies to define the appropriate policies to support equality, diversity, and inclusion, to align with the

Government's Health Mission and priorities, and make health and social care accessible to all.

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is committed to championing and promoting equal opportunity for those donating blood, including by: lifting the blood donation ban for men who have sex with men in 2021; encouraging more LGBT+ people to help save and improve lives by giving blood and joining the NHS Organ Donor Register; and making NHSBT a more inclusive place to work.

NHSBT continues to keep all its memberships under review, to ensure they best meet the needs of the organisation and benefit the public and patients they serve.

### Offenders: Deportation

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 21 October (HL1232), why the number of foreign national offenders removed from the UK who have served a custodial sentence of at least 12 months is not separately available in Government statistics. [HL1877]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Since moving to a new case working system in October 2022, we are continually reviewing the quality and usefulness of HO management information data sourced from this new system, for use in Home Office internal policymaking and also for possible public release. Data relating to returns of foreign national offenders is of great public interest, and we are reviewing ways we can better meet the public need for information on this topic in future.

### People Smuggling: English Channel

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prosecutions of individuals accused of smuggling migrants across the English Channel in small boats have taken place in the past three years. [HL1860]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** From January 2022 to 23 October 2024 Home Office Immigration Enforcement convicted 188 individuals identified as small boat pilots and four individuals for their involvement in an organised crime gangs linked to small boat criminality.

### Postal Services: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK's state of readiness for the implementation of new customs and parcel arrangements under the Windsor Framework from 31 March 2025. [HL1898]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government is committed to implementing the new freight and parcel arrangements under the Windsor Framework in good faith and protecting the UK internal market. Businesses should be ready for the new arrangements by 31 March 2025.

An intensive programme of engagement with operators and representatives from the freight and parcels sectors is underway. We will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders including businesses who send parcels to Northern Ireland, business representative organisations, and the wider customs and logistics sector, in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. Most recently HMRC published additional guidance on 24 October, which can be found on gov.uk.

### Private Education: VAT

*Asked by Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the provisions of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (as amended) around the impact of their decision to impose VAT on school fees. [HL1862]

**Lord Livermore:** VAT is a reserved tax and the VAT changes will apply uniformly across the UK. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is not engaged by this policy.

*Asked by Baroness Fraser of Craigmadie*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether providers offering Level 6 qualifications funded through the Dance and Drama Awards scheme will attract VAT. [HL1865]

**Lord Livermore:** Higher level qualifications, including Level 6, will remain exempt from VAT.

### Public Sector: Borrowing

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce borrowing. [HL1911]

**Lord Livermore:** The government has confirmed new fiscal rules and is putting the public finances on a sustainable path.

The stability rule will move the current budget into balance, so day-to-day spending is met by revenues, meaning that the government will only borrow for investment. The investment rule will reduce net financial debt as a share of the economy.

The independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) have confirmed that the fiscal rules are met two years ahead of target in 2027-28.

Public Sector Net Borrowing (PSNB) will fall in every year of the forecast.

## Pupils: Absenteeism

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether reducing absenteeism in schools will be an explicit goal of the curriculum review. [HL1856]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Tackling absence is at the heart of the government's mission to break down the barriers to opportunity. Thanks to the efforts of the sector there are more learners in school but, with 1.6 million children still persistently absent, this remains a major challenge.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review is being independently conducted by a group of education leaders (the review group) and chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. The terms of reference were published in July, which is attached and can also be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/curriculum-and-assessment-review>.

The review will look closely at the key challenges to attainment for young people, and the barriers which hold children back from the opportunities and life chances they deserve, in particular those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, or with special educational needs or disabilities. However, the review will not be able to address every issue facing the curriculum and assessment system. It will therefore seek to identify and focus on addressing the most significant and pressing issues facing curriculum and assessment without destabilising the system.

Ministers will take decisions on what changes to make to curriculum, assessment and qualifications in the light of the final recommendations from the review group next autumn.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL1856 attachment [HL1856 attachment - CAR terms of reference and working principles.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-10-22/HL1856>

## Religious Freedom

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Winchester*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on 18 October (HC8437), how many FCDO staff are dedicated to freedom of religion or belief and at what level of seniority. [HL1843]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The FCDO champions freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all. Officials dedicated to promoting FoRB policy include a central FoRB team, geographical policy leads for human rights, diplomats overseas and senior officials in Human Rights Department. Ministerial responsibility for FoRB

rests with the Minister for Human Rights. Director General, Legal, is the FCDO's Board Sponsor for FoRB, raising awareness across FCDO.

## Special Advisers

Asked by *Lord Kempell*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many special advisers are employed by the Government. [HL1883]

**Baroness Twycross:** As when the noble Lord was a special adviser under the previous administration, the number of special advisers will be published in the Annual Report on Special Advisers.

## SS Richard Montgomery

Asked by *Lord Evans of Weardale*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk posed by the explosives on board the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery; what plans they have to mitigate that risk; and to what extent they have been implemented. [HL1861]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** We manage the wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery to ensure public safety. Our approach includes an exclusion zone, 24/7 monitoring and regular condition surveys which are published on gov.uk.

There is no indication that the risk has increased but we continue to take expert advice on further mitigation. Our current focus is on reducing the height of the wreck's three masts. Additional surveys to inform that work remain ongoing and will inform future management strategies.

## Sue Gray

Asked by *Lord Caine*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions the Prime Minister had with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively before appointing Sue Gray as his envoy to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. [HL1854]

Asked by *Lord Caine*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions the Prime Minister had with the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales, the First and deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland, and combined authority mayors prior to appointing Sue Gray as his envoy to the nations and regions. [HL1855]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Prime Minister began immediate work to reset relationships with leaders in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and regional mayors in England. The Prime Minister travelled to meet with the First Ministers in Scotland and Wales, and the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland within the first week of being in office. He also



hosted the regional mayors for a meeting in Downing Street. He has since had further correspondence and conversations with leaders across the nations and regions, including at the first Council of the Nations and Regions. He speaks regularly to the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, including at Cabinet meetings.

### **Tata Steel: Port Talbot**

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support workers affected by job losses at the Tata Steel steelworks in Port Talbot into employment. [HL1949]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The Tata Steel/Port Talbot Transition Board has been set up to support those affected by Tata Steel UK's decarbonisation Transition and will be supported by £100 million of funding, £80 million of which will be provided by the UK Government, as confirmed by the Chancellor in the Budget on 30 October, and the remaining £20 million will be provided by Tata Steel UK.

The Secretary of State for Wales announced the initial £13.5 million funding, to support supply chain businesses and individuals affected, on August 15. This funding will allow businesses who are heavily reliant on Tata Steel as their primary customer, allowing them to diversify towards new markets and customers where necessary. This funding is also available to workers affected by the transition, allowing them to retrain or to learn new skills allowing them to re-enter the job market.

### **Windsor Framework**

*Asked by Lord Elliott of Ballinamallard*

To ask His Majesty's Government what were the overall costs associated with all aspects of implementing the Windsor Framework Agreement for Northern Ireland, including the installation and staffing of border inspection posts. [HL1859]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** As set out in the [Statement of Funding Policy](#), the UK Government has committed to fund the direct costs associated with reaching the required level of compliance to implement its obligations under the Windsor Framework. The provision under this commitment is set out in the Northern Ireland Office's Main Estimates 2024-25 Memoranda.

The UK Government is committed to implementing the Windsor Framework in good faith and protecting the UK internal market. Implementing arrangements have been designed to ease the flow of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and reduce administrative and other business burdens.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Statement of Funding Policy

[Statement\_of\_Funding\_Policy\_November\_2023\_FINAL\_.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-10-22/HL1859>

### **Winter Fuel Payment**

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government, in notifying individuals that they may be eligible to Winter Fuel Payments, whether they took steps to ensure that letters were not sent to deceased people whose relatives had used the Tell Us Once service, and in how many instances they are aware of such letters being sent despite this. [HL1907]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The department each year routinely takes steps to ensure letters issued to those eligible to Winter Fuel payments are accurate based on their circumstances at the time of writing. Naturally, there is a short timeframe where on very rare occasions these circumstances may change whilst the letters are already in production or in the delivery network. We continually review our processes to ensure these instances are kept to an absolute minimum to avoid unnecessary impacts on our customers or their relatives.

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